

Newsletter No.2

July 2010

Update about the Scientific Conference 2010 to be held in Suriname

Dear members of ICOMOS ISC on Shared Built Heritage,
Dear colleagues and friends,

Last month two important meetings took place. One in Darmstadt, Germany, where the (nearly full) Bureau came together. We had a very useful meeting hosted by our President, where we discussed the current matters and up-coming events.

The second was a trip of the organising committee for the SBH Conference. Peter van Dun and Benedict Goes travelled to Suriname in order to meet the local stakeholders and to investigate the practical possibilities for meetings, lodging, etc. This proved to be a most successful mission: we were received by the Directorate for Culture and by the Minister, both giving their full support, we talked to the director of the National Archive, met architects and other professionals from the monument sector, had a look into various restaurants and hotels. ICOMOS Suriname was most helpful in arranging all kinds of contacts.

On the following pages a more specific outline of the conference is drafted. For a pictorial and picturesque impression of what to expect in Suriname, you should surf to our website for a series of recent shots made in Suriname. Within the page of the Conference a slideshow on the plantations is presented [http://sbh.icomos.org/?page_id=174], on the homepage in the right undercorner a (somewhat unstructured) series of slides show the Paramaribo inner city [<http://sbh.icomos.org/>].

Notice that in Newsletter No. 1 we announced our website under the provisional web-name. By now the SBH website is hosted by the large server of ICOMOS International. You can find it on sbh.icomos.org or in full <http://sbh.icomos.org/> (note there is no www). Please have a look and put this web address in your favourites!

You are invited to inform me about interesting websites we can add to the link-page. A few have already been published, but please send a mail with more interesting mutual heritage!

On behalf of the President who is on holiday and myself,
Yours,

Benedict Goes
Secretary-General of ICOMOS ISC on Shared Built Heritage

Conference Suriname 18-23 October 2010

For the preparation of the SBH Conference the organising committee, consisting of Peter van Dun and Benedict Goes, paid a visit to Paramaribo. The trip was most successful, for a major part thanks to the very helpful cooperation of ICOMOS Suriname.

Of course one has to adopt to the high temperature and humidity of 100%. At some times the tropical rain drains half the city, but in October this is more unlikely to happen. The very friendly and welcoming behaviour of the Suriname people helps a lot in accustoming quickly.

Figuur 1 View over the Suriname river by rain



For the programme we did receive a lot of proposals for lectures, too much to accommodate within the timeframe. The selection turned out to focus on two major themes. One is the methodology of researching the plantation history. Several scholars stressed on the importance of expanding the view on available sources. People from the monument conservation department are used to look at the built environment, architectural styles and building archives. Within the plantation system a lot of information is not recorded in those sources. Prof. Stephen Small from Berkley University, California, will give a key-note lecture on the alternate sources he was able to trace in his study to the plantation history of Louisiana. From his Jamaica background, raised in Liverpool, he is working in this field for a long time and an outstanding expert.

Other speakers will elaborate on the situation in Suriname, the relation with the own built heritage of the enslaved in Ghana and the methodology of keeping, enhancing and managing the collective memory about the plantation history.



After exploring the relevant sources, the conference will focus on the built evidence. Philip Dikland, local architect and historian in Paramaribo, will give the second key-note lecture on the huge amount of undiscovered plantation remains still to be discovered all over Suriname. From Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, a systematic selection of plantation remains has been made, resulting in a World Heritage nomination and upgrading of the most representative planters house. Comparative studies of cultural historic

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landscapes are presented from Mexico and South-Africa. As an unexpected, yet direct comparison with the water management systems applied in the Suriname Commewijne plantation region, an example of Dutch 'polder works' from Poland will be shown.

The scientific programme of lectures on methodology and best-practices will give inspiration to the future development of the Commewijne region. The conference will make a full-day excursion by boat along the river of the same name, lined up on both sides with functioning, dilapidated and re-used plantations. The various agricultural and touristic development possibilities will be shown and discussed with the entrepreneurs.



Above: view over a drainage canal on a plantation, resembling a Dutch polder.
Left: some local boys fishing in the same water showing that it is really Suriname!



The SBH Committee experiences a warm support, not only from ICOMOS Suriname, but also from the Ministry of Education (including Culture) and its Director-General. The National



Archive, the University and the Dutch Embassy are willing to cooperate. The meetings will take place in historic buildings of which Paramaribo is still so rich. The city centre has a most attractive atmosphere of large, white painted wooden houses with verandas or central entrance steps. Restoration of the cathedral, the largest wooden religious construction in South-America, will be completed by October.

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The organising committee and the board of SBH encourage all members to consider attending the conference and annual meeting. Travelling to Suriname might be a time-consuming and costly adventure, but from experience we can say that it is absolutely worthwhile!

If interested in participating in the Conference, please send an e-mail to me at info@icomos.nl, in order to send you detailed information and a registration form!

We do hope seeing you in Suriname in October,
on behalf of Peter van Dun and myself,
Benedict Goes

PS. We have noticed the problem of **getting a visa**, which is obligatory from most countries, for travelling to Suriname since there are very few Consulates around the world. We have been able to make special arrangements with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, giving the possibility to get a visa on arrival at Paramaribo airport.



Figuur 2 Plantation house on Marienburg and the remains of a huge sugar press

