

Statement of Significance for the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property Buffer Zone

Not only are the BZs of the Aapravasi Ghat the buffer or curtilage for the CZ containing the Immigration Depot; it is also an important historic urban landscape where the origins and memories of the evolution of the oldest portion of the city are recorded, alongside its port of Trou Fanfaron. As such the remaining tangible and intangible heritage that is contained in the BZ must be protected and managed in its own right, as well as to provide a context for the CZ. The Statement of Significance provided for the BZ guides the type of development controls and guidelines attached to it.

The BZ of the AGWHP cover an area of cultural significance for the history of the Immigration Depot as nearly 70% of the Immigration Depot was located in this area before its destruction in the 20th century. Today, the visual and historical links are preserved between the CZ and its BZ as an evidence of common historical evolution. As from the late 1840s, the increasing immigration to Mauritius and expansion of port activities resulted in the development of commercial activities in the area providing materials and goods for the daily running of the Immigration Depot. As such, the surroundings of the CZ have been a centre of trade, commerce and other cultural expressions for more than two centuries, making it a place of strong interaction between people of various cultural backgrounds.

These traditions and practices have survived up to present: Merchant property owners have continued to operate in BZ 2 from the indenture period up to this date. The continuity in land use is also coupled with the continuity in the nature of commercial activities in the BZ stressing the existence of long commercial and ownership tradition evocative of the port activities and of the indenture period, together with cultural activities or intangible heritage that accompany this land use.

This intangible heritage is associated with several national monuments evocative of the French (1715-1810) and British (1810-1968) periods, the many remaining significant historic architectural examples of administrative and port buildings, shops, residences and religious places, as well as significant historic urban streetscapes, nodes and places. As such, the BZ present significant examples of the evolution of Mauritian colonial architecture and urbanism which stand as the legacy of the colonial past and as places of shared history erected by slaves, convicts and indentured labourers during the colonial periods.