



Analysis of the cultural-historic values of the Plaza complex Willemstad, Curaçao

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1. Introduction

The Algemeen Pensioenfonds Curaçao (APC) acquired the Plaza hotel complex in 2020. APC wants to develop the site, including the waterfort boogjes (Waterfort arches), into an attractive and mixed-use area. The purpose of this analysis is to describe the values of the Plaza hotel complex as an architectural design and as a landmark within the World Heritage Site of Willemstad. The analysis consists of the waterfortboogjes, the Plaza complex, and the public space surrounding it. The waterfortboogjes are protected monuments under the Monumenteneilandsverordening of Curacao (1989), and part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. According to the Monumentenlandsverordening of Curaçao, monuments are “movable and immovable properties of at least 50 years of age and which are of public interest because of their beauty, artistic value, the importance for science, the history of the island or their ethnological interest.”

In general, cultural-historic analyses are carried out for protected monuments. In this case, the Plaza complex is not a protected monument. Yet, because of its significant role in the past decades, it is worthy to identify the values of the complex and site. The analysis can be used as a tool to (objectively) discuss the values of the building complex and the site with stakeholders. The main purpose of this document is to identify the values and characteristics of the existing hotel building and place.

1. ICOMOS. (1997). World Heritage List: Willemstad (The Netherlands)

2. National Archaeological Anthropological Memory Management (2021).

As part of this analysis, the National Archaeological-Anthropological Memory Management (Stichting NAAM, 2021) made a report of the historical and cultural values of the area. NAAM identifies several cultural values such as archaeological heritage dating back to pre-Columbian civilizations, intangible heritage, the military history and describes the morphology of the area over the last centuries².

Ultimately, it's not just about protecting the World Heritage and the actions that need to be taken to maintain the UNESCO status¹. The aim is to set up a process in which continuous trade-offs are made between preserving the values of Historic Willemstad on the one hand and developing new heritage on the other in which the values are given a new purpose.

2. Description Willemstad as World Heritage

The Historic Area of Willemstad is an example of a colonial trading settlement and administrative center. The city was founded by the Dutch on the island of Curaçao in the southern Caribbean Sea, off the north coast of South America. It started in 1634, with the construction of Fort Amsterdam on the east side of St. Anna Bay, and over the centuries the city has continuously developed.

Willemstad, is the capital of Curaçao, and is made up of several distinct historic neighborhoods whose architecture reflects different periods of colonial urban planning and development. Punda, is the oldest part of the city and was built in the 17th century on the east side of Sint Annabaai, next to Fort Amsterdam.

Punda is the only part of the city with defenses, consisting of city walls and ramparts. The other three historic districts (Pietermaai, Otrobanda, and Scharloo) date back to the 18th century. Waterfort and Riffort were built in the late 1820s as part of a more extensive series of fortifications.

These neighborhoods are also part of the World Heritage area. In the middle of the historic area is a natural harbor. The whole area covers 86 hectares and are surrounded by a buffer zone of 87 hectares.

Willemstad's architecture was influenced not only by Dutch colonial concepts, but also by the tropical climate and architectural styles of other Caribbean cities with which the settlement traded. The first houses in Punda were built according to Dutch design. In the 18th century, local materials and craft techniques became fashionable and new architectural elements were added, such as galleries. The city expanded beyond Punda and with it the architectural style of the houses also developed. For example, when building the Otrobanda district, it was not necessary to take the ramparts into account. The houses were built on spacious lots and resembled plantation houses surrounded by galleries.



Figure 1:
Willemstad World Heritage
(source: Curacaoarchive)

In addition, the social and cultural differences between African-American, Hispanic and Caribbean residents have enriched building traditions and influenced cultural life in the city. The result is a European architectural style with regional adaptations in a rich Caribbean color palette. The colorful buildings of Willemstad are a local tradition that originated in 1817. From that moment on, the houses were no longer allowed to be painted white, because the reflection of sunlight on the white walls would lead to permanent eye damage. The predominant colors are light red, blue, yellow ocher and various shades of green¹.

Willemstad is an exceptionally well-preserved example of a Dutch colonial trading settlement. Being a hub of cultures, the city shares its cultural history with similar cities in the Caribbean, which is a very distinctive aspect of this World Heritage Site. The unique location around the natural harbor makes historic Willemstad an exceptional example of a historic port city in a natural setting of open waters¹.

The area is registered under criteria II, IV and V. To the right is a description of these criteria. Subsequently, the following description is included with regard to the integrity and authenticity of the historic inner city¹.

Criterion (II): The historic area of Willemstad is a colonial ensemble in the Caribbean, which shows the organic growth of a multicultural community over three centuries. It is also a striking historic port in the Caribbean from the Dutch colonial period. The city has a clear urban structure and architectural qualities.

Criterion (IV): The four historic city districts of Willemstad show the successive phases in the historical development of the city over the centuries. The city is an excellent example of how a city can develop historically and culturally.

Criterion (V): The city's historic urban fabric and historic architecture stem from European traditions transferred to the New World. Under the influence of North and South American and African styles and regional cultural elements, the European traditions have been transformed into a typical Caribbean style.



Figure 2 – Cityscape "Handelskade" Willemstad (unkown, 2015)

2.1 Integrity

The historic area of Willemstad has managed to preserve its integrity, due to the preservation of the urban fabric from the period 1650-1800. The various historic districts surrounding the active port, reflect the development of the city over more than three centuries. Many of the original street patterns and urban structures, such as the narrow alleys of Punda and Otrobanda, have been relatively well preserved.

On the other hand, there have been some historical aspects that have changed or damaged the historic urban fabric throughout time. For example, the oil industry, which developed at the beginning of the 20th century with the arrival of the Shell refinery, had consequences for the historical area, as did the construction of a highway (the 1960s) and access roads to the Koningin Julianabrug (1974), right through the historical districts of Otrobanda and Scharloo. In addition, the historical infrastructure was damaged by several fires in Punda and Otrobanda.

Presently, the area is under threat in part from historical buildings being lost due to lack of maintenance by their owners, and in part from damage from the saltwater and climate. In addition, the area is under pressure from the tourist industry. The construction of hotels in Punda and along the coastline, and the redevelopment of Waterfort demonstrate the tourism impact on the area.

At the beginning of the 1990s, new monument organizations were established, and new procedures were introduced that new projects in the historic area must comply with. In addition, various new construction projects were carried out in an organic manner. In addition to private projects, such as in Kura Hulanda in Otrobanda and boutique hotels and restaurants in Pietermaai, the government and government-related organizations have taken the lead in the restoration of the historic neighborhoods of Otrobanda (Stegengebied, Korallengebied) and more recently in Scharloo and Fleur de Marie.

2.2 Authenticity

The urban fabric and the historic cityscape have remained relatively unchanged. For example, Sint Annabaai still functions as an active port. Fort Amsterdam retains its administrative function, as it is home to the Curaçao government and various government offices, as well as the governor's palace. The Fort Church of the United Protestant Church is also located in the fort. The town plan of Punda has largely been preserved, including the alleys and the original place names. Archaeological work that took place in this neighborhood in 1990 provided new information about this oldest part of Willemstad.

As far as the architecture of the city is concerned, many monuments are authentic in design, materials and craftsmanship and have been designated as protected historical monuments. The facades are still painted in the traditional colors and a range of pink-red, blue, yellow ocher and green determine the cityscape. Willemstad also has a typical Curaçao baroque architecture, which can mainly be found on the larger plots of Otrobanda and Scharloo. A common feature of this architectural style is the gracefully curled Dutch gable end of the Penha building (1708). New projects are integrated into existing buildings.

Bad infills (building within existing buildings), the fragmentation of urban fabric, and other restorations that were carried out before the new laws were implemented have affected the authenticity of the area. Today, restoration and conservation projects strictly enforce the laws and regulations governing the replacement of imported materials.

2.3 Attributes & Values

The above description of the Outstanding Universal Value is based on various attributes and their associated values. At various times during the UNESCO process, an analysis was made of the attributes and values that underlie Willemstad's World Heritage status. Below there are three evaluation moments; the evaluation of the advisory body ICOMOS just before Willemstad was declared an UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997, and the Retrospective Declaration of Outstanding Universal Value in 2010 (see figures 4-6).

The analysis by the advisory body ICOMOS shows that the urban fabric, the four city districts, and Sint Annabaai are all seen as separate attributes and are linked to social, economic, political, and historical values.

In the decision document of the World Heritage Committee, the ensemble of the historic city center of Willemstad is seen as one attribute. The word 'ensemble' here refers to Willemstad as an entity that arose from the coming together of various attributes and whose attributes cannot be distinguished as separate elements. The economic value has disappeared here.

From the Retrospective Statement of the Outstanding Universal Value in 2010, several attributes are again mentioned. Willemstad's ensemble is still the most important attribute. The economic value returns, and the ecological value is added. The aesthetic and scientific values are again left out.

As illustrated in the evaluation moments above, the OUV can be an expression of different types of attributes. It can include both tangible and intangible heritage with examples such as multicultural community, human settlement, language, religion, trade, food and drink, music and dance, architecture, events and holidays, harbor, urban fabric, urban ensembles, and climate (see figure 3).



Figure 3—Cultural events & dance in Otrobanda (source: unknown, 2014)

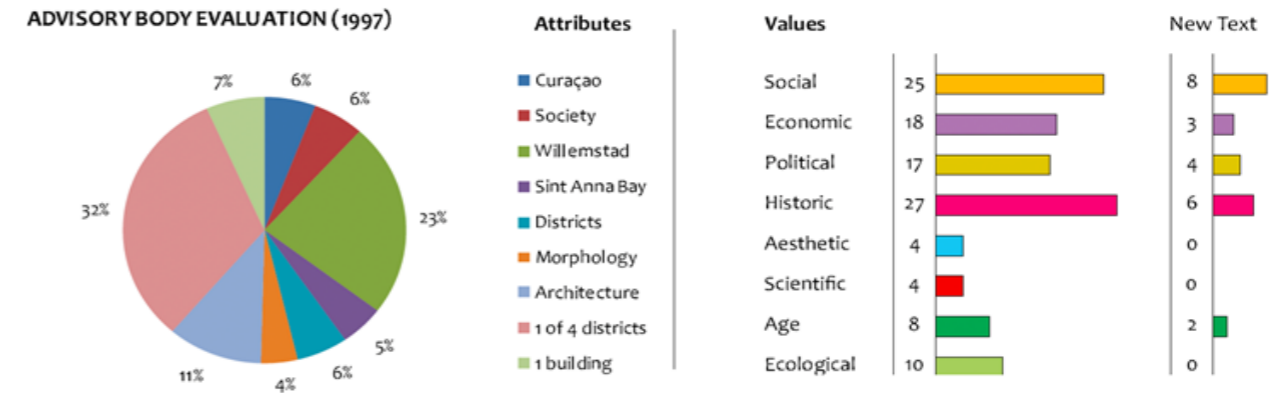


Figure 4 – Attributes and values during the evaluation of the advisory body ICOMOS in 1997 (source: Speckens, 2016)

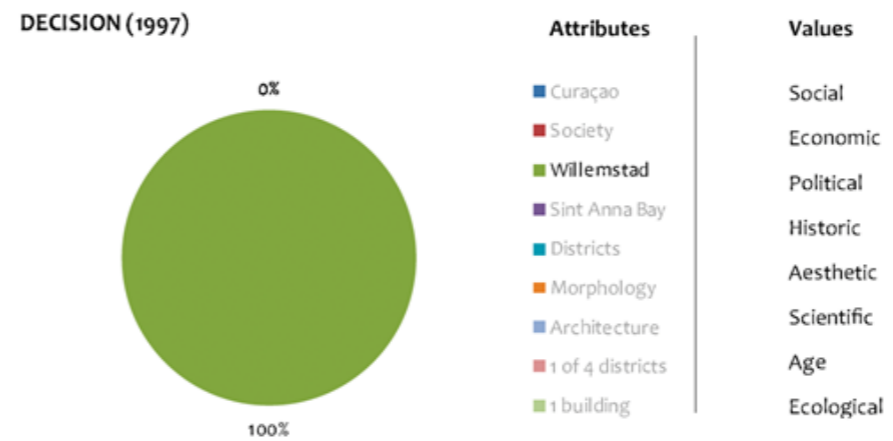


Figure 5 – Attributes and values in the decision document of 1997 (source: Speckens, 2016)

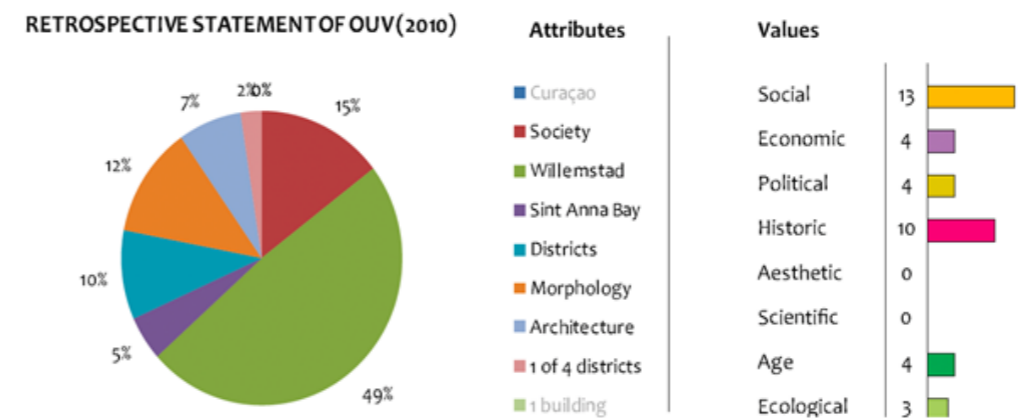


Figure 6 – Attributes and values in the Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value in 2010 (source: Speckens, 2016)

2.4 Project Area as part of UNESCO World Heritage Site

While the Plaza hotel is owned by APC, the government of Curaçao is the property owner of the adjacent waterfortboogjes, parking places, and public squares. For a coherent development plan, it is expected that APC will obtain the operating rights of these properties. The red dash -line in figure 7 highlights the project site.

The following frameworks and urban policies apply to this project site: UNESCO World Heritage Site Willemstad, the cultural-historic value map of Curaçao, the monument ordinance, and the Island Development Plan (Eilandelijk Ontwikkelingsplan).

On December 4th, 1997, the historic inner-city of Willemstad was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This year, 2022, Willemstad celebrates 25 years of obtaining this unique world heritage site status.

2.5 The Plaza complex within the UNESCO World Heritage

In the past 50 years, several buildings of different scales and designs have been constructed in Willemstad. Most of these are in the buffer zone colored green in figure 5. But a few developments, such as the Plaza Hotel in Punda, the building of the Ministry of Finance in Pietermaai, and the Landskantoor in Otrobanda, took place in the core area colored purple (see figure 7). It is argued that these developments do not quite fit in with the cityscape¹.

The fact that the Plaza complex deviates from the urban structure is included in the nomination file. Until today, the tower of the Plaza complex is the only one in the city center and is the tallest building in Curaçao.



Figure 7- Project area in Punda (edited from Google Maps)

2.5.1 Cultural-historic values map of Curaçao

Almost the entire project area is situated in a zone with high cultural-historic values for native sites, maritime heritage, and historic heritage. Historic heritage refers among others to religion, healthcare, education, military, and administrative and residential environments¹. The following map illustrates the project area within the cultural-historic values map (see figure 8).

2.5.2 Protected monuments

The Waterfort (waterfortboogjes) are in the Registry of Protected Monument and are therefore protected by the Monuments Island Ordinance 1989 (Monumenteneilandsverordening 1989). The Waterfort is listed as a monument both for its beauty that contributes to the cityscape and its history which is in public interest of Curaçao².

2.5.3 Island Development Plan (Eilandelijk Ontwikkelingsplan)

In the Island Development Plan of 1995 the project area is designated as 'city center'³. Areas that fall in the city center zoning are meant for preservation, restoration, and further development, as these are all important for the future society, the economic well-being, and the touristic development (see figure 9).

In order to preserve these special values, the city center was given the status of a protected cityscape. This means that not only the buildings but also the structure and appearance of the city are protected.

3. EOP (1995). Artikel 4- Binnenstad doelen.

Article 4 of the EOP includes special provisions that new construction in the city center must comply with in order not to disturb the character of the city³. Purpose description inner city EOP:

1. a. The grounds indicated as such on zoning map are intended for the preservation, restoration and further development of the Willemstad city center because:

1. An attractive and well-functioning city center is of great importance for the current and future social and economic well-being of all of Curaçao;
2. The preservation and restoration of the historic character of the Willemstad city center is considered of great importance for society and for the development of tourism.

b. In order to achieve this goal of preserving, restoring and further developing the city center, the following principles are used:

1. From the point of view of cultural, historical, urban development and touristic values, the general appearance of the Inner City requires special protection, as referred to in Article 19 of the EROC.
2. The historical role of the city center and therefore also of Curaçao in a broader sense as a trade and business center in the region must be optimised.
3. To increase the attractiveness of the inner city, the residential climate must be improved and the entertainment and recreational functions must be further developed.
4. As an essential part of a living inner city, the residential function must be strengthened.
5. In order to arrive at an effective and integrated approach to the preservation, restoration and further development of the inner city, it is necessary to pursue an active urban renewal policy.

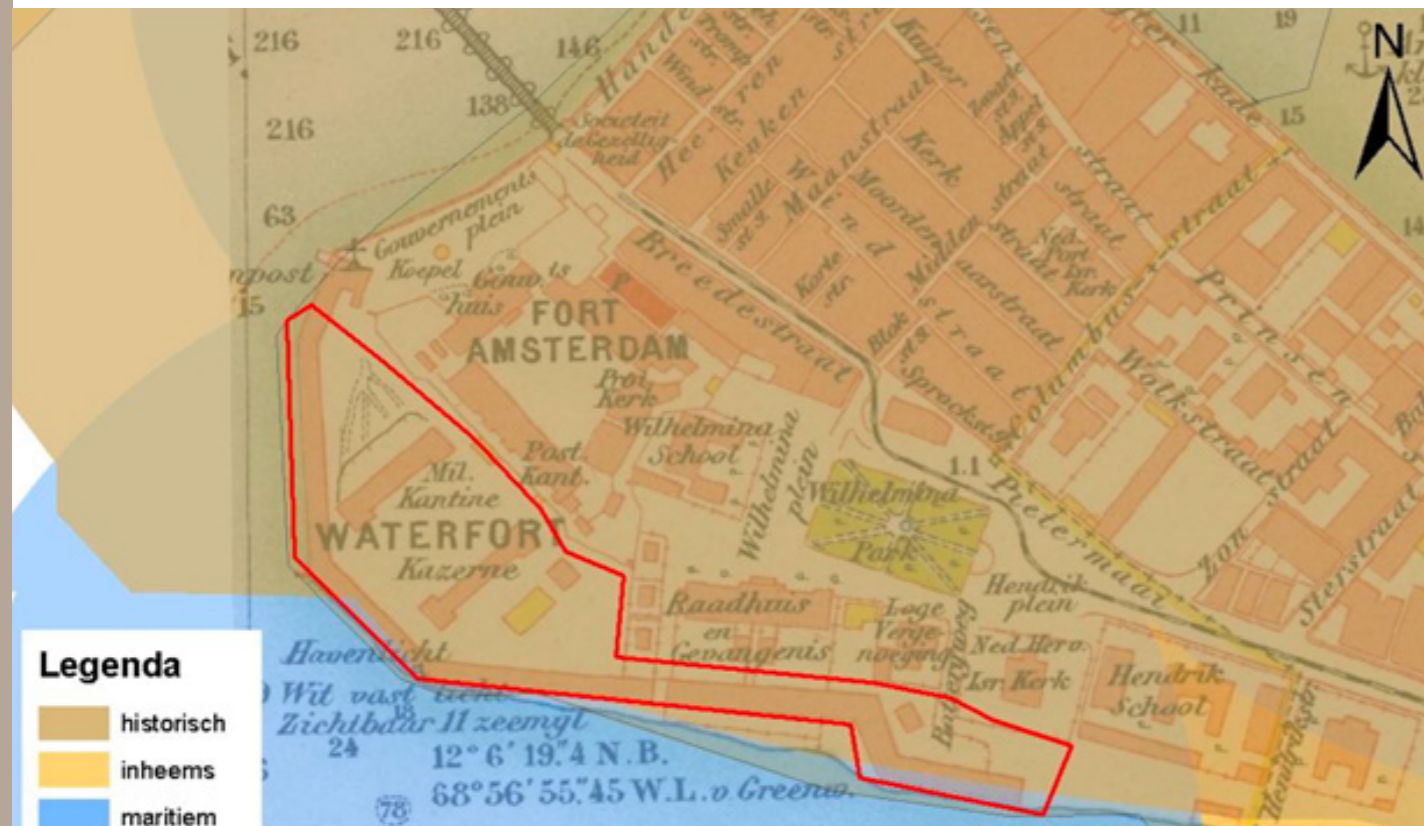


Figure 8 - Cultural-historic value map with the project area (source: NAAM, 2021)

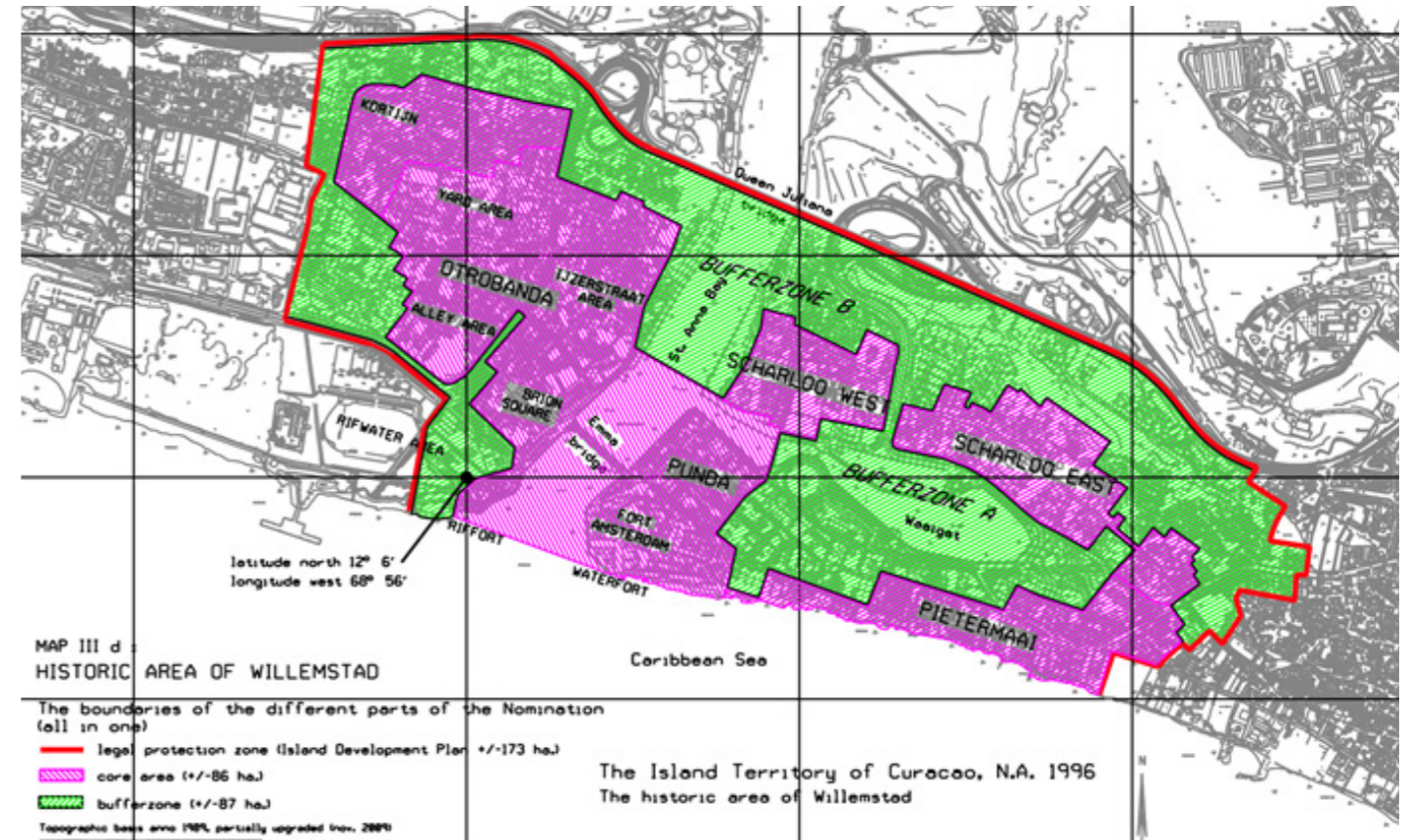


Figure 9 - Map of the Historic Area of Willemstad (source: WHS)

3. Brief historic development of the project area

In this chapter a brief overview is given of how the project area has developed throughout history. The project area is situated at the entrance of Sint Annabaai and is part of the oldest district of Willemstad, Punda. The name Punda is derived from De Punt, which is punta in Spanish (point in English) and eventually became Punda.



Figure 10: Siege of Curacao, 1800. Historical illustration of ships of varying nationalities
Source: Library of Congress, Geography, and Map Division/ Science Photo



Figure 11 - Locations where indigenous artefacts were found (source: NAAM)

3.1 Natives & Colonialism

During two past archeological investigations, indigenous finds were discovered from the period around 500-1500². Native pottery, modified corals and hammerstone are some of the indigenous artefacts collected during the research (see figure 11).

Curaçao was under Spanish rule from 1499 to 1634. Up until today, there were no artefacts found in the project area that date from this time period.

In 1634 the West Indische Compagnie conquered Curaçao from the Spanish. With the aim to turn the island into a privateer center for the West Indische Compagnie, some preparations were needed such as building fortifications at a strategic location at the entrance of the harbor (see figure 10). This first small fortification was already called Waterfort. Shortly after, in 1635, the Fort Amsterdam was built².

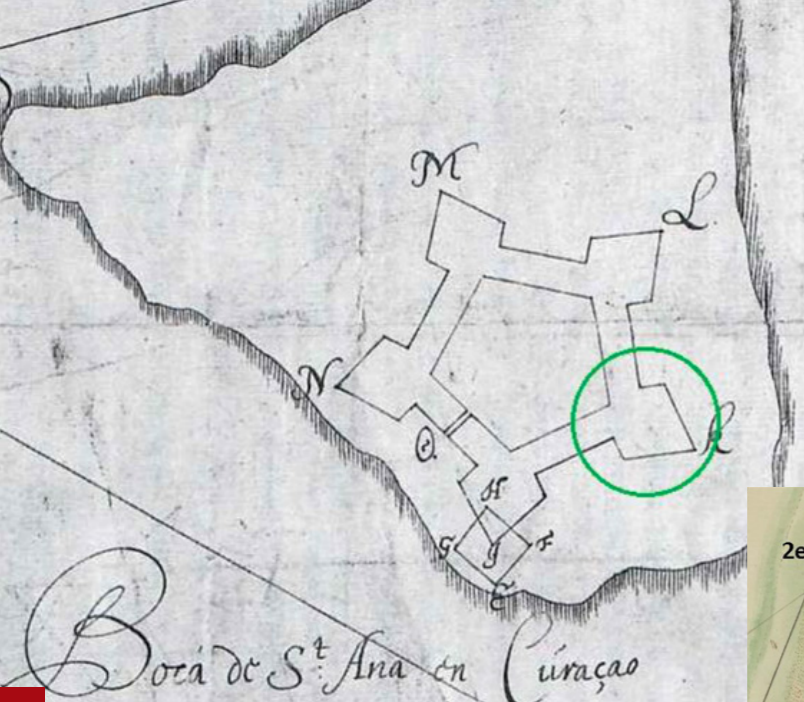


Figure 12 - Situation drawing from Johan van Walbeeck dated 1634 (source: NAAM)



Figure 13 - Fort Amsterdam plan from 1737 (source: NAAM)



Figure 14 - Drawing from around 1680 showing the first Waterfort fortification (source: NAAM)



Figure 15 - Detailed plan dated 1754 illustrating the second and third Waterfort (source: NAAM)



Figure 16 - Drawing from 1865 showing the fourth Waterfort (source: NAAM)

3.2 Establishing Fort Amsterdam 1634

The figure above is the oldest known drawing from the West Indische Compagnie that is relevant for the project area (see figure 12). It depicts Fort Amsterdam and Punda. The initial proposal was to build a fort with five bastions, but during construction it was decided not to finish the fifth bastion and instead make a straight wall between the two most southern bastions². At the center of this wall a bastion in the shape of a half-circle, Bastion De Halve Maan, was built. This is shown in the letter E in figure 13.

3.3 Functioning of Fort Amsterdam 1737

After the construction of Fort Amsterdam was completed, new drawings from the site show other structures, buildings, and even a cemetery (green box in figure 14). As time passes, the area starts getting more functions. The figure above illustrates a drawing from 1737 that shows how intensively the site was used at that time. In a second version of the Waterfort, warehouses, residential units, and carpentry workshops are some of the added functions shown in the figure above. After, the maps start becoming more detailed with descriptions such as storage, blacksmith shop, tar house, and even the third Waterfort²(see figure 15).

3.4 Modifications to Waterfort 1800-1859

At the end of the 18th century, the fortifications in Curaçao started to become outdated. It was after the British period, from 1800-1806 and 1807 to 1816, that King Willem I gave orders to replace the outdated fortifications and develop a new defense plan to protect the harbor. During these renovations, the second and third Waterfort were demolished to make room for the new fourth Waterfort, also known as the Waterfort today²(see figure 16). The new Waterfort arches were built in 1827-1829 and run from the entrance of St. Anna Bay to Marichi Beach. The Waterfort arches were built in the same period as the Riffort arches on the other side of Otrobanda. These new fortifications were part of a series of new defense developments.

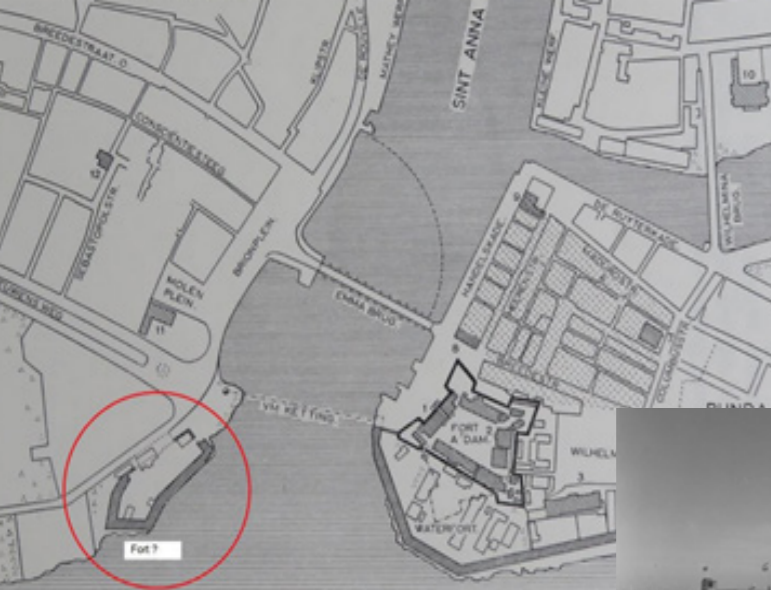


Figure 17- Relation between Riffort and Waterfort (source: unknown)



Figure 18 The Waterfort view from Riffort (source: Soubllette)



Figure 19 - Dutch marines standing in front of the Willem III military base inside the Waterfort in the 1940s (source: Soubllette)



Figure 20: Gate at the entrance of the Waterfort (source: Soubllette)



Figure 21: Maquette of Hotel development (source: nationaalarchief, 2017)

3.5 Repurposing Waterfort 1955

Between the Riffort and Waterfort, there was a chain to block ships from entering the harbor (see figure 17 -18). In 1859, a new military base, Kazerne Willem III, was built inside the fort and was used for this purpose until the Second World War. Throughout this time, entry to the area was not accessible to the general public. There was a gate between the Waterfort and the southwestern bastion of Fort Amsterdam to keep the area protected and closed off (see figure 20).

Up until 1955, when the hotel was built, the area remained in military use(see figure 19). The space between Fort Amsterdam and the arches was used as a military base area. The Willem III barracks and several smaller buildings were demolished in 1956. Nowadays, there are no remains of these buildings. Nevertheless, archaeological research may provide information about their foundations. With the arrival of the hotel, the Waterfort lost its military function and evolved into restaurants, terraces, and shops to compliment the newly built hotel.

3.6 New Developments 1960s

During the 1960s some buildings in Punda were damaged due to the uprising of 'trinta di mei' in 1969. Larger structures like Plaza hotel were added to Punda during this period as well. This trend was also visible in other districts of Willemstad. The relative openness of the design of the Waterfort area was due to its military function. However, in the 1960s the realization of a monofunctional hotel complex was introduced (see figure 21). This new hotel development led to a different urban structure and architectural design than the rest of the city and can therefore also serve as a root cause for having a different building typology and urban pattern than the rest of Punda. One of the differences with the rest of Punda is the issuance of land into a multitude of smaller private plots. This led to a completely different interpretation and therefore a different appearance of the city.



4. Urban development in a broader context

Zooming out of the project site to the rest of Punda also leads to noteworthy urban morphological developments between the 17th and 21st century. In the thesis 'Revising world heritage Willemstad', Speckens provides an overview of how the inner-city of Willemstad transformed in shape, size, and structure between the period of 1634 and 2010³.

4.1 Urban morphology developments in Punda

The following aspects are the most noticeable:

- o Fort Amsterdam was the first structure to be built on the peninsula of Punda in 1634 and was initially designed with five bastions.
- o Between 1635-1639 the construction of a city wall starting from Fort Amsterdam to Waaigat took place. It is said that the fifth bastion (facing the south coast) of Fort Amsterdam was not completed because its materials were used to build the city wall. Within the constraints of the city walls, narrow buildings and streets were built.
- o Between 1634 and 1676 buildings appeared to the northeast side of Fort Amsterdam. In this process a part of Waaigat was reclaimed.
- o At the beginning of 18th century more parts of Waaigat were reclaimed to expand Punda. A third city wall was also constructed at the northeastern side of Punda.
- o In the period of 1715 to 1754 some buildings in Fort Amsterdam were demolished and others were added, both inside and outside the fort walls.
- o Between 1754 and 1860 Fort Amsterdam again experienced demolition of some of its buildings. The fourth Waterfort, Riffort (Otrobanda) and Fort Nassau were constructed to defend the entrance of the harbor. More land was reclaimed from Waaigat and infills in open spaces were used to continue building in Punda.
- o In 1864 the city wall was demolished. The city wall lost its purpose as a defense structure and was limiting further expansion of Punda⁴.
- o In 1877 a hurricane damaged several buildings and part of the Waterfort structure.

o In the period after removal of the city wall, 1860 to 1909, Punda experienced expansion towards Pietermaai district.

o From 1906 to 1960 the remaining open spaces in Punda were also used to construct more buildings. Parts of Waaigat were further reclaimed to build Ruyterkade.

o Between 1960 and 2010 some buildings in Punda were damaged due to the uprising of 'trinta di mei' in 1969. Some larger structures like Marshe Rondó, Plaza hotel tower and San Marco hotel were added to Punda. This trend was also visible in other districts of Willemstad.

The above developments in the rest of Punda provide explanation as of why the urban fabric of the project location of Waterfort Plaza is different compared to the northeast side of Punda. The Waterfort area, built for military purposes, was enclosed by the large structures of Waterfort and Fort Amsterdam and existed of open spaces with military buildings inside. This morphology is in contrast with the northeast part of Punda composed of smaller and narrower buildings and streets with few open spaces due to the limitations of the city wall until 1864⁵. After losing its military function in 1955s to make place for the construction of the new hotel and casino, the Waterfort area remained with a visibly different urban fabric than the north of Punda. Also in function the hotel and casino area was relatively monofunctional (touristic function) compared to other parts of Punda which knew a variety of functions (shops, commerce and restaurants).

Also remarkable is the changing relation with water over the centuries. Old drawings and plans of Punda's peninsula show how land was reclaimed from the sea, at the entrance of the harbor, to build the Waterfort. Similar land reclamation took place in the north of Punda, alongside Waaigaat, to further expand the city.

4. Speckens, A.H. (2011).

5. nationaalarchief (Het Opbouwen En Afbreken van de Stadsmuren, z.d.)

5. The building of the Plaza hotel

In 1955, prince Bernard laid down the first stone of what would become The Plaza hotel. On January 21, 1957, the Waterfort officially stopped functioning as a military post². Yet, it was until October 1957 that the hotel was inaugurated. In the following chapter, we discuss the driving forces behind the creation of The Plaza hotel, such as the architects, the design, and the construction of the expansion are described.



Figure 22 Building Hotel
(source: Curacaoarchive)

5.1 Building of the hotel in a historic perspective

Worldwide the first decades of the twentieth century were rich in developing new hotels which rapidly became prestigious. Hence, the hotel industry was booming especially during the prosperous nineteen-twenties with many hotels creating a name for themselves. Some examples are the Adlon Kempinski in Berlin and the Waldorf Astoria in New York. In 1923, the architects Marchisio and Prost constructed a hotel consisting of wonderful gardens in the heart of Marrakech in Morocco, and for decades it was considered the most beautiful hotel in the world: La Mamounia. During this era, hotels were not only built in cities but also in the mountains and beaches.

During this period, Curaçao was also experiencing a boom, but in the oil industry. In 1918 Shell opened a refinery in the inner harbor of Curaçao. The location of Curaçao was favorable for Shell due to its proximity to Venezuela, an oil-rich land. The opening of the refinery made a large impact on the local economy. Jobs were created, the population increased with foreign workers and their families moving to Curaçao from different parts of the region, and as the housing demand increased new neighborhoods and facilities were built.

After the war, in the fifties, many places saw the second boom in the hotel industry. The Club Méditerranée created the now famous, but then revolutionary concept of the club village. These years were also notable for the construction of the first casino hotels. This was also the time when the airline companies began to develop their own hotels. In the Western hemisphere Intercontinental Hotels developed new concepts for the US travelers to the Caribbean and South America. The 1950s are also remembered as a prosperous time of recovery from the Great Depression and the war years. A time of looking forward and optimism, of new heroes like Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe and Grace Kelly. The first commercial air flights from London to Johannesburg and Colombo signaled the dawn of the jet age, heralding the start of the modern tourism industry. Holiday club destinations arrived on the scene, a precursor for today's all-inclusive resorts.

Up until the Second World War, Shell's oil refinery in Curaçao played an important role in providing fuel supply for the Allies. However, after the war ended, the refinery started to struggle due to the new restrictions set by Venezuela, as well as more refineries being built, and the arrival of automation⁶. During this time, Curaçao started looking at ways to diversify its economy and thus be less dependent of the oil sector. At the time, Curaçao did not have enough frequent connections with the outside world to develop a stay-over tourism market. Yet, with the arrival of commercial air travel and KLM, the market would soon change⁶. Local businessmen started coming together to discuss how to promote this new type of tourism: stay-over tourism. A combination of Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Traders, and the newly established Island Council (Eilandsraad), led by politician Ciro Kroon and chaired by businessman Norman Chumaceiro from S.E.L. Maduro, formed the limited company hotel group El Curaçao. The group approached InterContinental Hotels to further work out the ideas. In 1957, the Curaçao InterContinental Hotel open its doors. This opening was followed by the Curaçao Hilton, Hazeleger's Flamboyant Beach Hotel, the Country Inn, the Holiday Inn, and the Arthur Frommer. All these projects were built entirely or mainly with private capital and entrepreneurship⁶. The first years of the Curaçao InterContinental went so well that in 1960 plans were already made for expansion.

During this period, a similar development can be seen in Aruba and Bonaire. Aruba opened its first resort hotel, Caribbean Hotel, in 1959 and the Hotel Bonaire Plaza opened in 1963. Also on these islands, the main target group was American stay-over tourists looking for glamour, casinos and shopping⁷.

The sixties were an era defined by a counterculture revolution of social norms that swept away the calm and predictable feel of the late 1950s. As traditional taboos relaxed, the demand for greater

individual freedoms increased. As worldwide GDP grew, driven by the proliferation of new domestic technology and expanding middle classes, prosperity boomed⁷. In the sixties, new tourist resorts flourished around the world. From Spain to Greece and from the Caribbean Islands to South America, numerous city and beach hotels opened their doors to masses of summer guests hungry for relaxation and a good dose of sunshine.

In 1969, a strike from the oil refinery employees resulted into a series of riots in Curaçao. This uprising, also known as Trinta di Mei, impacted the development of the island's economy for the short and long term. In the short term, both air and cruise tourism decreased. The hotel occupancy by Americans declined and with it also the tourist-oriented businesses such as shops, taxis, and restaurants. In the long term, the improvements and corrections in the lower social classes such as the introduction of the minimum wage and an overall increase in salary levels led to huge public sector budget shortages⁸.

With a tourism decline in the early seventies, InterContinental terminated its contract in 1977. The new operator, Canadian Pacific Hotels, gave the hotel the new name Curaçao Plaza Hotel. After renovations and continuous losses during seven years, the group decided to once again look for a new operator. Richard Hart from Hartgroep was chosen as the new operator and managed the hotel from 1984 to 1989. Under this new operator, more renovations were carried out and a discotheque was added to the hotel complex⁸. It is during this time, Hartgroep tried to focus mainly on business travelers.

In 1989 Van Der Valk bought the hotel complex for just 3 million Antillean guilders. This price was low because the Island Council had high hopes for attracting European tourists instead of Americans with Van der Valk being a Dutch hotel chain⁸. Again, renovations were done to give the

more modern look and thus shift from business travelers to mass tourism. Being the only hotel without a beach along the south coast, the hotel claimed to have difficulties attracting these types of tourists. In 2006, Van Der Valk sold the hotel to Fort Shore NV with a bank guarantee of Girobank. According to the local government, the group did not fulfill its payments, and a court case was started to reverse the property rights of the building. Due to increasing debts, in 2017, the hotel and casino were declared bankrupt. Since then, little maintenance has been carried out. As a result, the the building has decayed in the past years.

All the social, economic, and political developments have had an enormous impact on the design and business operation of hotels. From the exclusiveness for which they were developed in the early 20th century to the club-like accommodations in the early fifties. With the rise of air trade, destinations became reachable for the middle-class⁹. Mass tourism had its demands for hotels where more tourists meant lower prices and thus more guests. At the end of the 20th century, hotels had diversified into various types. Business hotels, boutique hotels, environmental hotels, youth hostels, and more. Each was designed for its business model. Nowadays, the focus is on baby boomers that seek to reconnect with nature and submerge themselves in enriching experiences such as culture, heritage, art, and food.

Today, Curacao's south coast remains popular for hotels and tourism. While existing hotels are expanding, and new hotels are being added, the government continues to stimulate tourism as its main economic pillar. Over the last few years, the hotel supply has expanded with the introduction of all-inclusive hotels, boutique hotels, and Airbnb apartments to cater to the different types of tourists. With the city center of Willemstad being on the UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1997, the sector is also looking at ways to attract tourists who are interested in culture, arts, history, and heritage.

5.2 Building of the hotel in 1955

The construction of the hotel in the early fifties was linked to the desire to boost tourism on the island and transform it from a "shopping destination" for American cruise tourists to a more recreational-oriented island for stay-over tourists. One of the first priorities to achieve this was the construction of a 'first-class hotel' with a casino. Until then, Curaçao had no modern hotels. The founder for this project was the limited company hotel group El Curaçao. In 1953, the group reached out to InterContinental Hotels, who had experience with such types of hotels, to draw up a sketch. While drawing the sketch design, InterContinental took interest in the project and announced its willingness to take over the operation. The first model was delivered in 1955. The final costs for the hotel were estimated at 3.8 million guilders, of which 1.2 million was paid through government loans and local stakeholders, while the remaining amount was through equity issues. To maintain a comprehensive budget, a 60-room hotel was initially chosen. In the end, however, the number of rooms was doubled, and it became a 120-room hotel¹⁰. The first stone was laid on October 19, 1955, by Prince Bernhard, and the construction of the building lasted a year and half to be completed (see figure 23).



Figure 23- Punda with InterContinental Hotel (source: Curacaoarchive)

6. Antilliaansdagblad, 2014)

7. Van Soest, J. (1977). *Olie als water: de Curaçaoese economie in de eerste helft van de twintigste eeuw.*

8. MCB. (2006). *Annual Report 2006: 1916-2006 "for the glory of our native island".*

9. Amigoe(1986), Plaza Hotel

10. (Amigoe, 1989)

5.3 Architects Background

The architects of the hotel building were the Americans Joseph P. Salerno (who received an award from the American Institute of Architects for the design) and Richard Smith from the InterContinental, and Curaçaoan-Dutch architect Ben Smit. The building is designed in the New Building style.

5.3.1 Architect Joseph Salerno

Joseph P. Salerno (1914 – 1981), born in Chicago, was an American architect who graduated from the Yale School of Architecture and was a student and admirer of Frank Lloyd Wright¹¹. He was best known for his mid-century modern designs.

Salerno had his own concern in Connecticut for more than 20 years and previously (in the 50s and 60s) had been working at the Architectural Department of the InterContinental Hotels Corporation. He received awards from the American Institute of Architects for his works on the Curacao InterContinental Hotel and the United Church of Rowayton (see figure 24).

Another important work of his was the Siam InterContinental Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand (see figure 25). It stood on Rama I Road, in the neighborhood now known as Siam in Pathum Wan District, on land leased from Sa Pathum Palace. It opened as part of Pan Am's InterContinental hotel chain in 1966, operated by the Bangkok Intercontinental Hotels Company. It stood until 2002 when it was demolished to make way for the Siam Paragon shopping mall. The Siam InterContinental was Bangkok's first luxury international-brand hotel and was also particularly known for the striking design by Salerno¹¹.

Under his firm, Joseph P. Salerno Associate Architects and Engineers of Westport, he designed the Coleytown, Junior High School, a house of worship for the United Church of Rowayton, and the Middletown High School (see figure 26). All these works were done in Connecticut.



Figure 24- Church Rowayton (Source: unknown)



Figure 25- Siam InterContinental Hotel (Source: unknown)



Figure 26- Mid-century modern house (Source: unknown)



Figure 27- Hilton Hotel Curacao (Source: Curacaoarchive)



Figure 28- Residential home at Angloweg designed by Ben Smit (source: Fischer)

5.3.2 Architect Ben Smit

The architect Ben Smit (1922 – 2020) was born in Amsterdam and studied at the Koninklijke Academie voor Schone Kunsten in Antwerpen and the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Lyon. Due to the Second World War, he stopped his studies and moved to Jamaica. There he encountered an employee from the Public Works Department (Departement van Openbare Werken) from Curaçao and was offered a job. In 1943, Smit moved to Curaçao and worked three years at the Public Works Department before starting his architect firm at the age of 24 years old¹².

Throughout the forties and fifties, Ben Smit and partner Cornelis Bakker worked on various projects in Curaçao. Smit's work was characterized by functional layouts and a sleek concrete design, sometimes in combination with light steel columns. Vertical slats were often used in the facades to regulate daylight and natural ventilation. While rubble stone was used to give the structure a more local appearance. The source of inspiration was the Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer and other modern tropical Latin American designs. These climate-conscious design aspects gave Smit's buildings a natural tropical character¹³.

Some examples include his own house at Angloweg from 1948 or the south-eastern extension of the St. Elisabeth Hospital in 1953.

Smit's style was part of the New Building style (Nieuwe Bouwen) or the Modern Movement, an international architectural style that emerged in the twenties through sixties.

Ben Smith was responsible for the design of multiple hotels in Curaçao such as the Hilton and the InterContinental. (see figure 27) The latter included the first tower in the city center of Willemstad. Other well-known designs are the Antilliaanse Verffabriek, the chapel of the Alverna monastery, and the south-eastern extension of the St. Elisabeth Hospital. His residential home at Angloweg and the chapel of the Alverna monastery were appointed protected monuments in 2018(see figure 28). Remarkably, four of his designs have been inaugurated by the Dutch royal family.

At the age of 80, Smit decided to bundle his works in the book 'Ben Smit, projects Curaçao 1946 – 1969'. In 2015 his collection of drawings were transferred to The National Archive of Curaçao.

12. Lobo, (2020) in-memoriam-ben-smit

13. nationaalarchief, (2017) tekeninge-archief-architect-ben-smit-in-het-nationaal-archief

5.4 Design & Construction 1955

An important goal for Salerno and Smit when designing the Plaza hotel was to harmonize the colorful 18th-century Dutch character of Willemstad with the historic Waterfort. As a result, the Waterfort walls were left intact to provide a promenade on the terrace level of the hotel¹⁴.

The design consists of two three-story building blocks placed at right angles (North-South and East-West oriented). The complex is built of concrete. Both wings open onto the sea wall of the Waterfort and “lean” over the historic wall. The space between the two wings and the curved sea wall is a raised courtyard to the level of the fort wall. In the center of the room is a swimming pool in the shape of the top of a parabola. An Antillean Garden was created around it in 1956. Below the square, on the wall side, the nightclub Cave de Neptune has been set up, which had a view of the swimmers in the swimming pool through round windows. The fort wall itself has been kept free of major extensions and is still easily recognizable and perceptible as a historical element in the overall design. Remarkable is the use of round shapes in the entire design (roof, windows, swimming pool, construction in the reception hall East-West wing). Incidentally, the arch shape is not unusual in the New Building.

Both the North-South and East-West wing have three floors and a strong horizontal articulation on the end walls due to continuous links between the second and third floors and the roof molding. The roof is curved (barrel vault type) and originally covered with mastic. The first floor of the North-South wing has an open layout that integrates the reception, the restaurant, and the courtyard. The rooms are located on the second and third floors. The building block is intersected on the Northside by a rectangular building.

This rectangular building houses different facilities. The facades are neatly plastered, consisting of windows with a curved lower edge facing the city center on one side and the courtyard on the other side. The second floor has floor-to-ceiling windows. The East-West wing is similar yet it consists of an open layout divide by pillars for the reception of guests on the first floor (see figure 29 & 30).



Figure 29 The Plaza complex before the expansion with the hotel high-rise (source: Het Nationaal Archief van Curaçao)



Figure 30 - Tower as part of the expansion (source: Fischer)

5.5 Expansion 1960s

Soon after its opening, it became apparent that the hotel had insufficient capacity to accommodate the growing number of tourists that mass tourism was generating. At the end of the 1960s, the decision was made to expand the capacity. Following the mass tourism principle that larger quantities of guests meant lower prices, thus it was necessary to realize as many rooms as possible. Similar to other touristic places, there was a demand for more rooms to cope with the growing demand for stay-over accommodations.

Next to the North-South wing, the expansion of a tower consisting of 14 stories was designed by architect Ben Smit. The floor height is low (about 2.4 meters) with the exception of the top floor (restaurant). All floors are connected by the stairwells and elevator shafts which are centrally located in the building. Moreover, there are four emergency stairs shaped in an oval steel fence located at the corners of the building (see figure 31). This expansion helped to provide a total of 14 rooms per floor in addition to the four rooms per floor on the East-West side and three rooms on the North-South wing. In this tower, the style of the curved (or arched) shapes is continued, creating a distinctive frame with a curved top and bottom edges (see figure 32). Also, the theme of the arched roof shapes has been applied to the extension and construction on the Waterfort arches.

There were also designs for the expansion of the InterContinental Hotel that never got beyond the drawing board. Due to the financial restraints that were given by the clients to realize an innovative expansion of the hotel, the architect was more limited compared to the initial design from 1955 (see figure 33 & 34). The expansion itself builds on the design principles of the prior design of 1955, especially with the arched shapes in the facades and the roof structure. The limited spaces in the building, story heights and finishing are typical for many of the hotels build in this period focused on mass tourism.

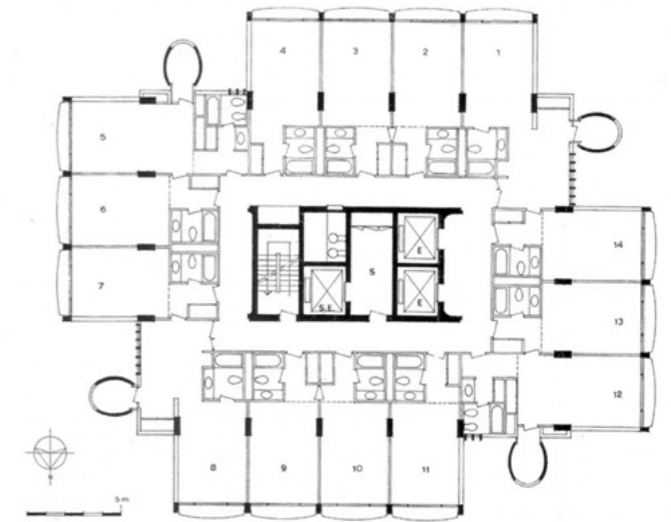


Figure 31- Drawing of a floor plan tower (source: Nationaal Archief van Curaçao)



Figure 32- Tower illuminated at night (source: Curacao archive)

14. Intercontinental News (1965). Volume 1, no.5.

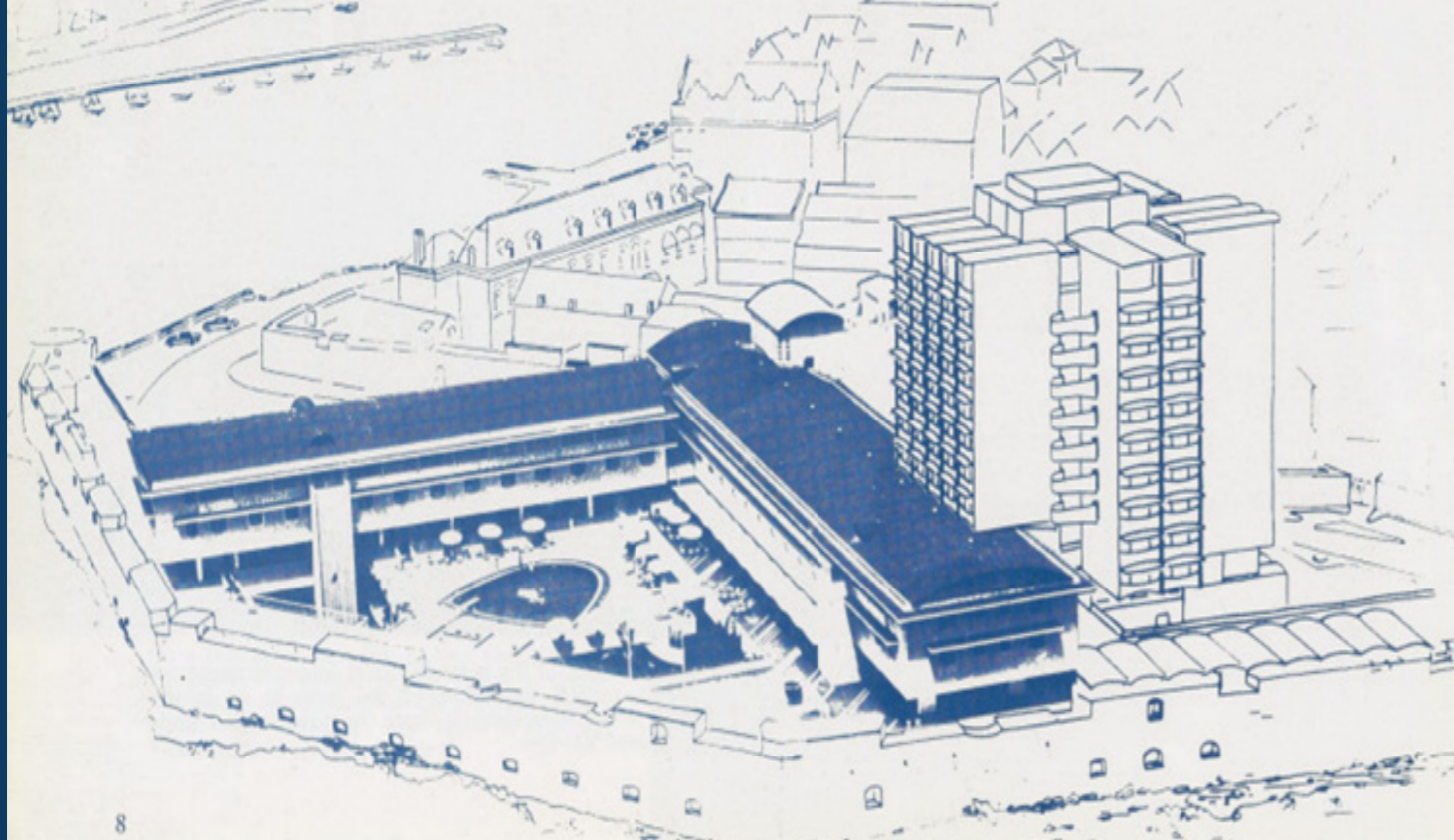


Figure 33: Design drawings of the expansion where the tower is lower and wider than the tower realized (source: Intercontinental News, 1965)



Figure 34- Design drawings of the expansion for InterContinental Hotel on an artificial island (Nationaal Archief van Curaçao)



Figure 35- View of the Van Der Valk hotel in relation with the nearby buildings (source: Soubllette)

5.6 Values of the hotel building complex

Unfortunately, the building complex was treated less carefully in the years that followed, going from one owner to another. This led to poor quality extensions such as the addition of balconies along with replacement of the typical curved lower edge window frames with rectangular frames. The North-South facade still kept the original frames on the inner courtyard side, but the facade on the city side has been completely hidden due to the addition of the tower and later structures, and it is presumed to have been severely damaged. Moreover, a large wooden canopy has been built on the side of the courtyard, which affected the original design¹⁵. Due to lack of maintenance the past years, the courtyard and swimming pool are in a dilapidated condition. Hence, the entire complex is in a state of disrepair, affecting not only the values of the design but also the construction contains concrete corrosion in various areas. Nevertheless, if the building had still been in its original state and protected as a monument, the current damage would never have been approved by a competent authority. A regrettable and largely irreversible damage on the building has caused a negative effect on the values of this design.

One aspect of the tower that is still valued is the visibility. Over the past decades, the tower has come to be seen as a landmark by many (see figure 35). The tower is a recognizable point from both sea and land. It even has also become part of the cityscape being captured on many postcards, photos, and even on local driver's license.

On the contrary, the hotel building complex is described by some as a disturbance to the adjacent monumental structures such as the Governor's Palace, the Fortchurch and even the Waterfort. With statements such as "The Van Der Valk hotel 'disfigures' the Governor's Palace and Fortchurch. The Waterfort has largely had to make way for the hotel accommodation" or "The Governor's Palace with the Fortchurch in the background are dwarfed by the Van Der Valk complex"¹⁵.

In addition to tangible values, the Plaza complex and the Waterfort arches also have intangible cultural-historical values. For example, the hotel symbolizes a new era of international tourism on Curaçao, a hotspot for the affluent American and Latin American tourists. The local older generations mainly remember Plaza and its Cave the Neptune club as a popular place for going out, parties, and events. International artists regularly performed here.

Lamentably, what remains of this once lively area is a decayed building complex with many of its original cultural-historic values having been severely affected. Only the main form of the wings with the curved roof along with the original façade on the side of the courtyard, and the facade of the North-South wing, still conserve the characteristics of the original building. In addition, the historic Waterfort arches remain conserved and are partially hidden by the current design. This leads to consider the Venice Charter of 1966, stating that reconstruction is not an issue if through extensive analysis it becomes evident that many of the original values have been definitively lost¹⁶.

Since the closing of the building complex in 2017 the empty complex has been victim to vandalism and theft. Furthermore, the closing of the hotel also affected the Waterfort arches where many arches remain unused, while some of the arches are still used as restaurants, storage, and art studios.

15. Stichting Libri Antilliani. (1999). *Veranderend Curaçao*.

16. ICOMOS. (1964). *Venice Charter*.

6. Relation with the immediate surroundings

The Plaza complex is located at the entrance of the harbor, surrounded by Fort Amsterdam, the waterfortboogjes, public spaces Plasa Piar and Plasa Gobernador Cola Debrot, the old city hall, and the former synagogue. All these neighbors play an integral part in the development of the project. Considering the importance of the ensemble in the description and nomination of Historic Willemstad by UNESCO, the relation with neighboring functions will be briefly described.



Figure 36: Relation with the immediate surroundings (source: own illustration)

6.1 Fort Amsterdam

Right after the West Indies Company conquered Curaçao in 1634, it ordered the construction of Fort Amsterdam. Fort Amsterdam served two purposes: as a military fort and as the headquarters of the West Indies Company. Nowadays, the fort still retains its administrative function as the seat of the government and governor in Curaçao (see figure 37). Fort Amsterdam also is part of a series of forts constructed in Curaçao between the 17th and 19th century.

The construction of Fort Amsterdam lasted two years until completion. Dutch soldiers and slaves from Angola constructed the fort¹⁷. As previously mentioned, the initial design of the fort included five bastions, but only four were built.

Inside the fort, the oldest church of Curaçao can be found: The fort church (Fortkerk). This monument dates back to 1769 and houses the Protestant Cultural Historical Museum.

17. Smakman, Y. (2012). Fort Amsterdam op Curaçao.



Figure 37- Fort Amsterdam seen from the harbor with Fort Church top in the back (source: unknown)

6.2 Plasa Piar

Enclosed by the Waterfort arches, the Plaza complex and the Fort Amsterdam, is the Plasa Piar. On this public square that is named after Manuel Piar, a large bronze statue of Manuel Piar stands on a concrete base (see figure 38). The plaque on the statue reads as follows:

- General en Jefe
- Manuel Carlos Piar
- 1777 – 1817
- El Gobierno y el Pueblo de Venezuela ofrendan este Monumento a Curazao1963

Manuel Carlos Piar (April 28, 1774 – October 16, 1817), child of an Afro-Venezuelan father and Dutch mother, grew up in Otrobanda. Piar was General-in-Chief of the army fighting Spain during the Venezuelan War of Independence. In 1804, he joined the Curaçao militia that was fighting the British occupation¹⁸.

The Curaçao militia successfully expelled the British, restoring Dutch rule. In 1807, he helped the Haitian revolution by commanding a warship. By 1810 his military experience and his desire for independence from the colonial governments put him at the service of the incipient Venezuelan rebellion against Spain. Following his military victories, Piar came into conflict with his higher-ranking white criollo superiors, including Simón Bolívar. This friction eventually resulted in Bolívar stripping Piar of direct troop command. Piar then asked for leave, which was granted to him in June 1817. In what is one of the darkest episodes in the struggle for independence, Simón Bolívar ordered Piar arrested and tried for desertion, insubordination, and conspiring against the government. Since Piar was the only one charged and arrested in this episode, it is generally agreed that Bolívar simply needed to make an example for the rest of his military leadership. Piar was the unfortunate chosen one. He was arrested on September 28, 1817 and was judged by a court martial which found him guilty on all charges; and on October 15 sentenced him to death. The following day Manuel Piar, General-in-Chief, was executed against the wall of the cathedral of Angostura by a firing squad. In a puzzling moment, Bolívar, who had decided against witnessing the execution, heard the shots from inside his nearby office and said in tears, "He derramado mi sangre" (I have spilled my blood). This statue is an important element of value.

There is also a relation between Plasa Piar and Brionplein. The public square Brionplein in Otrobanda is named after Luis Brion. Manuel Piar and Luis Brion shared various similarities. Both grew up in Otrobanda and were important figures in their times regarding their thoughts on freedom, equality and independence.

Both defended Curaçao against the British in 1804, worked under command of Simón Bolívar, and won multiple significant battles¹⁸.

In the current Venezuela Piar is considered an important symbol due to his ethnic background and his battle for emancipation for mulattoes. Several schools and projects in Venezuela are named after Piar.

In Curaçao Piar is still remembered as an important figure. The Piar Foundation (Fundashon Piar) is an active foundation with a board dedicated to raise awareness about Piar. There is also an elementary school called Manuel Carlos Piar (M.C. Piar) and a 'Manuel Carel Piar: De jongen van Otrobanda' written by Dr. J. Hartog. The year 2024 marks the 250th birthday anniversary of Piar.

18. Canon van Curaçao. (2020). Brion, Piar en Bolívar.



Figure 38- Statue Manuel Carlos Piar (source: unknown)

6.3 Parliament & Court of Justice

This building, 'Casa Municipal', constructed from 1859-1861, seated the Parliament and Court of Justice. It is a neoclassical architecture with colossal landmarks such as the portico¹⁹. Over the years, the building received the nickname '21 trapi', referring to its 21 stairsteps leading up to the entrance of the building (see figure 39).

19. Curaçao Monuments, (2020) Whileminaplein

20. Oorlogsbronnen (1981) Cola Debot



Figure 39- Casa Municipal, the Parliament and Court of Justice (source: theguardian,2018)

6.4 Plasa Cola Debot

On the other end of the Waterfort arches, near the Marichi beach, is the public square Plasa Gobernador Cola Debot²⁰. A bronze statue of Nicolaas (Cola) Debot stands on a marble base on this plaza (see figure 41). The plaque on the statue reads as follows:

- Nicolaas Debot
- 1902–1981
- Promé Gobernador Antiyano (First governor born in the Netherlands Antilles)
- Eskritor, Hurista | Médiko (Write, lawyer and medical doctor)
- Fundadó di Centro Cultural Curaçao (Founder of Curaçao Cultural Center)

Cola Debot (1902-1981) was born in Bonaire, a child of a plantation owner. At the age of two he moved to Curaçao and at the age of 14, he moved to the Netherlands to pursue further education. In the Netherlands, Debot studied law in Utrecht and later medicine in Amsterdam. Here he also started his literary career with his debut 'Mijn zuster de negerin' (1935), still today one of his most recognized works. After the Second World War, in the late 1940s, Debot moved back to Curaçao to work as a doctor²⁰. During this time, he laid down the foundations of Dutch-Antillian literature and wrote multiple works. He also got involved in politics.

From 1962 to 1970, Debot became governor of Curacao. He then moved back to the Netherlands and dedicated his time to writing. In 1981, Debot passed away in Amsterdam²⁰.

Since 1968 the government of Curaçao gives out an annual award for music, literature, or science. This award is named after Cola Debot; the Cola Debot Prize. Furthermore, in 2008, the Werkgroep Caraïbische Letteren, an independent group of the Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde to promote and support Caribbean literature, started the annual Cola Debot lectures in Amsterdam. Furthermore, an elementary school on the island was named in his honor; Cola Debot; Skol Básiko Cola Debot.

Debot wrote multiple works. In 1955 he was appointed knight in the 'Orde van de Nederlandse Leeuw' (Order of the Netherlands Lion) and in 1970 he was promoted to commander in the 'Orde van de Nederlandse Leeuw'.

In 1994 Jaap Oversteegen wrote a two-fold biography about Cola Debot, one based on Debot's life until 1948 and one after 1948.

6.5 Synagogue

The Emanuel synagogue is a former synagogue at the Henrikplein in Punda (see figure 42). On the back side it borders with Plasa Gobernador Cola Debot. The building was constructed in 1867, in neoclassical architecture. After a division in the local Jewish community in the 19th century, this synagogue merged with the Mikvé Israel-Emanuel synagogue at Hanchi Sinoa in Punda in 1964 to form the present Jewish community. Since 1999 this former synagogue is used as office of the public prosecutor.



Figure 40- Casa Municipal, the Parliament and Court of Justice (source: Soubllette)



Figure 41: Statue of Cola Debot on the Plasa Gobernador Cola Debot (source: unknown)



Figure 42: Emanuel Synagogue (source: unknown)

7. Takeaways

Regarding developments of project area Plaza; cultural-historic values

The report aims to explore a broader view of the cultural and historic values of the plaza complex in Willemstad. Building upon findings from the NAAM report and focusing on urban development and architecture of a unique location in Punda, the Waterfort. The analysis consists of the Waterfort and the Plaza complex, as part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. Furthermore, identifying the values of the Plaza hotel complex as an architectural design and as a landmark within the World Heritage Site of Willemstad. The architecture of the hotel complex is partly described from the perspective of the developments of mass tourism, as a result of the emergence of the jet engine in the aircraft, which means that transatlantic flights became feasible.

The urban context of the project location in relation to the rest of the Punda district provides an explanation as to why the urban fabric of the project location of Waterfort Plaza is different compared to the northeast side of Punda. The Waterfort area, built for military purposes, was enclosed by the large structures of Waterfort and Fort Amsterdam. After losing its military function in 1955s to make place for the construction of the new hotel structure. The purpose and function of the area as a hotel and casino were relatively monofunctional (touristic function) compared to other parts of Punda which knew a variety of functions (shops, commerce and restaurants). This led to a different urban structure and architectural design than the rest of the city. Regardless the project area establishes a link between the Waterfort area and other cultural-historical elements in the immediate vicinity.

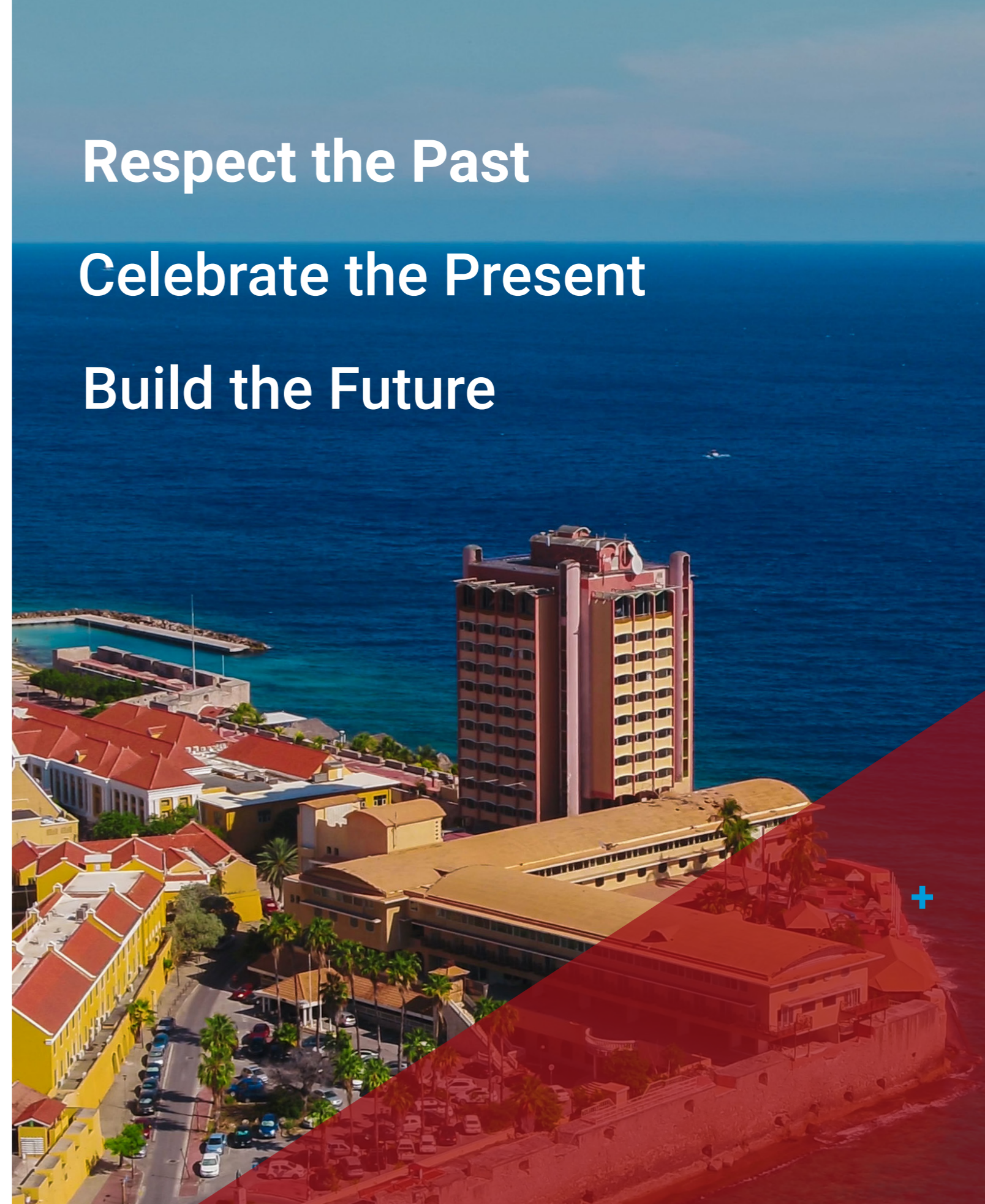
Together these building elements form the cultural-historical landscape and play a crucial role in establishing a relationship. This offers the opportunity to connect the area more with the rest of the Punda and other districts by considering the following values and historical aspects:

- 1.** The site itself is an important place with many cultural heritage values (tangible and intangible). Of high value are the waterfortboogjes, the statues on the public squares, and the archeological remains in situ.
- 2.** It is recommended to have an Inventory Field Research (IVO) carried out to gain more insight into the exact location, size, conservation, intactness of the known and expected heritage values. The IVO results in an appreciation of the heritage values and advice on its preservation worth.
- 3.** Certain design aspects of the first phase of the Intercontinental Hotel and the later expansion of the tower by architect Smit have generated added values such as becoming a landmark, an example of New Building principles, representing an after-war development of high-quality hotels for a new age of tourism.
- 4.** In a broader perspective the urban relationship between Plaza and the historic part of Willemstad is deeply intertwined. The architectural unity of the ensemble binds the site with the rest of Punda. From a historic point of view, the site has been used for rather exclusive purposes catered to a specific target group such as the military or the elite tourists. However, as restricted the area may have been, the buildings had to adapt to the climate.

Respect the Past

Celebrate the Present

Build the Future

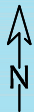


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Appendix 1 Willemstad Urban Morphological growth (Speckens, 2016)





Morphological reduction

Map 8
Period: 1634 to 1676
Scale: 1:10.000



Morphological growth

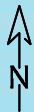
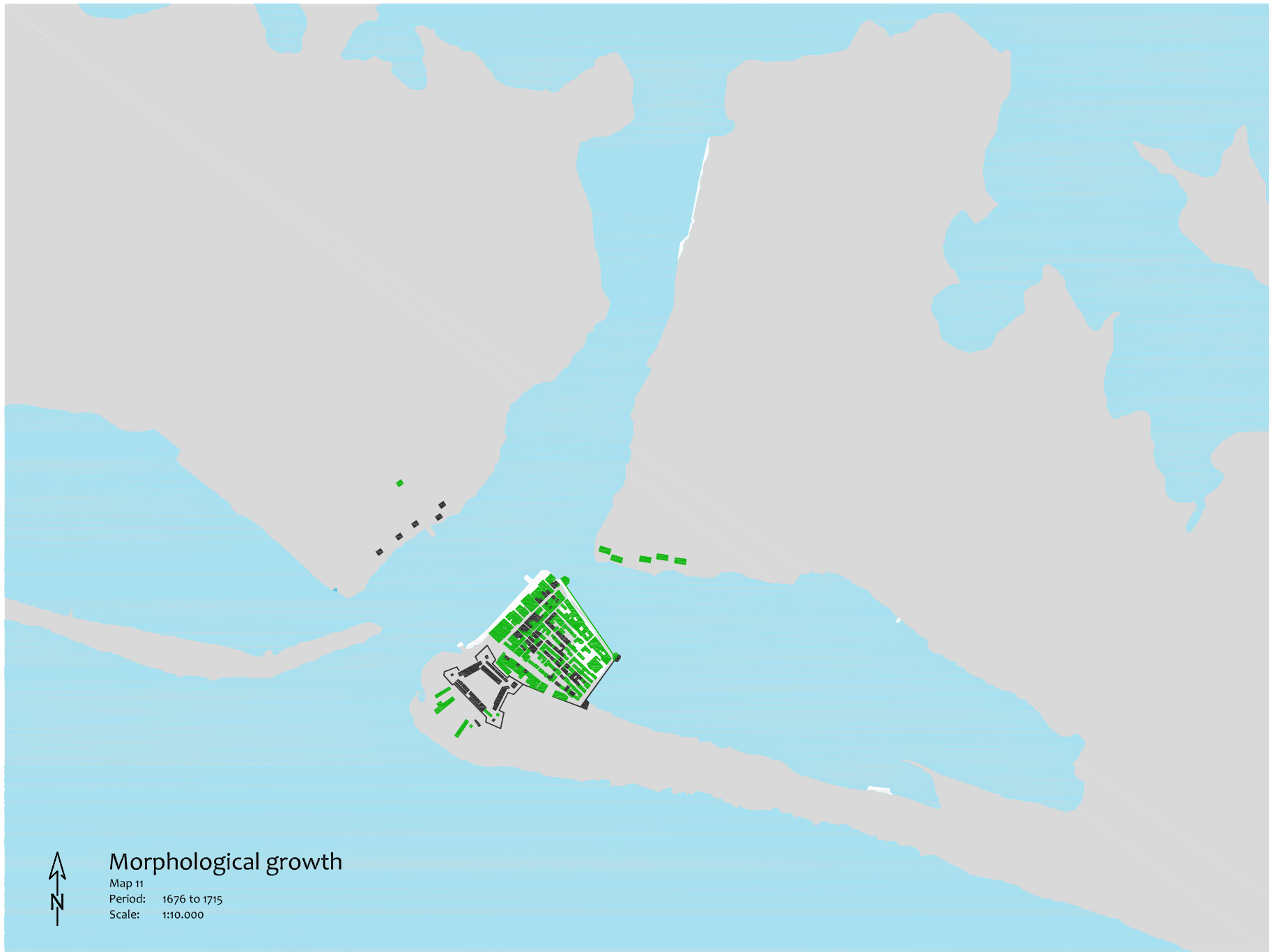
Map 9
Period: 1634 to 1676
Scale: 1:10.000





Morphological reduction

Map 10
Period: 1676 to 1715
Scale: 1:10.000



Morphological growth

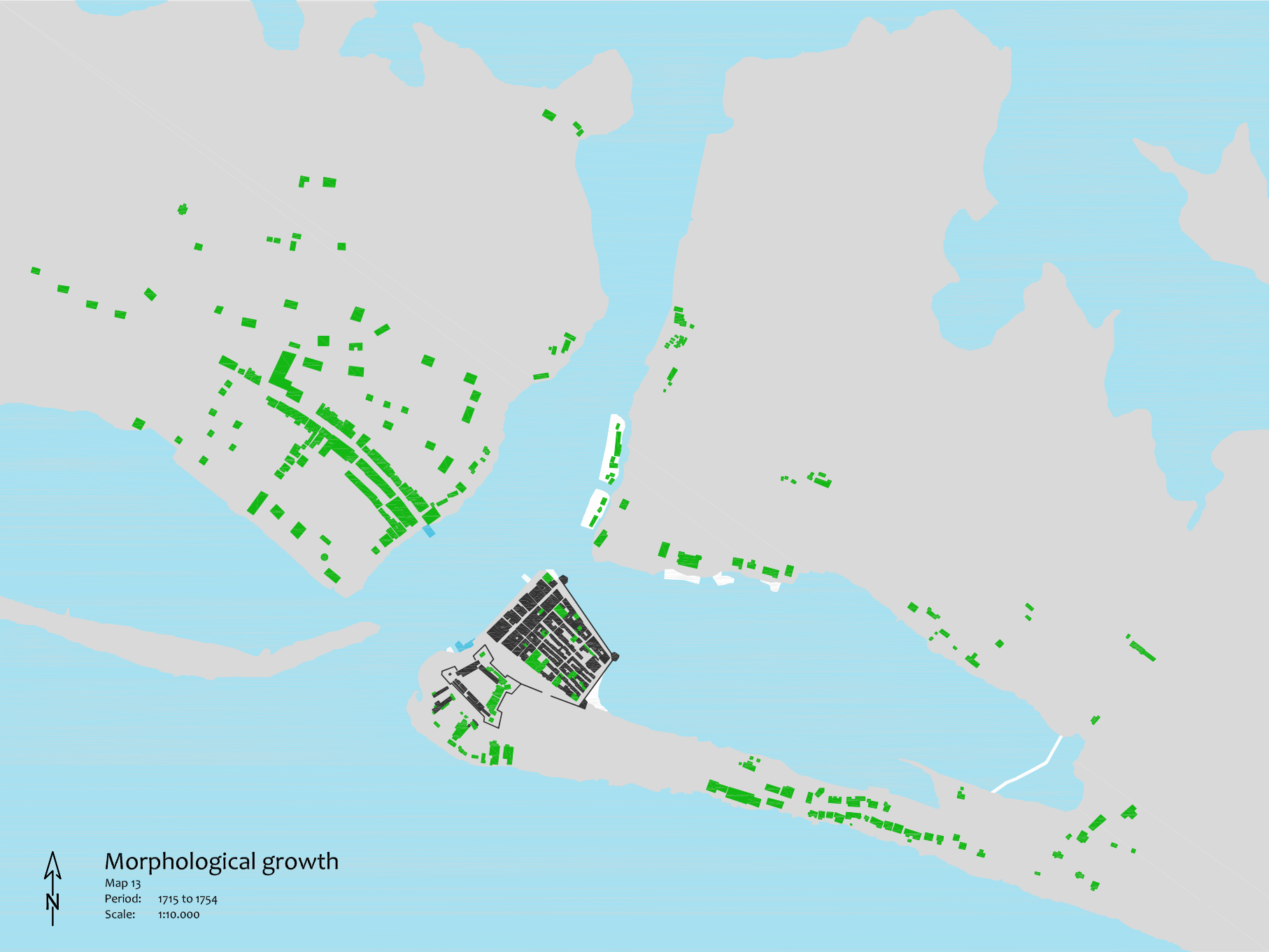
Map 11
Period: 1676 to 1715
Scale: 1:10.000



Morphological reduction

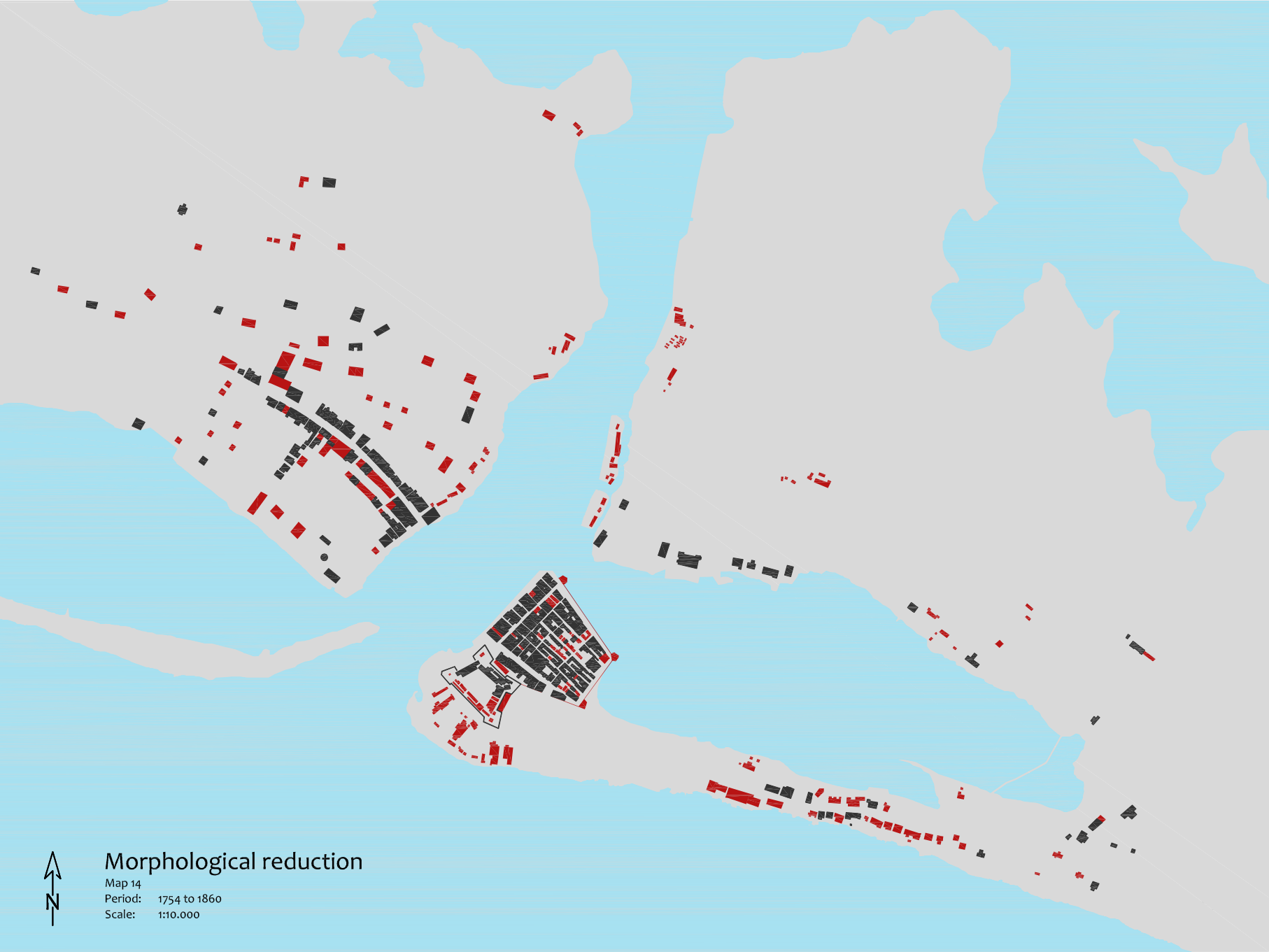
Map 12
Period: 1715 to 1754
Scale: 1:10.000

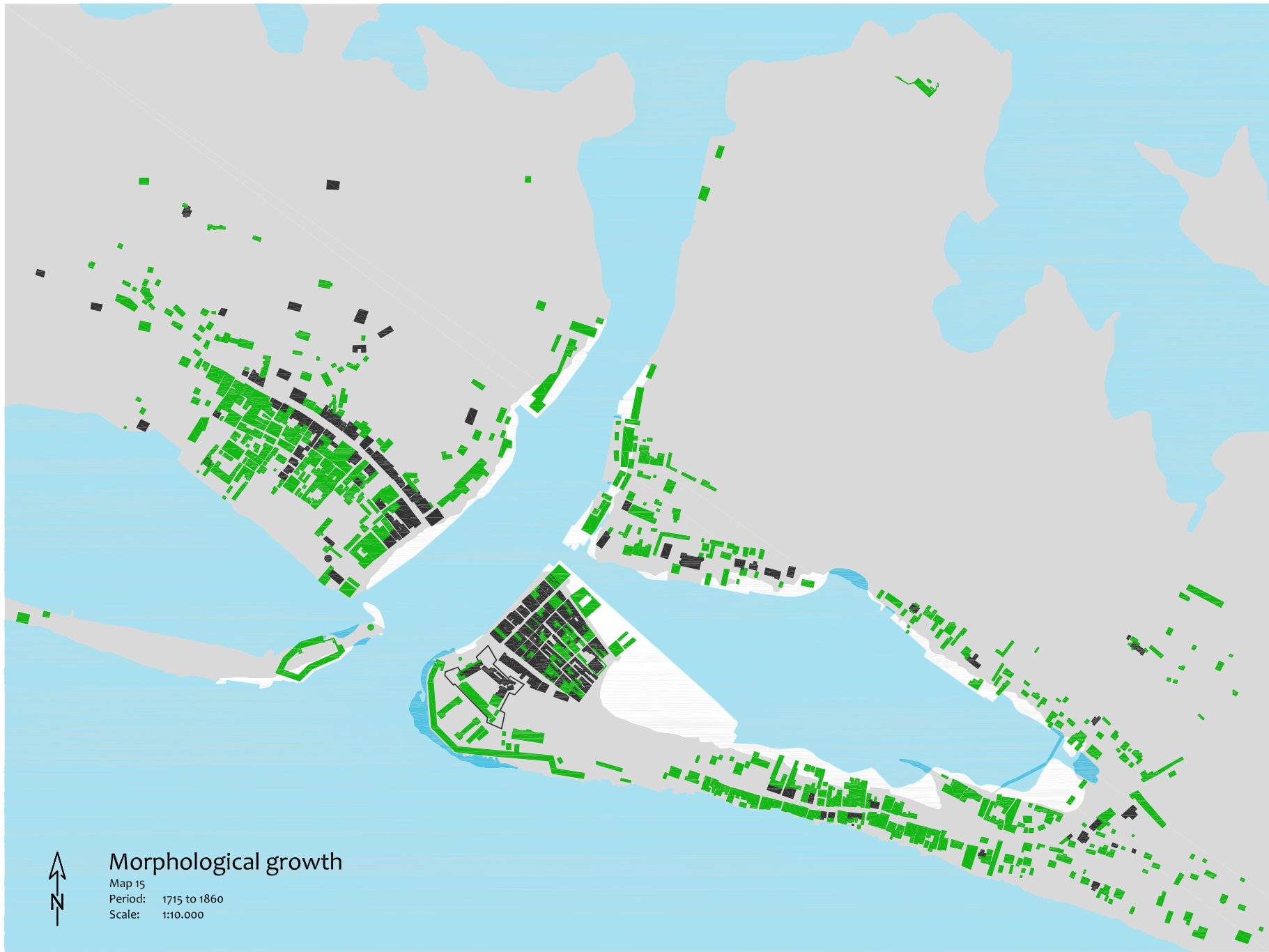




Morphological growth

Map 13
Period: 1715 to 1754
Scale: 1:10.000

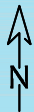
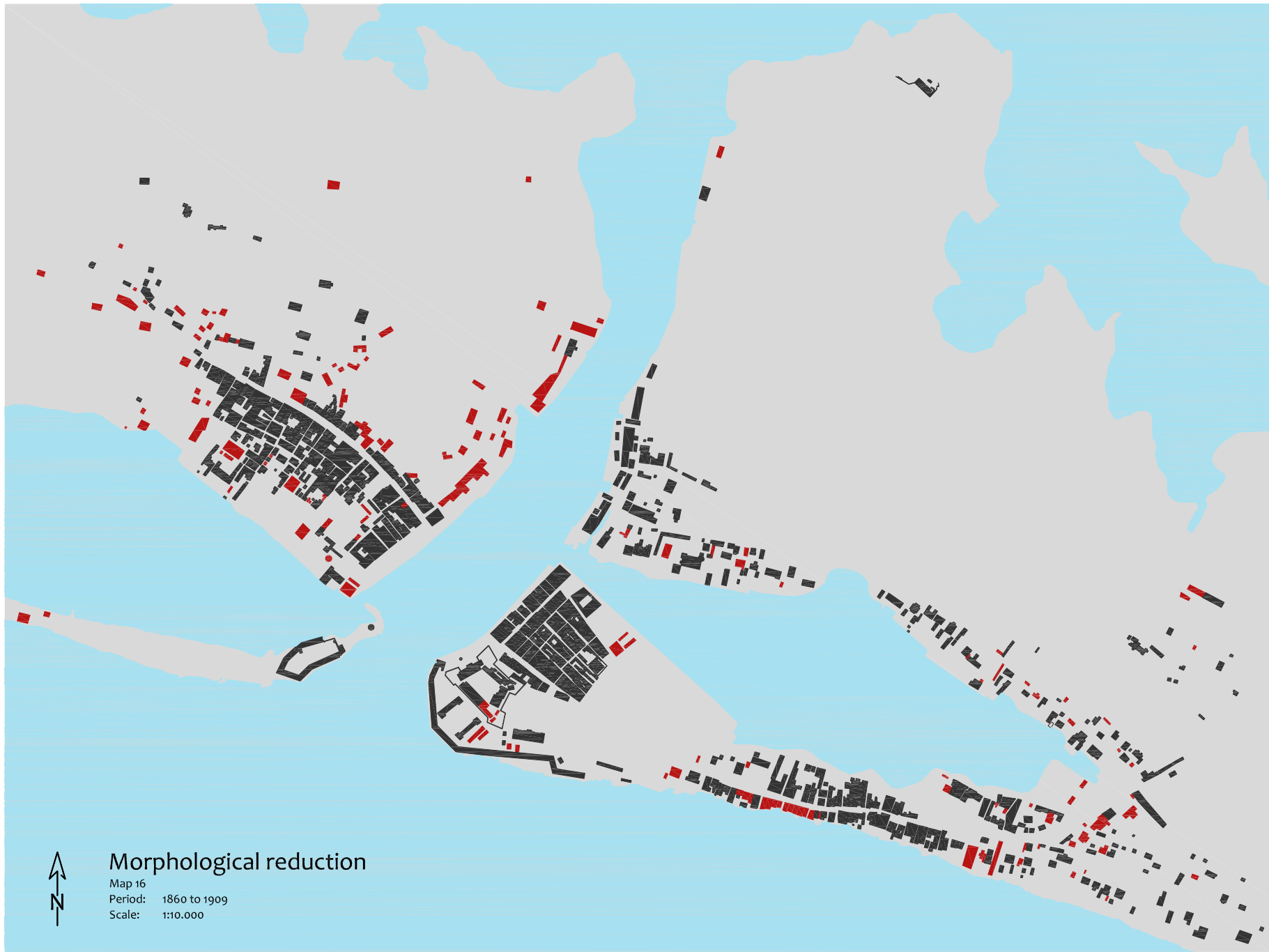




Morphological growth

Map 15
Period: 1715 to 1860
Scale: 1:10.000





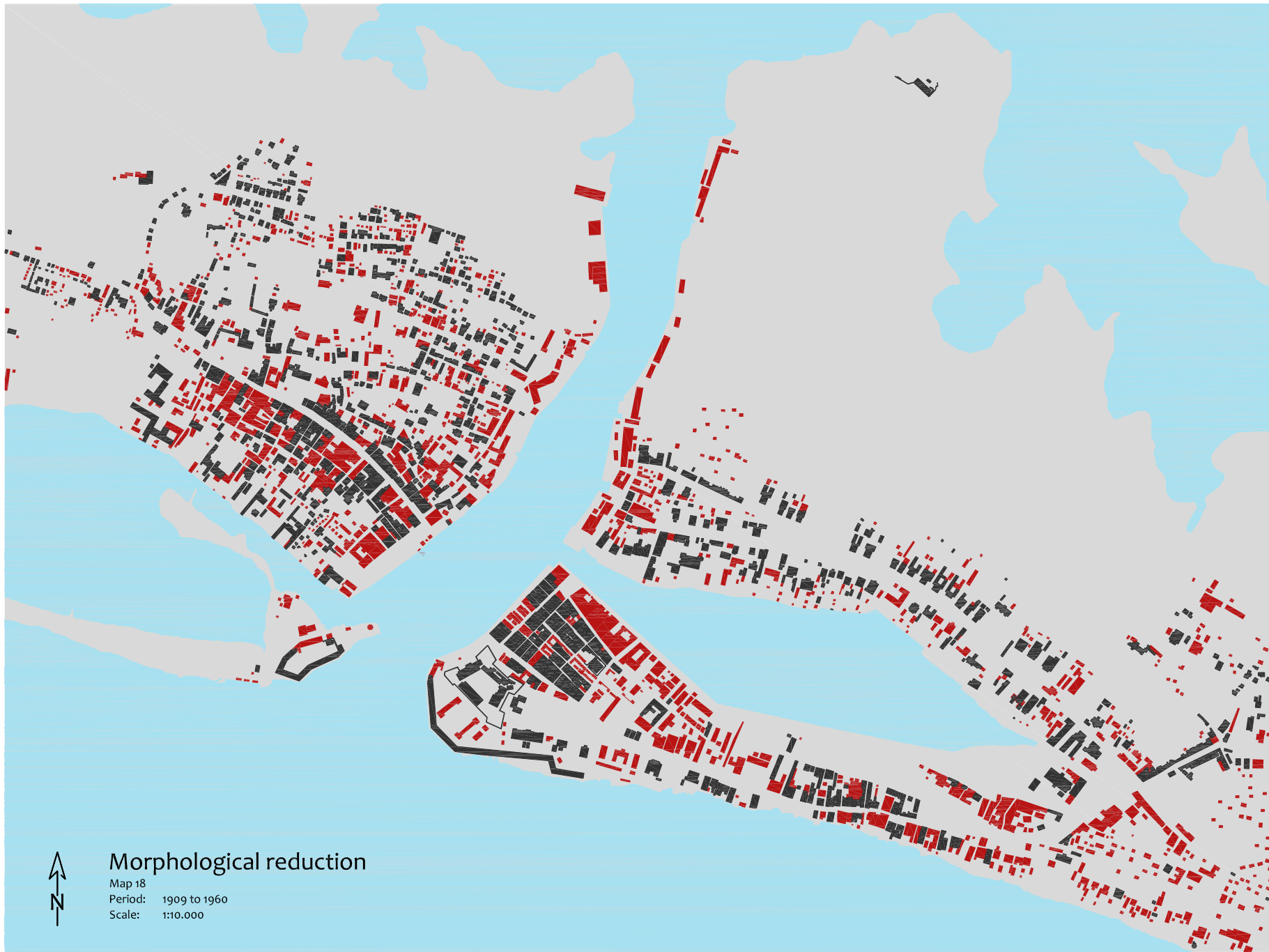
Morphological reduction

Map 16
Period: 1860 to 1909
Scale: 1:10.000



Morphological growth

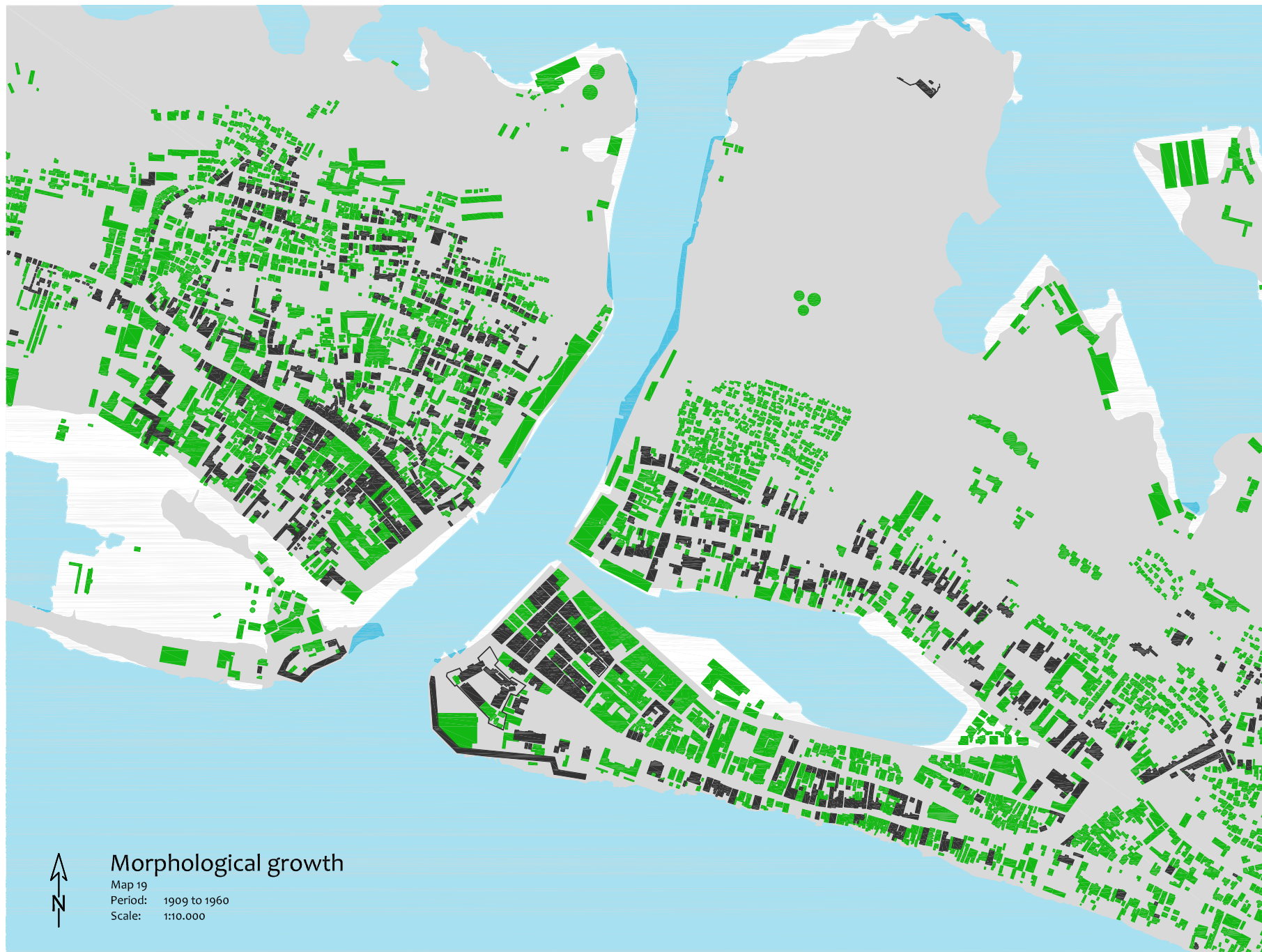
Map 17
Period: 1860 to 1909
Scale: 1:10.000



Morphological reduction

Map 18
Period: 1909 to 1960
Scale: 1:10.000



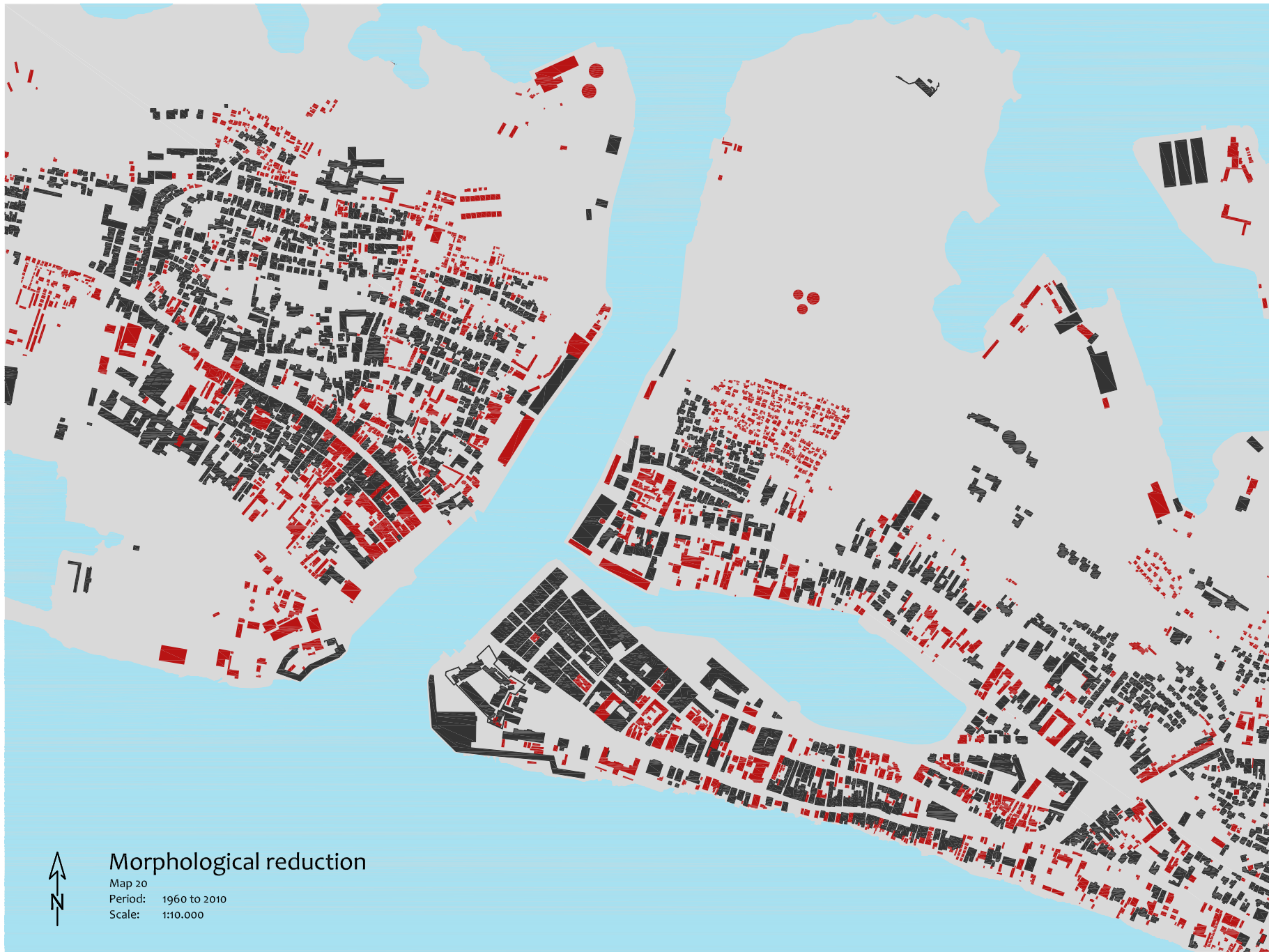


Morphological growth

Map 19

Period: 1909 to 1960

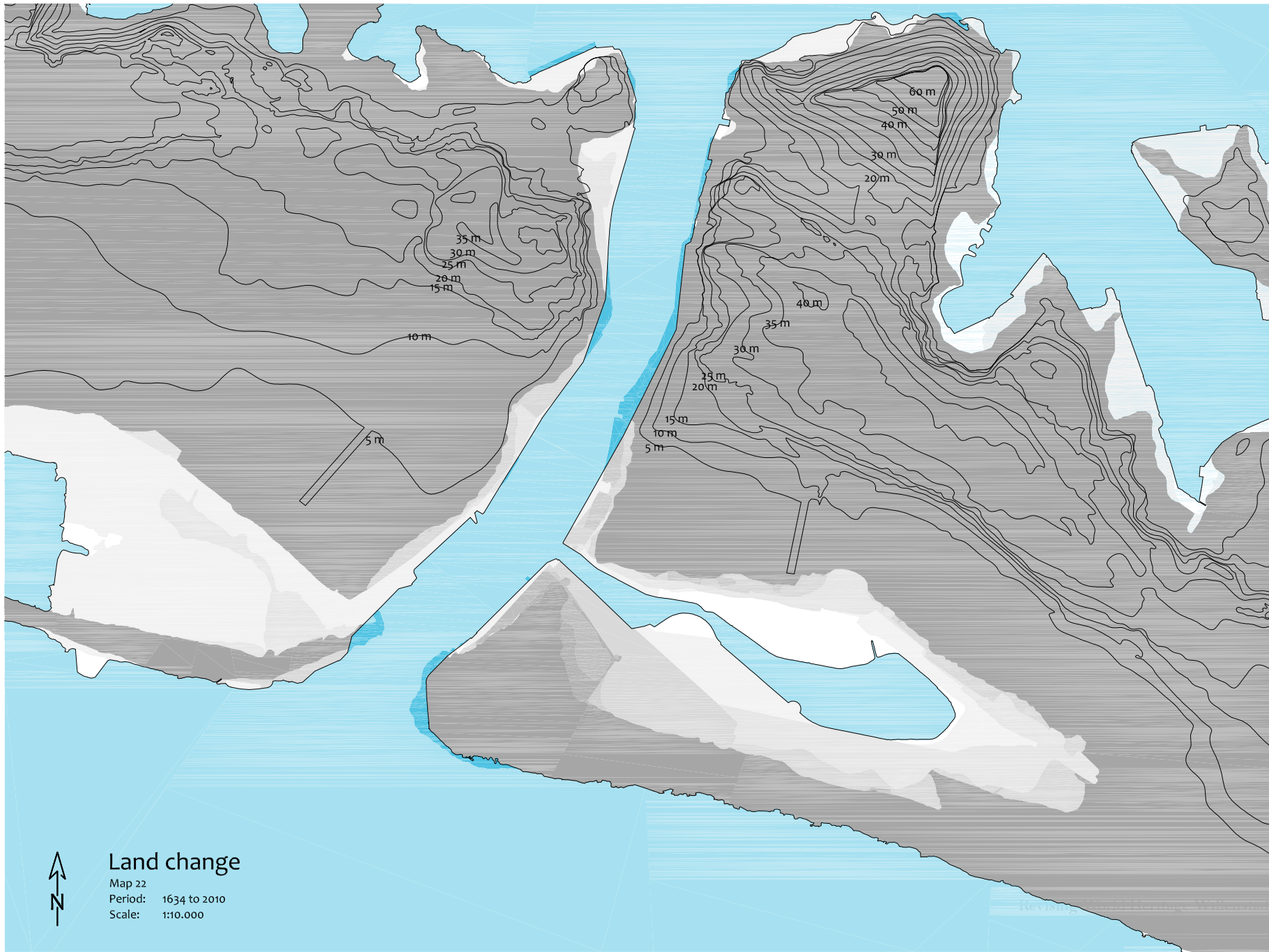
Scale: 1:10.000





Morphological growth

Map 21
Period: 1960 to 2010
Scale: 1:10.000



Land change

Map 22

Period: 1634 to 2010

Scale: 1:10.000