

# Sultan Park

Reconfiguration of Sultan Park as meaningful Public Space,  
Integrating the National Museum and Other Buildings as a  
Cultural Complex

# Public Space

“The Sultan’s Park in Male is a **cozy little garden in the heart of the capital**. At least it would be –if one removes all the weed, remove the dead plants, water the lawns, pave the dusty walkways and plant new flowers: in short reverse the decades of neglect suffered by the only garden in Male. **The new leadership at the Municipality has removed the barbed wires enclosing the park. They must follow it up with a sustainable plan to maintain it.**

Sultan’s Park stands at the site of the royal palace of Maldives, parts of which are still preserved as the National Museum. After demolishing the other buildings in the palace compound, the government of Ibrahim Nasir established the park in the late 1960s. Those days it was a beautiful garden where many memorable childhood photographs were taken. Later for some unexplained reasons the park went into years of neglect and parts of the garden were given to Dhiraagu.

Currently the park is a bit too small to be the only garden in Male. However with a little bit of imagination and courage a swath of greenery can be developed extending from the Park to the President’s Office through Bandeyrige, Republican Square and the site of Ghazee building and Faashana building. The latter two buildings are dilapidated and await demolition. And at a time when we are talking of reducing the size of the government, why two additional buildings must be built to replace them is a relevant question especially when Velaanaage building is nearing completion. Similarly why the headquarters of the Maldives National Defense Force must occupy the face of Male is beyond comprehension.

**Male has suffered from years of neglect, seriously compromising the quality of life of its citizens. Sacrifices must be made to bring the old glory of Male.”**

<http://abdullahwaheedsblog.blogspot.com/2009/02/sultans-park.html>

# Design Brief for new buildings 1999

An initial brief for the plan of a new museum Structure within the Sultan Park was outlined in a report presented to the **National Centre for Linguistic and Historical Research** ( Solbritt benneth and Egil Mikkelsen, (may, 1999).

**It Allocates the site for the two Buildings, now under construction.**

**The plan for the Park in General is outlined in Page 10 as:**

“4.4 Open Air Museum in the Sultan Park (D)

The Sultans Park should be kept as intact as possible without cutting more trees than necessary. **A path through he whole park ending into Lily Magu to make the park more available to the pubic is recommended.** To make it an Open Air Museum the suggestion is to built part of a village along one of the present paths, with examples of different building techniques, homes kitchen, workshops etc.. If the cannons, stored outside the present museum, should be exposed in the park, the demand is to put them into carriages. They could be placed near the Sultans Palace.”

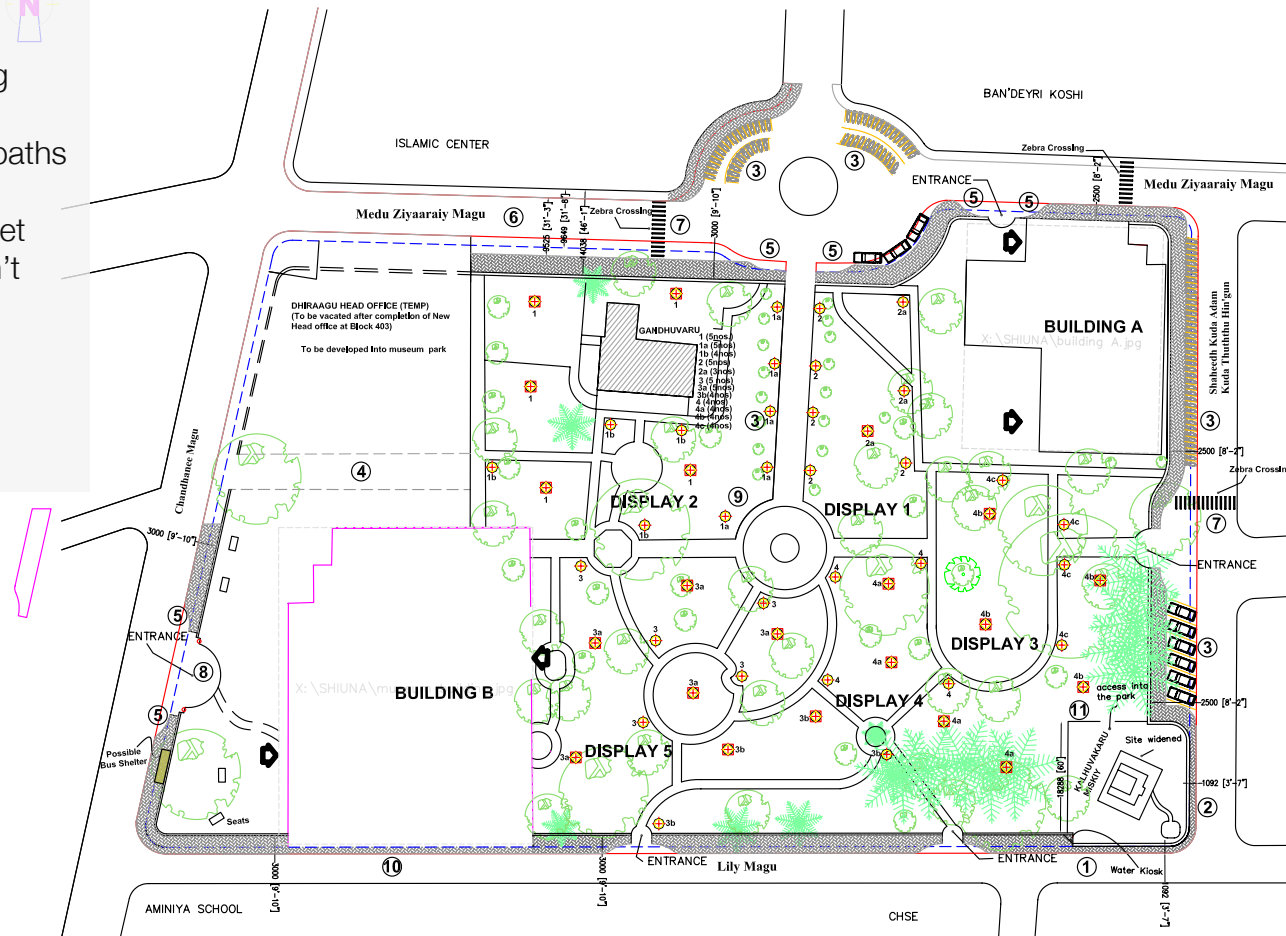
# Existing public spaces in Male'



## The plan

### At present:

The location of the new buildings and the existing paths serve two different purposes. Whereas the paths were designed as a folly where the public could get stretch the time, it doesn't serve the new public mandate of the cultural Buildings and Spaces envisaged in the new program.



# Criticisms:

The sole gesture to accommodate a public through way is a mere gesture of an extra entrance.

Even this appears to be negated immediately with the intention to load the park area with exhibits.

It implies specialist security measures, congestion, and privatized space.

The suggestion has no correlation with the idea behind the demolition of the barbed wire when the new government took charge of Male's municipal affairs.

**Male's population in 1985 was a 45,874, where it is over 150,000 at present, the greenery and a safe urban public space has to be configured in way that is inclusive of various public/ urban interactions.**

**"Change life! Change Society! These ideas lose completely their meaning without producing an appropriate space. A lesson to be learned from soviet constructivists from the 1920s and 30s, and of their failure, is that new social relations demand a new space, and vice-versa".**

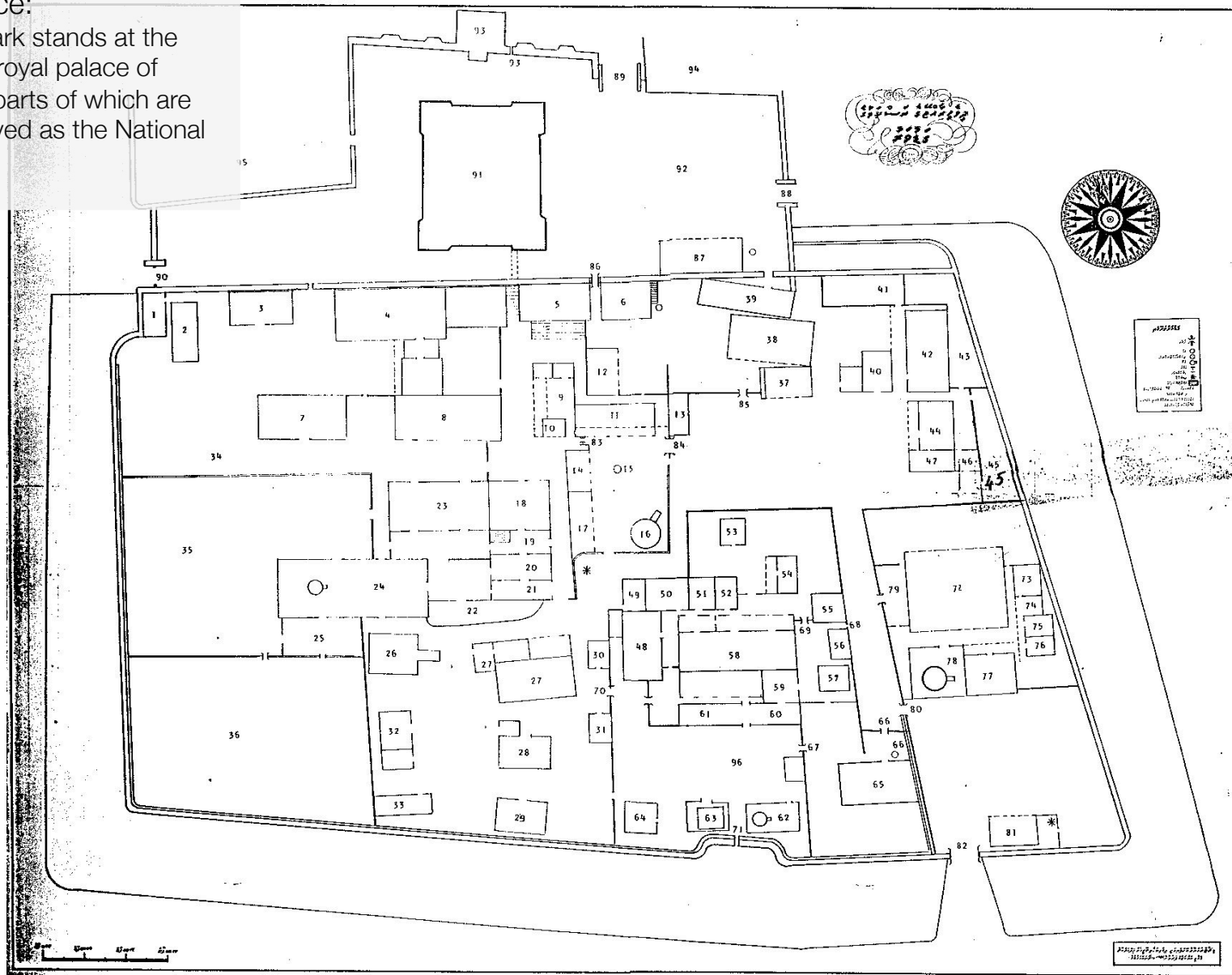
Lefebvre, Henri The Production of Space, 1991.

# Continuity:



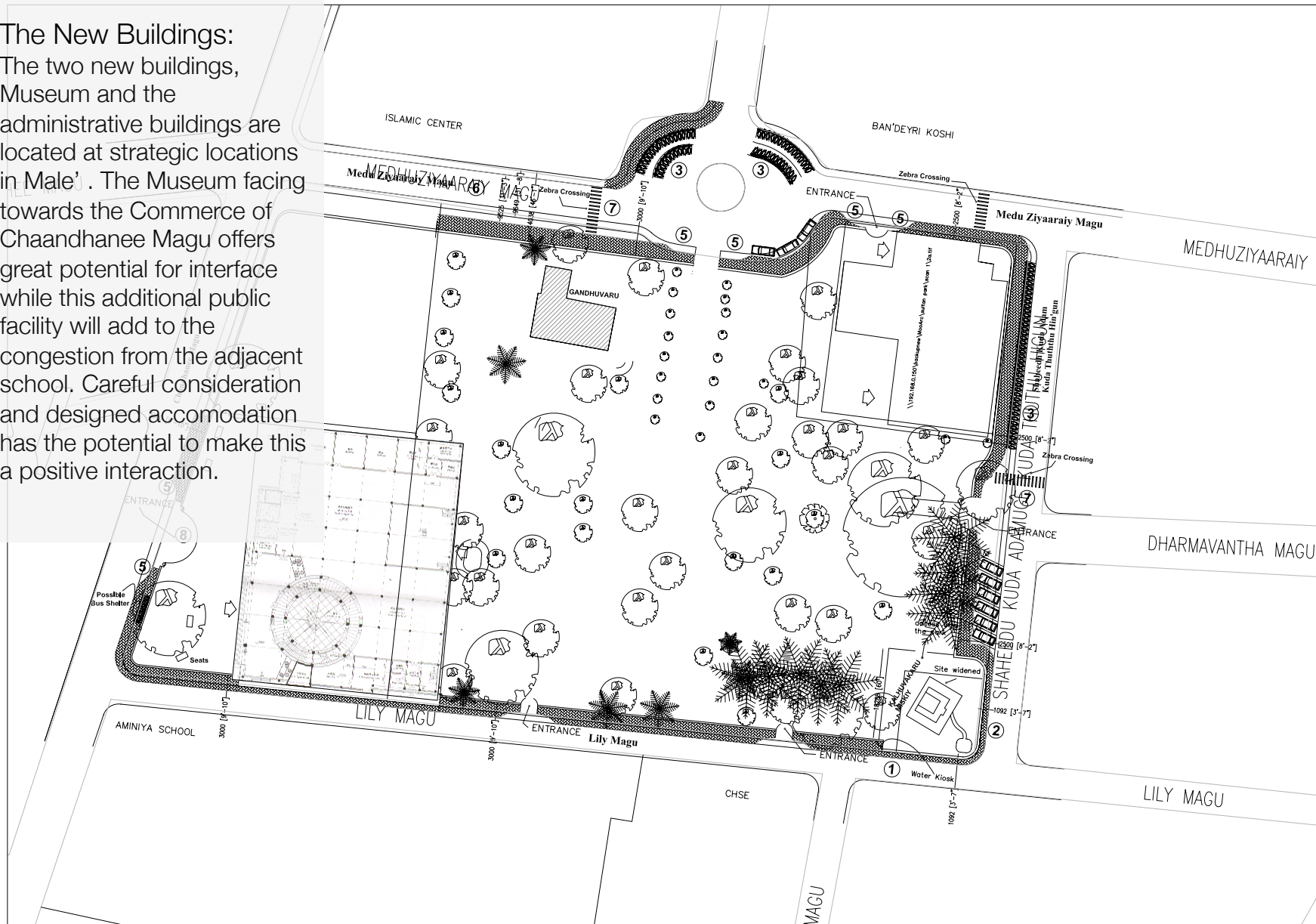
### The Palace:

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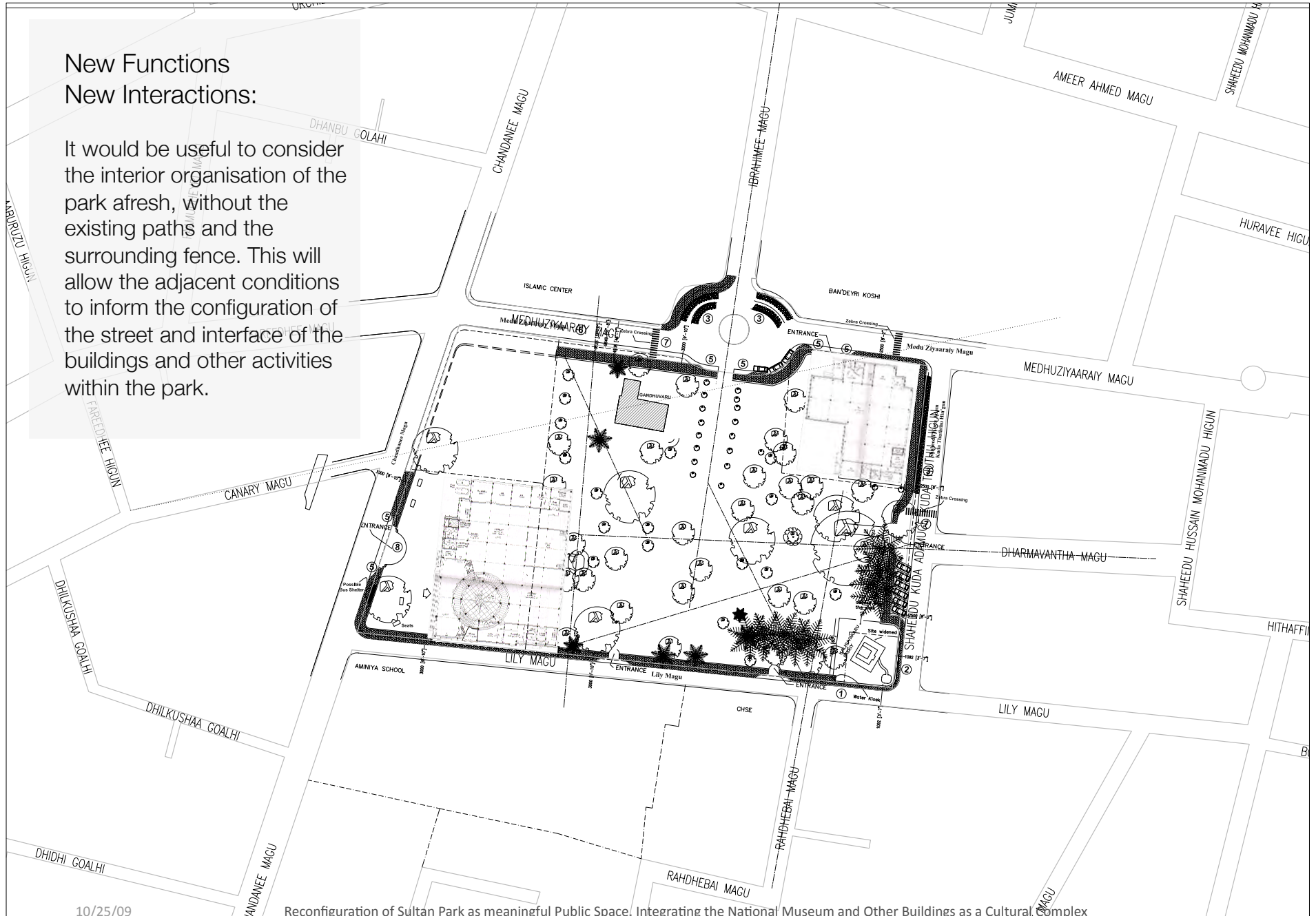
The New Buildings:  
 The two new buildings, Museum and the administrative buildings are located at strategic locations in Male'. The Museum facing towards the Commerce of Chaandhanee Magu offers great potential for interface while this additional public facility will add to the congestion from the adjacent school. Careful consideration and designed accomodation has the potential to make this a positive interaction.





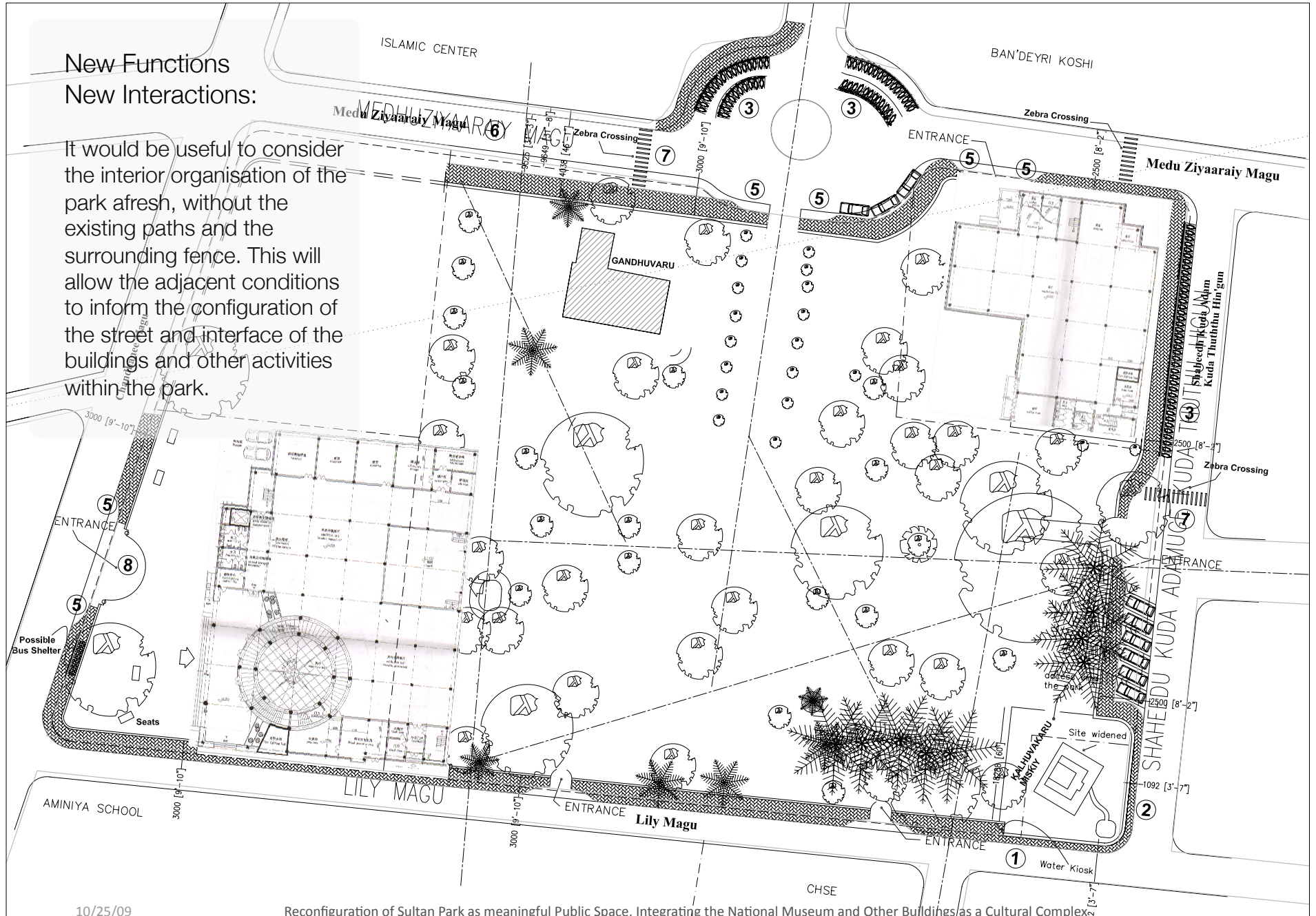
## New Functions New Interactions:

It would be useful to consider the interior organisation of the park afresh, without the existing paths and the surrounding fence. This will allow the adjacent conditions to inform the configuration of the street and interface of the buildings and other activities within the park.



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### Narrative Unity:

An idea to explore could be to overlay the boundary of the fortifications of the old palace on the existing site.

It appears to offer a narrative continuity with the past while offering a physical layer which can inform a transitional urban threshold where a more subtle hierarchy of organization can offer a more public friendly and functionally efficient configuration.





Sultan Park Reconfiguration Oct 2009







