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منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

**Culture Sector**  
Division for Heritage

H.E. Mrs Ecaterine Siradze-  
Delaunay  
Ambassador Extraordinary and  
Plenipotentiary  
Permanent Delegate of Georgia to  
UNESCO  
UNESCO HOUSE

Ref.: CLT/HER/WHC/EUR/18/10980

23 July 2018

**Subject: State of Conservation of the World Heritage property "Gelati Monastery"**

Dear Ambassador,

I have the pleasure to transmit to the attention of the Georgian authorities an ICOMOS technical review of the planned project on the rehabilitation of the road and the support structure within the boundaries of the World Heritage property "Gelati Monastery" (see Annex I).

Please note that, although the project demonstrates the commitment of the State Party for ensuring safe access to the property, ICOMOS made some critical observations and recommendations in its review.

Thanking you for your support and cooperation in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Mechtild Rössler  
Director  
World Heritage Centre

Enc.

cc: Georgian National Commission for UNESCO  
ICOMOS

**Annex I**

**ICOMOS Technical Review received by the World Heritage Centre on 20 July 2018 concerning the project “the rehabilitation of the road and the support structure”.**

## ICOMOS Technical Review

<b>Property</b>	<b>Gelati Monastery</b>
<b>State Party</b>	<b>Georgia</b>
<b>Property ID</b>	<b>710bis</b>
<b>Date inscription</b>	<b>1994</b>
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>(iv)</b>
<b>Project</b>	<b>Rehabilitation of the Road and the Support Structure</b>

On 24 May 2018, ICOMOS received a document entitled “Rehabilitation project of the Road and the Support Structure – Gelati Monastery WHS”, which had been submitted by the State Party to the World Heritage Centre and passed to the Advisory Body for review.

ICOMOS has assessed the project and presents its analysis below.

### Analysis

Firstly, ICOMOS considers that the general idea of such an arrangement from architectural, engineering and management point of view for the problematic site of the road is correct and demonstrates the direct concern of the State Party for ensuring safe access to Gelati Monastery, as well as its particular sensitivity to protect and display the new archaeological finds discovered in situ.

- 1) The presence of the building on the opposite side of the road, containing auxiliary functions for visitors to the monastery, ensures that the proposed archaeological exposition site would be visited. It is likely that the remains of the pavement belong to the historical road that lead to the monastery in the past.
- 2) The western elevation, as shown in the plans, is compatible with the historical environment of the monastery. That is, the proposed construction of the stone covering of the façade of the closed archaeological site would be in accordance with the traditional stone walls shown in the photographs, while, at the same time, part of the façade could be hidden by the natural vegetation.
- 3) The drawings show only a surface construction for the removal of the surface water that reaches the back side of the existing building on the opposite side of the road. The plans are not clear (neither is the brief technical description) on what measures are foreseen to address the phenomenon that was one of the main reasons for the destruction of the road. The proper measures to collect and remove groundwater that descends from the mountain slope and obviously exerts great pressure on the back wall of the underground exposition space (wall B on the section plan) are not explained (perhaps some kind of underground drainage is required?)
- 4) On the plans, there are two stairways leading the visitors from road level to the level of the archaeological exposition ( $\pm 0.00$  m). First of all, the stairways are designed with different direction on each plan. However, ICOMOS' main remark concerns the ambiguity of how the open stairways

will be protected in the event of rain. The drawings do not provide this information. If some kind of protective shelters over the open areas of the stairways are to be provided, these should be shown on the plans, as such coverings would substantially and aesthetically change the general western elevation of the construction (and even more so if they are of some kind of reinforced concrete construction).

- 5) It is not clear how the archaeological exposition space will be secured at night. Are doors to be placed in the lower part of the stairways? If not, another option is that the covering roof on each stairway forms a closed space with a door; in this case, the whole construction will be more burdensome on the main façade (which should be re-designed with these additions: see some proposed solutions for the stairway covering on the attached plan A).
- 6) It might be advisable - from an architectural point of view - to create additional vertical narrow windows, on both sides of the supporting columns on the main western façade wall (see proposed solution on the attached plan B). Adding these narrow windows would:
  - provide more natural light in the underground archaeological exposition space (in addition to that delivered by the planned horizontal openings);
  - allow the visitors to have a view from inside the space to the exterior opened very interesting view to the village (because the level of the archaeological exposition site is much higher than the altitude of the village);
  - completely change the character of the "enclosed underground space" of the archaeological exposition site, avoiding the sense of a "bunker", and, on the contrary, ensuring a lively relationship between the inner space and the nature outside, part of which was in the past the archaeological site itself.

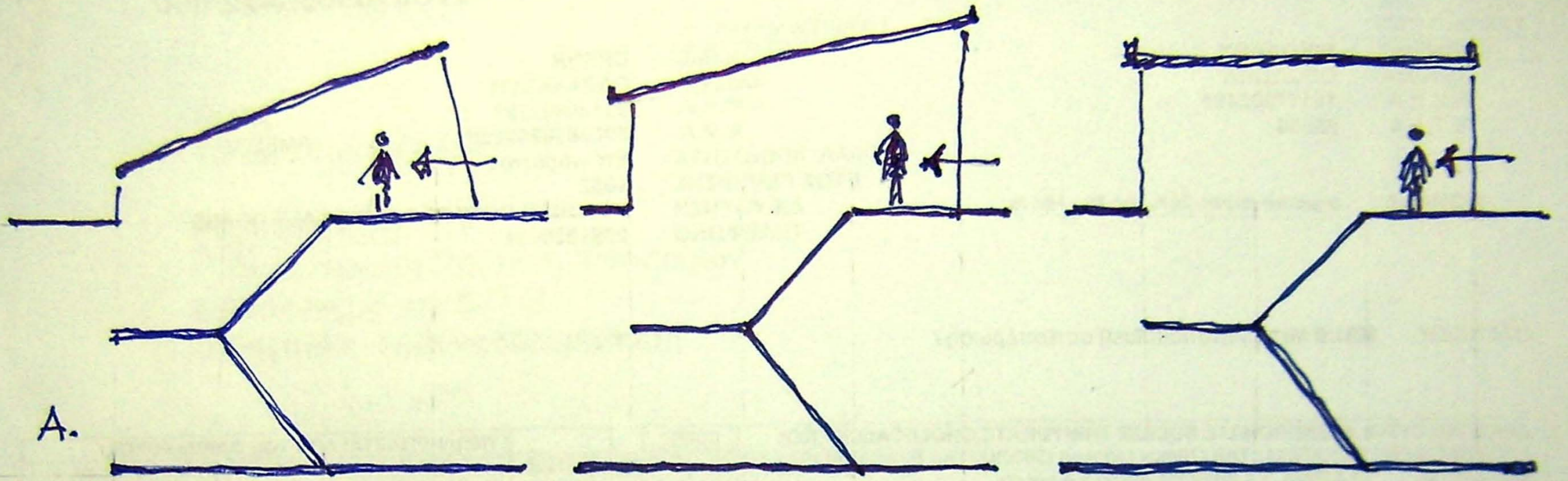
The western wall at the level of the archaeological space ( $\pm 0.00$  m) is not a bearing wall (the western bearing elongated wall is constructed on the lower level of  $-1.40$  m). Therefore, it is possible to construct additional vertical openings and to create a more morphologically interesting western façade for the archaeological exposition site.

ICOMOS remains at the disposal of the State Party for further clarification on the above or assistance as required.

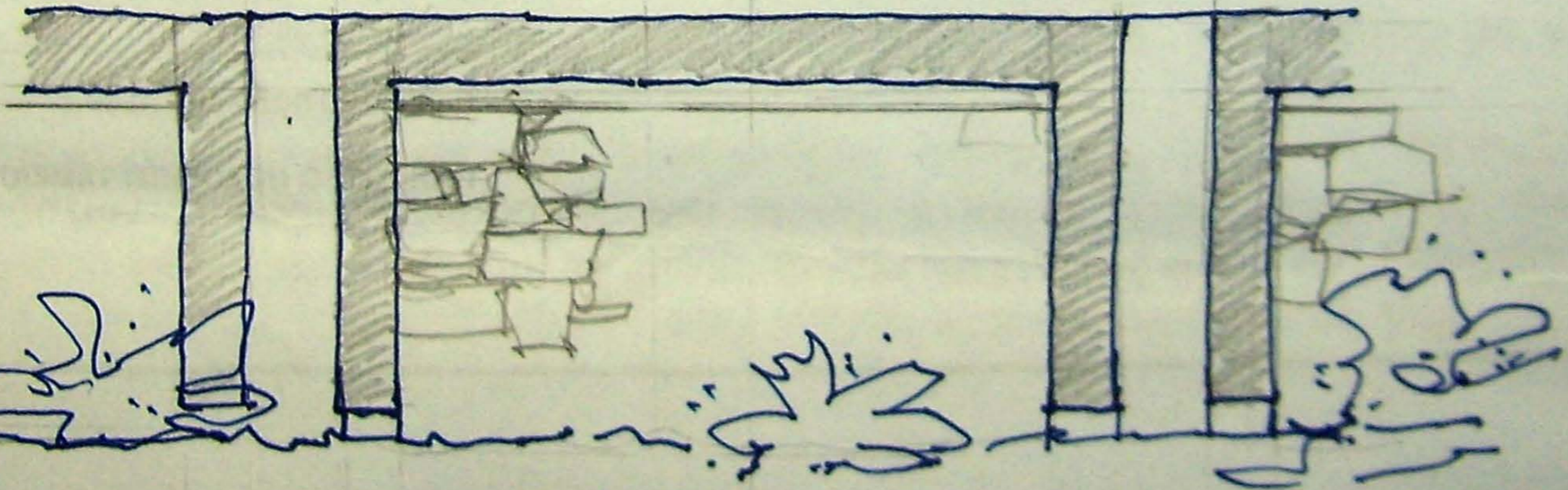
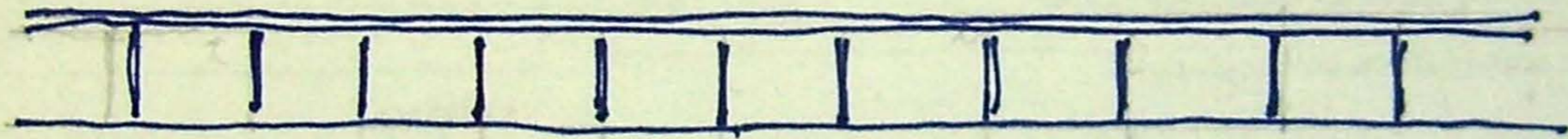
ICOMOS, Charenton-le-Pont  
July 2018

Annex: Plan A – proposed solutions for the stairway covering  
Plan B – proposed solution for additional windows





A.



B.