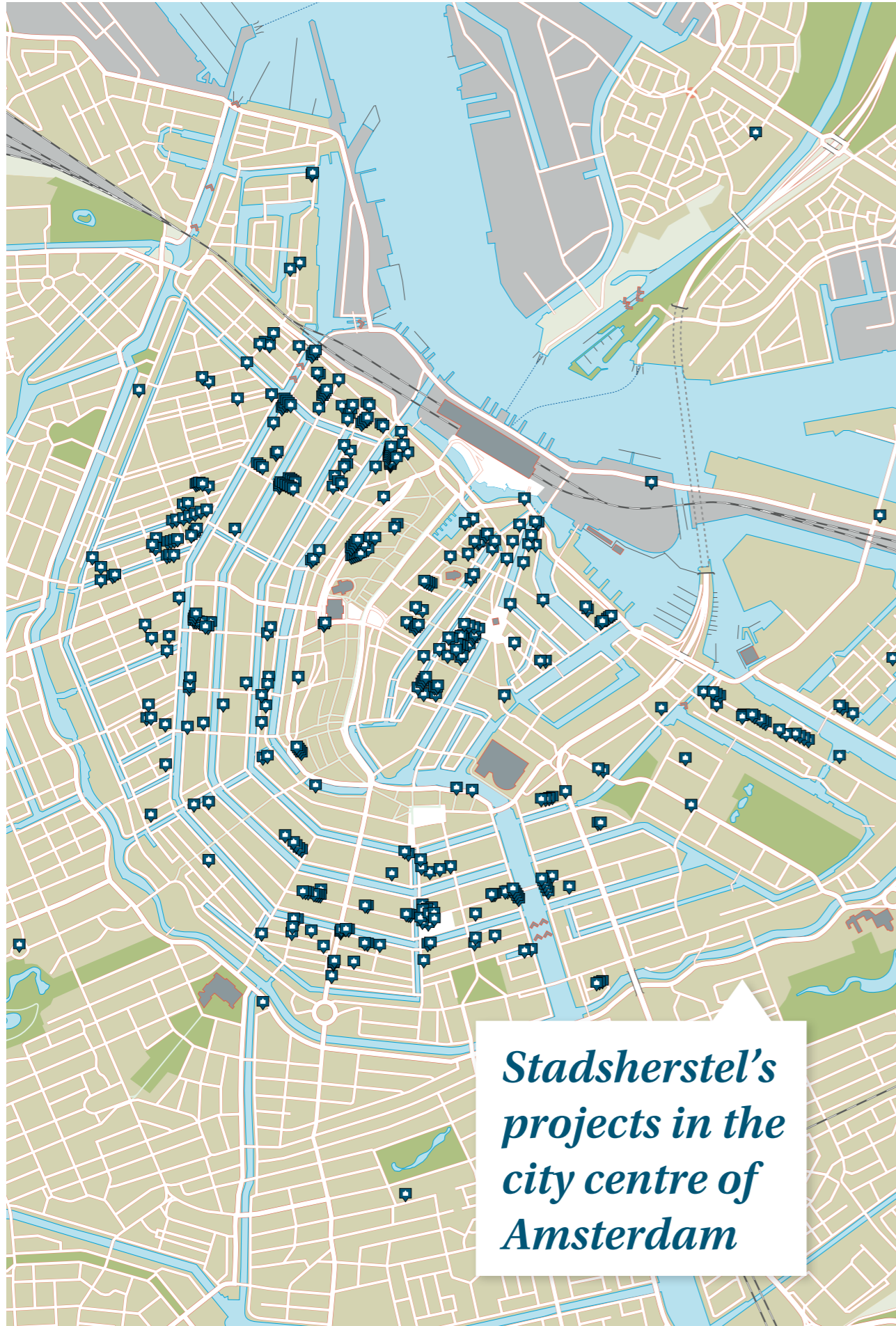




STADSHERSTEL AMSTERDAM

The company for city restoration

2006-2011



*Stadsherstel's
projects in the
city centre of
Amsterdam*



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STADSHERSTEL AMSTERDAM N.V.

The Company for City Restoration

Since its founding 55 years ago, Stadsherstel Amsterdam has developed into a restoration company for all kinds of monuments in an urban or rural environment. It not only restores, but also preserves these monuments in such manner, that the character of the building is left intact and that further development will not cause any damage to the architecture, or change it in any way. Currently Stadsherstel owns more than 500 houses and 30 larger monuments, e.g. churches and industrial monuments like pumping-stations and a shipyard. It is partly thanks to the example set by Stadsherstel, that the historic centre of Amsterdam became a very sought-after residential area.

AMSTERDAM AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

As in most cities in Europe, the historic part of Amsterdam was in desperate need of restoration after the Second World War. Although Amsterdam did not suffer much war damage, since there hardly had been any bombing, the inner city looked like a war zone. Part of the damage was caused by neglect and lack of maintenance during the depression years in the 1930's. The larger part of the deterioration, though, had a much more sinister cause. The houses of the deported Jews were stripped of all the wooden parts, including supporting beams, when the German occupier forbade the sale of fuel to civilians. The wood ended up in the stoves of the Amsterdam citizens.

During the post war period, both the central and local authorities in The Netherlands concentrated on the construction of as many houses as possible in suburban areas. The old city centres were not considered appropriate for the housing of people. Thus the unique townscape of numerous historic dwelling houses in Amsterdam was being neglected. According to the Amsterdam city council the inner city was more suitable as a business centre, shopping area and for cultural purposes like opera, concerts, museums and the theatre. This meant that it was necessary to make the centre accessible to automobiles, which involved filling up canals and converting them into roads. It also meant pulling down houses in order to have enough space for the vehicular flow to and from the centre and for car parks in the inner city. The buildings considered less valuable - including many 17th and 18th

century dwelling houses - were to be pulled down for this modernisation. Only the more remarkable buildings were to be restored. These measures would result in the erosion of the townscape. The acceptance of these plans by the city council in the early 1950's marked the beginning of a counter-movement by the local inhabitants. The people came to see that the historic centre was indeed very decrepit, but not at all lost and very worthwhile saving. The more the results of these plans came to light by actual demolishing of complete streets, the more the protests grew.

At first the counter-movement was carried by respectable monument lovers from the upper strata of society. It was characterized by the search for cooperation with the local authorities and by taking restorations of the smaller dwelling houses into their own hands. But in the sixties the protest generation sided with the monument lovers and their way of working was quite different. They sought the confrontation with the authorities. This peculiar alliance led ultimately to a change in policy of the local government. The large-scale destruction of the historic structure of the city made way for a street-to-street approach. In this approach the existing buildings were the starting point around which the plans were drawn up. In the areas where large scale demolishing had already taken place, the new buildings were put up according to the old street patterns.

In Amsterdam - and indeed in the whole of The Netherlands - the idea of how to develop historic cities changed during the 1960's and 1970's. This change was brought about by concerned citizens, who fought for their living environment and cultur-

POSTHOORNKERK



The neo-Gothic Posthoornkerk is the first church in Amsterdam created by renowned architect P.J.H. Cuypers, who would later design Centraal Station and the Rijksmuseum. The church, a cross-shaped basilica with a three-way nave and clover-shaped choir, had to be built on a small space. As a result, the second gallery was built on top of the other. The construction started in September 1861. By the 1980s, the church was no longer in use and was nearly demolished. However, this was prevented in 1986 by a plan drawn up by the Posthoornkerk Foundation. Since its restoration and reconstruction, the church has been rented out as office space, as well as used as a location for receptions and dinners. The Vondelkerk - which was also designed by Cuypers - was preserved in the same way.

CHAPEL OF DURGERDAM



The wooden 'Chapel' of Durgerdam is built in 1687. Even though it is known as a 'chapel', it actually functioned as the local town hall. Currently it is in use as a residential dwelling. To make sure the building will be preserved soundly and the current tenants will be treated well, the 'Chapel' was sold to Stadsherstel in 2010.

al heritage. Since then the city of Amsterdam does not think twice, but a hundred times before pulling down any historical building.

THE FOUNDING OF STADSHERSTEL

As already stated, the first countermovement against the plans of the city was carried by members of the upper classes. The founding of Stadsherstel is the best example of this. It was founded by members of an association called the Amsterdamse Kring (Amsterdam Circle), a club of leading persons from the most important sectors of Amsterdam society. Even the mayor and the aldermen of the city were members. Within this society a group of concerned individuals decided something had to be done about the, what they thought to be, ruinous plans of the local authorities.

Many deliberations with mayor and aldermen followed, but without result. The president of the Amsterdamse Kring, mr. Six van Hillegom - who was in daily life president of the Amstel Brewery - then proposed to take the initiative himself. He was inspired by a young artist, Geurt Brinkgreve, who developed the idea of founding a company, independent of the city council, which would try to halt the decline of the old city. Brinkgreve had written a memorandum on this matter. He cooperated with the head of the - very small - department for conservation of the city, Ruud Meischke, who thought the plans of his colleagues in the department of city planning were disastrous. This civil servant however had to remain anonymous, because he was bound by the official policy of the city council.

Within the Amsterdamse Kring a committee was founded, named De Stad Amsterdam (The City of Amsterdam), to concretize Brinkgreve's plans. It was decided to establish a limited liability company (Naamloze Vennootschap), which meant that the company's capital would come from shareholders. The members of the Amsterdamse Kring were asked to buy shares in the new company. Because Amsterdam is the financial centre of The Netherlands, the country's most important banks and insurance companies are based in the city. Most of their presidents were - and still are - members of the Amsterdamse Kring and thus became involved in the work of Stadsherstel. Also other companies, such as the dock industry, participated.

Stadsherstel set itself three objectives:

- ▶ To buy and restore the most threatened historic dwelling houses, especially listed monuments
- ▶ To construct modern dwellings within these buildings for the benefit of the public housing sector
- ▶ To maintain these buildings after restoring them

The founders wanted to save the city landscape of Amsterdam and especially the more modest buildings. They also wanted the residential function of the city to be restored, as this was necessary - along with the cultural, business and shopping functions - for the good functioning of the inner city. In this way they wanted not only to restore historic Amsterdam, but also to contribute to solving the city's severe housing shortage.

One of the founders, Mr. H. van Saane, was involved in finding solutions to the housing problems on a national scale. For this purpose he created the N.V. Nederlandse Maatschappij voor Volkshuisvesting (Dutch Company for Public Housing), a public liability company for the building of new housing projects. The structure of this company became an example for Stadsherstel. Because the founders of Stadsherstel wanted to make a permanent contribution to the preservation of the city, they decided not to sell the restored houses but to keep and maintain them and to let them as living quarters.

In 1957, Stadsherstel was granted the legal status of a public housing corporation by the Ministry of Housing and Planning. This gave it certain important advantages: it was exempt from both corporation tax (35% of profits) and transfer duties (6% of the purchase price). In 1968 the city of Amsterdam embraced the ideas and goals of Stadsherstel and became a shareholder; today, the city owns a 13% share.

A LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY WITH A SOCIAL GOAL

Stadsherstel is both a limited liability company and a public housing corporation, which makes it an anomaly in The Netherlands: whereas the law requires a limited liability company to make a profit, a public housing corporation is not allowed to do so. However, in cooperation with the Ministry of Housing and Planning and the Ministry of Finance, a solution to the problem was found. The Ministry of Housing and that of Culture feared that the shareholders would take advantage of subsidies or special loans, while such advantages are intended to benefit tenants. Therefore it was decided that the annual dividend should not be more than a reasonable interest on the capital invested in shares (since the beginning, the dividend has been fixed at 5%) and in the case of the company's dissolution, the shareholders would receive no more than their capital and the dividend; the surplus would go to the Central Fund for Public Housing or to an institution for restoring listed monuments. Later, the government agreed that the 5% dividend would be free of tax for commercial organisations but not for private persons.

A 5% dividend is on average not high (although this of course depends on the interest rate on the

long-term market). On top of that there is no profit sharing with the shareholders. Stadsherstel's statutes stipulate that any profit it makes after taxes, dividend, etc. must be used for the purpose for which the company was founded: to save historic Amsterdam. Thus the shareholders invested in Stadsherstel primarily for altruistic reasons.

As a limited liability company, Stadsherstel has a managing director and a board of commissioners; the former is accountable to the latter. The board holds sessions with representatives of the shareholders - leading businessmen from the most important Dutch banks and insurance companies. The commissioners are not paid but do their work voluntarily in order to further the goals of Stadsherstel.

Stadsherstel now has circa thirty employees, who organise the restoration and maintenance projects but do not carry them out themselves. They give assignments to architects and contractors, and then supervise the projects right from the first preparations up to and including their execution.

Stadsherstel only buys houses that are in a very bad condition; most are unwanted and endangered buildings of historic importance. The company purchases buildings no one else is interested in. Frequently those buildings are almost beyond saving and, in light of their potential rental value, far too costly for their owners to restore. The importance of restoring such dwelling houses lies in the power this has to pull an entire street or even neighbourhood out of the vicious circle of neglect and decay.

In the beginning Stadsherstel bought houses in those parts of the city where the city government was planning to start demolition work, to thwart those plans. But it soon started buying buildings of which the rehabilitation would contribute most to the upgrading of whole city blocks even in areas that were not in immediate danger, but did face demolition in the long term because of long overdue maintenance. Corner buildings were very important: when restored, they provide a positive culmination to two fronts and are clearly visible from other places in the street. In later years Stadsherstel tried to buy the buildings adjacent to those it already owns: this helps to reduce the cost of restoration work and, later, that of maintenance. At the same time, it gives the restored frontages a considerable impact and encourages other house owners to restore their own property. Stadsherstel actively searches for buildings that are in the danger zone. When it finds one, the company traces the owner and starts negotiations. It also happens that the city government offers Stadsherstel a building which is in a bad state, and sometimes the company asks the city government to sell it a certain house or building.

It is generally believed that the work of Stadsherstel was jointly responsible for turning the tide in the

way of thinking about the Amsterdam's historic centre. Of course Stadsherstel did not rescue the city on its own, but it gave the example of how it could be done. The example of her restorations showed that monuments are not pathetic money absorbers, but could stand on their own feet economically. In its slipstream thousands of owner-residents meticulously restored their possession, often piece by piece in a process that took years. Slowly the inner city became a popular residential area. The process of gentrification, so important to a lively city, set in and larger developers began to invest. Now the historic centre is one of the most popular parts of the city to live in. As a public housing corporation, Stadsherstel usually created dwellings in the houses it restored. Because of the popularity of the old city, people started to buy houses in bad constructional condition for high prices. It became quite difficult economically to restore buildings as rental houses, so Stadsherstel more and more took on restoring buildings outside the housing sector. Furthermore the emphasis was no longer on the 17th century centre of the city. In 1998 the board of commissioners agreed that Stadsherstel should work also in the 19th and early 20th century districts. The biggest problems in the inner city seemed to have been solved, or could be solved by the market. That's why the work of Stadsherstel in the old centre is largely finished. Although their still remain several dilapidated houses of which the company will restore its share, the challenges of the future lie elsewhere.

CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

The restoration of the old houses was the greatest restoration task in the inner city of Amsterdam until the 1990's. Before then there was no institution to restore large monuments like churches and industrial buildings. Those landmark buildings are particularly important for the face and memory of the city. Unfortunately many of them are in danger of being torn down. They occupy high value ground. If the market is at all interested in restoring such buildings, it would only be to turn them into apartments. But by doing so the character of the building's interior would disappear. To prevent the disappearance of this part of our cultural heritage the Amsterdam Monument Fund (NV Amsterdams Monumenten Fonds, AMF) was founded in 1992. It was, like Stadsherstel, a limited liability company. The aim of the AMF was to restore large listed buildings. It tried to find functions for them without turning the whole interior into offices or dwellings. Only if it was unavoidable for economic reasons an appropriate part of the building would be transformed into offices. More than half of the shareholders of Stadsherstel became shareholders

of the new company.

At the beginning of 1999 negotiations concerning a merger between Stadsherstel and the AMF were begun. After carrying out investigations and consulting with the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Culture and the city government, the shareholders of both organisations came to an agreement. Of course the consequences of the merger for both companies were great. To the new organisation it meant:

- ▶ Stadsherstel became a restoration company for all kinds of monuments. Its task became to restore all the threatened cultural heritage in the whole city. As mentioned, at the moment the most threatened monuments are not the modest buildings suitable for dwellings, but the larger edifices like churches and 19th-century industrial structures (e.g. factories, tram depots, pumping stations). So the emphasis has shifted towards the saving of those kind of buildings.
- ▶ Subsidies from the government have become increasingly smaller in the last decades. The only way to restore without suffering a financial loss was to act very sharply and economically during each part of the process, in short, to be businesslike. In recent years, Stadsherstel has increasingly focussed on the financial aspects. To neutralise this tendency, after the merger an advisory committee was installed to assess the restoration plans and to pay attention only to the cultural aspects before applying to the local and the central government for permission.
- ▶ The building itself is always Stadsherstel's first concern: what kind of building is it, what are its characteristics and what kind of function is it suitable for? The larger restored buildings all have very beautiful interiors, which are only suitable for incidental letting. Recent experiences have shown that it is not possible to transfer such spaces to the hotel and catering sector without exercising strict control. The only way to protect such spaces is to do the letting under own supervision. Thus Stadsherstel has set up its own organisation to supervise the letting of (up to now) ten beautiful spaces or buildings, in which dinners, receptions, symposia, concerts, all kinds of performances and weddings can be held.

On 31st December 2010, the company owned 500 buildings, including 14 churches and 16 large monuments like a shipyard, a storehouse, a mill, pumping stations and schools. Within these restored buildings are located 950 dwellings and 300 commercial units, like shops, workshops pubs and restaurants. A small amount of our houses have been built with extra subsidies from the Ministry of Housing and have a relatively low rent. In any



*Herenstraat 36
Occasionally the restoration or reconstruction of objects that do not qualify for subsidies - such as ornamental gates, façade stones, pavement benches and lanterns - can be achieved thanks to donations made by the Associations of Friends of Stadsherstel*

one year, some 85 dwellings become available for tenants. The company allocates the houses itself, using its own waiting list. Currently more than ten thousand applicants are on this list (closed to new registrations). When interested, people on this list have to react themselves to the available houses, being offered on the website every first Wednesday of each month. The demand for accommodation in Amsterdam is very big and it is still increasing.

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS OF STADHSHERSTEL

In 1981 the Stadsherstel celebrated its 25th anniversary and announced that a Society of Friends would be set up for those who wished to provide practical support for the work of the company. The phenomenon of a private limited company with a Society of Friends seems extraordinary, and yet it exists. The idea of a Society of Friends clearly struck a chord and nowadays there are more than 2500 members. Thanks to the members' contributions and a number of large donations, the society can assist in those cases, where under normal circumstances a project could not otherwise be realised. For example, particular aspects of restoration which qualify for only a very small government grant or no subsidy at all, such as the replacement of historic architectural features and of stone tablets, can now be carried out with the financial help of the Society of Friends.

The Society of Friends is also very important for promoting and encouraging the public and political side of the company. When that support is not there, the company cannot work. In that case there would be no subsidies for restoring particular monuments and without subsidies it is quite impossible to do the job. Members of the Society of Friends receive a newsletter twice a year containing information about acquisitions and restoration projects of the company and articles on specific aspects of a restoration, such as the foundations of old houses. An annual boat trip along the company's properties is organised, as well as a trip by foot to restoration-projects and projects that just have been restored.

AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHER CITIES?

Imperative for the success of Stadsherstel was - and is - the cooperation between a. citizens, b. the business world and c. the government, both local and national.

- a. citizens - Stadsherstel was and is often the professional continuation of action groups. Concerned citizens muster support for the saving of a building and start the battle. Frequently they contact Stadsherstel for advice or to investigate the possibilities of an economically sound



Property in 'de Jordaan'.

future and a possible purchase of the building by the company.

- b. business world - the large banks and insurance companies have remained shareholders through the years. They are satisfied with a smaller return on their money, because of the cultural and social benefits of Stadsherstel's work. In other words, social involvement is the main motive for shareholders to invest in the company.
- c. government - local: although conflicts with some municipal departments were - and are - fought out, others supported Stadsherstel from the start. But since its participation in Stadsherstel in 1968 the city of Amsterdam on the whole has been an ally. national: the national government has supported Stadsherstel in the early years by granting certain tax benefits that are still valid.

The appreciation of Stadsherstel's work has been growing from the beginning. One of the most notable examples of this is alderman, G. van 't Hull, who was responsible for city development in the fifties. After his term of office he became the chairman of the board of commissioners of Stadsherstel and remained that for 25 years.

The American scholar Anthony M. Tung wrote a book on the fate of twenty-two historic cities around the world: *Preserving the world's great cities. The destruction and renewal of the historic metropolis* (New York 2001). The author considers the work of Stadsherstel an example for other cities. He writes, among other things, about the work of Stadsherstel:

'In Amsterdam a marvellous resolution of social equity, modernization, and architectural preservation would evolve in one of the world's most sophisticated urban conservation initiatives.' (p.194)

'Stadsherstel had introduced a more inventive way to think about the renewal of the city. Problems of urban conservation, urban revitalisation and urban social housing were reconciled by being solved simultaneously. The historic city was largely saved. New architecture was asked to engage in the collective urban aesthetic colloquy. Amsterdammers learned to live with the liabilities of the historic environment in order to retain its other cherished attributes.' (p. 247)

Maybe a working method like that of Stadsherstel could help to save other historic cityscapes. It's crucial for the preservationists to remain constructive and come up with solutions. That's the best way to convince everybody concerned, that monuments are both culturally and economically worth the time, the money and the effort. As Tung puts it (p. 244):

"by actively helping to shoulder the economic burden of conservation, preservationists came to command a higher moral position, enhancing their empowerment in the citywide political dialogue."

CONCLUSION

With the founding of the company for city restoration, Stadsherstel, Amsterdam got an effective means of restoring the City. Indeed, as Prof. A.M. Tung said, the company can reconcile the problems of urban conservation, urban revitalization and urban social housing.

During the 55 years of its existence, a well-balanced system has been developed for restoring the most unwanted and endangered historical buildings in Amsterdam. This is despite the fact that, especially in the last ten years, all the grants for public housing have disappeared and the subsidies for restoring monuments have been diminished. An exemption from transfer duty was granted from January 1, 2003 for listed monuments.

Today, it is very hard to restore a building in a legitimate way without incurring a loss. It is likely to become even harder, if not impossible, in the years to come. As far as new social housing in monuments is concerned, this is already the case. The most stable factor during the existence of the Stadsherstel has been the contribution of the shareholders from trade and industry. They have always paid their contribution according to the same conditions, as much as was necessary and always at the right moment. Let us hope that, despite the current economic conditions, Stadsherstel will be able to continue the reconciliation of the problems of urban conservation and urban revitalisation for many years to come.

“Pakhuis de Zwijger, Stadsherstel’s most ingeniously developed building. A road through a building, nice tenants, and historic heritage in the middle of an area that is almost newly built.”

Emmy Schouten



FROM A COOLED WAREHOUSE TO A REALLY COOL WAREHOUSE

Describing the building and restoration of Pakhuis De Zwijger in a way that everyone can understand is quite a challenge. The design of architect De Bie Leuvelink Tjeenk and design engineer Bakker was highly ingenious even when they produced it in 1934. Economic motives played an important role in the remarkable design. Until the Second World War, ground rent was based on the area of the building that actually covered the ground. Projections, overhangs, balconies and such like did not count, so the architect made the building smaller on the ground floor than on the storeys above it. The increase in floor area is accomplished on the second floor, which has an overhang on the south and east sides. It was a daring feat of construction whose costs were outweighed by the permanently lower ground rent! However, the building also projects invisibly under the ground. ‘Pakhuis Afrika’ (The Africa Warehouse) was already standing on the west side, and that meant that piles had to be driven in at considerable distance from the property boundary. On the north side (by the River IJ), too, it was not possible to drive foundations under the outer wall because of the quay, so these piles are also located within the property boundary. This means that the building overhangs on all four sides, albeit at different levels.

De Zwijger is a concrete building; its load bearing structure consists of columns that get wider at the top rather like a mushroom. The columns are about five metres apart and are considerably thicker on the bottom floor than on the higher storeys. 1933 is not that long ago, but it was a completely different age. Labour costs were next to nothing, but materials were expensive. This meant it was important to economise on materials, so the shuttering for the octagonal (!) columns was assembled with different diameters on each floor. This cost a lot of time, but it saved on wood, concrete and reinforcing rods. And it cut down on the amount of vertical transport, which was not nearly as well organized then as it is today. The upward reduction in column width allowed the architect to display the interplay of forces in the building, emphasising the functionalist and constructivist character of the building. The top floor – the sixth – was home to the laboratory. Here the wares, such as coffee, beans and cocoa, were inspected and tested. On the north side there is an enormous, sloping window in a ‘shed roof’, producing the ideal studio with day-

light but not direct sunlight and an excellent view without reflections. This 6th floor also housed the famous gas cabinets that were a prime advert for this refrigerated warehouse because bacteria could be eliminated using the latest techniques. The facades of the warehouse are brick-faced, but this does not contribute to the structural strength. The architect used yellowish bricks laid in a whimsical bond to emphasise that the brickwork’s only purpose is to protect the building against wind and weather. De Zwijger was built as a cooled warehouse for the storage of perishable goods. For that reason, an additional thick layer of concrete was applied to the inside of the south wall (the town side). This thick wall, with small windows, efficiently kept out the summer heat so that the building remained naturally cool.

With its columns on the outside at the ground floor and 1st floor, the overhang on the 2nd floor, the rhythm of the hoisting hatches, the yellow brickwork and the shed roof, this is not only a functional, industrial building but also an extremely beautiful and striking one.

JAN SCHAEFER BRIDGE DRIVEN THROUGH THE WAREHOUSE

When the Java Island area of Amsterdam was converted to a residential area, the municipal executive decided to create the Jan Schaefer Bridge, a direct connection between this artificial island and Kattenburgerstraat. De Zwijger lay in the direct line of this development, and the urban planners made a plan to run the bridge through the warehouse. This plan, together with the supposed decrepit state of the building (which nearly led to its demolition, despite the fact that it was then already a listed building), made it necessary to take numerous temporary structural measures.

To facilitate construction of the ‘gateway’ under the building, the ground and first floors and the associated columns had to be removed where they lay in the path of the bridge. But because of the rising approach of the road towards the bridge, part of the 2nd storey also had to be removed on the north side. However, this meant there was no longer any support for the floors above, so these floors were ‘hung’ from numerous tension rods. Enormous steel rafters were installed on the 6th storey for the attachment of these tension rods. However, during



To facilitate construction of the 'gateway' under the building, the ground and first floors and the associated columns had to be removed where they lay in the path of the bridge.

the installation of this construction and the demolition of the floors and columns, the east facade started to subside. The 2nd storey – the level of the overhang – holds the building together and in balance, and it was precisely from this storey that a big chunk was removed on the north side. For that reason, the three northernmost columns of the east façade had to be underpinned. By this time, we had reached the year 2001.

PLANS TO GIVE PAKHUIS DE ZWIJGER A SECOND LIFE

This was the state of the building when encountered by the promoters of the new centre for the creative industry, with developers and architects in tow. Additionally, hundreds of pigeons were nest-

ing in the building and merrily procreating. Plans were developed, but for various reasons these proved not to be feasible. At the start of 2004, on the recommendation of their advisor Dieric Elders, the promoters approached the Van Stigt architectural practice. André van Stigt then approached Stadsherstel. The architect and Stadsherstel were well known to each other, and in the space of three short months all those involved hammered out a plan under the coordination of Van Stigt. The major difference between this and previous plans was that the building was the main focus and would remain so. The size, outline and silhouette were to be retained in every way. Instead of adapting the building to fit the schedule of requirements, the schedule had to be adapted to the building. Just a few changes would be made to its appearance. A number of horizontal windows were to be created

in the east facade on the ground and first floors to provide a view for the public as they make use of the catering facilities there. On the 6th floor, the setback brickwork facades were to be replaced with steel-framed windows, turning this storey into high quality office space. The outside areas there were to be laid out as terraces for the users, complete with outside smoking areas. A plan to expand the shed roof to form a continuous feature in an eastward direction as a space for systems was worked out, but the government department for the preservation of national monuments was having none of it.

CONSTRUCTION AND ACCESSIBILITY OF THE BUILDING

On the other hand, the interior modifications were numerous and sometimes radical. The design engineers, Ingenieursgroep Van Rossum, were involved in the project from the start. In many respects, the large hall accommodating 400 or 500 people was at the heart of the schedule of requirements. This was projected to come directly above the gateway and hence on the 2nd storey. The floors and associated columns were to be removed from the 3rd and 4th storeys in this area. This had the major structural advantage of removing a lot of weight throughout the building and precisely over the gap where the bridge passes through.

Two smaller halls were to be created on the 5th floor. The respective roles of these halls as television studio and multi-functional hall made it necessary to increase the height. This meant that part of the floor on the sixth level had to be demolished and replaced with a new concrete floor, about 60 cm higher.

However, the biggest challenge for the architect was configuring access to the building. There were troublesome parameters. Even in the original design, the ground floor was smaller than the upper storeys, but due to the bite taken out of it by the bridge the difference in area between the ground floor and the 2nd storey had become even bigger. And yet on the busiest days there could be as many as 1,000 people in the building, all of whom had to enter and exit via the ground floor – even in emergencies. To top it all, the design engineer was of the opinion that it would be a bad idea to create apertures in the floor for stairs and lifts immediately adjacent to the gateway. This meant that the bigger staircases and lifts could only be installed in a single vertical line. After much brainstorming (the tenants also tried to help figure it out!), the architect came up with a solution. The best possible solution, given the circumstances, but the stairs would always be steep and the doorways sometimes rather narrow. Two passenger lifts and one goods lift were also to be installed in the building.

A BUILDING WITH ALL THE FACILITIES – ON BUDGET

During this whole exercise, the establishment costs were reduced from 17 million euros to just over 11 million euros, for which about 5,500 m² of floor space was to be renovated and given a change of use. Of course, this was balanced by a considerable amount of compensation from the City of Amsterdam, such as for the removal of the steel construction that had been erected to facilitate creation of the gap for the Jan Schaefer Bridge and thus also for the necessary work to put the building back into good structural order. In goes without saying that the Department for the Preservation of Monuments also provided a subsidy. For this budget, the building would be handed over ready for use so that the tenants could get started right away. This meant that it would have all the facilities, including the latest data network, connection to the external fibre-optic network (making it possible to broadcast live TV and radio from the building), theatrical technology in the halls and five fully equipped digital radio studios; all painted, with floor coverings and access control systems. In short: the whole works apart from the furniture, so that the tenants would not have to get even more money together before they could get started. This was also the express wish of the municipal executive.

ROLE OF THE NEW USERS

All this meant that the architect had to go into the details of the layout of the building at an early stage and define elements of it in the design and specification phase. Steadily, problems arose because of this. Naturally, the future users only understood at a later stage what it all meant for the building and for 'their' layout. All these issues were discussed with the tenants in the planning team. This consultation was often constructive, but sometimes it went less well; in almost every case, it was quite emotional. In the end it was decided that the tenants should engage a consultant architect for the project. A list of all the points that could still be changed was drawn up, such as stair banisters, floor coverings in the public areas and the layout of the hall, counters and bar. The architecture practice Heren 5 took on this task. Its suggestions, following approval, were worked out in practice by Van Stigt, which retained ultimate responsibility and supervised the coordination of the various disciplines. This move helped in this unusual building project, where the users had already been involved with the building for much longer than Stadsherstel had. After all, it was these promoters who had put the project with Van Stigt and Stadsherstel.

SQUATTERS

In 2003, Pakhuis Afrika was occupied by squatters. De Zwijger was an inhospitable building and so was mainly used for events, alternative art shows and studios for aspiring artists. With the road running through (and the associated noise), the hatches that closed badly or not at all and the hordes of pigeons, the building was hardly very suitable as a place to live. The squatters therefore used Pakhuis Afrika as living accommodation. The warehouses have a communal staircase on the River IJ side, so it was also strategically important to them to occupy both premises. It took some trouble, but after a while the architect and Stadsherstel got the opportunity to visit the premises. That was not always very easy, partly because the composition of the group changed quite frequently. It remained a disadvantage in the preliminary inspection phase, but the squatters liked the plans for De Zwijger so much that they moved out of the building voluntarily at the beginning of 2005. The objections to the request for planning permission, expressed by the association 'Eeuwich gaat voor Oogenblik'¹, were also overcome after talks with the architect and the principal. On 'handing over' the building, the squatters presented Stadsherstel with a bust of Willem de Zwijger², after whom the building was named. The bust was made by one of the squatters. When the contractor started work, there were still occasionally some arguments about access via the communal staircase, but these were resolved after some time. In the summer of 2005, the 'Mobiële Eenheid' (a special unit of the Dutch police) cleared the building of the remaining squatters for safety reasons.

THE CONTRACTOR AND THE PLANNING SCHEDULE

Construction at De Zwijger officially started on 7 April 2005, but considerable progress had already been made. The work was not put out to tender, the contract being granted to the construction firm De Nijs of Warmenhuizen as part of a construction team. The contractor discovered that a building from 1934, however functional in design, was not built to precise measurements. All the storeys were different in height and none of the columns were exactly aligned, but the thing that really made it different from any other work on an existing building was the demolition sequence. Normally it is possible to strip out the entire building so that the real construction can start a few weeks or months later. In De Zwijger, however, the contractor had to put each storey completely in order from a structural point of view before the temporary steel auxiliary structure could be removed from that storey. And so they worked from one storey to the next, starting

with the second. This meant that demolition continued until late in the process – and quite radical demolition it was too. As a result, the floor of the 6th storey was only removed in January 2006 – less than eight months before handover – while in other parts of the building they were already fine tuning the building systems. The deafening noise and vibration from the demolition of a concrete structure didn't do much to help communication between the various technicians and builders. The planning schedule caused a lot of headaches for the contractor (and also for the principal), and it was partly due to this that a postponement of handover became inevitable.

NOISE

The acoustic requirements play an especially important role in the warehouse. People can make quite a lot of noise in the halls and studios, and this must not be allowed to cause a nuisance, especially for the surrounding offices. Noise from outside also has to really stay outside and, above all, not penetrate to the main hall. The extended urban buses driving over the Jan Schaefer bridge cause not only a lot of noise but vibration as well. This meant that the road surface of the bridge had to be completely separate from the building, and many adaptations to the warehouse itself were needed. For example, the floor of the 2nd storey was constructed as a solid block, with a soundproof ceiling underneath. When the building was nearly ready, the noise measurements gave excellent results.

At one point, noise led to a major change of plan when construction had already been underway for quite some time. It had been intended to put the radio studios in the basement, but until construction started the Peutz consultancy firm from Zoetermeer could not carry out any decent readings. This was simply because the building was completely open; it was only several months after the start that apertures in the basement could be bricked up. The readings then showed that having radio studios in the basement wouldn't be possible. It was exactly in that zone that the urban buses caused a great deal of noise, especially at low frequencies. This could not be resolved and, at quite a late stage, we had to decide to build the studios on the 4th storey. As a result, the studios and offices of Salto completely occupy this storey.

COOPERATIVE TENANTS

The promoters became the new tenants and hence the new users. Their original intention to cooperate intensively in the new accommodation increased by leaps and bounds during the construction period. The four companies realised the enormous pos-

sibilities of the building and the potential benefits of cooperation. A highly advanced network makes it possible to transmit text and motion pictures throughout the building. For example, interviews in connection with an event in one of the halls can be broadcast from the café on the ground floor. The offices are also directly connected via the network so that programmes being made elsewhere in the building can be edited 'on line' from there. And in the studios they can work on the details of events recorded in the building. After editing, these can be broadcast via the cable connection.

It will also be possible to broadcast events live from the hall. This can be done via Salto's channels, but the broadcasting stations in Hilversum can also take care of it. De Zwijger is directly connected to the media capital via the fibre optic network. The possibilities of television via the internet will be explored exhaustively. The internal and external telephone traffic will also be conducted via the internet with the aid of voice over IP. In this respect, De Waag, a pioneer in the field of the internet ('The Digital City') and highly advanced computer applications, is a leading light in the building. Salto is the public, and above all publicly accessible, broadcasting station of Amsterdam. It provides radio and television (via internet or otherwise) intended for and made by listeners and specific target groups, giving you a broad vista of all the (multi-)cultural life of Amsterdam. The enormous advantages of technical cooperation with De Waag speak for themselves. Recent graduates and newly started entrepreneurs can get to work in a professional way in an environment with all the necessary facilities, assisted by low rent in the first two years of their career. The organisation 'Broedplaatsen³ Amsterdam' helps them with this.

In the halls, 'De Cultuurfabriek' (The Culture Factory) produces events relating to cultural debate as well as more commercially oriented ones. This was the prime purpose of the main hall, but with the possibility to highlight the debate in a wide variety of ways. Of course, it is also a very good place for musical events, as the first trial concerts have shown. These productions can be edited in the building for transmission via radio or TV or dissemination via the internet, whether or not in cooperation with De Waag and Salto. In addition, De Cultuurfabriek operates the catering facilities on the ground and first floors. The Amsterdam Art Fund will make less use of this technical interaction with other users, but nevertheless wishes to have a base in the cultural heart of Amsterdam.

A REALLY COOL WAREHOUSE

The decisions to build the Jan Schaefer bridge and to preserve De Zwijger as a national monument made it necessary to run the bridge through the

building. After all, the first two decisions were contradictory and this made it necessary to make the third, reconciling decision. An administrative monstrosity or Dutch consensus politics at their best? On entering the building, you can see the outcome of these decisions on the ground floor and the 1st storey. Through the steel and glass facades, visitors can see the traffic passing over the bridge. Pedestrians and cyclists can take the time to glance inside. Visitors inside have an all-round view while they enjoy a meal or a drink, and always have a view of the water. On the higher storeys, the public can view the bridge and the water from above. Every change in the daylight because of a sunbeam or a rain shower gives the large area of water a different appearance. The landscape constantly changes and always attracts the visitor's attention. In the foyer on the 2nd storey, you can look directly onto the road through the openings in the enormous steel truss. This storey is at about the same level as the summit of the bridge; the urban bus looks like it is going to drive into the building, but passes under the visitor so close you feel you could touch it, to disappear on its way to the junction with Piet Heinkade. Whether an administrative monstrosity or a model of consensus politics, the bridge running through the building has produced a striking conjunction of building, road and water, which the architect has been able to make visible throughout the building. There is intensive interaction between the inside and the outside. It has now become a really cool warehouse!

¹ (Translator's note) Roughly: "Posterity before the Moment"; i.e. the considerations of posterity should take priority over the convenience of the moment.

² (Translator's note) William the Silent, Prince of Orange.

³ (Translator's note) 'Nesting boxes'.

“Out of place among the commerce, electricity, water and new buildings lies a piece of history that was fortunately never used for its intended purpose. For the sake of the surroundings, let’s give it a fine new function!”

Frank de Ridder



ZEEHOEVE FARM

It was announced last year that the restoration of Zeehoeve farm was nearly complete. The original living quarters, together with the stable to the rear, had already been handed over to the tenant, Stichting Herstelling (the Restoration Foundation). This foundation aims to give work experience to young people with poor employment opportunities by involving them in restoration projects, such as the restoration of the forts and green areas of the Defence Line of Amsterdam. It is not an educational institution, but rather preparation for subsequent training, employment or a combination of the two. The foundation’s Diagnosis Centre is based in Zeehoeve. This part of the foundation uses a practical cycle of tests and orientation with the aim of providing participants, within two months, with a thorough and meticulous advisory report leading to an appropriate work programme.

This year, work was completed on the stone-built pigsty that was handed over in February. The entire site was ceremonially opened on 13 July 2005 by Alderman Aboutaleb. He attached the wood carving to the dormer window of the living quarters. Stichting Herstelling rents all the grounds that have always belonged to Zeehoeve Farm.

Much of the grounds at Zeehoeve have been restored, insofar as possible, to the condition they were in around 1900. This means that everyone – especially the foundation’s participants – can experience what life was like on a farm around the beginning of the 20th century. For the young people, that mainly involves taking a hand in the work on the farm. Although the farm has no livestock, it is otherwise run as if the farming family was still living and working there. That is partly possible thanks to the stories and photographs supplied by Mrs Hennipman-Bakker, who grew up here at Zeehoeve. The gardens department of Stichting Herstelling took charge of the green areas of the estate; for example, the old fruit orchard and the vegetable garden have been restored to their former glory. On the other hand, the grounds have been given some new additions. For example, in the past dirty water could be simply discharged into the ditch. Now, in 2005, that is no longer allowed and the water has to be purified first. The water is purified through the use of ‘constructed wetlands’. The dirty water is channelled through this wetland and purified; after that, it can go into the ditch as clean water.

Zeehoeve Farm, Stadsherstel’s first provincial monument, has nearly been restored to its former glory. What is still missing is the hay barn. The original barn was destroyed by fire in 2003, but it will probably be rebuilt in 2006. The foundation has found a new, useful function for the barn. This is also a good example of adaptation to farming life, because the farmers also knew how to make the best use of available space.



“It is a church with a new, different function, and a building with many colours”

Juan Hernández



PARKKERK

Thursday, 16th February saw the completion of the first stage of a restoration in an anniversary year: the completion of structural work on the Parkkerk (Park Church). However, this did not mean that the church could immediately be taken into use. The building still had to be set up as an organ centre by the new tenant, Stichting Het Orgelpark (The Organ Park Foundation).

The first contact with the Organ Park's promoter, Loek Dijkman of Stichting Utopa, was made in July 2003. After a year of making plans, the preparatory work for the restoration started in summer 2004. Then, on 21 December of that year, this urgently required restoration was officially begun.

The intention was that the Organ Park should become a concert hall accommodating not only the existing Sauer organ but three or four more organs. Organists (a dying breed due to the drastic decline in church attendances) would get new opportunities to practice, perform and compose organ music. This would enable connections with music of other types such as jazz, Latin and improvisation to reach a wider audience. There would be special programmes for children, lunchtime concerts and, last but not least, dancing; specially choreographed dancing for organ music, but also dancing just for fun as they used to do in Amsterdam pubs in the inter-war years and still do in Flemish 'staminees'. The maximum number of people in the hall would be 250 and the principal had made it clear that the standard of the concert hall should be at least equal to that of the nearby Concertgebouw and should convey a 'festive' atmosphere to the public.

In fact, there were two principals. In the end, Utopa invested so much in its own concept that it was no longer simply a future tenant. Utopa, which already had other accomplishments to its name, such as the sculpture gallery 'Het Depot' in Wageningen, had been working for many years with Bas van Hille of BD architectuur in Leiden. Meanwhile, Stadsherstel had engaged Nico Willigenburg of Monumenten Adviesburo Delfgou some time previously to make a thorough architectural inventory and draw up a restoration plan, so he continued to be involved. Also, everyone was agreed that a systems advisor was needed right from the start. Herman de Groot Projekttechniek of Leusden was engaged for this purpose, and Rob Dekkers of Lich-

tveld Buis and Partners was engaged for the building physics. And, of course, there were also a few organ experts around to give advice!

The work was put out to tender in summer 2004. Bouwbedrijf Hulshof was the lowest bidder and the contract was granted to this firm. The building systems were contracted out separately, based on the specifications of Herman de Groot Projekttechniek. Hijkoop was chosen for the electrical systems, Van de Burg for the heating and Bouwbedrijf Kiebert for the actual work on the interior decor. All three were regular business relations of Loek Dijkman and his colleagues. This meant that many parties would be working on the Parkkerk and so to prevent any possible differences of interpretation, a fixed structure was agreed. Buro Delfgou was in charge, and jobs could only be allocated via them and Stadsherstel. The general provision of information to all the parties also went via the bureau in charge.

There is now a splendid church building in excellent structural condition, containing a colourful, almost flamboyant concert hall with superb acoustics. The meticulously furnished foyer and toilet block are also very attractively finished. The previous annual report contains a detailed description of the work, which eventually led to structural completion on 16th February. And almost a year later, on Saturday, 21st January 2007, the Organ Park was officially opened by Mayor Job Cohen. In the booklet that the Association of Friends of Stadsherstel published about the Parkkerk, Loek Dijkman describes the purpose of the new organ centre as follows:

“The purpose of the Organ Park is to present the organ in a new way, thereby giving it a place in contemporary music. The musician and the artist are put in central place and our objective is accomplished via three components: organ music, the organist and composer, and the public. Traditionally, the organ primarily served the building (especially the church); in the Organ Park, the building serves the organ and its music. This means that there is room for a broad range of activities, such as composition assignments, study facilities, master classes and exhibitions. The organ is the uniting theme for these highly diverse activities.”

We wish him every success in this!



A splendid church building in excellent structural condition, containing a colourful, almost flamboyant concert hall with superb acoustics.

The following message was secreted in a tube in the top of the church for future generations:

On the instructions of Stadsherstel Amsterdam N.V., owner of the Parkkerk, Monumenten Adviesburo Delfgou B.V. of Scherpenzeel produced the specification and drawings for this restoration.

Following a multiple restricted invitation to tender, the contract to carry out the restoration was awarded to the construction firm Hulshof Restauratie of Houten on 7th October 2004.

The roofing work was subcontracted to W.M. van Boxtel BV and the steel and wrought iron work to Van der Vegt of Meerkerk. The wooden globe of this finial was made in the workshop of Hulshof Restauratie.

In charge of the construction site was general foreman Hans Kooijman, who provided inspiring leadership for this work in which much restoration takes place, often using traditional crafts and techniques. Many people also took part in this restoration, among them Cees Delfgou and Nico Willigenburg (adviesburo Delfgou), Cees Nomen (Hulshof), Peter Verwindt and Willem Ellenberger (building supervision Oud-West) and Paul Morel (Stadsherstel).

The restoration was facilitated by the cooperation (including financial assistance) of the Bureau of Monuments and Archaeology. All the work was done in cooperation with the Oud-West Borough of Amsterdam.

In the course of this restoration, the interior of the Parkkerk will be transformed into a centre for modern organ music. Upon completion, the Parkkerk will thus become the 'Orgelpark' (Organ Park).

A great stimulus and source of energy (in many respects) has been Loek Dijkman of Stichting Het Orgelpark. BD-architectuur has produced the drawings for the interior. On behalf of this agency, Bas van Hille and Tom Spaanderman have joined in this restoration game for grownups.

Drawn up on 29th March 2005 during the celebration of the highest point, in which this reconstructed finial was unveiled. The original was removed in 1963 and this new one was reconstructed by buro Delfgou on the basis of old photographs and drawings.

“Hidden in a beautiful clearing in the wood and yet accessible for everyone.”

Remco Vermeulen

The dome on the Eindhoven estate, Haarlem

RESTORATION OF DOME ON THE EINDENHOUT ESTATE, HAARLEM

In the gardens of the former Eindhoven estate outside Haarlem – better known as the ‘House with the Statues’ – stands a unique dome. This dome has been awaiting restoration for a long time; a demolition permit had even been issued for the complete removal of the structure. Fortunately, Stadsherstel Amsterdam and Rescura joined forces and approached the Haarlem municipality together in search of a solution. Thanks to this partnership, the dome – once so beautiful, but now decrepit – is being restored to its former glory.

DEMOLITION

The dome, located by the Haarlemmerhout wood close to the Wagenweg/Spanjaardslaan crossroads, is one of the first examples of the use of reinforced concrete in the Netherlands. It may even be the very first structure created in reinforced prefabricated concrete and this is one of the reasons that it is a national monument. Neglected for decades, it was in such poor condition that it seemed impossible to preserve it. Despite the efforts of ‘Stichting ‘t Koepeltje’ (founded 1984) to save the structure, the procedure to delete it from the national list began a few years ago and a demolition permit had even been issued.

RESCUE PLAN

When Stadsherstel Amsterdam (which is increasingly active in Haarlem) heard this news, it decided to make a last-ditch attempt to save this unique piece of architecture. The restoration company Rescura was called in, and an inspection showed that restoration was possible. The concrete was still in good shape, but the reinforcement on the outside was completely rusted through. The stucco work of the decorations on the concrete was also in poor condition. Fortunately, one of the eight pillars was still almost as good as new. This could be used to make moulds for the repair of the stucco work on the other pillars. The two sphinxes that stood in front of the dome were also in reasonable condition and were refurbished in the Rescura workshop. They are copies of the ones that stand in front of Eindhoven House. The Haarlem municipality provided money to carry out the restoration.

RESTORATION

The restoration is proceeding apace. At present, the dome is completely packed away, but in September the monument will be back in pristine condition. The intention is to officially complete the work during Open Monument Weekend of 12th and 13th September although, regrettably, the garden dome will not be completely restored to its former condition by then. To avoid the dome becoming a gathering place for youths, the Haarlem municipality decided that the roof should not be replaced. That had already fallen in by 1948, probably due to the weight of the statue of a siren that surmounted it. During the neighbourhood festival, ‘Cultuurlijn Bosch & Vaart’, on 14th June 2009, interested parties can mount the scaffolding to view the dome in its current poor state.

THE BUILDING OF THE GARDEN DOME

The dome was built in ‘artificial stone’ in 1915 by the Amsterdam firm Rooker & Achterberg. It was commissioned by the estate owner at that time, H.A. van Odijk. Odijk was the owner of the country’s biggest rice mill, C. Kamphuis in Zaandam. The ‘temple’, as the Odijk family called the dome, served as a place of rest in the extensive gardens. The temple is similar to the 19th-century ‘Temple of Diana’ in the gardens of the Villa Pallavicini-Durazzo at Pegli near Genoa. The dome is also a very important piece of art history. It is regarded as a folly: a whimsical, artistic structure with no purpose except to decorate the surroundings and offer a place to rest for a while.

THE EINDENHOUT ESTATE

A house existed on the site of the Eindhoven estate as early as 1630. It was located next to the inn ‘Het Dronckenhuisje’ and was also used as a pub known as ‘Het Nieuwe Dronckenhuisje’ until 1685. At the beginning of the 18th Century, the estate acquired the name ‘Eindhoven’. At the end of that century, in 1793, the wealthy Amsterdammer George Gerard Lans had the present house built. It was designed by Pierre Esaie Duyvené, an architect from Lans’s home town. Around 1802, the next owner, Jacob Temmick, beautified the estate and installed the two marble sphinxes from Italy. In 1963, the Haarlem municipality acquired ownership of the estate. The municipality’s main interest was in the grounds surrounding the house and the gardens were set up as a public park as an extension of the Haarlemmerhout wood. The house itself fell into disrepair and was sold in 1972 to the antiquarian H.F. Bill of Amsterdam, who had it restored.



The dome is also a very important piece of art history. It is regarded as a folly: a whimsical, artistic structure with no purpose except to decorate the surroundings and offer a place to rest for a while.

WHAT IS STADSHERSTEL DOING IN SURINAME?

For many years, Stadsherstel has been working with the Stichting Herstelling (the Rehabilitation Foundation) which helps young people who have somehow 'lost their way' to find work and reintegrate into society. These young people mainly work on building projects and on green areas outdoors. For example, Stichting Herstelling is active in Fort Diemerdam and Zeehoeve Farm, both of which were restored by Stadsherstel. Stichting Herstelling has a sister organisation in Suriname called CAO. It has the same objectives as Stichting Herstelling and is mainly active in and around Paramaribo. With such close ties with Suriname, it was therefore not surprising that Stichting Herstelling became the intermediary when Stadsherstel was asked to provide its knowledge in order to help found another sister organisation: Stadsherstel Paramaribo.

Paramaribo is a splendid city with Caribbean architecture. The white wooden houses 'float' on blocks so that the wind can circulate underneath them. But there are also many similar houses with brick pavements and Dutch-style pointing. So it is with good reason that the city centre and the waterfront area are on the UNESCO world heritage list. But the city is also congested with motor traffic and its beauty is often tarnished by a considerable

lack of maintenance. UNESCO protection does not unequivocally guarantee the maintenance of the city's architecture and structure. The many small houses, so characteristic of the city, are especially threatened with destruction, only to be replaced with high-rise buildings that usually clash violently with their background.

This situation is comparable to Amsterdam as it was in the 'fifties and 'sixties. In those decades, Stadsherstel focused from the start on the smaller houses in the minor streets, and much less on the big houses that faced the canals. It was therefore no coincidence that Suriname, and hence Amsterdam too, asked to make use of Stadsherstel's expertise to help found Stadsherstel Paramaribo. The fact that the request came via Stichting Herstelling made it even more direct. This led to deputy director Jaap Hulscher paying an initial visit to Suriname in January 2007.

On arrival in Paramaribo, Jaap Hulscher met the director of the Zuiderzee Museum, at that time Erik Schilp. He played an important role in founding an open air museum in Fort New Amsterdam. This fort, about 10 kilometres north of Paramaribo, was built by the Dutch in the 18th Century and has

an almost exclusively Dutch biotope. On entering and seeing the stone buildings, the mown grass, the moat and the ramparts, you get the feeling of a completely Dutch environment. It served as a fort until the end of the 19th Century and was subsequently used as a prison until after WW2. After that, the fort was slowly restored to create a delightful recreation spot at the confluence of the Suriname and Commewijn rivers. However, this was interrupted by independence and the Bouterse era.

The fort was privatized in 2007, giving rise to the Stichting Openluchtmuseum Fort Nieuw Amsterdam (Fort New Amsterdam Open Air Museum Foundation, SOFNA). Because of the Dutch character of the fort and its buildings, Erik Schilp offered Jaap Hulscher a position on the board, primarily as architectural advisor. Hulscher agreed, and that meant that Stadsherstel was suddenly represented on two fronts in Suriname. Not long afterwards, Erik Schilp joined the Supervisory Board of Stadsherstel. That's how things go sometimes...

To help set up Stadsherstel Paramaribo, in 2008 Rob Boot went to Paramaribo on behalf of Stadsherstel in the role of resident advisor. In close cooperation with Stichting Gebouwd Erfgoed Suriname

(the Suriname Buildings Heritage Foundation, SGES), he is working to create an inventory of small houses to purchase. The intention is to establish an NV (public limited company) in 2010, with 60% of the share equity coming from the Suriname banking sector, 20% from the Suriname Government in the form of real estate and 20% from the Netherlands. The NV will have almost exactly the same form as Stadsherstel Amsterdam. On the other side of the ocean, they too will be able to acquire, refurbish, maintain and let property after property.

In the open air museum, the emphasis is now mainly on the restoration of the Kruithuis (gunpowder warehouse) after which it will be used as an exhibition area. Built in 1778, this is a typical Dutch building that is a very fitting part of a fort. However, it was never really suitable for its purpose because this Dutch product did not stay very dry in the tropical rain forest. They clearly did not take the saying 'keep your powder dry' to heart here, but fortunately very few shots were fired from Fort New Amsterdam and most of those that were missed! In that sense, it is comparable with the Amsterdam Defence Lines, from which no shot was ever fired.

This situation of Paramaribo is comparable to Amsterdam as it was in the 'fifties and 'sixties.



*Kruithuis
Built in 1778, this is a typical Dutch building that is a very fitting part of a fort.*



“These are big, striking buildings with an aura. They have historic value, beautifully coloured brickwork; the way the light shines in is also beautiful. Robust buildings where you would feel at home if you lived here or attended a party.”

Bert Dros



‘OUD NICO’ FIRE STATION

In 2006, Stadsherstel took over a fire station called ‘Oud Nico’ (Old Nico) on De Ruyterkade, from the municipality. It was offered to us thanks to our good contacts with the Municipal Development Agency that had been created during the restoration of Pakhuis De Zwijger.

Because of intensive discussions with the Buildings Aesthetics Committee regarding a sympathetic solution for the additions needed for a change of purpose, it took a long time before the restoration plan was finalised. Eventually, however, the development phase was completed to everyone’s satisfaction. The invitation to tender took place in February. It was an unusual process because the structural work, the electrical work and the mechanical work were each the subject of a separate contract. There were therefore actually three tender procedures, each involving four contractors / installers.

RESTORATION

The permits to build and to alter a listed building have now been issued and ‘Old Nico’ will be restored over the coming year and a half. Two small extensions are being built at the rear of the premises. The architects’ practice for this restoration is Casa Architecten, already known to Stadsherstel from work on the Olympia House and Professor Tulpstraat. A variety of consultancies have been called in for advice: Ingenieursbureau Linssen for the mechanical systems, Jan-Willem Blomhoff for the electrical systems and Evers Partners for the construction calculations. Together with Rockview of Amsterdam, we subjected the masonry to a thorough examination because facades and structural walls showed signs of many defects and salt efflorescence. It will be a remarkable restoration, with the premises remaining inhabited for the most part. This means that the contractors are expected to stick to a tight planning schedule and respond adequately to unforeseen problems.

It is expected that the premises should be handed over to the new tenants in mid-2011. There will be an area of about 500 m² to let in the main building and about 150 m² in the adjacent building, the former smithy. In the main building, the ground floor can be divided into smaller units if necessary for easier letting. The residents and artists on the upper floors will also retain their old places after

the restoration. The Netherlands Mountain Sports Association – which makes use of the climbing tower – has moved to Sloten in the meantime, but the marks on the back wall remain a reminder of 50 years of mountaineering practice. When the association officially departed in the summer of 2009, it was agreed that some commemoration of the mountaineering connection should be mounted on the rear wall of the restored building.

MAIN WATCH ‘N’

The rather unusual name ‘Old Nico’ is derived from the station’s predecessor, the ‘Waag op de Nieuwmarkt’ (Weighhouse on the New Market). Fire station ‘N’ adopted this as its base in 1874. In that year, Amsterdam became the first city in the Netherlands to get a completely full-time, professional fire brigade. New fire stations were also built. These stations were given a telegraphic designation with a code letter. In the phonetic alphabet, the letters were allocated personal names and, in the course of time, these names became applied to the stations themselves. Main watch ‘N’ became fire station ‘Nico’.

In 1890, the fire station was moved from the old Weighhouse to the banks of the River IJ, where a new building was established, designed by the assistant city architect Willem Springer. The training centre was also set up here and a practice tower was built at the rear for this purpose. Station Nico also covered Amsterdam North, because that area still only had a volunteer fire brigade. The steam-powered fire boat ‘Jason’ was moored just outside. In 1973, the fire brigade moved again, this time to its current location at the start of the IJ tunnel. It lost the name ‘Nico’ at that point, but the building on the banks of the River IJ would always be known as ‘Old Nico’ from now on. After the building lost its function as a fire station, the fire brigade personnel were allowed to carry on living in the Old Nico apartments. The other areas were taken over as studios.



NATIONAL MONUMENT

When the IJ Riverside municipality started to develop, this became a threat to the existence of the stately building designed by the architect Springer. Tall office buildings rose up all around, and an increase in building density by De Ruyterkade was also permitted in the local plan. With the help of the Cuypersgenootschap, the Bond Heemschut and the Amsterdam Council for the Preservation of Historic Buildings, the residents were successful in getting their building designated as a national monument. After various developers had come to their wits' end with this historic building, the municipality approached Stadsherstel.

Amongst all the stark new buildings in the riverside sector of the city, the fire station stands out with its richly decorated facade. Next year, when you drive past Pakhuis de Zwijger, you will be able to see a beautifully restored building a little further on and on the other side of the road!



There will be an area of about 500 m² to let in the main building and about 150 m² in the adjacent building, the former smithy.

“It has become a highly esteemed project. It looked beautiful. And I loved the story that Paul Morel told about it. Even better was the fact that it is now home to archaeological findings.”

Hicham Ezzerari



RESTORATION OF BAKENESSER CHURCH BEGINS

Since 31st December 2009, Stadsherstel has been the proud owner of the Bakenesser Church in Haarlem. However, we have been involved in the redevelopment of the building since 2007.

One day in September 2007, Paul Morel heard the following message on his voicemail: “Can you come and visit me at the town hall on Monday at 09.00?” The message was from Chris van Velzen. “Who is Chris van Velzen?” Paul asked his colleagues from Haarlem. “He is the Alderman,” they replied. “Oh well, I’d better go then!” said Paul. And that was the start of it.

STRUCTURAL FAULTS

It turned out that the Alderman wanted to ask Stadsherstel to take a look at the Bakenesser Church. A preliminary inspection of the church immediately revealed that restoration or even major maintenance was urgently required. The roof was leaking and the guttering and drainpipes were blocked or broken. As a result, water had been running down the walls for a long time, damaging much of the pointing and loosening bricks. But there were even more structural faults, such as vertical cracks in the walls and damaged leaded glass windows. The latter were serious, but not the biggest problem. “What can we use this building for?” This was the question that both Van Velzen and Stadsherstel were asking themselves. On the back of a visiting card, the Alderman made an initial calculation of revenue. An exhibition by Ans Markus, followed by ‘Haarlem on the Map’, would cover the interest costs in the first year after the purchase. The conclusion, clear and simple, was that this would allow Haarlem to buy the church from its owner, Minerva, in 2008. And so it was done: the church was purchased and the exhibitions were held. Then it all went quiet as far as Stadsherstel was concerned, but towards the end of 2009, Haarlem bounced back. A good tenant had been found, the Archaeology Department of the municipal executive. The Project Management Bureau had drawn up a restoration plan and the construction firm Aannemingsbedrijf Holleman & Zonen had made a competitive offer. However, the municipal executive wanted to have an experienced advisor for the restoration and

asked Stadsherstel to take on this role. In the end, it was found that the best solution for both parties was for Stadsherstel to purchase the church as well and that took place on the last day of last year.

RESTORATION

Shortly afterwards it became possible to start the work. After all, the design was already complete, the tender process had taken place, and the permits had been granted. So on 11th February, Alderman Van Velzen gave the official starting signal as the bells rang out. The work is being carried out by Holleman & Zonen under the direction of Martin Busker of the Project Management Bureau, with assistance from Stadsherstel. Together with Anja van Zalinge, Director of the Archaeology Department, the Alderman unveiled the construction sign at a ceremony attended by 60 guests. Prior to the unveiling, the Alderman gave a short speech about the good cooperation between the Haarlem municipality and Stadsherstel. Jaap Hulscher, Deputy Director of Stadsherstel, also spoke in praise of the mutual cooperation, emphasising that it is mainly thanks to the municipality that Stadsherstel is now so active in Haarlem.

HISTORY

The Bakenesser Church, a national monument, is located in the Bakenes quarter of the city between Bakenessergracht and the River Spaarne. The place of worship was founded as the Chapel of Our Lady by William II, Count of Holland and Zeeland from 1234 to 1256. The current building originates from the 15th Century. The oldest mention of it is from 1486 and relates to the western part of the church and the bottom part of the tower. The top part of the tower dates from the beginning of the sixteenth century and was originally intended for the Grote Kerk (Large Church) by the Grote Markt (Large Market). However, because it proved too heavy for

the church's cross-pillars, the structure was taken down again and eventually used for the Church of Our Lady.

The tower remains the property of the Haarlem municipality, which had work done on the clock from the 8th to the 10th of February, with the result that it now keeps proper time. After standing silent for years, the automatic carillon will now once again regularly ring out its beautiful melodies. However, to minimise disturbance to people in the neighbourhood, the instrument will be turned off in the late evening.

The Bakenesser Church, a national monument, is located in the Bakenes quarter of the city of Haarlem between Bakenessergracht and the River Spaarne.

“There are marks on the building that tell a story – you can see a number of niches high in the walls of the corridor on the ground floor. These once held beams that supported a floor. The room above was a refuge for people hiding from the Germans during the Second World War!”

Peter Goutbeek

Herengracht 249

STADSHERSTEL AND CSR

Corporate Social Responsibility

Stadsherstel has been restoring buildings for over half a century now, but also moves with the times. That has to be the case, because there is always innovation in building. These days, the innovations are very much shaped by the realisation that the earth's resources, including energy, are finite. Reducing environmental impact and energy consumption are therefore important themes, and are particularly important when it comes to new building and new legislation on building. But we also devote attention to this issue at Stadsherstel.

Stadsherstel has introduced the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into its way of working. CSR means that when decisions are made, you have to examine whether they are good for people, the planet and profit.

Restoration is in any case good for the planet because many materials are reused. A restored environment is also good for people, being a pleasant one in which to live and reside, and for appreciation of culture and history. And even if Stadsherstel is a public limited company with a social goal, it still has to make a profit in order to carry on operating. It is thanks to the fact that all the projects over the past fifty years have made just enough revenue that Stadsherstel still exists.

But there is more to it than that.

PILOT PROJECT HERENGRACHT 249

The restoration of the listed historic building Herengracht 249 is being carried out as a pilot project in Corporate Social Responsibility. Every possible means of increasing sustainability is being studied and, if feasible, employed. The intention is to learn a lot from the project for application in future restorations.

Promoting the education of young tradespeople is also part of the social task of both the contractor and the principal. Stadsherstel therefore insists that the contractor establishes the building site as one where teaching takes place. This is not new, but it does focus the attention. Thanks to the fact that both the architects, Architectenbureau Emma, and the contractor, Vios-Scheurer, enthusiastically accepted the challenge to make a CSR pilot of the Herengracht project, many ideas were put forward and we were able to learn from these.

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

As well as the use of eco-friendly and recycled materials and the installation of optimum insulation, other, less obvious sustainable solutions have been brought in. Some have already become fairly standard – such as installing LED lighting with motion detectors in the common areas – while others are only just out of the development phase and have not been used very much yet.

For example, a new, advanced system is being used to heat the apartments. This is connected to the high-yield boiler and draws heat from the air outside. The system will function in temperatures as low as minus 15C and should save at least 35%. In combination with low-temperature floor heating, the saving could be even greater.

Domestic appliances that use hot water usually heat it less efficiently than a high-yield boiler. For that reason, 'hot fill' systems are used for the washing machine and dish washer, with hot water being pumped from the central heating boiler directly into the machines so that they do not have to heat it themselves. It is a technology that is not widely used but is nevertheless very useful.

UNFEASIBLE IDEAS

On the other hand, some ideas proved unfeasible either because they were too expensive, or prohibited by regulations or met with practical objections. Ideas that came up included transporting building materials via the canals (this proved impossible because a separate crane would be needed for unloading) and extracting heat from the water in the canals (which could not be done because, among other things, the scale was too small to make the investment profitable).

Installing solar panels on the roof was also suggested in the design process, but it was found that there was too little flat roof surface. Moreover, the Municipal Housing Inspectorate would probably not have given permission for this. Collecting rainwater to create a grey water circuit for flushing toilets was also not possible, partly because there was no room for the large tank that would be needed. Another thing that proved impossible because of lack of space was a heat recycling system for the shower. This would have returned heat from the shower water to the central heating boiler as it drained away.

There was not enough space to accommodate the pipework.

No radical solution has yet been found for insulating the windows. The proposed secondary glazing would have proved very expensive and would also have been aesthetically unpleasing. Where replacement is necessary, however, laminated glass is used. This looks acceptable and has better insulating properties than traditional, single-layer glass.

In this way, Stadsherstel is using this pilot project to gain the necessary experience of energy-saving technologies. The current state of affairs is carefully assessed and the work is evaluated in a different way. It is clear that technology does not stand still. We have to carry on learning so that we can make our restorations ever more eco-friendly in the future.



The restoration of Herengracht 249 is an example of the concept CSR that Stadsherstel recently embraced.

“The most exciting thing about this lovely building is the tunnel from the old pumping works, which you can see under the glass in the café!”

Christine Huijssen



PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF: THE ‘OUDE MOLEN’ BECOMES THE ‘AKERMOLLEN’ AGAIN

Has the stump of a mill that was known for decades simply as ‘the old mill’ (it even became its accepted name) the right to get its old name back? Yes! Everybody is agreed that the ‘Oude Molen’ (Old Mill) should be called the ‘Akermolle’ again. It still lacks vanes but, following the complete restoration, it really is not just ‘an old mill’ anymore.

For over ten years Stadsherstel and Stichting de Oude Molen (the Old Mill Foundation) have fought to preserve the Akermolle, and finally it paid off: on 2 September 2010, the old parties ‘for’ and ‘against’ came together with various parties who had joined the fray along the way to raise a glass to the completion of the restoration of this special piece of heritage.

In addition to its new function as a teahouse (run by people with a mental disability), the mill has an information centre. Here one can find information not only on the history and restoration of the mill, but also about the history of the local area and sites of cultural, historical and recreational interest in the neighbourhood.

FERRY

Stadsherstel’s deputy director Jaap Hulscher was the master of ceremonies at the official opening, introducing the three speeches. Harry van Gerwen, the chairman of Stichting de Oude Molen, and Achmed Baâdoud, the chairman of the Nieuw-West Borough, spoke about their ten years of involvement with the mill. Bart Heller of the Noord-Holland Provincial Executive spoke on behalf of Stichting Mainport en Groen, which financed the ferry service across the Ring Canal, and symbolically presented the ferry to Jaap Hulscher. The ferry is very important to the success of this project as it makes the Akermolle the hub of an extensive leisure network.

OPEN DAYS

It became clear that the mill would be a success in the weekend after the official opening, when open

days were held for local residents, donors and other interested parties. Over a thousand people visited the mill over that weekend and the ferry went back and forth at least a hundred times. The days were delightful, thanks to the warm sunshine. Many people enjoyed coffee and cakes on the terrace. On Sunday, Stadsherstel presented a free, open-air theatre performance, ‘Yurko, the smallest giant in the world’. At least 250 adults and children watched this family performance. It was very nice to see how the gathering place was used. It was used in exactly the same way that all the parties involved had intended (and actually even better). It was intended that the mill should become an information centre for leisure activities in the area, and that is what happened. The booklets and cycling route maps simply flew from the shelves. It was intended to be a project for the neighbourhood, and with this level of commitment it is on the right track. The painter and the builder steered the ferry together with a volunteer, and many visitors congratulated each other on the result achieved.

PEAT EXTRACTION FROM THE MIDDELVELDSCHER AKERPOLDER

The Akermolle was rebuilt in its current place in 1874 on the orders of the administrative committee for a polder known as the ‘Middelvelde Akerpolder’. The history therefore goes back even further than that. This pumping mill, which stood at the edge of the Lutkemeer (drained ten years previously), replaced the old, derelict Akermolle from the 17th Century. The mill used wind power to turn a paddle wheel in order to pump water. It is still not clear where the new Akermolle came from. The polder administration only recorded that it came from “elsewhere”. This can be read in the minutes of the April 1874 meeting of the executive committee of the Haarlemmermeer Water Board, relating to the request to relocate the mill to the Ringvaartdijk (Ring Canal Dike). The relocation was connected with the anticipated favourable pumping position upon completion of the planned peat diggings. In 1875, the national government gave the polder



The Akermolen in 2008, before the restoration



The Akermolen in 2010, after the restoration

administration a concession to extract peat from the polder; this was still in great demand as fuel in the growing city of Amsterdam.

CONVERSION TO SCREW PRINCIPLE

When the peat extraction was completed in 1896, the water table had to be lowered by over three metres to guarantee dry feet for the farmers and market gardeners who were to occupy the polder. This could not be achieved with the paddle wheel and a new, stone screw channel was laid centrally under the mill. Both channels still exist, under and partly behind the mill. A quarter of a century later, in 1921, the windmill was replaced by an electric pump house at the base of the dike. The wind was too fickle to provide the required drainage of the polder, which was now fully occupied by farms and market gardens. The superstructure of the mill was removed and the remainder was converted into living accommodation for the polder master.

MILITARY FUNCTION

The waterworks, which are still located under the mill remains, were used not only to keep the Akerpolder dry, but also to flood it in time of war. In this function, the mill formed part of the water engineering works of the Amsterdam Line, the forerunner of the Amsterdam Defence Lines. For this reason, the Minister for War had to be involved in the rebuilding. With the creation of the Amsterdam Defence Lines, which were started in 1883, the old Line lost its primary military function. The south-west flank, where the mill was located, was nevertheless incorporated into the new defence works as a secondary line.

With thanks to Dr Han Stricker, a volunteer with Stichting De Oude Molen, who kindly researched the history of the Akermolen.

“Lovely project. So special because of the location within the city, and particularly because of the enthusiastic colleagues from brewery De Prael”

Leora Boot



OUDEZIJD'S ARMSTEEG

Stadsherstel Amsterdam has refurbished various properties in the oldest part of Amsterdam and, for several years now, it has been active in what is referred to as the 'Cluster Arm', situated between Oudezijds Voorburgwal, Oudezijds Armsteeg, Warmoesstraat and Heintje Hoeksteeg.

The 'Centrum' borough, the central municipal council and the Coalition Project 1012 are keen to see an upgrading of this part of the city, which contains, among other things, many low-quality catering establishments, brothels and 'coffee shops.' The Cluster Arm is intended to be created as an attractive entry point to the city in line with the 'Amsterdam Top City' concept and we are keen to work with all parties in order to achieve this objective.

We do this by looking for tenants who can make a positive contribution to the area. Quite often these are not the highest-bidding businesses, but businesses that can improve and strengthen the project. On the other hand, Stadsherstel also helps to achieve its objectives by restoring monuments, bringing about attractive new building and ensuring that historic buildings get protected status. In the framework of this project, Stadsherstel has purchased the remains of a building (which was serving as a garage) and constructed a replica of the original building. A replica was a fitting addition to the row of facades in this part of town, although it is a different case with Oudezijds Armsteeg.

On the Armsteeg, Stadsherstel took over a piece of ground from the municipality where six small properties once stood. Because Stadsherstel had already been in consultation with various owners of the Cluster Arm and the municipality for years, it was clear that the intention was to turn Oudezijds Armsteeg into a clean, positive and attractive street that is favourable for business. At the same time, it was to be an attractive thoroughfare for tourists as they make their way from the Central Station to the Museum Onze Lieve Heer op Solder¹ on Oudezijds Voorburgwal. It was therefore decided that bright, attractive new buildings were in order.

The new construction was inspired by the world-famous miniature houses in Delft Blue that KLM Royal Dutch Airlines presents as gifts to its passengers in First Class. Although foreigners regard the Delft Blue miniatures as typical Dutch houses, you could not really find such houses anywhere in the

Netherlands; but with the Armsteeg project, this was about to change! We therefore anticipate that this will become a fine tourist attraction and through co-operation with two other relatively small attractions in the area (the Oude Kerk and the Museum Onze Lieve Heer op Solder), it should help to bring this part of the town the improvement that it deserves, making it a more attractive environment to live in, work in or visit.

Even in the preparation phase, Stadsherstel was constantly on the lookout for a bigger tenant that could provide various functions, thereby generating a positive image towards various multiple aspects of the planning area. De Prael Brewery became that tenant and a small-scale, traditional brewery now occupies the historic Auction House in the interior of the planning area, and there is also a specialist beer shop in a building on Oude-zijds Voorburgwal. The brewery's bar will be installed in two of the Delft Blue houses, with a view onto to the brewery. The other houses will provide accommodation for small, attractive shops or studios.

De Prael Brewery offers occupational therapy for people with long-term psychiatric disorders. These people can work in the bar, the shop or the brewery, or they can lead tours, thereby endowing the Auction House with a new and improved function. De Prael works together with many other social organisations with the result that this project not only delivers a positive result for the area but also creates a much broader impression. De Prael also helped with the realisation of this project in the construction phase. For example, various customers chipped off bricks that were later reused in the Auction House. In this way they were already able to get used to their new working environment and make a positive contribution to their project.

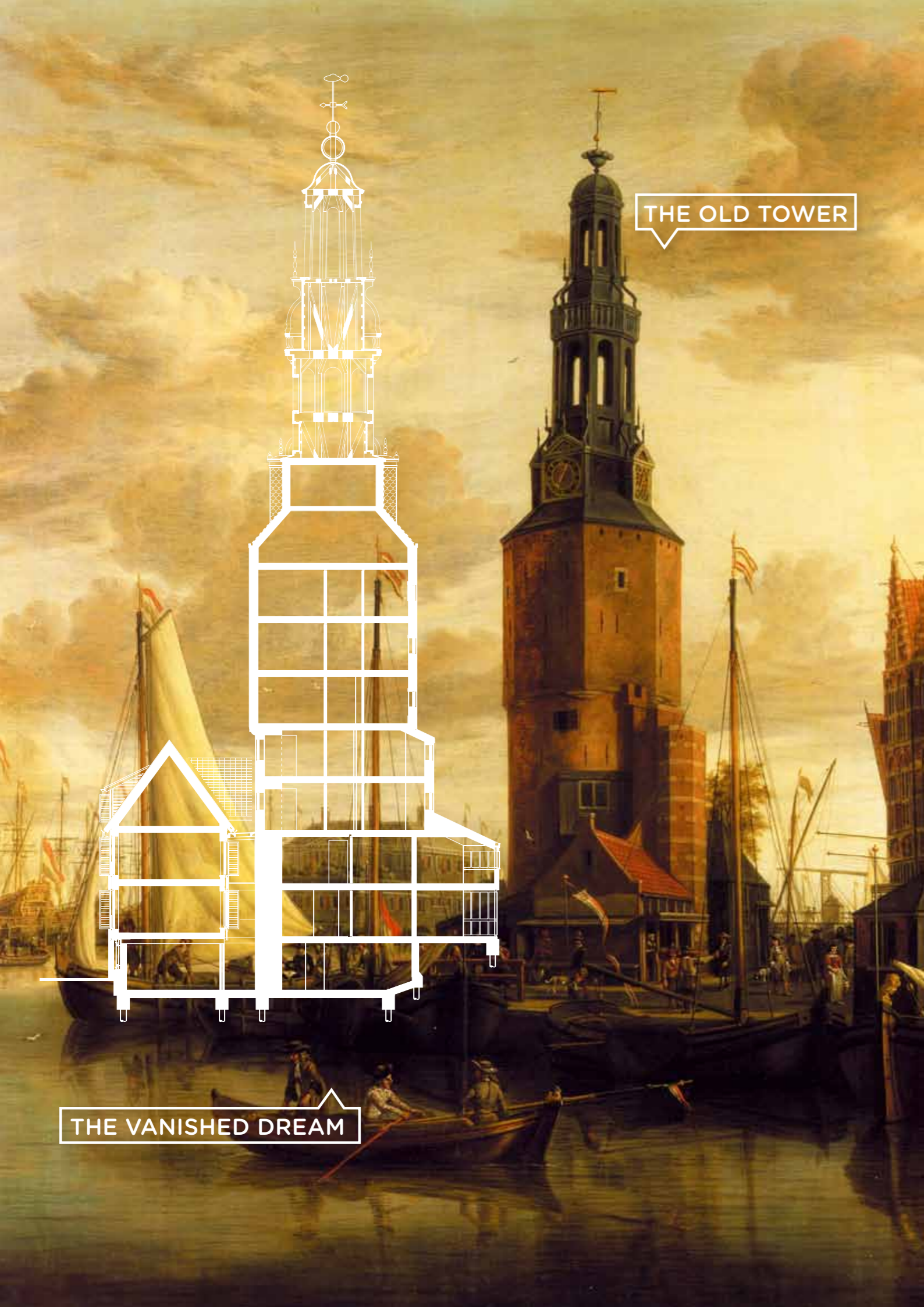
At present, Stichting Herstelling (see Fort Diemerdam) is working in premises on Warmoesstraat that are intended to become a temporary pub for De Prael. In this way, we are trying to create an attractive product together with various social organisations, so that everyone can be proud of their work.

Stadsherstel has adopted a pioneering role in this area with the intention that this positive project should create a flywheel effect. This fine project, of which Stadsherstel is very proud, was completed in 2010.

¹ (Translator's note)
Museum of the Church
of our Lord in the Attic.
This refers to a 'hidden'
church from the days
when Roman Catholics
were not allowed to
worship openly.



Although foreigners regard the Delft Blue miniatures as typical Dutch houses, you could not really find such houses anywhere in the Netherlands; but with the Armsteeg project, this was about to change!



THE OLD TOWER

THE VANISHED DREAM

The Haringpakkerstoren in a 1687 painting by Jacobus Storck



A VANISHED DREAM

Because the rebuilding of the Haringpakkerstoren (Herring Packers' Tower) would endanger Amsterdam's chances of gaining a place on the World Heritage list, Stadsherstel decided to turn down the project. Deputy Director Jaap Hulscher thinks it is a shame that this 'dream opportunity' could not be made use of. His account follows below.

It was late one afternoon at the end of 2004. Guido Frankfürther, an executive member for the relevant Amsterdam borough, came to talk with Stadsherstel. He asked if we wanted to help finance a steeple. Which steeple? On a reconstruction of the old Haringpakkerstoren. What? The Haringpakkerstoren, one of the old towers of Amsterdam, which was demolished at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This memorable conversation eventually led, via a few diversions, to Stadsherstel's initiative to take the entire reconstruction of this tower complex in hand.

READY MADE PLAN

There was a ready made plan by architect Paul van Well, a detailed study (on which the plan was based) of the tower's history, and an overview of old images in which the tower was depicted. Not photos, of course - it had been demolished several decades too early for that - but there were over a hundred prints; some of them seemed to be accurate depictions, while others were free interpretations, but they all clearly showed that this tower had been part of the old Amsterdam skyline. Its august presence was mainly due to the magnificent spire that city architect Hendrick de Keyser had erected on the mediaeval substructure. Picture the top of the Montelbaanstoren, but somewhat bigger with a magnificent lead and slate covering on an ingenious oak frame that could withstand any storm.

But is that acceptable, to reconstruct a tower that is only known from old prints on a prominent site in the city centre? A tower that hasn't been seen in living memory and is only held in the mind's eye of connoisseurs of the city's history? As an urban restorer, you get used to reconstructing buildings. After all, you try to restore derelict buildings and sometimes reconstruct ones that disappeared altogether in order to maintain the fabric of the historic urban landscape. And at the same time this fabric has to leave space for healthy future development

in a living city. On the other hand, a radical move like rebuilding a tower of 45 metres in height is quite a different matter, requiring careful weighing of the pros and cons.

A DREAMED OPPORTUNITY

I won't bore you with all these deliberations. In any case, they were brought up often enough in the public debate. Predictably, they involved the eternal dispute about how to approach the city, about authentic and inauthentic and what is beautiful or ugly. To be honest, I considered all the arguments, but what won in the end was the desire to turn a unique dream into reality. After all, who gets the chance to realise a project of this kind these days? To build a tower that will certainly make its mark on the old city centre, raise questions, relate history and eventually become a piece of history in its own right? Whenever would you get another chance to erect such a classic structure, using wood sizes and attachments that you learned about but were never yet able to make? When would you get another chance to acquaint a generation of young builders, who are interested in old, traditional crafts, with these building methods? A dreamed opportunity.

In the end, it remains a dream. The dream was dispelled by the strict requirements set by the city in its bid for World Heritage status. Personally, I never had any doubt that Amsterdam would be nominated. As an Amsterdammer, I found it incredible that UNESCO had not already designated the city as such on its own initiative. The concept of the belt of canals, with the world history that can be read in it, is in a category of its own. That tower would not have detracted anything from it. At most, it would have been viewed as a remarkable piece of construction by some and as a splendid urban adornment by others. Now all we have left are some more drawings and a meaningless, untidy city site on the corner of Singel and Prins Hendrikkade.

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