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Permanente Vertegenwoordiging van het
Koninkrijk der Nederlanden

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Subject *Request for information about the nomination of the 'Seventeenth-century canal ring area of Amsterdam inside the Singelgracht' (The Netherlands) as a World Heritage site.*

Dear Ms Durighello,

In response to your letter of 18 December 2008, reference GB/MA 1349, requesting further information concerning the nomination of the 'Seventeenth-century canal ring area of Amsterdam inside the Singelgracht (The Netherlands)', I am pleased to submit to you the requested information and the answers to your questions.

We have studied the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel's proposals and questions very carefully and with particular interest, all the more so since your response drew our attention to the fact that the Nomination Document and Management Plan may be unclear and inexhaustive on certain points. We are therefore pleased to have this opportunity to provide further clarification of our nomination. The proposals and questions in your letter are addressed in the following order:

1. Revision of the boundaries of the nominated property
2. Updated information on projects and situations
3. Clarification of permits for listed monuments
4. Information about property construction projects and their impact
5. Putting in place and functioning of the property management system

1. Revision of the boundaries of the nominated property (App. A and B (Maps) and C (Photos))

The unique character of the urban planning concept lies at the core of the nomination of the seventeenth-century canal ring area of Amsterdam for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List (Nomination Document, pp. 98-107, Justification for inscription, particularly pp. 106-107 Proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value). The seventeenth-century urban infrastructure of the canal ring area is almost completely intact. The large rational grid is the result of progressive ideas on urban planning, which provided the blueprint for a flexible city that would repeatedly be able to accommodate new developments. At the level of individual houses, too, the seventeenth-century structure in the majority of the property is still intact. Modernisation in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries mainly involved adapting the interior design to the fashion of the period, with occasional small and generally still clearly visible changes to the layout, which barely impact on the main structure of the house. The replacement of a substantial number of façades gradually created the mixed terrace frontages typical of the canal ring area, which in rhythmic terms remained true to their seventeenth-century origins. The strong infrastructural pattern and the varied, picturesque architecture of the façades give the area a strong degree of unity in diversity. Thanks to the preservation of the structural core, the different phases of construction in Amsterdam's canalside houses are particularly easy to distinguish. This has produced clearly readable, organically accumulated layers of building within the strict seventeenth-century infrastructural pattern.

In the late nineteenth and the twentieth century, the seventeenth-century structure was breached at three locations (see: Map A.4). Nevertheless, the associated scaling up affected no more than a very small part of the property and had hardly impact on the urban structure itself. The number of reconstructions as part of the intensive programme of repair following the Second World War was also limited in this area. We therefore believe that the nominated canal ring area complies with UNESCO's conditions concerning authenticity and integrity.

Bearing these facts in mind, we have studied your proposals for three alterations to the boundary of the property.

Change the Droogbak, Haarlemmer Houttuinen, Buiten Oranjestraat boundary to Haarlemmerstraat, Binnen Oranjestraat.

It was decided in the Nomination Document to include in the property the area between Haarlemmerstraat and Droogbak, which is part of the *Derde Uitleg* (Third Extension: the first phase of the construction of the ring of canals; see: Map B.2). The reasoning was that, when the canal ring area was created, the existing medieval sea dike was straightened (becoming Haarlemmerstraat), and that the area to the north of this (as far as present-day Droogbak and Haarlemmerhouttuinen) was divided into large geometric blocks according to the same urban planning principle as the canal ring area (see: Map A.8 and A.11/part of B.2), with the dike (later Haarlemmerstraat) acting as a central axis.

You propose moving the northwest boundary of the nominated property so that it runs along Haarlemmerstraat (see: Map A.9). Historical arguments could indeed be made for this option. One might argue that on this side the canal ring area stops at Brouwersgracht. Only Singelgracht and Prinsengracht, which both played a key role in water management and transport, were connected via locks to what was then the open water of the IJ. Herengracht and Keizersgracht, whose main function was to impress, end at Brouwersgracht. The former sea dike, whose elevation is still slightly higher, forms the boundary between the city and the port area, and can be physically perceived as a 'ridge' in the area.

Our conclusion is that both approaches to defining the northern boundary of the property are appropriate from an historical and urban planning perspective.

In terms of the architecture in this area, we would like to make the following remark. Your letter indicates that the idea of shifting the boundary of the property to Haarlemmerstraat, Haarlemmerdijk and Binnen Oranjestraat was prompted mainly by your observation that the blocks of buildings between Haarlemmerstraat, Haarlemmerdijk, Droogbak and Haarlemmer Houttuinen as far as Buiten Oranjestraat and Binnen Oranjestraat 'lack historical and architectural interest'. This must however be based on a misunderstanding. The observation most probably refers to the new buildings to the north of the proposed boundary of the property. The buildings on the blocks mentioned above are historical, and follow the original plot boundaries. The buildings display a variety of architectural styles from the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, thanks to a careful transformation within the seventeenth-century infrastructural pattern (see: Photo C.1 - C.14).

In view of these considerations, it would not seem to us to be necessary to move this section of the boundary of the proposed property. Our preference would be to retain the northern boundary as proposed in the Nomination Document (see: Map A.10). Should this prove unacceptable to the World Heritage Panel, we could however agree to the boundary being moved to Haarlemmerstraat, Haarlemmerdijk and Binnen Oranjestraat.

Move the eastern boundary to the left bank of the Amstel.

The World Heritage Panel proposes to shift the eastern boundary to the left bank of the river Amstel. This proposal is, in our opinion, not defensible from a historical point of view, and is at odds with the essence of the nomination, i.e. the urban planning concept. Designs for the *Vierde Uitleg* (Fourth Extension: the second phase in the construction of the canal ring area) reveal that the Amstel was intended as the central axis of this phase, and the riverbanks were accordingly straightened (see: Map B.7 and B.8). Though the eastern part of the canal ring area was built between 1660 and 1850, it largely follows the original planning concept and is therefore an integral and essential part of the canal ring area. The original plan for the canal ring area was used as the framework for development into the nineteenth century.

We can imagine that the expansion and architectural transformation of Weesperstraat in the twentieth century has compromised the cityscape to such an extent at this point that it can be perceived as an 'insurmountable barrier' within the canal ring area. Nevertheless, with the exception of the buildings bordering directly on Weesperstraat and the buildings on the blocks known as 'Roeterseiland' (bordered by Roetersstraat, Nieuwe Achtergracht, Plantage Muidergrecht, Nieuwe Prinsengracht), this eastern part of the canal ring contains many historic buildings that conform to the pattern of the seventeenth-century plan (see: Map A.12 and B.6; Photo C.15, C.16, C.17).

It is worth noting that from the beginning the eastern part of the ring of canals is characterized by plots on a larger scale than elsewhere in the canal ring area. This is the result of the construction of a number of large complexes, including the former parish old people's home (*Diaconie Oude Mannen en Vrouwenhuis*) on the east bank of the Amstel (1670; now the Hermitage Museum) and the workhouse (*Spinhuis en Nieuwe Werkhuis*, 1780) on Roetersstraat. These are both visually important listed buildings, and examples of the expanding system of highly institutionalised social care in Amsterdam that began in the seventeenth century. Other examples are the *Nieuwe Lutherse Diaconie* (1770) and the former Jewish old

people's home (*Nederlands Israëlitische Oude Mannen en Vrouwenhuis*, 1840) on Nieuwe Keizersgracht, which are also listed buildings (see: Photo C.18 – C.27). They were built as new premises for institutions that had previously been established in the old city. This concentration of social institutions in the eastern part of the canal ring area was able to occur because, in the eighteenth century, private interest in purchasing land declined, causing prices to fall. It was not until after 1850 that private construction revived again, and the Plantage district (north-east of the property) was developed. The construction of this neighbourhood broke with the seventeenth-century infrastructural pattern (see: Map B.5 and B.6). Plantage has therefore not been included in the nominated property, and the boundary thus runs along Plantage Muidergracht.

To summarise, therefore, there are in our opinion a number of reasons to maintain the eastern boundary as specified in the Nomination Document, despite the breach at Weesperstraat:

- the Amstel functions as the pivot and main axis of the second phase (*Vierde Uitleg/* Fourth Extension) of the seventeenth-century canal plan;
- the blocks of buildings to the east of the Amstel as far as Plantage conform to this plan;
- the buildings are largely historic and some are important and characteristic listed buildings.

We propose that an exception be made in the case of Roeterseiland (see: Map A.14) and that this area not be included in the property. The large recent buildings in this area do not conform to the plot pattern in the seventeenth-century plan and their architecture is also at odds with the historic cityscape (see: Photo C.28, C.29, C.30). Excluding this area from the proposed property does not affect the seventeenth century concept, on which the nomination is based.

The proposed new boundary to the east of the Amstel would thus run from Blauwbrug Nieuwe Amstelstraat along Weesperstraat, Hortusplantsoen, Nieuwe Keizersgracht, Roetersstraat as far as Nieuwe Achtergracht (see: Map A.14).

Alter the Muntplein, Binnen Amstel boundary to Muntplein, Vijzelstraat, Reguliersdwarsstraat, west front of Rembrandtplein, Utrechtsestraat, Utrechtsedwarsstraat, left (west) bank of Amstel.

The plot divisions in this area arose when the late medieval town was joined with the new seventeenth-century extension. Daniel Stalpaert's map of 1662 (see: Map B.7 and A.18) shows that the sites directly to the south of the Binnen Amstel originally lay inside the medieval ramparts. Reguliersbreestraat had for example already been laid out and built up. The Rembrandtplein conversely was part of the new seventeenth-century extension.

You propose that the boundary of the property be moved from the Binnen Amstel to Muntplein, running via Vijzelstraat, Reguliersdwarsstraat, the west front of Rembrandtplein, Utrechtsestraat and behind the buildings on Herengracht to the left bank of the Amstel (see: Map A.16). We understand from your letter that your proposal to change the boundary is informed largely by the desire to ensure that the large structures on the east front of Rembrandtplein, part of Amstelstraat and part of Herengracht, fall outside the property. The building on the east side of Rembrandtplein is a former bank designed in the 1930s by architects H.P. Berlage and B.J. and W.B. Ouëndag. The building was listed by the local authority several years ago (see: Photo C.32).

Various alternatives might be considered for the Binnen Amstel boundary, on both urban planning and historical grounds. However, each brings its own problems. Your proposal implies that the boundary should be drawn across a block of buildings, and that the garden of the listed building at Herengracht 605 (Willet Holthuysen Museum), which borders on the Amstelstraat, be divided in two. This strikes us as undesirable on practical, historical and architectural grounds. We would therefore prefer to accept your proposal with the exception of the most eastern part and to make a shift in the boundary of the nominated property from Muntplein to the east side of Vijzelstraat, along Reguliersdwarsstraat, the west and north of Rembrandtplein and along Amstelstraat (see: Map A.17; Photo C.31 en C.33).

2. Updated information on projects and advertising policy

- Vijzelgracht metro station and underground parking garage
- Kop Singel building plan
- Binnengasthuis site
- Advertising policy and enforcement

Underground parking garage at Vijzelgracht metro station

The design of the metro station at Vijzelgracht allows for an underground car park to be built at a future date, the roof of the station having been constructed with this in mind (see: Architect's impression, Nomination Document, p. 178). The preliminary sketches of the car park entrances and exits by architects BenthemCrouwel were discussed during Mr Barbato's visit to Amsterdam in September/October 2009.

It should be noted that there are currently no plans to actually build the underground car park, certainly not before completion of the North-South metro line in 2017. Should the issue arise, the municipality will inform the UNESCO World Heritage Committee accordingly.

Kop Singel building plan

The Nomination Document (pp. 193-199) mentions the initiative by the private company Stadsherstel Amsterdam NV to partially reconstruct and rebuild Haringpakkerstoren tower, which was demolished in the nineteenth century.

In the second half of 2009, detailed discussions were held between the management of Stadsherstel, the chair of the executive committee of Central Amsterdam district council, the councillor responsible for monuments and historic buildings in the city centre, and the director of the Bureau of Monuments & Archaeology. After careful analysis of the Vienna Memorandum and assessment of the design's compliance with current building aesthetics and heritage policy, the municipality came to the conclusion that implementation of this specific design at this location, in the context of the World Heritage nomination, would be neither desirable nor feasible.

The building aesthetics criteria for this location will be amended to reflect the spirit of the World Heritage Convention, as you urge in your letter, and are likely to be officially adopted in autumn 2010. Pending this, the planning procedure for this location has been suspended.

Binnengasthuis site

In your letter you express the opinion that the former *Tweede Chirurgische Kliniek* surgical clinic and the former *Zusterhuis* nurses' home, both situated in the buffer zone, should not be demolished as part of the construction plans, 'as this would permanently diminish the architectural authenticity of the area, located in a medieval core'.

Amsterdam city council is keen on the presence of the University of Amsterdam in the city centre. The municipal authority therefore allowed this consideration to take precedence over

conservation in its decision-making. The authority did not take the matter lightly, however, having explored and discussed many alternatives over the past few years. Only when no other feasible option was available, the municipal council did decide that the two buildings in question should make way for new structures. On 12 January 2009 Central Amsterdam district council issued permits for the demolition and partial demolition of these two buildings. Official decision-making on this project is now at such a stage that, in our opinion, it is no longer possible to withdraw these permits. If the district council were to do so, its decision could rightly be regarded as 'arbitrary', and would not stand up in court in the event of an appeal.

The planned demolition/partial demolition of these two listed buildings – both designed in 1897 and extended and transformed several times during the twentieth century – to make way for the new university library on the Binnengasthuis site has an unusual history. The buildings were listed (given 'national monument' status) in July 2001. At that point the plans for the library had already been in the pipeline for some time. The designation took account right from the outset of the possibility that the premises might either be radically altered or demolished under a special permit for monuments and historic buildings.¹ The designation was intended first and foremost to ensure that the cultural heritage value of the buildings was considered in the decision as to whether demolition and redevelopment of the site would be permitted as part of the construction plans. These factors were then carefully considered, and the outcome of the process has been underpinned by official decisions.² Three stakeholdergroups lodged an appeal with the district court against the decision to issue permits for the demolition of these two listed buildings. The court's ruling, which is expected in the next few weeks, will determine once and for all whether the decision to issue the permits will stand.

The statutory and procedural aspects of granting licences under the Monuments and Historic Buildings Act in general are examined in further detail in our response to question 3. It will become clear that the Binnengasthuis site is an exceptional case, and certainly does not reflect standard procedure under Amsterdam's monuments and historic buildings policy.

Finally we will remark that the 'architectural authenticity' of the area can be seen in various ways. Though the Binnengasthuis site is medieval in origin, the spatial structure and buildings have been subject to continual change over the centuries. The most radical transformation of

¹ See Council of State ruling, 19 July 2006. Quoted in Nomination Document, p. 207.

² See Nomination Document, pp. 206-212.

the area – in both a spatial and an architectural sense – occurred in the period 1868–1913, and in the late twentieth century. The buildings are therefore more a functional, dynamic assemblage than a historic, cohesive urban whole.

Advertising policy and enforcement

Advertising policy in Amsterdam city centre, including the proposed property, has been tightened up considerably over the past ten years. In 2008 and 2009 the executive committee of the Central Amsterdam District council introduced stricter rules for façade advertising and advertising on scaffolding wrap. The district council also conducts regular on-site inspections to ascertain whether advertisements comply with the rules, and engages in active consultation with local business associations on the matter. If necessary, it takes enforcement action. At the same time, the district council encourages companies to remove undesirable façade advertising by offering them grants. A budget of € 400,000 is available for this purpose. In 2009 almost 50 grants were awarded, more than double the number in 2008. One result of this policy has been that all large advertising boardings for hotels on Damrak have now been removed.

New rules for façade advertising

Brochures setting out the new rules on façade advertising (adopted by the district council on 27 November 2008) have been distributed to businesses in the city centre. The most important changes are:

- advertising in the form of a name in separate, flat letters now applies to all categories of building;
- each establishment may have only one flat advertisement on the façade and one sign perpendicular to the façade; a second sign will be permitted only if the establishment straddles three or more plots of approx. 5.5 metres each;
- moving advertising images, whether attached to the façade or not, including light projections, are no longer permitted.

The transitional arrangements include a deadline (three to five years, depending on the type of advertising) by which advertising must comply with the new policy. Any businesses with advertising that does not comply with the new rules must remove it by the deadline, and replace it with advertising that is compliant.

New rules for advertising on scaffolding wrap

A more austere policy on advertising on scaffolding wrap was introduced on 1 October 2009.

The most important new rules are:

- the advertising may cover no more than 50% of the scaffolding wrap (was 100%);
- the maximum width for scaffolding wrap is 16 metres;
- the section of scaffolding wrap that does not display advertising must display a print of the façade;
- no advertising may be displayed on scaffolding wrap around Dam Square and along the canals;
- from September 2010, no advertising may be displayed on scaffolding wrap on premises at the corner of a junction between a canal and a radial street or square.³

The arrangements as to how often advertising may be displayed on scaffolding wrap, and for how long, have also changed. Advertising on scaffolding wrap on buildings on which work is being carried out that is not subject to a permit may not be displayed for longer than six weeks (was nine weeks). The frequency has been reduced from once every three years to once every five years. Users of the building must now also be notified.

3. Statutory and procedural aspects of listed building permits

General

The Dutch Monuments and Historic Buildings Act (*Monumentenwet 1988*) allows municipal authorities to issue permits for alterations to listed buildings, on condition that the authority has adopted a monuments and historic buildings ordinance (or heritage ordinance) setting up an independent heritage management advisory committee.⁴ Where plans impact on the future of a monument or historic building (demolition, reconstruction and new designation or function), the municipal authority is obliged to seek the advice of the Cultural Heritage Agency (*Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed*). Though its recommendations are not binding, they generally carry a great deal of weight in the municipality's decision-making. Stakeholders have two opportunities to appeal against the municipality's decision (or submit their views): to the municipal authority itself when the draft decision (draft permit) is issued, and to the district court when the final

³ Particularly radials and squares in the main shopping district: Raadhuisstraat, Leidsestraat, Muntplein and Koningsplein.

⁴ In Amsterdam this is the Building Aesthetics and Built Heritage Committee.

permit is issued. This procedure conforms to the administrative system in The Netherlands, whereby authority to take decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level, as close as possible to the public, and a broad legal framework guarantees careful decision-making by all concerned.

The situation in Amsterdam

In Amsterdam, the authority to issue monuments and historic buildings permits has been delegated to the district councils. A scientific investigation of the value of the monument or historic building concerned plays a key role in the assessment of permit applications. The Bureau of Monuments & Archaeology generally performs an architectural/historical or built heritage survey, the results of which guide the assessment of the restoration or alteration plan. Policy has also been developed on interventions for which many permit applications are received, such as foundation repair, façade repair, roof work, insulation etc.⁵ 'Conservation before renovation' is the first principle. Central Amsterdam district council has formally adopted this policy, which is publicised via the municipality's website. To summarise, therefore: the cultural heritage value of monuments and historic buildings is always the key principle underlying the assessment of permit applications.

Permits and the demolition of monuments and historic buildings

To make alterations to a national listed building requires both a building permit and a permit issued under the Monuments and Historic Buildings Act. A similar procedure applies to municipal monuments and historic buildings, and again a special monuments and historic buildings permit is required. It is a criminal offence to demolish parts of a monument or historic building without a permit. Should this nevertheless occur, the municipal authority (Central Amsterdam District council) will demand that the demolished parts be restored to their original state. If the owner fails to comply, he or she will be prosecuted.⁶

In the most extreme cases, a monuments and historic buildings permit may authorise demolition of a monument. In practice, this occurs only by way of great exception, if at all. Amsterdam city centre has a policy of conservation, commensurate with the area's status as a protected cityscape (Conservation Area) under the Monuments and Historic Buildings Act. Furthermore, there is great popular support for preservation of the heritage in Amsterdam. The

⁵ Programme of Requirements for the Quality of Monuments and Historic Buildings 2009 (PvEM)

⁶ Recent example: Vijzelstraat 103

city's residents have always had a moderating effect on the development and regeneration of the urban fabric. The people of Amsterdam have, for the past 150 years, systematically resisted any breaches of the historic infrastructure, filling in of waterways and demolition of neighbourhoods (such as the Jordaan district). This is in line with a long tradition in Amsterdam whereby residents like to present their city as a free, tolerant and slightly anarchistic city state, while at the same time taking great pride in their heritage and being extremely wary of anything that threatens to harm it.

4. New developments since October 2009 (App. D and E)

Structural Concept and Vision for High-rise Construction

On 26 January 2010 the Municipal Executive adopted the Draft Structural Concept, which sets out a long-term vision for the physical development of the city. On 25 February 2010 the Draft Structural Concept will be debated by the City Municipal Council. The document will then be released for public consultation with Amsterdam residents until 20 May 2010.

The Draft Structural Concept consists of:

- a vision of the development of the city up to 2040;
- a schedule that shows what is to be done, and how implementation will be phased in each district;
- a set of instruments defining how the rules allowing implementation of the vision will be enforced.

Contrary to the common procedure for structural concepts, prompted by the World Heritage nomination of the canal ring area, the Municipal Executive has decided to include the Vision for High-rise Construction as a separate policy document. This decision illustrates the fact that the Municipal Council regards it as vital that a clear and consistent policy on high-rise construction be set out for the long term.

The draft Vision for High-rise Construction of August 2009 (appendix D) will be completed by the Spatial Planning Department in collaboration with the Bureau of Monuments & Archaeology and presented to the Municipal Executive for adoption after the 2010 summer recess.

Pontsteiger (Waterpoort) building in the Houthaven

Plans have been developed for a 90-metre building containing public amenities and apartments (designed by Arons & Gelauff) in a new residential area in Houthaven, in the Westerpark district.

This location is well outside the buffer zone. Sightline studies produced to identify the impact of the building on the city's skyline have found that it will not be visible from the canal ring area. At Westerdok, which is situated in the buffer zone, along the IJ, the building will however be clearly visible. Given the fact that there are already modern buildings at this location, the new building will not disrupt the city's skyline.

Update on key issues

For the latest update on the key issues, please see appendix E.

5. Update on implementation of Management Plan (App. F and G)

The Management Plan for the 'Seventeenth-century canal ring area of Amsterdam inside the Singelgracht' sets out a series of Key Points (pp. 71-86) to ensure that management of the canal ring area is implemented in municipal policy in a way that is compliant with the World Heritage Convention's objectives. They cover:

- continuity and optimisation of the policy on the conservation of the historic city centre developed since it was designated a protected cityscape (Conservation Area) under the Monuments and Historic Buildings Act in 1999;
- activities associated with mandatory monitoring;
- activities designed to broaden and strengthen public support for the World Heritage nomination.

The majority of the actions have already been implemented, and the rest of the actions are on schedule. The main developments are listed below.

World Heritage Office

The World Heritage Office came into being on 1 September 2009. In organisational terms, the office (1.5 FTE) is part of Central Amsterdam district council, the owner of the nominated site. The costs of the office are being borne jointly by the district council and the city centre authority. The World Heritage Office's main responsibilities are to ensure that the site is monitored and to report monitoring activities to UNESCO, to provide information on and create support for the world heritage nomination among residents, businesses and other stakeholders, and to maintain a network.

Heritage Ordinance

The Heritage Ordinance that is to supersede the current 'Central Amsterdam District Council Monuments and Historic Buildings Ordinance 2005' has now been presented for public consultation. It will be officially introduced as soon as new legislation on building and other permits (known by the Dutch acronym WABO) enters into force. This is currently scheduled for 1 July 2010. The most important change relative to the existing regulations (Monuments and Historic Buildings Ordinance 2005) lies in the fact that the Heritage Ordinance will set out rules both for the built heritage above ground (monuments and historic buildings) and the archaeological heritage under ground. The procedure and associated deadlines for monuments and historic buildings permits will also be adjusted to the provisions in the new legislation. The criteria for issuing permits will be the same as those applying under the current Monuments and Historic Buildings Ordinance of 2005.

Progress with review of zoning plans

Since 1999, Amsterdam city centre has enjoyed the status of protected cityscape (Conservation Area) under the Monuments and Historic Buildings Act. Protective zoning plans have been drafted for the entire city centre which, under the new Spatial Planning Act, must be updated once every ten years. This updating process (zoning plan review) is on schedule. The zoning plan for the eastern city centre (which covers the section of the canal ring area to the east of the Amstel) will be presented for public inspection, after which the official adoption process will be completed. A start will be made on preparations for the zoning plans for the southern and western city centre (covering the section of the canal ring area to the west and northwest of the Amstel) this year; the revised plans will be presented for public inspection and official adoption in 2011. This means that all zoning plans pertaining to the canal ring area (the property) will have been updated by 2012.

One important change in relation to the old zoning plans is that plot boundaries in built areas may no longer be breached, thus explicitly regulating the preservation of the urban structure. The new zoning plans will also include an archaeological policy map.

Updating and extension of Conservation Area Classification Map

The Conservation Area Classification Map, which was drawn up after the city centre was designated a protected cityscape in 1999 (see Nomination Document, Management Plan pp. 235-236) was updated in 2009. It now shows all monuments and historic buildings granted statutory protection since the year 2000 (more than 1200 in all). The map, which carries legal

force as part of the zoning plan, and is used as an assessment framework for building permit applications, is publicly accessible, and can be consulted online as an appendix to the 'The Beauty of Amsterdam - Digital' policy document on building aesthetics (www.welstandsnota.amsterdam.nl). The plan is to update the map in 2010 to include information on buildings from the period 1940-1970, which have thus far been overlooked.

Map of Built Heritage Values

In 2009 the Bureau of Monuments & Archaeology produced a map of built heritage values for the medieval core of the city centre (see Nomination Document, Management Plan, 'Classification Map for Historic Architectural Value', pp. 236-237). A similar map is now being produced for the canal ring area. The possibility of incorporating this map and the rules associated with it into the updated zoning plans and formally adopting them as policy – as has happened with the archaeological policy map – is currently being explored.

Water zoning plan

On 29 January 2009 Central Amsterdam district council adopted a policy document that sets out criteria for the appearance of boats and houseboats and the design of jetties, ladders and other structures designed to provide access to floating objects. As a follow-up to this, a start has now been made on a water zoning plan regulating the designated purpose and use of the city's waterways and other water bodies, including moorings for boats and the locations of jetties. The basic principle of the plan is to highlight the relationship between the water and the quayside. Options being considered include moving houseboats to allow unobstructed views of historic bridges, and creating space for historic ships in important sightlines. Another important principle behind the plan is that access to the water should be promoted by allowing short-term mooring at some spots. The district council will adopt the zoning plan in 2011. The rules in the plan will gradually be incorporated into the updated regular zoning plans.

To promote passenger and – possibly – freight transport by water, the district council has drawn up a jetties plan which will be included in the water zoning plan. The idea is to construct a number of new jetties of modest dimensions, with as light a structure and restrained a design as possible. The district council signed covenants on the implementation of the plan with a number of private companies and cultural and other organisations on 30 November 2009. Under these agreements, the district council will construct the jetties, and the private parties will pay the costs. Fourteen possible locations have so far been identified, eleven of which are situated in

the canal ring area. A separate decision will be taken on the construction of each jetty. The jetties planned for two visually important locations (Amstelveld and Noordermarkt) will be constructed after the houseboats currently moored there have been moved. A new jetty was recently built at the Hermitage aan de Amstel museum.

Monitoring

One of the key issues included in the Nomination Document required the municipal authority to compile a monitoring matrix to accompany the section on monitoring in the Management Plan (pp. 317-324). The matrix was completed in September 2009 (appendix F). Arrangements have since been made with Amsterdam's statistics department O+S for the collection of data. O+S has also been commissioned to conduct a survey of visitor perceptions of the canal ring area. In September 2009 Central Amsterdam district council published its regular two-yearly trend report (*Tendrapport 2008-2009*) on the main developments and trends affecting the city centre. A summary of the report is enclosed (appendix G).

Communication

The World Heritage Office has drawn up a communication plan for the period up to summer 2010, with the aim of keeping stakeholders as fully informed as possible about the nomination, and of engendering the widest possible support for it among Amsterdam residents, by responding to queries and exchanging requests and opinions. A separate plan is being drawn up for activities after summer 2010, assuming a positive decision will be taken by the World Heritage Committee.

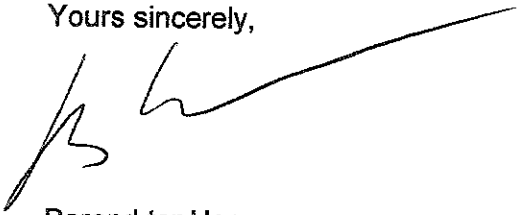
Work is currently underway on the expansion and updating of the interactive site www.werelderfgoed.amsterdam.nl, where residents, businesses, visitors and other stakeholders can find information and give their opinions and ideas about the nomination of the canal ring area. The first newsletter has been sent to stakeholders, and a second one is now being drafted, assuming a positive decision will be taken by the World Heritage Committee. As a follow-up to the stakeholder meeting in June 2008 and the two city consultations in 2009, a 'network of ambassadors' has now been set up. These are individuals who are prepared to convey the importance and significance of world heritage status to their grassroots. The first meeting took place on 15 September 2009, and the second is planned for spring 2010.

Important forums like the Building Aesthetics and Built Heritage Committee and Amsterdam Urban Development Board have been fully informed, and have committed their support for the nomination.

Final remarks

We have done our utmost in this letter to provide you with correct, adequate and up-to-date information. We are aware that in a few cases we have departed from your suggestions. We believe that we have good reason for doing so, and have attempted to present our arguments as clearly and consistently as possible. Throughout, we have based our response on the underlying principle that the essence of the nomination of the seventeenth-century canal ring area of Amsterdam for inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage List is the unique character of the urban planning concept. We have been frank and transparent on this issue in the Nomination Document, during the evaluation mission and in the answers set out above. We hope that those answers prove helpful in your evaluation process.

Yours sincerely,



Barend ter Haar

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APPENDICES

A. Boundaries

- A.1 The Centre District and the World Heritage property and buffer zone:
Proposal by the State Party in the Nomination Document, January 2009
- A.2 The Centre District and the World Heritage property and buffer zone:
Proposal by ICOMOS, December 2009
- A.3 The Centre District and the World Heritage property and buffer zone:
Revised proposal by the State Party, February 2010
- A.4 The Centre District and the World Heritage property and buffer zone:
Changes in the 17th-century urban plan
- A.5 The Centre District and the World Heritage property in focus:
Proposal by the State Party in the Nomination Document, January 2009
- A.6 The Centre District and the World Heritage property in focus:
Proposal by ICOMOS, December 2009
- A.7 The Centre District and the World Heritage property in focus:
Revised proposal by the State Party, February 2010
- A.8 Northern boundary, proposal by the State Party in the Nomination Document, January 2009
- A.9 Northern boundary, proposal by ICOMOS, December 2009
- A.10 Northern boundary, proposal by the State Party, February 2010
- A. 11 Northern boundary, proposal by the State Party, February 2010, in Historical Map of 1612
- A.12 Eastern boundary, proposal by the State Party in the Nomination Document, January 2009
- A.13 Eastern boundary, proposal by ICOMOS, December 2009
- A.14 Eastern boundary, revised proposal by the State Party, February 2010
- A.15 Boundary round Rembrandtplein, proposal by the State Party in the Nomination Document, January 2009
- A.16 Boundary round Rembrandtplein, proposal by ICOMOS, December 2009
- A.17 Boundary round Rembrandtplein, revised proposal by the State Party (as possible alternative), February 2010
- A.18 Boundary round Rembrandtplein, revised proposal by the State Party (as possible alternative), February 2010, in Historical Map of 1662

B. Historical Maps

- B.1 Amsterdam in 1538
- B.2 Amsterdam in 1612 (Design Third Extension)
- B.3 Amsterdam in 1662
- B.4 Amsterdam in 1662
- B.5 Amsterdam in 1708
- B.6 Amsterdam in 1770
- B.7 Design Fourth Extension (Daniël Stalpaert 1662)
- B.8 Design Fourth Extension

C. Photos

- C.1 - Photos
- C. 31

D. High Rise Construction in Amsterdam

Input for the Draft Structural Concept 2040, August 2009

E. Key Issues

Update June 2009

F. Monitoring Matrix

Key Indicators for Monitoring the State of Preservation, October 2009

G. Summary Trend Report

Amsterdam inner city Trend Report 2008/2009 – English Summary, 2009