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Acknowledgements

With the enormous wave of construction over the last decade, the architectural guide to Amsterdam was obviously due for revision. In light of the interest from architecture tourists, the city's expansion with the Eastern Docklands region can be termed a great success. Amsterdam has a new attraction of stature to join its ring canals, since 2010 on UNESCO's World Heritage List. But there is also a good deal elsewhere in the city which is well worth making the effort to see.

I would like to thank the publisher Kees van den Hoek and of course the authors who have been involved with the guide from the very beginning for all help and fine cooperation. As a publisher and as the owner of Architectura & Natura bookstore we have now been able to realise the seventh edition of the original publication. I therefore wish you great pleasure in your voyage of discovery through the architectural history of Amsterdam, a unique city.

Gaston Bekkers

Introduction

The great variety in the architecture of Amsterdam has often been a reason for architects, art historians or just lovers of fine buildings to pay a visit to the city. *Amsterdam Architecture* is intended as an introduction and a companion for these visitors. The chronological arrangement of the guide gives a picture of the architecture through the ages. *Amsterdam Architecture* opens with an introduction to the architectural history of the city, which is followed by eight separate periods into which the history is divided. Each period includes an introduction which is followed by a great number of illustrations with the address, the name of the architect and the name and date of each building. Although this guide can only give a limited number of examples, every effort has been made to create a picture which is as representative as possible.

Apart from this there is a list of the bodies engaged in architectural history, the preservation of monuments and historic buildings, 'architectural walks', lectures, etc. The guide concludes with an index which contains the names of all the streets included in the guide and the names of the persons and the buildings respectively. The maps on the insides of the cover show the location of the buildings illustrated in the guide. The numbers correspond to the numbers in bold face on the bottom line of the captions. This line also indicates the accessibility of the building to the public (□ = open to the public, ■ = closed to the public). For more than one reason the centre of Amsterdam cannot be visited by car. The ring of concentric canals was not built to hold so many cars and the exhaust fumes are harmful to the monuments. Adequate car-parking space can be found outside the city centre and in the suburbs, from which there are good connections to the centre by public transport. It is, therefore, advisable to walk or to cycle (rent-a-bike) within the ring of concentric canals. Public transport to each of the buildings outside this ring is indicated.

The history of a densely populated city

It has been said that Amsterdam is a laboratory for town-planning experiments. The creativity of a people that has to make the most of the space granted to it becomes apparent in the sequence of organic growth and conscious planning. An aerial view of Amsterdam shows how the diversity of the various districts increases towards the perimeter. In the middle lies the famous crescent-shape of the seventeenth century concentric canals around which the ring of nineteenth century areas and, on the outskirts, the many developments of the present century, spreading far into the landscape of Noord-Holland.

Beginnings

Amsterdam is situated on the river IJ, and was built when it was not yet cut off from the Zuiderzee (renamed the IJsselmeer). The river Amstel, together with the Dam, which the inhabitants built in the river around 1270, gave the town its name. A finger of land opposite the mouth of the Amstel protected the port against the westerly winds, while the tidal flow of the Zuiderzee prevented the port from silting up. The reclamation of many of the lakes surrounding the city made the thick, marshy layer of peat available for building. The buildings were all of timber, but fires in 1421 and 1453 made it essential to build in brick. To support this, long wood en piles were driven into the ground and held together by a framework. Dikes protected the land against the threatening seas but, even in the eighteenth century, were not able to prevent the farmlands from being flooded: a spectacle that scared the wits out of many a foreign visitor.

When in 1275, Amsterdam was granted exemption from paying tolls on Dutch waterways; it was able to devote itself to trade as well as to fishing. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the town became the most important port of call for many ships on their way from the German Hansa towns to Bruges, the most important trading town of the time.

The favourable position of Amsterdam and the development of small, manoeuvrable ships led to an increase in trade with the Baltic and the town itself became a permanent annual fair, at which grain and other commodities could be stored for long periods. The cargo trade and fishing stimulated industry and attracted many unemployed labourers from the countryside. The first townspeople lived along the banks of the river Amstel in the Warmoesstraat and the Nieuwendijk. A wooden rampart was surrounded by the Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal and the Oudezijds Voorburgwal. In the fifteenth century the town was twice enlarged with new moats without filling up the preceding ones. The oblique dike paths became linking alleys and streets.

In 1425, when the Geldersekeade and the Kloveniersburgwal in the east and the Singel in the west were built, the town was provided with its first brick fortress, with gateways, perimeter towers and round bastions. Nevertheless, the new extensions were not sufficient to cope with the increasing stream of immigrants and very soon the town literally burst at the seams. In defiance of the interests



of the landowners, the inhabitants of the carpentry workshops to the east of the city, in the area around what is now the Jodenbreestraat (then known as the Lastage), demanded protection. The landowners, who were often also members of the city council, feared a drop in the price of land. In 1589, the inhabitants got what they wanted. The carpentry workshops were removed to the islands to the east of the city and the Lastage became an exclusively residential area.

The seventeenth century concentric canals

Amsterdam, which remained Roman Catholic longer than other Dutch towns, only chose the side of William of Orange during the revolt of the Northern Netherlands against the Spanish Habsburger kings (1568-1648). In 1578 when the Protestants took over the city, Amsterdam gained a reputation for freedom and tolerance. The already substantial influx of refugees grew considerably in 1585 when the powerful city of Antwerp fell into Spanish hands and was cut off from the sea. Experienced Antwerp merchants and many poor Protestants took refuge in Amsterdam and gave impetus to trade. An important contribution was also made by rich Portuguese Jews. Trade was not restricted to the Baltic and the Mediterranean; Dutch ships swarmed over the seven seas. With a fleet larger than the English, French and Spanish put together, Amsterdam became the biggest trading town and depot of the seventeenth century. The expansion of the town stimulated the establishment of whale-oil factories, ship-yards, soap works, textile industry and many other industries and gave rise to financial institutions such as the banks and the stock exchange.

Recruiting cheap labour became more important for the landowning merchants and entrepreneurs than land speculation. Between 1570 and 1640, the population had increased from 30,000 to 139,000. It is clear that the decision of 1609 to undertake a considerable expansion of the city had been absolutely essential. All remaining open spaces were built on and former monasteries were requisitioned for public services. Increasing prosperity resulted in increasing social differences.

Citizens who had become rich wished to live far away from the smell of the docks and the noise of the warehouses. This wish had to be taken into consideration in the new development. The western section of the new expansion, as far as the Leidsgracht, was completed between 1612 and 1625 and the eastern expansion was commenced in 1658. The ramparts, with 26 bastions, were laid out like a barbed chain around the city. Of the old city gates, only the Sint Antoniespoort remained and the old city towers were provided with spires. New gateways appeared on the exit roads to Haarlem, Leiden, Utrecht, Weesp and Muiden.

Within the city walls, the western part was parcelled out in two ways. The well-to-do citizens of the mansions in the Warmoesstraat and the Kalverstraat settled in the first section: Herengracht, Keizersgracht and Prinsengracht. The plots were laid out by Frans Hendriksz. Oetgens and Hendrick Jacobsz. Staets, on a mathematical basis rather than following the existing pattern of drainage

ditches and pastures. This approach had already been applied to the Oostelijke Eilanden of Uilenburg, Rapenburg and Marken. However, the straight radial roads connecting the canals provided only poor links to the city centre and the way in which the second area to be parcelled out, known as the Jordaan, was attached, was equally unsatisfactory. In the Jordaan, where small tradesmen and many Jews had settled, the division into lots did follow the existing pattern of ditches and pastures.

In dividing land into lots, space was reserved in both the Jordaan and within the belt of concentric canals for churches and public buildings which were not surrounded by large squares and parks. Neither public gardens nor wide prospects will be found in seventeenth century Amsterdam. The area to the west of the Amstel was quickly built up, whereas the eastern section lagged behind. Many Jewish immigrants settled here and rich Amsterdammers founded many charitable institutions. Between the concentric canals and the Oostelijke Eilanden, the Plantage was built, a promenade park with small country houses for well-to-do citizens. Now the Botanical Gardens are situated here.

The prosperity of Amsterdam was maintained throughout the eighteenth century even though the port was surpassed in importance by London, Hamburg and Bremen. The rate of population growth decreased. The latest developments were sufficient to house all the inhabitants. Wealthy citizens built country houses along the Vecht and in the Watergraafsmeer which had been reclaimed in 1628. Only Frankendael still reminds us of the former affluence.

The nineteenth century: a new start

In 1813 the French troops of Napoleon left the Kingdom of the Netherlands in a state of collapse. With the financial support and economic insight of King William I the Netherlands tried to revive the former glories of Amsterdam. In the first part of the nineteenth century improvements to the infrastructure laid the basis for economic development. This was only to gain momentum in the second part of the nineteenth century. The port was dredged and cut off from the Zuiderzee and reconnected with the sea in the north by the Noord-Hollandsch Kanaal (1825). The opening of the Noordzeekanaal in 1876 and the Merwedekanaal in 1896 enabled Amsterdam to develop into an important port for transferring cargoes. The first railway, to Haarlem, was opened in 1839. Soon afterwards lines were laid to Utrecht (1843) and to Hilversum (1874), from the Weesperpoortstation. Not until 1889, the Centraal Station was built on an artificial island facing the waterfront on the axis of the Damrak to connect the lines from Utrecht to Haarlem.

The improved infrastructure stimulated industry. Shipbuilding flourished in the thirties and several factories were built on the outskirts of the town. The tram system and the gas and electricity companies were in private hands. This suited the more progressive liberals, who after 1865 had a great deal of influence in the city council. The liberal council had to deal with the problems of a city that was very much impoverished, had a great number of unemployed people



Development Plan
Amsterdam, 1866,
J.G. van Niftrik

and an exodus of well-to-do citizens to dormitory towns in the Gooi and the Kennemerland. The poor and unemployed occupied vacant canal houses, converted them into smaller units and filled them from cellar to loft with their large families. Hygiene left much to be desired, especially because the canals were still used as sewers. Here too the liberals saw the solution in private enterprise, which considering the few powers left to the council under the constitution of 1848, was the only remaining possibility.

The land in the Plantage was released for building on by rich citizens. In 1838 the Natura Artis Magistra society had already built a zoo there. When in 1848 the city ramparts were demolished and a little later the city excises and tolls were abolished, expansion outside the ramparts became possible. The first expansion included the areas on and along the city ramparts on which villas and other buildings were built. By setting up several businesses and by building the Palais voor Volksvlijt on the Frederiksplein, Dr. Sarphati hoped to reduce unemployment, improve the city and raise the morale of its people. He was the first to propose a building plan for the working class as well as for the wealthy. In the area around the Frederiksplein only the buildings on the Westeinde, the Oosteinde and along the Hemonylaan, together with the majestic Amstel Hotel and the Sarphatistraat which leads over the Hogesluis bridge, are left to remind us of his design.

The demand for houses increased in the rapidly industrializing town and many entrepreneurs followed Sarphati's example. Building activity began around the exit roads but quickly spread throughout the area up to the city boundaries. The

city council realized that action was badly needed in order to preserve some vestige of cohesion. In 1866 the city architect Van Niftrik proposed an expansion plan, which, however, met with much criticism because the necessary, compulsory purchase of property did not conform to the liberal ideas of the city council. The plan consisted of a linked succession of working-class areas, villa parks and promenaded parks. Many people see the influence of Haussman's plans for Paris in the geometrical street pattern.

In the final plan of 1876 by the director of Public Works Kalff and Van Niftrik, only the Westerpark, the Sarphatipark and the Oosterpark are left to remind us of Van Niftrik's plan. The first two were carried out according to his designs. Apart from the Vondelpark (which was laid out privately), these parks were the only green spaces between the built-up areas. Kalff's plan took property boundaries into account and followed, as in the Jordaan, the alignment of pastures and drainage ditches. The city council assisted with the completion of the street network. This raised street rates and lowered building costs. Because Amsterdam, like so many European cities, made credit available, a real building revolution took place from 1874 till 1900, during which as many houses as possible were built on as little land as possible. The development consisted of closed housing blocks around

Development Plan
Amsterdam, 1876,
J. Kalff



courtyards in which only the architectural treatment showed the difference in social status between the different houses. Supervision of the building regulations was insufficient, so that many a newly-built block of houses collapsed.

The council accepted responsibility for the infrastructure, but at the end of the 1870's had the builders themselves pay for the roads. Little consideration was paid to the way in which main roads linked up with the old city as the junction of the Overtoom with the Leidseplein shows. The irregular route of the Ceintuurbaan linked the main roads to each other and shows a lay-out that was not very well planned. At the same time the arrival of office blocks and department stores in the city centre made it necessary to fill in many old canals such as the Spui, the Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal and the Nieuwezijds Achterburgwal (now the Spuistraat) in order to create good connections to the Central Station. The houses behind the Palace on the Dam had to be sacrificed for the construction of the Raadhuisstraat. Traffic began to take its toll.

Workers who could afford a new home settled predominantly in the eastern and western parts of the nineteenth century belt, while the better-off moved into houses along the Weteringschans, the Plantage, the Sarphatistraat and, around 1900, the neighbourhood of the Museumplein. Near the Kinkerstraat canals were dug partly to imitate the character of the seventeenth century concentric canals, yet mainly for reasons of hygiene. In addition to the improvement of education and hygiene the housing of unskilled labourers became part of the social question which after 1850 began to play an important role in politics. However, the members of the philanthropically building associations were able to accomplish very little, because they were unwilling to compromise the interests of firms in which they themselves were the major shareholders. Their ideas were to form the basis of the criticism of the Radical Liberals who together with the Confessionals tried to defeat the Liberals. From 1890 onwards their influence was decisive. When in 1896 parts of adjacent municipalities such as Nieuwer Amstel were annexed, the land was leased out and observance of the building regulations was more tightly controlled. Public transport as well as the electricity and gas companies was taken over by the city council. In addition to legislation to improve working conditions the Housing Act was passed in 1901.

The council intervenes

Apart from a slight recession in 1923 the growth of the economy and the increase in population continued until 1929. The Housing Act of 1901 enabled the city authorities to draw up compulsory building regulations and to grant subsidies to house builders, giving preference to housing corporations. Moreover, building materials had become expensive for private individuals. Due to the increasing influence of the local authority in public housing, the Housing Department and Public Works became important institutions and became involved in the debate about town planning theory. The districts around the Lairessestraat and the Willemsparkweg were built on land acquired by annexation. Work was started in the Indische Buurt, the Oosterpark area was completed and the Transvaal



Development Plan
Amsterdam, 1922,
H.P. Berlage

area, in which important architects such as Berlage were involved, was realized. The Transvaalbuurt amounted to a demonstration of the use of town squares. It is possible that some of Berlage's designs were preliminary exercises for one of the climaxes of pre-war town planning: the 1917 development plan for Zuid (Amsterdam South).

This Plan Zuid was commissioned by the council to cover a section to the south of the Ceintuurbaan and was carried out in a somewhat revised form. It was the first time that aesthetic considerations had played an important role in planning. By combining wide avenues and winding side-streets, Berlage hoped to achieve the same mixture of the monumental and the picturesque which had characterized the seventeenth century concentric canals. The avenues lead into squares in which monumental buildings were to have closed the perspective. Instead of artists' residences and an art academy, however, the buildings that were actually built were more mundane. A 'skyscraper' was built in the eastern part at the intersection of the Rooseveltlaan, the Vrijheidslaan and the Churchillaan. In the western part, dominated by a trident configuration of streets, a hotel was to appear at the end of the central axis. Owing to the increased traffic,

the squares have become busy traffic intersections. Seventy-five percent of all the buildings were intended to be working-class housing, making the plan an expression of the ideas, which were fundamental to the Housing Act. In Berlage's social vision all people were equal and, although the brief demanded a division into classes (the well-to-do came to live in the western part), Berlage was able to bring together the different classes by offering everybody the same environment. The garden city concept, originating in England, was introduced to Amsterdam by socialist councillors such as Wibaut and De Miranda. These ideas were given shape in Tuindorp-Oostzaan, Volenvijk and with the incorporation into Amsterdam of the Watergraafsmeer in Betondorp. The notion of garden suburbs was suggested by fears of megalopolis. In the opinion of architect Van Eesteren and town planner Van Lohuizen of the Town Planning Department, these fears were unfounded. In 1935 they produced the General Development Plan (Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan, AUP). This plan was unique in that it was based on a combination of requirements, resulting from statistical and demographic surveys. Housing, employment, transport and recreation were functions of a town, which deserved equal attention. The designers stated in the AUP of 1935, that Amsterdam would be complete in the year 2000 and would have around 900,000 inhabitants. Before the war, in 1934, a competition for cheap working-class houses was held as part of the AUP. It was won by representatives of the Nieuwe Bouwen (Functionalism). On the basis of their design, housing was built in Bos en Lommer, an area in the western part of the city. The closed block was abandoned in order to admit more sun and air and green areas became more important. The designers were not satisfied with the finished product, however, as the high price of land had compelled the builders to place the façades to a closely together.

Slum-clearance in the Jordaan and the Oostelijke Eilanden, which had been started in the 1920's came to a standstill because of the Depression of 1929. Yet, in the thirties several railways were elevated and in 1939 the Weesperpoortstation was replaced by the more southerly Amstelstation. These actions were intended as part of a scheme for an orbital railway-line around the city. Together with the landscaping of the Amsterdamse Bos (Landscape Park) it was part of a job creation scheme.

After the Second World War: expansion and renewal

When the war was over, the city recovered surprisingly fast. After an initial increase the population now fluctuates around 750,000 but the AUP had not provided for the increase in car ownership and the demand for more living space per inhabitant. The Department of Housing and the Town Planning Department, responsible for most of the new developments, realized that the western suburbs of Geuzenveld, Slotervaart, Slotermeer, Osdorp, Westlandgracht and Buitenveldert in the south were inadequate. Building was also necessary in Amsterdam Noord and Amsterdam Zuid-Oost in the sixties. Flats of more than five storeys appeared for the first time in the north of the city, which in 1968

was connected to the centre by the IJ-tunnel. The Coentunnel and the Schellingwouderbrug made completion of the ring-road round the city possible and protected Waterland, the polders north of the city, from further expansions. In the AUP the provision of landscaping received as much attention as housing, employment and transport. The layout of the Amsterdamse Bos started before the war and in the fifties suburbs in Amsterdam West were situated around the large Sloterplass (lake).

In the Bijlmermeer in Amsterdam Zuidoost the separation of different types of traffic according to function on different levels formed the structural theme. The area was connected to the centre by the metro. The Bijlmermeer, with its abundant greenery, separate traffic zones, large car parks and centrally situated shops, could have become the triumph of the ideas embodied in the AUP. Reference was also made to the ideas of CIAM. However, the large scale on which the Bijlmermeer was built, incurred much criticism and the district of Gaasperdam was laid out on a smaller scale with low-rise building. The proximity of motorways and railway has made Zuidoost very attractive for the establishment of businesses. It is currently a large office building site. Apart from Schiphol airport and the Zuidas these businesses provide most of the job opportunities.

This development is the opposite of what was happening in the sixties. Then many businesses settled in the city centre and large roads threatened to devastate characteristic parts of the town. Of those large roads only the Wibautstraat was actually built. The construction of the metro, for which many houses were demolished in the Nieuwmarktbuurt (the former Lastage) met with much resistance from the local population. Their opposition led to a turning point in council policy with regard to urban renewal. On which the population now has more influence. The Pentagon in Jodenbreestraat and housing around Nieuwmarkt are successful examples of this development.

Housing and employment in the city centre now receive equal attention, often owing to the neighbourhood action groups. Neighbourhoods eligible for urban renewal are renovated in phases, adhering to the nineteenth century infrastructure. The council now has the difficult task of keeping motor traffic out of the city centre without causing firms to think twice about establishing themselves there. Therefore, public transport is being improved and the use of bicycles stimulated. In 1978 the railway line to Schiphol from Amsterdam Rai Station was opened and in 1986 the second Schiphol railway line, through the western part of the city, was brought into service. After fifty years, the orbital railway line was realised with Amsterdam-Rai station being connected to Duivendrecht station. In 1985 two unusual plans were completed. For the IJ-plein Rem Koolhaas designed a plan in which urban villas and rows of low-rise buildings are placed in such a way that as many residents as possible have a view of the river IJ. Carel Weeber was responsible for the Vensepolder development, where, with reference to Berlage's Plan Zuid, he built closed housing blocks with large courtyards along wide streets.

Koolhaas' plan generally meets with approval, whereas the plan by Weeber arouses controversy. Both demonstrate that there is still a lively debate about town planning in Amsterdam. The council has plans to build offices, hotels, museums and houses along the river IJ and in the eastern docklands in order to stop the migration from the city centre. This has become a new proving-ground for town-planning ideas.

The compact city

During the 1970s the continued emphasis on urban renewal and social housing led to a large-scale exodus of the better off from Amsterdam. Because there was little opportunity for them to move up the housing ladder, they moved to rapidly growing neighbouring municipalities – initially with the encouragement of Amsterdam itself. Affordable single-family dwellings with gardens were available in these 'overflow municipalities', such as Almere and Purmerend. But the need for people to commute between these growth centres and Amsterdam each day caused enormous traffic problems. Furthermore, this exodus distorted Amsterdam's population structure. Amsterdam was compelled to respond, and policy shifted towards promoting the concept of a 'compact city'. Although with the construction of the Bijlmermeer the municipality considered Amsterdam full, it went looking for new housing locations within the city's boundaries, preferring those that could also offer employment opportunities. By taking over sites abandoned by industry, urban enclaves have been created over the past few years which have their own unique atmosphere and style of architecture. The Oostelijk Havengebied (Eastern Harbour District), which is centrally situated in relation to the city centre, was rediscovered for example. And several hitherto undeveloped areas between the city's western suburbs were earmarked for housing. One example is the market-gardening district of Nieuw-Sloten. Under the terms of a 1988 covenant agreed with the state, a start had to be made on constructing 5767 dwellings in the Oostelijk Havengebied before 1996. The final target envisages the construction of 8500 dwellings housing around 17,000 inhabitants. A total of 33,000 dwellings will have to be built in Amsterdam over the next decade. The development of the Oostelijk Havengebied since the end of the 1980s demonstrates well how the emphasis of municipal policy and town-planning ideas has shifted. Through the earliest projects (along the Cruquiusweg) proposed constructing only social housing, on Java-eiland and Borneo-Sporenburg seventy per cent of all new housing is free-market sector. Of particular interest though are the different architectural approaches taken by the projects, such as The KNSM-eiland, with the much discussed sculptural, brick housing block by the German architect Hans Kollhoff. For the island's remarkable location, in the middle of the IJ, the municipality opted largely for closed blocks in order to create a clear distinction between public and private. This reveals a completely different view from that taken a number of years previously in IJ plein. The architect Jo Coenen was responsible for the detailed urban masterplan for KNSM-eiland. In contrast, Sjoerd Soeters, who drew up the urban design plan for Java-eiland,

rejected large freestanding blocks. He wanted the façades to be designed by different architects. In his plan four artificial canals transverse the long narrow island. What Soeters is particularly seeking here is the alternation of sight lines which results as one crosses a steep bridge. Furthermore, the combination of small canal houses and large apartment buildings creates differences of scale and atmosphere.

On Borneo-Sporenburg most houses are single-family dwellings, with a density of around 100 dwellings per hectare. The firm of West 8 drew up the plan and developed a completely new type of dwelling, arranged around a patio, garden or roof terrace. The dwellings are designed by various architects. Large apartment buildings 'rise up' between the streets of terraced houses. These serve to increase the dwelling density, but they also function as 'modern church towers', landmarks amid the low-rise.

Just as with Borneo-Sporenburg, the starting point in the district of Nieuw-Sloten was very high density low-rise. By stacking dwellings in the centre of the area, it was possible for most to be single-family dwellings. Here too, the high-rise served to provide a point of reference for the entire area. A clear structure and a carefully considered design of the public space have encouraged a further improvement in the quality of life in this densely populated area.

Following the Bijlmermeer fiasco, it was clear that good links and services are essential for the success of a new residential location. In this respect Nieuw-Sloten and De Aker are very favourably situated – close to the ring road and Schiphol, but also close to existing services in surrounding areas. A high-speed tram link will connect the city centre (Central Station) with the Oostelijk Havengebied, the ring road and the large, new construction area of IJburg via the Piet Heintunnel. Over the past few years it has been around the World Trade Centre (WTC) and in Amsterdam-Zuidoost that significant concentrations of office space have appeared. Both the prestige offices around the WTC and the ABN AMRO Bank headquarters in the Zuidas are well situated as a result of their proximity to a railway and metro station. Furthermore, a north-south metro line is being built to link the city to Amsterdam-Noord. A large office park has also been established close to Bijlmer Station in the past few years, in combination with the modernisation of the shopping centre 'Amsterdamse Poort'. The construction of the Arena-stadium was a major stimulus to the further development of the area.

New plans for a wide IJ-boulevard along Amsterdam's waterfront, providing space for offices, dwellings and cultural organizations are in development. Amsterdam will continue to expand by building housing on new artificial islands in the IJmeer, outside the ring road, in Amsterdam North and the 'Zuidas', which shows that, fuelled by new ideas, the intense debate on town planning is continuing to rage in Amsterdam.

Parks in Amsterdam

On a recent street map of Amsterdam one is immediately struck by two colours, green and blue. Blue represents the history of Amsterdam from when the city was founded on the spot where the rivers Amstel and IJ converge. The canals, waterways and lakes all have a history of their own. They are all from a later date, as are the cemeteries, public parks and gardens. Indeed, public parks and gardens became common only during the course of the nineteenth century. Together with the roads, squares, façades and water, public green space has become the determining factor in the quality of public space in the city. Amsterdam's landscape depicts a special situation.

Within the ring of canals

The planting illustrated on the well-known map by Cornelis Anthonisz. from 1544 is confined to a few vegetable gardens and orchards belonging to monasteries. Vegetables, fruits and herbs were grown there. The Begijnhof between Kalverstraat and Spui dates from 1346 but was later extended. Most of Amsterdam's hofjes were founded during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as almshouses. In 1610 plans were made to construct the famous ring of concentric canals, and the scheme was further elaborated in Daniël Stalpaert's map of 1665. A striking feature of this scheme was the canals lined with trees on both sides. As is evident from poems, travel stories, paintings and charters, great importance was attached to green space in the city's expansion. A stadsgaardenier (city gardener) was responsible for the trees in the city and for any new planting.

At that time, the authorities also regulated private gardens along the canals. On 19 November 1615 an ordinance was enacted which laid down conditions under which land was granted along parts of Herengracht and Keizersgracht. Local regulations permitted the owner of a plot to build on an area up to 100 Amsterdamsche voeten (1 voet is 28 cm) from the street. In addition, a summerhouse was permitted at the end of the property as long as it was no more than 15 voeten deep. The space in between was left unbuild and intended for a garden. The seventeenth-century architect Philips Vingboons designed a number of canal houses with adjoining geometrical gardens in which the same elements are present namely vegetable gardens, parterres de broderie (embroidered parterres), bleaching grounds, summerhouses and aviaries. Even now, a number of luxuriant examples of this wealth of planting and of the sculptures and summerhouses exist. From 1880 onwards the landscape architect L.A. Springer remodelled a number of canal gardens into country-house gardens according to the fashion of the time. From 1920 onwards J.R. Koning restored a number of properties (keurblokken) along the lines of seventeenth-century geometrical designs. The reconstructed private gardens of the Museum Willet-Holthuysen and Museum van Loon, with its beautiful summerhouse, also have a markedly architectural structure.



Apart from having a canal house, wealthy owners often had an estate in the country or along the rivers Amstel or Vecht. By about 1700 there were about 400 such estates around Amsterdam, along the Amstel, the Haarlemmerweg, in Watergraafsmeer, in Kennemerland and in the Vecht region.

With the exception of Herengracht and Nieuwe Herengracht the concentric ring of canals terminates at the Plantage in the east of the city. In 1682 the authorities decided to situate a pleasure garden between Nieuwe Herengracht, Plantage Muidergracht and Plantage Doklaan. This was the first sizeable green open space in Amsterdam. The architect J. Bosch divided the rectangular site into straight lanes along which privately owned gardens and places to relax were situated. The area became an important attraction and was, until 1940, a thriving entertainment centre. Even though part of the Plantage was built on in the nineteenth century, Artis (the zoo), founded in 1839 on the initiative of three individuals, continued to occupy most of the area.

Walking to the Plantage from the city via Plantage Middenlaan, one sees on the right the aid Hortus Botanicus (the botanical gardens), established here in 1682, and, on the left, Wertheimpark, named in 1898 after the banker A.C. Wertheim. The park along Nieuwe Herengracht was laid out in 1812 by the civic architect A. van der Hart and was originally part of a larger site which included what is now a sports field behind the park.

Parks outside the ramparts

The gardens laid out on both sides of the Willemspoort in 1843 were enlarged two years later with a park on 't Blauwvoofd, a city fortification. This created a popular promenade to the river IJ and offered the city's inhabitants a magnificent view towards the river Zaan and the Zuiderzee from near the present Houtmankade. Despite being extended in the direction of the Bogt (another fortification) in 1857, Park Blauwvoofd's existence was short-lived. The park disappeared in 1869 when a connecting canal was dug. These developments meant the city's outer limits had been breached however.

Park Blauwvoofd still featured in J.G. van Niftrik's famous 1866 expansion plan for Amsterdam. He planned a number of working-class neighbourhoods, urban-villa neighbourhoods and city parks in a new strip along Singelgracht. By 1855 responsibility for planting trees in the city was vested in the newly established Dienst van Publieke Werken (Public Works Department). Thus Van Niftrik, as civic engineer, had considerable influence on both urban development as well as the layout of green open space.

Amsterdam's most famous park, Vondelpark, was a private initiative however. In its current state, little now remains of another private initiative, that by Samuel Sarphati, a doctor, who designed a luxurious, green residential district in Amsterdam's Oud-Zuid. The Sarphatipark (1885) is a vague memorial to Sarphati's intentions. Westerpark was probably designed by Van Niftrik and laid out in 1891 on the site where, fifty years before, the first steam train left for Haarlem. This park and Oosterpark, which was completed in 1894 by the landscape archi-

tect L.A. Springer, were included in the urban-expansion plan drawn up in 1876 by the new director of the Public Works Department, J. Kalff. The smaller public gardens like Frederiksplein (1870) and Frederik Hendrikplantsoen (1883) outside the Singelgracht often included references to the planting at the former gates to the city. Some of the trees in the Leidsche Bosjes date from before the Leidsepoort demolished in 1862.

Green space in large-scale urban development

At the beginning of the twentieth century Amsterdam had relatively little public green space in comparison with foreign cities. The tact was noted by a committee from the Amsterdamse Woningraad (Amsterdam Housing Board) and included in the Rapport over de Amsterdamse Parken en Plantsoenen (Report on the Parks and Public Gardens of Amsterdam). To improve the situation proposals were put forward by, among others, the architect H.P. Berlage and the conservationist Jac.P. Thijsse. Thijsse wanted to link the centre of Amsterdam with the pol-ders outside the city by means of four green axes. Thijsse played a prominent role in setting up the Vereniging tot Behoud van Natuurmonumenten (Association for the Preservation of Nature Reserves). With the purchase in 1906 of Naardermeer near Amsterdam, the first nature reserve was established. The need for green open space led local SDAP (Social Democratic Labour Party) councillors to provide the city's first playgrounds and allotments. In about 1915 the Ubos (later renamed after the socialist councillor W.H. Vliegen: Vliegenbos) and Volewijkspark were laid out in Amsterdam-Noord. The important routes in Berlage's Plan Zuid such as Apollolaan also show how, from the 1920s, the municipal authorities took seriously their responsibility for providing public space. In 1926 a start was made on laying out the Zuiderzeepark (Flevopark) along the Nieuwe Diep, followed by the Beatrixpark in 1938.

The green connecting links propagated by Thijsse can be recognized in the Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan (1934), which included the 900-ha Amsterdamse Bos, and in the later struggle to preserve the green banks of the Amstel. In the case of major housing projects in and around Amsterdam, the Vaste Commissie voor Uitbreidingsplannen (Standing Committee on Extension Plans) gave detailed advice and paid considerable attention to the relationship between city and nature.

These new ideals also resulted in the provision of communal green spaces between blocks of houses. A good example of this is the communal garden designed by the landscape architect Mien Ruys at Geuzenhof, a 1930s public-housing project on Willem de Zwijgerlaan. The garden, which opened out onto the lower gallery of the block, included a stage for performing music and plays, an ornamental pool, an aviary and sandboxes. The garden was planted with simple indigenous plants. Ruys has designed many projects in Amsterdam which are worth a visit. They include communal gardens for housing in Frankendaal (De Sitterstraat, 1949), which has a playground by Aldo van Eyck and the small park at what used to be the offices of the KNSM (KNSM-laan, around 1950)

and which she herself has recently adapted as part of the development of the Oostelijk Havengebied.

Most parks suffered considerably during the Second World War and profound renovations were necessary. This provided an opportunity to further elaborate the recreational function given to parks as an integral component in the design process by the Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan. The prominence of Sloterpark in the Westelijke Tuinsteden and of Gijsbrecht van Aemstelpark in Buitenveldert is indicative of a more intense interaction. Rembrandtpark (1973), plans for which had been drawn up even before the Second World War, links the older neighbourhood De Baarsjes, which dates from the period of the Amsterdam School, with the flats in the Overtoomse Veld. Existing parks, such as the Westerpark and Noorderpark, were renovated, expanded and modernised, and new parks, such as Diemerpark, were built.

In order to solve the problem of a lack of recreational facilities, in the 1960s the government resolved to lay out 'green stars', and larger areas close to the city were redesigned as places of recreation. It was as a result of this policy that Het Twiske to the north of Amsterdam and Spaarnwoude between Amsterdam, Velsen and Haarlem were developed. The high point of the green-city concept was reached in the 1960s when the Bijlmermeer was built. High-rise flats were built in a wooded landscape divided into so-called woonhoven (residential courts), local parks and large, green open spaces like Gaasperplas. The park at Gaasperplas was the result of the International Horticultural Exhibition, the Floriade, which was held in Amsterdam for the second time in 1982. In 1972 Amstelpark was laid out for the same purpose.

Recent urban-development schemes of Nieuw-Sloten and the Oostelijk Havengebied illustrate a new vision in municipal policy towards green space. The landscape architect Lodewijk Baljon was supervisor for the architecture and public space in Nieuw-Sloten, which should be densely built but also retain an open character. Those who conceived the layout of the Oostelijk Havengebied (West 8 landscape architects) and the IJ lake started from the proposition that 'blue is green'.

Since the end of the 1990s a wave of innovation has given public space in the heart of Amsterdam and the islands a whole different appearance. Historically important squares have received new pavement, lighting and street furniture. The Danish landscape architect Sven-Ingvar Andersson was responsible for the design and execution of the Museumplein.

Frankendael

c. 1660 5.3 ha

Rebuilding 1997-2004

This seventeenth-century farmstead in the impoldered Watergraafsmeer was converted into a country estate during the eighteenth century. In 1835 it became a popular pleasure garden for the people of Amsterdam. Its attractions included a playground, a tearoom and an island with a hermitage set between poplar trees. In 1867 the Koninklijke Nederlandsche Tuinbouw Maatschappij 'Limmaeus' acquired Frankendael and founded a nursery and a horticultural school. One of its students was the well-known landscape architect Leonard Springer. The municipality of Amsterdam subsequently became the owner and established the city's nurseries here in 1886. H.C. Zwart, head of the city's parks department and later, from 1923, J.R. Koning lived on the estate. In 1925 an open-air theatre was built in the woods behind the house, and two years later the first mass open-air lessons for children began. In the 1930s the school gardens and an allotment complex were added. The botanical garden was laid out by J. Jongasma in 1960. In 1982 this historic country estate became a public park. The Louis-XVI-style entrance gate is embellished at the front with Ionic pilasters, ferns and a medallion with the head of Mercury (Jacob Otten Husly, 1783). There is a fountain in a shell-shaped basin representing the sea-god Poseidon and his wife, the sea nymph Amphitrite, a small boy sitting on a dolphin plays the lyre (Van Logteren, 1714). Buro Sant & Co has taken responsibility for the design and realisation (1997-2004) of the renewal of the park. One of the pleasantest additions is the 'Eetuin De Kas' in the middle of the park. The historic garden near the house is a reconstruction by Lucia Albers.

Hortus Botanicus

1682

1.7 ha

After the Plantage had been laid out on the edge of the old city, there was space over for the new Hortus Medicus. The plants and seeds supplied by the Dutch East India Company and the West India Company enabled an extraordinary collection of exotic plants to be built up. The semicircular hedges and the flowerbeds are a reference to the seventeenth century. Later the Hortus was used as a research garden for the University of Amsterdam. The iron palm house on Plantage Kerklaan dates from 1912. A major renovation began in the late 1980s. The tropical hothouse, which consists of three separate glasshouses each with a different climate, was completed in 1993 to a design by Zwarts & Jansma architects and laid out by landscape architect Wybe Kuitert. A fine collection of old trees in Wertheimpark on the other side of Plantage Middenlaan recalls the period when the park was part of the Hortus.

Vondelpark

J.D. Zocher & L.P. Zocher, 1864-1865 8 ha

L.P. Zocher, 1877 40 ha

The park was laid out in the rustic area between Singelgracht and Amstelveenseweg on the initiative of the Amsterdam banker C.P. van Eeghen (1816-1889). Up to 1953 Vondelpark was in private hands. The park was designed in two phases. The layout by Jan David Zocher jun. (1791-1870) and his son Louis Paul (1820-1915), both from a famous family of park designers, consists of meandering paths, pools and small graves alternating with open fields. The original plan envisaged exotic plants. During the past century the park has been repeatedly adapted to reflect the needs of the time. During the summer the park is crowded with tourists and people from the city. Vondelpark is to be the first public park in the Netherlands to be listed as a national monument. See 320 for the buildings and sculptures.

Zorgvlied

J.D. Zocher jun. & L.P. Zocher, 1867-1869

L.P. Zocher, 1891-1892

C.P. Broerse, 1967 14 ha

This cemetery is an enclave of the municipality of Amstelveen and lies along the banks of the river Amstel. The oldest part dates from 1867 and, like the extension in 1891-1892, is laid out in the landscape style. The most recent extension, by C.P. Broerse (1902-1995), is laid out in a more rigid 'Roman' style. The monuments are situated amidst poplars, weeping willows and dark coniferous trees, which provide an appropriate mood. There are fine monuments to be seen, like the family tomb of Oscar Carré (1891, by J.P.F. van Rossem and W.J. Vuyk, also the architect of Circus theater Carré, 1887), and the last resting place of many famous Amsterdam personalities, such as the architect Eduard Cuypers (1927), sculptor Hildo Krop (1970) and the painter Carel Willink (1983). See also 316.

Sarphatipark

J.G. van Niftrik, 1881-1886 4.5 ha

Little became of plans by Samuel Sarphati (1813-1866) for a salubrious residential district near Ceintuurbaan. In J. Kalff's extension plans for the city, only 4.5 ha (the equivalent of two building blocks in the urban grid) were devoted to creating a municipal park. The park has a meandering footpath linking the ponds, as well as typical landscape elements such as idyllic bridges and a small waterfall. On the other side of the park, which is at polder water level, water was pumped by what used to be a steam-driven pumping station (opposite the entrance to the park at the end of Eerste Jan van der Heijdenstraat) and drained off into the Boerenwetering. The playground was a later addition. During the restoration of Sarphatipark in 1994 the paths were raised, the southern part was given a more wooded character and the north was replanted with ornamental shrubs and perennials. For the Sarphati monument see 336.

Amsterdamse Bos

Jacoba Mulder & Cor van Eesteren, 1931-1937

Layout 1934-1970

900 ha

In 1928 the municipality of Amsterdam decided to lay out a park between the Nieuwe Meer, the ring canal of the Haarlemmermeerpolder and Amstelveenseweg. A Bos commission consisting of a large number of experts on the natural environment urban development, recreation and landscape architecture was asked to investigate how best to develop the park. On their advice, the land along the shores of the older veenplassen of the Poel and the Nieuwe Meer was preserved. Most of the extensive recreational facilities were to be located in the middle of the park. The park was to be planted along geographical lines with trees indigenous to the forests of Western Europe. It was laid out as part of the Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan according to a design by the architects Cor van Eesteren (1897-1988) and Jacoba Mulder (1900-1988). Mulder was responsible for the design and execution of the Bosplan, which provided for equal areas given over to forest, open space and water. A 300-km-long pipe-drainage system formed the basis of the park, which in some places is 5.5 m below sea level. From the artificial hill, the highest point, there are fine sight lines to the mostly landscaped layout with its curved paths, ponds and alternately open fields and thick forests. All types of sport are represented. The separate paths for ramblers, cyclists and horse riders are functional. There is also a hockey stadium, a camping site, and the Bosbaan, a wide canal used for boat races. The farmhouse Meerzicht has been transformed into a restaurant. Between 1937 and 1945 the Amsterdam School architect P.L. Kramer designed about fifty wooden bridges for the park; they vary in shape and detail. About 20,000 unemployed worked on this park since the 1930s as part of a relief-work project.

Jac.P. Thijssesepark

Design and layout C.P. Broerse, 1940-1972

5.3 ha

To visit one of Amsterdam's finest parks one has to cross into Amstelveen. This neighbouring municipality is well known for the high quality of its green open space. The former head of the city's parks department C.P. Broerse made an important contribution to this. The Jac.P. Thijssesepark, named after the founder of the Vereniging tot Behoud van Natuurmonumenten, is situated between Amstelramseweg and the Amsterdamse Bos and was inspired by the traditional Dutch peat landscape. The mostly indigenous planting is grouped around smaller enclosed beds in which the traditional lawn is replaced by herbs. Other botanical parks in Amstelveen such as Braak, Landwehrpark and Meander are also worth a visit.



The town garden of Museum Willet-Hoithuysen
Design Egbert Mos
Renovation Saskia Albrecht
Opened 1972
770 m²

Following a fire in 1929 Amstelstraat 20 and 22 lay fallow. The site had been obtained by the municipality of Amsterdam partly as the result of a legacy from the Willet-Hoithuysen couple. A gift from a bank for the purpose of improving Rembrandtplein was used in part to lay out a garden behind the Museum Willet-Hoithuysen. This town garden was to be in the French classical style once popular in eighteenth-century Holland. It was laid out in 1972 by E. Mos, head of the city's parks department. Only a few plant types are used in this symmetrical garden. The central parterres consist of clipped box hedges and red and white gravel. They are bordered by a grass verge. Pear trees have been planted and these are trained against the trellises. As well as having an eighteenth-century sundial, the garden is embellished with a series of sculptures by Ignatius van Logteren dating from 1721 and representing Flora, the goddess of flowers and spring, and Pomona, the goddess of fruit.

Erasmuspark
Egbert Mos 1960-1961
Renovated 2003
11 ha

There were gardens on this site even before the Second World War. Jan van Galenpark was situated here in the period after 1926. The present park to the north of Jan van Galenstraat in the Bos en Lommer district was completed only in the 1960s and reconstructed recently by Urban van Aar. Admiralengracht broadens out along one side of the park and then flows into Erasmusgracht. Erasmuspark is laid out as a polder and has a geometrical structure enclosed by a dike to the north and the east. The water level in the park is the same as the polder water level, a few meters below NAP (the Dutch ordnance datum). The water in the surrounding canals is kept at the maximum level of the boezem, the polder outlets. The bridge across Admiralengracht along Jan van Galenstraat was built in 1933 to a design by Piet Kramer. The series of four sculptures by Hildo Krop (of an Eskimo with seals, an American stockbroker, a Negro with lions and a Chinese) represent the four points of the compass. Next to the steps and the incline leading to the path on the ring-dike around the park are two statues by J. Klaas (Mother and Child) and H. van Lith (Nude Standing).

Jac. P. Thissepark

Gijsbrecht van Aemstelpark
Design and layout W.C.J. Boer, 1959-1962
c. 40 ha

A narrow green strip in Buitenveldert links the Amsterdamse Bos with Amstelpark over a length of two kilometres. Wim Boer was one of the few landscape architects to join the Opbouw architects and the influence of that movement can be seen in his design. By continuing the pattern of the housing blocks in the geometrical design of the park, he produced an impressive integration of urban development and park architecture. The paths link up with the street layout of the area, and much use has been made of asphalt, concrete and stone. Near the shopping centre in the centre of the green strip is an island, intended as a place to meet. This square is enclosed by flower-beds, a pergola and a rectangular pond. A restaurant has been built on a peninsula to the east of the central square. A wide promenade lined with plane-trees runs parallel to Van Nijenrodeweg.

Museumplein

**Design Sven-Ingvar Andersson in cooperation with Stefan Gall
(Atelier Quadrat, 1992-1995)
Completed 2001**

Many plans have been drawn up over the past hundred years for this large triangular space behind the Rijksmuseum. In 1884 a garden was laid out around the museum according to a design by P.J.H. Cuypers, the Rijksmuseum's architect. It was designed in an eclectic style and functioned as a sort of outdoor museum, containing, among other things, fragments of old buildings, city gates and gates to country estates which had been removed from their original locations, statues, arbours and pollard trees. Despite the many designs for villas and parks, Museumplein has remained an open space. The idea of having a garden here continued to live on, however, and new plans were recently drawn up for the site. The design by the Danish architect Sven-Ingvar Andersson (pupil of C.Th. Sørensen) preserves the openness of the square, but the 1952 layout by the city's Public Works Department with the 'shortest motoway in the Netherlands', disappeared. Instead, meadows, a pedestrian area, a pond and diagonally arranged rows of trees are created. One of the most attractive features is the sloping expanse of grass near the Stedelijk Museum. During summer evenings Andersson's light design gives the square a most urban character. In 2011 the Stedelijk opened its exceptional extension fronting on the Museumplein, designed by Benthem Crouwel.

Museumplein



Westerpark and Westergasfabriek

**Design by Kathryn Gustafson-Neil Porter (USA/UK) 1997-2003,
Extension of 13.5 ha**

This project for the rebuilding of the former gasometer terrain into a recreational park was complex. Thirteen buildings including the gasometer were renovated for the park. Since its opening in 2003 there are multiple ponds with planting of various kinds, restaurant and cafe facilities and a children's play pond, among other things. Much attention was given in the design to water features alternating with plazas and a field for events. The attention paid to planting can be seen in the selection of various species of trees and perennials. The starting point for the detailing and the selection of lighting was the large volume of visitors. Quite in the Dutch tradition, along the railway line various levels have been constructed, with embankments reminiscent of dikes. The new design links up with the landscaped section of the Westerpark, laid out in the 19th century.



Noorderpark

Noorderpark

**Design by West 8 Urban Design & Landscape Architecture
2011**

Noorderpark is a new park facility that was created after the consolidation of Florapark and Volewijkspark, both designed in the English landscape style. In the design the landscape architect Adriaan Geuze put the park's social function first. He made no radical interventions in the contours and organisation of the existing parks; in his own words, the architect wanted only to 'kiss them awake' by connecting the parts of the parks with one another and better utilising the existing elements. The new design particularly emphasises the long sight lines – referring to the vistas of the North Holland landscape.