



Gemeente  
Amsterdam



**Management Plan**  
**UNESCO World Heritage Site**

The seventeenth-century  
canal ring area of Amsterdam  
inside the Singelgracht



An aerial, high-angle photograph of the Amsterdam canal ring area, showing a dense grid of streets and canals. The water is a light blue-grey, and the buildings are in various shades of grey and white. The overall tone is muted and historical.

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The seventeenth-century  
canal ring area of Amsterdam  
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Figure 1: The Keizersgracht at the Molenpad | 1775 | Hendrik Keun | Amsterdam Museum

## Colophon

This Management Plan has been commissioned by the City of Amsterdam.  
Executed by the City District Centre and the Office for Monuments and Archaeology (Planning and Sustainability department), responsible for the Site management of the UNESCO World Heritage Site 'The seventeenth-century canal ring area of Amsterdam inside the Singelgracht'.  
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# Summary

## Canal ring area of Amsterdam UNESCO World Heritage Site

The seventeenth-century canal ring area of Amsterdam inside the Singelgracht, or Amsterdam canal ring area for short, was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in August 2010. Until the nineteenth century, the Amsterdam canal ring area and the associated urban expansion served as a great example for urban expansion in the Netherlands and in Europe. It is considered to be a masterpiece of urban development, hydraulic engineering and architecture, with the greenery as an important part of the design. The Management Plan was drawn up at the time of the nomination for UNESCO World Heritage status in 2009. It is now in need of updating.

## The value of the canal ring area

The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the Amsterdam canal ring area is:

- Criterion (i): To represent a masterpiece of human creative genius: The canal ring area is the first urban development project in the world that was systematically designed and built on such a large scale. The functions of housing, working and traffic were incorporated in the grid-like design, filled in with concentric canals and radial streets. Civil government combined functionality and beauty at a very high level. This distinguished the canal ring area in social, cultural and political terms from all major cities in the seventeenth century.
- Criterion (ii): To exhibit an important interchange of human values: In the seventeenth century, Amsterdam was the largest trading city in the world. The canal ring area, with its warehouses and merchants' houses, was the centre of this trade network. Products were stored and traded from all over the world. For more than a century, Amsterdam served as the 'warehouse of the world'. Foreign merchants and immigrants brought with them their language, knowledge and culture, in addition to their goods. Thus, Amsterdam also became the 'intellectual warehouse of the world'.
- Criterion (iv): To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape: Amsterdam is the largest and most outspoken example of the Dutch canal city, in which water traffic rather than road traffic determines the urban design. The canal plan with canals, locks, bridges and quays is the basis of the infrastructure of the canal city, with streets that were created by the excavation of canals.



### **A new Management Plan**

The Management Plan has been updated. It is more compact and meets the current UNESCO standards. The aim of the Management Plan is to describe how the City of Amsterdam will preserve, propagate and, where possible and desired, strengthen the Outstanding and Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Site for current and future generations. The Plan deals with policy-based protection, management-based protection, and the propagation of the values of the World Heritage Site. It is primarily a self-binding Plan for the City of Amsterdam. After adoption, the new Management Plan will be presented by the State Party to UNESCO. The Plan includes developments that are likely to manifest themselves in the next 6 to 10 years. These developments and the management measures are monitored every two years.

### **Legal and political safeguarding**

The international treaties, international charters and guidelines in the field of cultural heritage form the starting point for safeguarding the OUV. In the Netherlands, the OUV of the Amsterdam canal ring area is safeguarded by means of a coherent system of laws and regulations. Until the Environment and Planning Act enters into force (expected 01-01-2024) three systems are important: the spatial planning system (for planning protection), the system of heritage policy and legislation (for the renovation and alteration of monuments) and the water policy system (for water management and related works). The Environment and Planning Act offers wider possibilities for the integral protection of values and the integral assessment of developments in areas. These laws and regulations will ensure the preservation and management of the Amsterdam canal ring area.

### **Organisation**

A new governance system has been in force in Amsterdam since 2022. It consists of the City Council together with the College of Mayor and Alderpersons, with the district committees and the Executive Boards of the districts functioning as “extended administration” of the College of Mayor and Alderpersons. In this context, the City Council is the highest administrative body in the city. By giving substantial advice and through their monitoring task, the district committees and the Executive Boards can ensure that the decentralised voice is taken into account in governance.

The State of the Netherlands is formally responsible for the Dutch World Heritage Sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The siteholdership and the operational management in respect of the Amsterdam canal ring area World Heritage Site is entrusted to the College of Mayor and Alderpersons. This is carried out under the responsibility of the City of Amsterdam by the World Heritage Office of the Monuments and Archaeology Department. The World Heritage Office has the integral responsibility for the adequate management of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. The implementation of various tasks that also influence the protection and preservation of the canal ring area has been delegated to the Executive Board of City District Centre. The Executive Board of City District Centre has the task of helping to protect and preserve the heritage values in the area. Taking into account the interests and values of the UNESCO World Heritage Site is an integral part of the policy and task implementation of the organisational units of the City of Amsterdam and of the Executive Board of City District Centre. The Committee for Spatial Quality (upon the introduction of the Environment and Planning Act: the Committee for Environmental Quality) will monitor the relationship between cultural heritage and spatial/environmental quality.

### **Management tasks**

In the Management Plan, a large number of developments is identified and policy developments are outlined that affect the inner city and thus the vicinity of the Amsterdam canal ring area World Heritage Site. These include the City Centre Approach, various construction and redevelopment projects, the Bridges and Quay Walls Programme and projects aimed at infrastructure and traffic. In addition, developments such as high-rise policy, archaeology policy and the design of public space are being discussed. Other significant developments are climate change, dealing with natural disasters, calamities and risks, and changes in recreation and tourism. These developments, and their possible influence on the OUV, are described in this Management Plan, with as far as possible a look ahead to the years to come. Management measures are proposed to keep track of, and if necessary limit, the impact on the OUV.

The social discussion on the evaluation of history and on dealing with the history of slavery has also changed. By expressing apologies, Amsterdam has explicitly stated that for the City Council this means “an additional obligation to commit itself to on the one hand increasing knowledge about and acknowledgement of what happened during the slave-trading past, and on the other hand to combat the consequences arising from the effects of this past: (institutional) racism and inequality”.

### **Propagation**

The World Heritage Office is responsible for the propagation of the World Heritage Site. This is brought about by, for example, the management of a visitor centre and a website, the distribution of brochures and apps, collaboration with other World Heritage Sites, and organising and attending programmes, conferences and fairs. The fact that from the end of the 16th century Amsterdam's wealth was in part obtained through unfair trade, such as the trade in enslaved people, is increasingly highlighted and discussed. In addition, the World Heritage Office pays attention to education and information, and it contributes to (scientific) research and dissemination of knowledge. The latter is not aimed at attracting large tourist flows, but at visitors and Amsterdam residents who are interested in the historical and cultural story of Amsterdam (quality tourism).

### **Resources**

The management and maintenance of the canal ring area within Amsterdam are included in a number of programmes, in which the management and maintenance and the design of public space are regulated across the full range. Because the costs of preserving the heritage form part of a broad and comprehensive approach within this, it is not possible to specify these costs.

Maintenance and management of public space are included in various agendas and programmes, such as the City Centre Approach implementation programme. The costs of regular management and maintenance of monumental buildings are borne by the owners or the managing authorities of the canal houses and the other buildings and land, whereby owners can appeal for a subsidy at the Conservation Fund for National Monuments (SIM) and the National Restoration Fund. Most of the canal houses and the land are owned by private individuals. A smaller number of buildings and land in the canal ring area are owned by the City of Amsterdam or the Central Government Real Estate Agency. The City of Amsterdam and the Central Government Real Estate Agency respectively are responsible for the management and maintenance of these buildings.

Amsterdam is also responsible for the management of the (monumental) bridges and quay walls in the canal ring area, and for the trees and the public greenery. In addition, social housing is scattered throughout the canal ring area. This is owned by housing corporations, that are responsible for management and maintenance.

The World Heritage Office and the Monuments and Archaeology Department have a limited budget (some 65,000 Euros per year) and a staff of 2.1 FTEs at their disposal for propagating the heritage values and carrying out site management.

### **Monitor**

The World Heritage Office provides a monitoring system with a biennial report, aimed at the state of maintenance, the timely identification of developments that could affect the OUV, the progress of management measures and the provision of data for the periodic six-year reporting requirement of UNESCO. Some more complex indicators and the perception survey have a lower frequency. The World Heritage Office has asked the municipal Research, Information and Statistics Department to assist in drawing up the Amsterdam World Heritage Monitor, based on approximately 50 indicators. The Research, Information and Statistics Department advises on the manner and form in which data collection, analysis and reporting are given shape. This may take the form of a dashboard with the core data, some of which will also be made publicly accessible.

### **Management Plan for the coming period**

With this updated Management Plan, Amsterdam has a more compact plan for preserving, managing and propagating the values of the World Heritage Site, which meets current UNESCO standards. The aim is from now on to update the Management Plan in line with UNESCO's six-year Periodic Reporting.



*Figure 2: Reguliersgracht*

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Management Plan upon nomination

In August 2010, the Amsterdam canal ring area was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The canal ring area was designed in the early 17th century, and construction started in the first decades of the same century. The land around the city of Amsterdam was a peat meadow area, cultivated in the 10th-13th century. The water level was controlled by means of ditches. For the construction of urban buildings, the land first had to be raised. To this end, soil was brought in, partly coming from the newly dug canals. For the new urban expansion, a network of concentric canals was constructed on the west and the south side of the historic city and port at that time. With its length of approximately 14 kilometres, its 80 bridges and the large number of monumental buildings and houses, the canal system is considered to be a masterpiece of urban planning, hydraulic engineering and architecture, with the greenery as an important part of the design. It was the largest and most cohesive urban expansion of its time. This model of urban expansion served as a reference for urban expansion in the Netherlands and Europe until into the nineteenth century.

In 2009, in preparation for the world heritage status, an extensive nomination file was presented to UNESCO in Paris. Part of the nomination file was the Management Plan, dating from 14 January 2009. Back then, it was the first time for the Netherlands that a Management Plan for a World Heritage Site was drawn up. The plan contains the frameworks for the preservation of the World Heritage Site, as referred to in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. The plan is a guideline for the preservation and management of the core zone, being the seventeenth-century canal ring area, and the buffer zone designated to protect the core zone. The Man-

agement Plan bundled the policies of the various parties responsible into one single common vision for the sustainable management of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. At the time, the common vision and agreements on protection and management were laid down in two Covenants between the administratively responsible shareholders (the City of Amsterdam, the City District Centre and the Water Authority Amstel, Gooi and Vecht). The City District Centre was appointed siteholder and the World Heritage Office was set up to ensure the implementation of the Management Plan.

## 1.2 Need for a new Management Plan

The term of this first Management Plan was five years. Meanwhile, after more than 13 years, the Management Plan has passed its originally intended term. The plan is outdated in several parts. This applies to the content, in terms of the developments and threats that were included in the plan at the time, as well as the legal and operational frameworks and the organisation of the management and preservation of the World Heritage Site. It is imperative that the plan is updated and modernised, and to focus it on the contemporary standards of UNESCO, while at the same time aiming to make it compact and practical. The new Management Plan is being drawn up in a period in which the Periodic Reporting to UNESCO is also being issued.

The new Management Plan will meet the formal requirements for a Management Plan as set by UNESCO. In concrete terms, this concerns the operational guidelines of UNESCO and underlying documents, such as the “Resource Manual on Managing Cultural World Heritage”, developed by ICCROM in consultation with ICOMOS, IUCN and the World Heritage Centre. UNESCO’s Operational Guidelines provide a clear framework and make a number of

matters mandatory. The new Management Plan has been drawn up in accordance with Guideline 108, and will indicate how the globally unique meaning of “Outstanding Universal Value” of the UNESCO World Heritage Site is safeguarded and/or strengthened, taking into account the current state and the vision on authenticity and integrity. The Management Plan indicates which measures can or must be taken in order to achieve this objective and the ways and means for the parties to contribute. The new Management Plan aims to:

#### **Aim**

- Draw up a compact and up-to-date Management Plan.
- Update and modernise the Management Plan for the seventeenth-century canal ring area of Amsterdam within the Singelgracht UNESCO World Heritage Site.

#### **1.3 Points of departure new Management Plan**

The new Management Plan, based on UNESCO’s requirements, maps out the activities for a period of at least 6 years, in line with the term of the Periodic Reporting. This Management Plan offers a view of 10 years, and concerns activities aimed at:

- A. Propagating the values and the meaning of the canal ring area
- B. Political protection
- C. Managerial protection

The aim of this Management Plan is to maintain, propagate and, where possible and required, strengthen the OUV for current and future generations.

This translates into the following activities:

#### **Ad A. Propagation**

- Continuation and expansion of the many projects and activities in the field of education, museums/ visitor centres, research and the creative industry. Further upscaling and connecting the activities based on a joint image of the World Heritage Site.

#### **Ad B. Political protection**

- Safeguarding the policies aimed at the preservation of the World Heritage Site by continuing and strengthening it and, where necessary, adapting it to current developments (including the introduction of the Environment and Planning Act). This affects both spatial and heritage policies (environmental policy), as well as policies aimed at culture, recreation, climate and economy.
- Raising policy assignments collectively to a higher level, seeking cooperation with local stakeholders.

#### **Ad C. Managerial protection**

- Inventorying and mapping out (monitoring) the developments and possible threats for the preservation and protection of the OUV.
- Identifying appropriate and feasible actions and measures to manage these developments and possible threats in such a way as to sustainably safeguard preservation and protection in the next 10 years.
- Implementation of management as a ‘living city’, in which there is room for new developments that, taking into account and inspired by the (material and immaterial) heritage values, enrich the future setup and the recreational and educational significance.
- Involving parties in the implementation of management measures.

Part of the management is to find suitable solutions in a timely manner for developments and possible threats that manifest themselves around and in the canal ring area, and to anticipate such developments and possible threats. Management, protection and preservation are not possible without the cooperation of residents and users of the canal ring area and the immediate surroundings. This means that the siteholder will implement the management plan in collaboration with:

- Parties such as stakeholders, heritage organisations, owners/residents, entrepreneurs and administrators who play a role in protecting, preserving, sustainably maintaining, managing and propagating the OUV of the World Heritage Site.
- Parties such as other authorities, who play a role in filling in new user functions or dealing with external developments to ascertain that the OUV is not compromised.

The Management Plan ensures continuity in safeguarding the heritage values in a dynamic environment and contributes to the coherent input and use of diverse expertise and disciplines that play a role in the management and preservation of the heritage.

The City of Amsterdam is responsible for the preservation and management of the core zone, the buffer zone and the attributes contained within (buildings, bridges and quays, infrastructure and trees), as well as for managing the effects that may occur from a larger area of influence. Since the nomination, there have been multiple changes in respect of the core zone, the buffer zone or the inlying attributes. Changes that were often already included in the Management Plan drawn up at the time, or that presented themselves afterwards and for which “State of Conservation Reports” were sent to UNESCO in 2011 (scaffolding cloth advertising) and in 2017

(Sluisbuurt high-rise development). A number of these changes recur in this Management Plan because they have not yet been completed. In chapter 6, developments relevant to the management of the canal ring area that may manifest themselves in the next 10 years are discussed.

Amsterdam is responsible for the adequate management of the World Heritage Site. This means that it will initiate and carry out activities for the purpose of preserving and improving the quality of the World Heritage Site. The State Party is the contact point for UNESCO with regard to the obligations arising from the status of the canal ring area as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

#### **1.4 Management Plan status**

The Management Plan is primarily a plan that binds the siteholder as the determining body (self-binding). The Management Plan itself has no legal status, but the management measures affect the municipality and the Water Authority, private parties, owners and users/operators. Upon adoption, the new Management Plan will be presented by the state Party to UNESCO (Paris).

#### **Term of the Management Plan**

A Management Plan looks approximately 10 years ahead with regard to developments (opportunities or threats) with a possible impact on the World Heritage Site. This Management Plan focuses on the period 2023-2033. In the Netherlands, it is being considered whether the term can be linked to the Periodic Reporting period of 6 years.

## 2 Outstanding Universal Value Amsterdam canal ring area



Figure 3: Amsterdam canal ring area / Cor Harteloo

### 2.1 Qualitative description

The Amsterdam canal ring area is without doubt the most evocative part of the inner city of Amsterdam. The area is well loved by residents and visitors, renowned at home and abroad. It is a very special area with endless canals, a great number of trees along the quays, and canal houses in all shapes and sizes. It is a historic area used intensively by residents, businesses and visitors. The roots of the canal ring area lie in the seventeenth century, when the area was developed by and for the citizens of

Amsterdam. Since then, the canals have been a symbol of the civic culture and the openness that characterise Amsterdam. Together, they form the characteristic fan-shaped layout, with the many bridges that are part of a water city. It is a green living and working area, with multifunctional merchants' houses and city palaces and homes and workshops of craftsmen in the side streets.



The canal ring area is exceptional and has no equal in the world. That is why this icon has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 2010. Like all World Heritage Sites, the canal ring area has its unique values. The area includes the three main canals: Herengracht, Keizersgracht and Prinsengracht. But Nieuwe Herengracht, Nieuwe Keizersgracht and Nieuwe Prinsengracht (on the east side of the river Amstel) are also part of it, as is Het Singel and the seven side canals. The whole area measures more than 198 hectares, the total length of the canals measures 14 kilometres and there are no fewer than 80 bridges. The canal ring area is part of a gigantic urban expansion, dating from the seventeenth century.

The term Grachtengordel (canal ring area) was introduced in the nineteenth century.

The UNESCO World Heritage Site includes a so-called core zone and a buffer zone. The buffer zone surrounds the core zone and serves as its protection. The boundaries of the Amsterdam buffer zone are the same as those of the nationally protected cityscape designated in 1999. This designation also guarantees the legal protection of the World Heritage Site.

#### **From Hamlet to commercial metropolis**

Although the peat in Amstelland had been reclaimed as early as around the year 1000, there was no permanent habitation at the mouth of the river Amstel until the first half of the 13th century, when fishermen and craftsmen settled on the dikes on either side of the Amstel, the current Damrak. From the mid-13th century, a dam connected both banks and gave the settlement its name. Its favourable location on the water enabled Amsterdam to grow into an important port and trading town.

In the 14th and 15th centuries, the city expanded with new canals, ramparts and a city wall. These can be partly traced back to the peat streams of the Amstel estuary, but they are essentially drawing board designs, while the side streets (from east to west) more closely follow the structure of the polder layout. This was followed in the 16th century by two larger urban expansions, the so-called First and Second Expansion. Prosperity as well as population numbers increased explosively. The city functioned like a magnet for people from all over the world. A new rigorous expansion was urgently needed.

#### **A unique streetplan**

The canal ring area is part of the enormous seventeenth-century urban expansion, which created new living and working areas and through which the harbour on the river IJ was extended. The canal ring area provided Amsterdam with a unique streetplan: the new canals were laid out like a fan around the old inner city. The characteristic shape and size of the area distinguishes Amsterdam from other canal cities in the world.

For practical and financial reasons, the canal ring area was constructed in two phases, during the Third Expansion and the Fourth Expansion. The Third Expansion started in 1613 in the western part of the city, following the construction of a new harbour and rampart. Within the new walls, land was expropriated, raised and structured, with the exception of the Jordaan quarter, where the old polder structure has remained. The Third Expansion covers the area from the river IJ to the current Leidsegracht.

The Fourth Expansion builds on and completes the earlier expansions. This, too, was preceded by a port expansion and a new defensive wall. This time

the entire area was expropriated and all the land was re-parcelled. It includes the canal ring area, from Leidsegracht in the direction of the Eastern Islands, with the famous Golden Bend. The part east of the river Amstel was not immediately built up as planned, because the economy stagnated. However, some large social institutions were established and gardens were created in the Plantage. Only later did the canal houses emerge there. Thus, Amsterdam underwent the largest urban expansion in Europe in the seventeenth century. In less than 100 years, the city had grown to five times its original size.

### **A city of citizens**

The seventeenth-century urban expansion was a costly, complicated and lengthy project. The fact that it was nevertheless successful is due to the local, civic government. In other European cities and countries at the time, authoritarian monarchies called the shots. But Amsterdam had a civilian government that cooperated closely with enterprising and prosperous citizens. In fact, the City Council consisted mainly of well-to-do merchants.

The fact that the city government came from the bourgeoisie had a major influence on the construction of the canal ring area. It was agreed that every choice made had to yield something. It had to be functional, beautiful or profitable for the city: 'for benefit, ornament or profit'. Stone bridges, for example, were expensive, but required less maintenance and on top of that were status-enhancing. Another example is the design of the main canals: straight building plots and streets were created as much as possible, providing a maximum of saleable land as well as beautiful sightlines. And that is also one of the essential characteristics of the civic city: all its citizens could have their own houses built on their own lots.

The appearance of the canal ring area had to match the rich and powerful trading town that Amsterdam

had become, which is why a separation was devised between living, working and traffic. The low-traffic and luxurious Herengracht and Keizersgracht were made into residential canals, meant mainly for the wealthy citizens. The rest of the area was intended for logistics and business. This was new in Europe. The canal ring area thus reflects the civic culture of that time.

### **The world's warehouse**

In the seventeenth century, Amsterdam was powerful, rich and internationally oriented. Between 1585 and 1685, Amsterdam was the centre of world trade, the warehouse of the world. During this century and the following centuries, the Amsterdam elite became rich from this international trade, thanks in part to colonisation and slave trade. This wealth, partly based on colonial robbery and the slave trade of the West and East India Companies, is still tangible today in the Amsterdam canal ring area.

Due to the international trade network, the many visitors and the inhabitants who settled from abroad, there was plenty of knowledge about the world of that time. Notorious philosophers and scholars found a market for their work in Amsterdam; some even found a safe haven there. Maps, atlases, newspapers, books and magazines were printed and sold in many languages. The arts flourished, thanks to urban and private commissions. In this sense, Amsterdam was an intellectual warehouse.

Since 1578 the city had been officially of the Reformed denomination, but in practice many different religions were tolerated. Religious refugees, such as Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews, found shelter here. Remonstrant or Roman Catholic believers could still profess their faith in so-called home churches or clandestine churches. Thus, Amsterdam's reputation as a tolerant, open city is centuries old and still attracts many citizens of the world today.

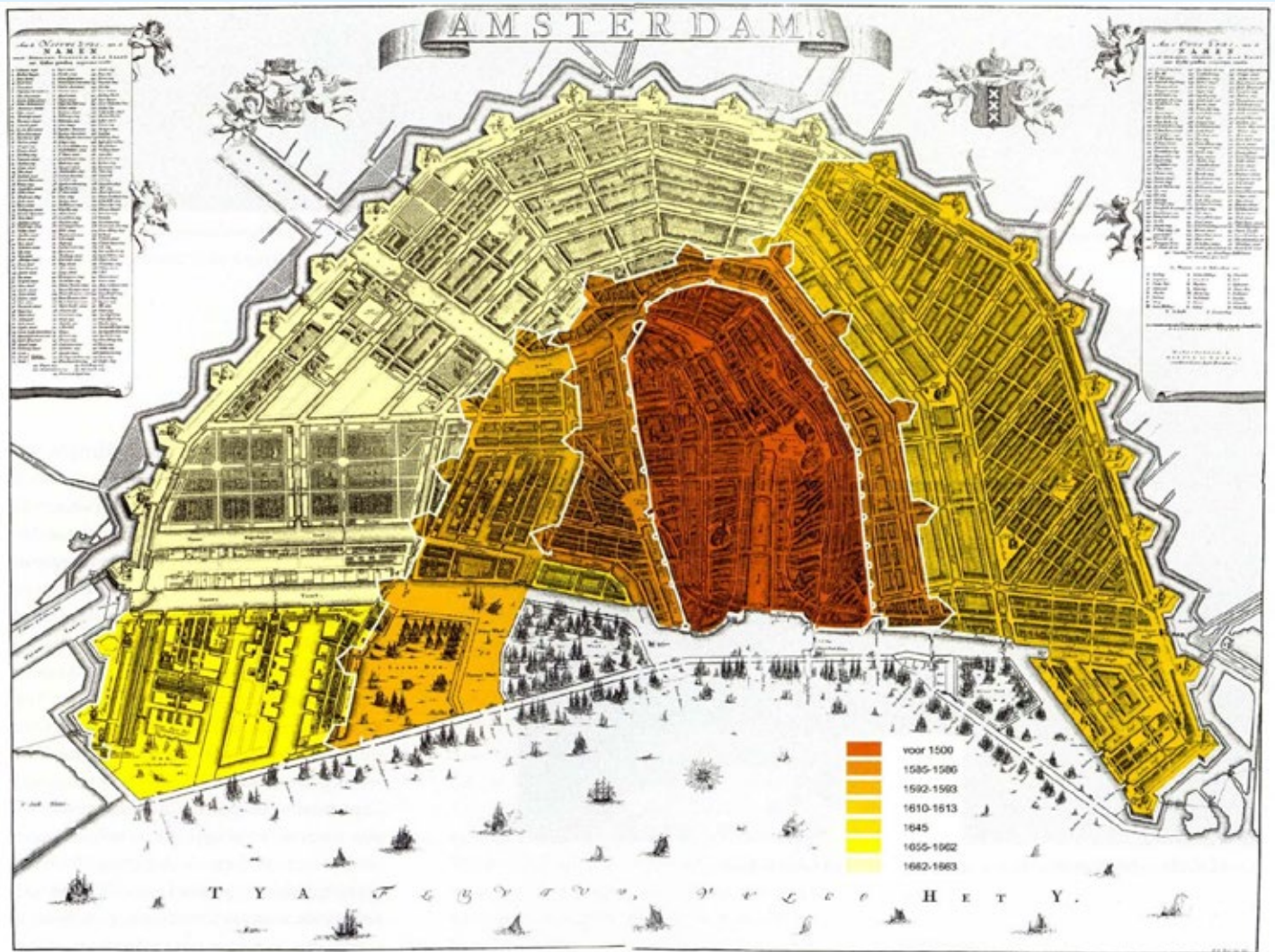


Figure 4: Overview phased urban expansion canal ring area

### Waterworks

Behind the pretty picture of the canal ring area lies a complete history of working on the water. A major point of concern was the water level, because the city level deviated from the water levels in the rivers Amstel and IJ. With the great urban expansion, seven storage basins had emerged within the city, each with their own water level. Locks had to resolve the differences. Fixed and movable bridges ensured unhindered passage of land and water traffic. Around 1700, the storage basins in the city were merged. With the arrival of the Oranjesluisen locks in 1872, one single water level was achieved between the city, Amstel and IJ.

However, even with the water level within the city having been equalised, water quality remained problematic. This was mainly because the canals were used as open sewers. In the seventeenth century, the city was once described as 'a fair virgin with foul-smelling breath'. In order to improve the water quality, the canals were flushed, first through the river Amstel, then by using the tides, and finally by pumping up water from the Zuiderzee, later to become IJsselmeer. Pollution by household waste was also prevented. Since the seventeenth century, waste had been collected. A sewerage system was installed in the old inner city after 1930 and in the canal ring area in the 1980s. Nowadays, flushing the canals is no longer necessary, because houseboats

are connected to the sewerage system, sewage treatment plants have been improved and moved, and there are stricter controls on the discharge of waste into water. Water quality is currently of such a high standard that it would be possible to go for a swim in the canals.

### **Green lungs**

The seventeenth-century City Council decided that the canals should be green. And so, trees were planted along the canals and large indoor gardens designed behind the canal houses: the green lungs of the inner city. At the time, this kind of urban greenery was virtually unique in Europe.

As early as 1600, Amsterdam started planting trees on a large scale and systematically, and this also applied to the construction of the canal ring area. The trees formed a crucial part of the 'master plan' of the canal ring area. With their regular planting pattern in a straight line along the water, they are part of the canal profile. In the course of the seventeenth century, the widely used linden tree was replaced by the elm, which was more resistant to city life. The benefits of the trees were countless. They provided a pleasant shade and their roots strengthened the quays. The foliage was suitable as fodder, and the wood was used to produce wooden shoes, cart wheels and lock gates. But above all the trees were a jewel for the city.

Gardens behind the canal houses should be a feast for the eyes and help to boost the value of the houses. Therefore, it was laid down in a so-called 'keur' (an urban law) that the plots could only be partially built on. This resulted in the deep 'keur gardens'. These were in part functionally laid out. With a terrace, an ornamental garden and a bleaching field or a vegetable or herb garden. At a later stage, the ornamental garden prevailed. Until the end of the eighteenth century, such a garden had a formal layout, with clean lines and geometric shapes. Subsequently they started to go with the

taste of the times. Thanks to the seventeenth century 'keur' rules, the greenery has remained present in the canal ring area.

### **Merchant houses and urban villas**

Nowadays there is a wide variety of façades, but in the seventeenth century the canal houses looked very similar. They were mostly merchant houses with Dutch brick façades. In the oldest part of the canal ring area, they frequently had stepped gables. Later on neck gables, clock gables and cornices became popular.

The merchant houses were built in accordance with a few standard models. The uniform architecture created unity in the cityscape. The clients were private individuals or project developers. It sometimes happened that three houses for rent or sale were built on two lots. Typical merchant houses combined living and working, or in other words mixed business with pleasure. The merchant lived there, his office was located there and he could store goods there. 'Keur gardens' appeared behind the merchant houses, sometimes with garden houses. Alongside these merchant houses, warehouses and craftsmen's houses also emerged.

Canal houses with a more exclusive architecture were commissioned by the wealthiest members of society. Most of these houses are to be found in the area between Leidsegracht and the river Amstel. Such urban villas are often built on a double plot, with an accompanying coach house or stable on a plot at the back on Reguliersdwarsstraat or Kerkstraat. The servants' quarters were located in the basement of the luxurious urban villas. Over time, the function of the canal houses could change: from residential to business premises or vice versa. And while the construction of the seventeenth-century buildings is frequently still intact, all the façades have been modified or replaced to a greater or lesser extent, with the current varied mix as the result.



Figure 5: View of the golden bend in the Herengracht | 1671-1672 | Gerrit Berckheyde | Rijksmuseum

## 2.2 Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

The Outstanding Universal Value of the canal ring area is apparent from three criteria, as drawn up by UNESCO:

- i. To represent a masterpiece of human creative genius
- ii. To exhibit an important interchange of human values
- iv. To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape (Dutch canal city)

In today's communication, Amsterdam uses the following "translation" of the SOUV:

- **Criterion (i):** To represent a masterpiece of human creative genius.  
The canal ring area is the first urban development project in the world that was systematically designed and built on such a large scale. The functions of living, working and traffic were incorporated in the grid-like design, filled in with concentric canals and radial streets. Civil government combined functionality and beauty at a very high level. In social, cultural and political terms, this distinguished the canal ring area from all major cities in the seventeenth century.
- **Criterion (ii):** To exhibit an important interchange of human values.  
In the seventeenth century, Amsterdam was the largest trading city in the world. The canal ring area, with warehouses and merchants' houses, was the centre of this trade network. Products from all over the world were stored and retraded. For more than a century, Amsterdam served as the 'warehouse of the world'. Foreign merchants and immigrants brought with them not only their goods, but also their language, knowledge and culture. Thus, Amsterdam also became the 'intellectual warehouse of the world'.
- **Criterion (iv):** To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape.  
Amsterdam is the largest and most outspoken example of the Dutch canal city, in which not road traffic but water traffic determines the urban design. The canal plan with canals, locks, bridges and quays is the basis of the infrastructure of the canal city, with streets that were created by the excavation of canals.

The box below provides a compact representation of the formal Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

### **Synthesis of the formal Statement of Outstanding Universal Value**

The Amsterdam canal ring area illustrates exemplary hydraulic and urban planning on a large scale through the entirely artificial creation of a large-scale port city. The gabled façades are characteristic of this middle-class environment, and the houses bear witness both to the city's enrichment through maritime trade and the development of a humanist and tolerant culture linked to the Calvinist Reformation. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Amsterdam was seen as the realisation of the ideal city that was used as an urban reference model for numerous projects for new cities around the world.

- **Criterion (i):** The Amsterdam canal ring area represents the design at the end of the 16th century and the construction in the 17th century of a new and entirely artificial 'port city.' It is a masterpiece of hydraulic engineering, town planning, and a rational programme of construction and bourgeois architecture. It is a unique and innovative, large-scale but homogeneous urban ensemble.
- **Criterion (ii):** The Amsterdam canal ring area bears witness to an exchange of considerable influences over almost two centuries, in terms not only of civil engineering, town planning and architecture, but also of a series of technical, maritime, and cultural fields. In the 17th century, Amsterdam was a crucial centre of international commercial trade and intellectual exchange, for the formation and the dissemination of humanist thought; it was the capital of the world economy in its day.
- **Criterion (iv):** The Amsterdam canal ring area represents an outstanding example of a built urban ensemble that required and illustrates expertise in hydraulics, civil engineering, town planning, construction and architectural know-how. In the 17th century, it established the model for the entirely artificial 'port city' as well as the type of Dutch single home with its variety of façades and gables. The city is testimony, at the highest level, to a significant period in the history of the modern world.

### 2.3 Integrity and Authenticity

The network of canals in concentric arcs of a circle that forms the basis of the urban layout, together with the radial waterways and streets, with its old embankments and historical façade alignments, is intact, authentic and recognisably present. Most of the houses built in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are still present and generally in a good state of conservation.

This basic situation is fundamentally sound for an urban ensemble that is alive and characterised by high dynamics. However, some streets have been widened and totally new buildings have arisen along these wide streets. This applies to Vijzelstraat (even side) and Weesperstraat (both sides). Raadhuisstraat was an important breakthrough in 1895 (widened profile, demolition of buildings with filling in of Warmoesgracht and Rozengracht). The old civil and hydraulic structures have mostly been replaced. In addition, waterways in the canal ring area were filled in in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Tall modern buildings influence the spatial visual quality of the urban landscape, particularly in the north.

The entire area has been designated as a nationally protected cityscape. A large number of buildings and structures are protected by national and municipal heritage lists. The high-rise development, particularly in Amsterdam North, on the other side of the river IJ, had already been included in the UNESCO file for the nomination, as had the High-rise Vision that was still being developed at the time.

### 2.4 State of Conservation

The State of Conservation was established in 2010, which is when the key indicators for annual monitoring were appointed. Such a monitor was drawn up every two years up to and including 2016. From 2022, Amsterdam is working on a new monitor, which will also provide input for the Periodic Reporting to UNESCO.

After inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List, the government sent State of Conservation Reports to UNESCO in 2011 and 2017:

- In 2011, this concerned the impact of advertisements (particularly façade and scaffolding cloth advertising and moving advertisements) and the agreements made or measures taken by Amsterdam in collaboration with commercial parties to counteract the negative impact on heritage values and heritage perception. Also mentioned was the availability of the Amsterdam High-rise Vision as part of the Structural Vision on future urban developments Amsterdam 2040.
- In 2017, it concerned the high-rise plans in Sluisbuurt. This high-rise development was to take place at a distance of 4 kilometres from (the core zone of) the UNESCO area. The extent to which the plan affected, for example, the SOUV of the UNESCO World Heritage Site was elaborated in a High-rise Impact Assessment. The survey prompted some adjustments to the plans that lessened the impact on the sightlines from the canal ring area. Specifically, the height of a number of towers in the design was reduced and some were moved to different locations.

In this Management Plan, the developments that will emerge in the coming 10 years are discussed and the measures to regulate the impact on the State of Conservation in line with the SOUV of the UNESCO World Heritage Site are outlined.





## 3 Location, buffer zone and ownership

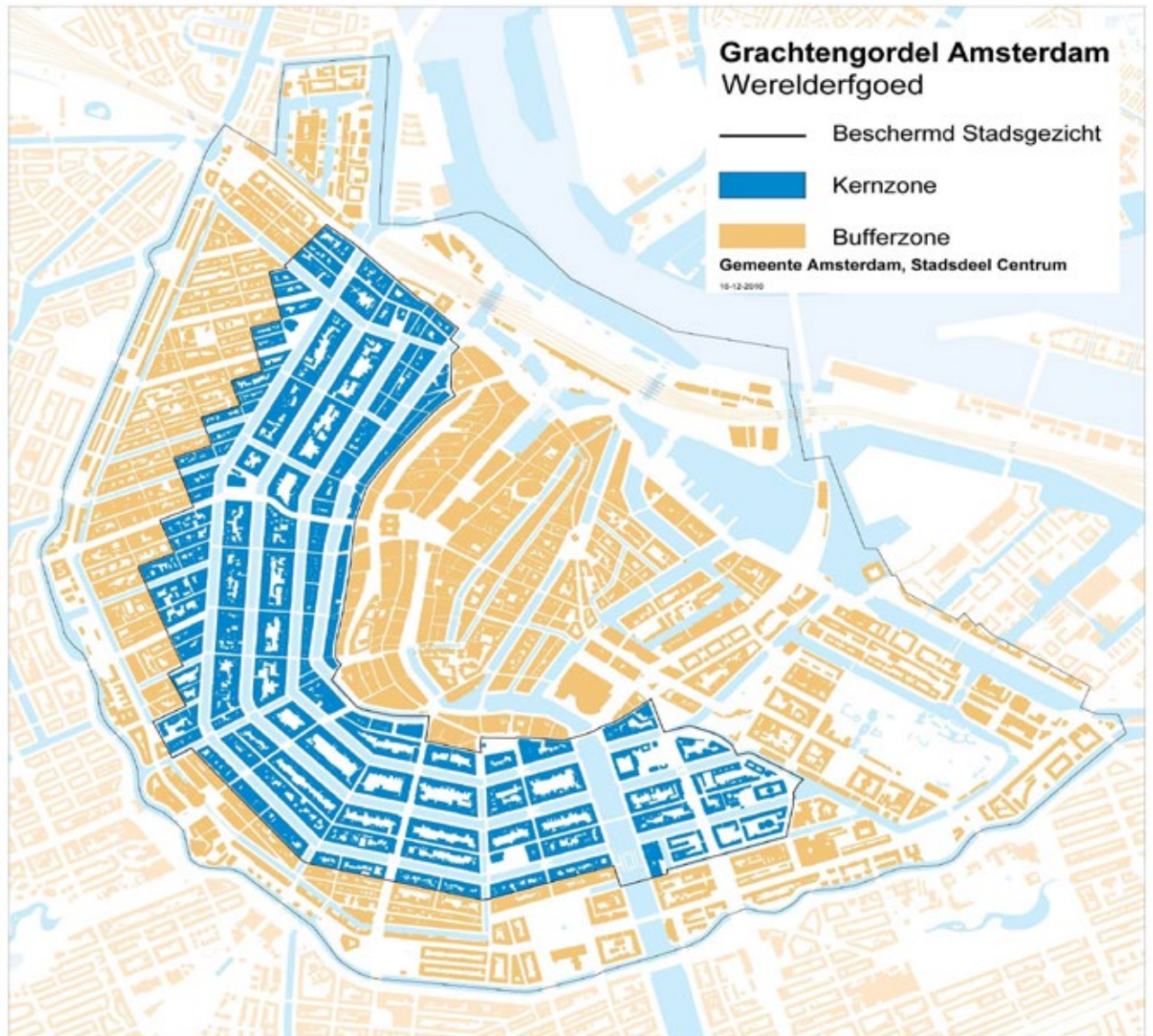


Figure 6: Overview map core zone and buffer zone Amsterdam canal ring area

### 3.1 Location

The location indicator for the UNESCO World Heritage Site “The seventeenth-century canal ring area of Amsterdam within the Singelgracht” inscribed in 2010 (UNESCO file number 1349) is: N52°21’54” and E4°53’16”.

### 3.2 Boundaries and buffer zone

The seventeenth-century canal ring area forms the core zone. The other parts of the historic inner city within the Singelgracht form the buffer zone. The core zone comprises 198.2 hectares and the buffer zone 481.7 hectares. The core zone is formed by Het Singel, Herengracht, Keizersgracht and Prinsengracht, and the radial streets and side canals in between, and on the east side of the river Amstel Nieuwe Herengracht, Nieuwe Keizersgracht and Nieuwe Prinsengracht. The boundaries of the buffer zone corresponds to the boundaries of the protected cityscape. The buffer zone is protected in the same way as the core zone, on the basis of the regulations for the protected cityscape. Approximately 8,000 national and municipal monuments are located in the area.

### 3.3 Ownership

The ownership position of the buildings in the canal ring area, broken down into centre, buffer zone and core zone, is shown in the table below (figure 7). This concerns both homes and buildings used as a business, office, catering, retail or service facility. It should be noted that the buildings in which the establishments are housed are predominantly privately owned. A small proportion of the establishments are buildings owned by the municipality or other authorities such as educational institutions, museums and the Central Government Real Estate Agency. De facto, in relation to Amsterdam these are private owners. Some of the homes are owned by housing corporations and private individuals, who manage these homes and rent them to residents. Owner-occupied homes and more expensive private rentals are privately owned.

All the houseboats are also privately owned. The locations/berths of these houseboats have been laid down in zoning plans, for the most part in the “Water” zoning plan. In addition to an environmental permit, houseboat owners must also have a mooring permit, pursuant to the Inland Shipping Act. For mooring in public municipal water, houseboat owners pay sufferance tax (‘mooring fee’).

Public space and water are public property, managed by the City of Amsterdam and the Water Authority Amstel, Gooi and Vecht. More than 18% of the surface of the core zone and 20% of the buffer zone consist of water. In the canal ring area there are approximately 7,750 trees, of which some 2,500 in the core zone and more than 5,000 in the buffer zone. More than 450 trees have a monumental status.

A special feature of Amsterdam is the fact that since 1896, approximately 80% of the land of the municipality has been leased out. The map below (figure 8) provides an overview in which the red areas have been leased out. For large parts of the canal ring area, the leasehold percentage is considerably lower. In the canal ring area, much of the land is privately owned and a relatively large number of buildings is located on private land.

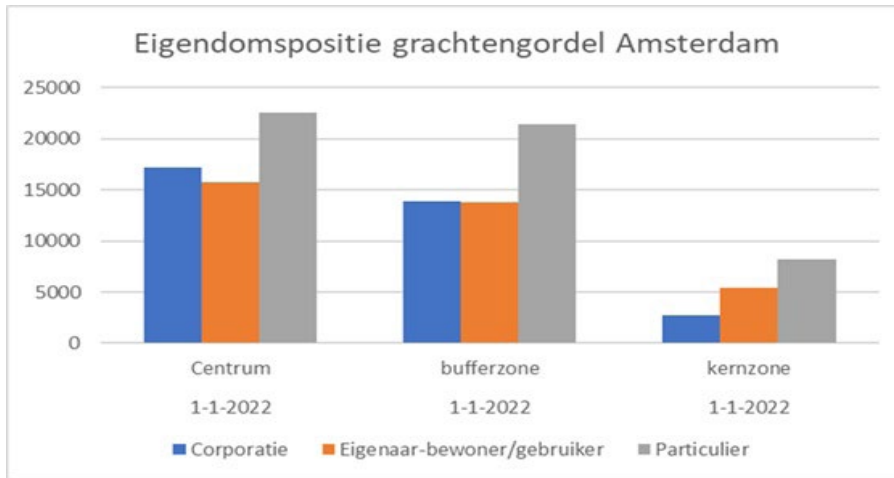


Figure 7: Overview ownership position buildings in the Amsterdam canal ring area

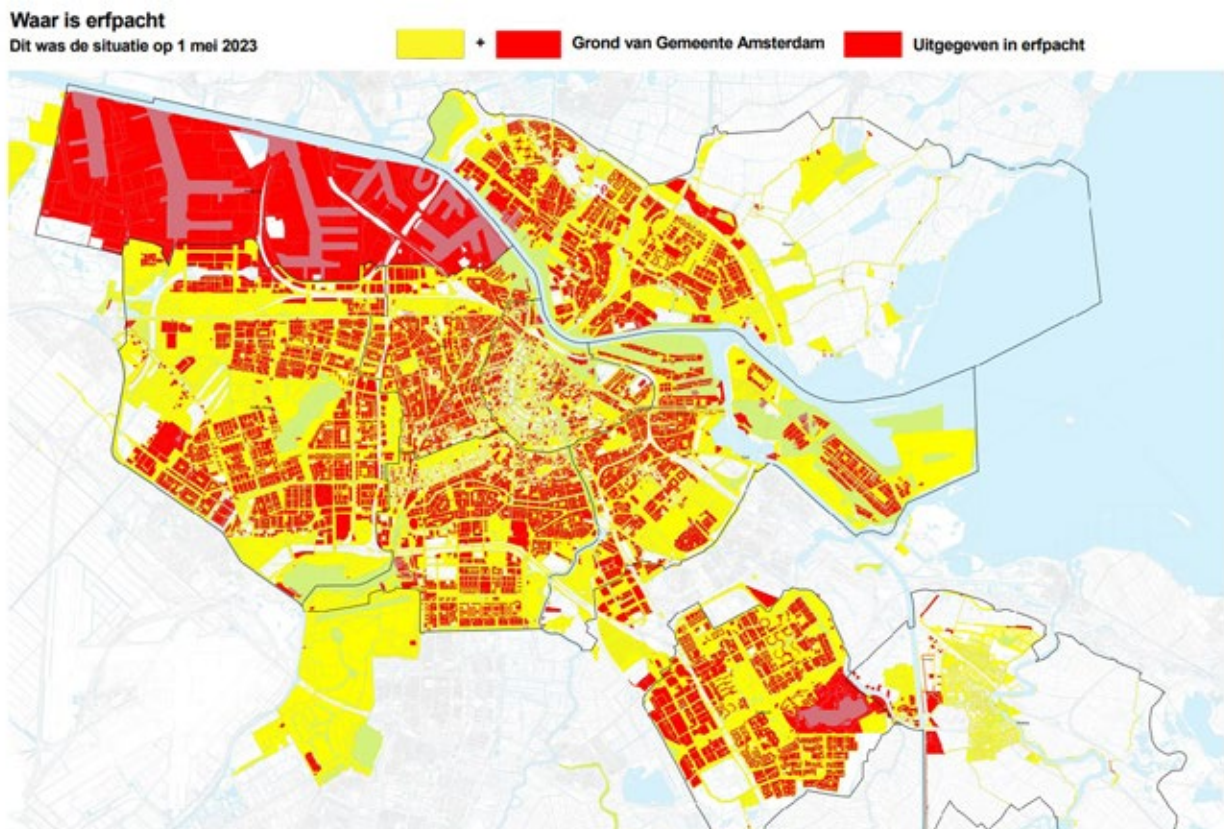


Figure 8: Overview land ownership and leasehold Amsterdam canal ring area

# 4 Safeguarding in legal and policy frameworks

## 4.1 International treaties, conventions and charters

Below is an overview of the most important international treaties, conventions and charters that are important for the management of the canal ring area:

UNESCO	World Heritage Convention (Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage)	16 November, 1972	<a href="http://whc.unesco.org">WHC.unesco.org</a>
UNESCO	Linking Universal and Local Values: Managing a Sustainable Future for World Heritage (World Heritage papers 13)	22-24 May, 2003	<a href="http://whc.unesco.org">WHC.unesco.org</a>
UNESCO	Vienna Memorandum on World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture – Managing the Historic Urban Landscape	10-11 October, 2005	<a href="http://whc.unesco.org">WHC.unesco.org</a>
UNESCO	Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention	31 July, 2021	<a href="http://whc.unesco.org">WHC.unesco.org</a>
UNESCO	World Heritage Managing Historic Cities (World Heritage papers 27)	November, 2010	<a href="http://whc.unesco.org">WHC.unesco.org</a>
UNESCO	World Heritage and Buffer zones (World Heritage papers 25)	March, 2008	<a href="http://whc.unesco.org">WHC.unesco.org</a>
UNESCO	Kyoto Vision	8 November, 2012	<a href="http://whc.unesco.org">WHC.unesco.org</a>
UNESCO	Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape	10 November, 2011	<a href="http://whc.unesco.org">WHC.unesco.org</a>
ICOMOS	Charter for the conservation of historic towns and urban areas	1987	<a href="http://icomos.org">icomos.org</a>
ICOMOS	The Venice Charter (International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites)	1964	<a href="http://icomos.org">icomos.org</a>
ICOMOS	Resolutions of the Symposium on the Introduction of Contemporary Architecture into Ancient Groups of Buildings	30 June, 1972	<a href="http://icomos.org">icomos.org</a>
UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS	The Nara Document on Authenticity	1994	<a href="http://icomos.org">icomos.org</a>
ICOMOS	International Cultural Tourism Charter. Principles And Guidelines For Managing Tourism At Places Of Cultural And Heritage Significance	December, 2002	<a href="http://icomos.org">icomos.org</a>
ICCROM	Riga City and Historical Reconstruction in relationship to Cultural heritage	23-24 October, 2000	<a href="http://iccrom.org">iccrom.org</a>

ICOMOS	ICOMOS Charter on the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites	4 October, 2008	<a href="http://icomos.org">icomos.org</a>
UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN	World Heritage Resource Manual Preparing World Heritage Nominations, second edition 2011	November, 2011	<a href="http://WHC.unesco.org">WHC.unesco.org</a>
UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN	Managing Cultural World Heritage	16 November, 2013	<a href="http://WHC.unesco.org">WHC.unesco.org</a>
UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN	Managing Disaster Risks for World Heritage	1 June, 2010	<a href="http://WHC.unesco.org">WHC.unesco.org</a>
UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN	Managing Natural World Heritage	June, 2012	<a href="http://WHC.unesco.org">WHC.unesco.org</a>
EU	European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage	January, 1992	National Government
EU	Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada)	October, 1985	National Government
Council of Europe	Faro Convention. The Value of Cultural Heritage for Society	2005	National Government
United Nations	Sustainable Development Goals	2016	<a href="http://www.un.org">www.un.org</a>

## 4.2 National policies, laws and regulations

### 4.2.1 General functioning of the regulatory system

It is intended in the Netherlands to combine 26 laws and other regulations relating to spatial planning and the physical living environment in one law: the Environment and Planning Act. The Environment and Planning Act aims to provide clarification and efficiency. A coherent approach should lead to a good and sustainable physical living environment. The new law will also further safeguard the protection of heritage, monuments, archaeology and water. Existing qualities, such as heritage values and nature values, are associated with the quality of the living environment. These values will also form the starting point for new developments (this is notably in line with the aim of UNESCO's Historic Urban Landscape, which was in part developed and supported by the Netherlands). The intended date of entry of the new Environment and Planning Act is 1 January 2024.

The implementation of the Environment and Planning Act provides for a transitional arrangement up to and including 2031.

The Environment and Planning Act offers wider options to integrally protect values in areas and assess developments. This law contains separate, generic rules with regard to safeguarding the qualities of the World Heritage Site. The law offers the possibility to issue governmental instructions for protected cityscapes and villagescapes as well as for UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Also, after the amendment of the law, the Amsterdam canal ring area will, substantially unchanged, remain designated as a nationally protected cityscape. This means that Amsterdam must implement these instructional rules at municipal level in the new instruments that will apply under the Environment and Planning Act, such as: the environmental visions, the Environmental Plan and the environmental permits. The same also applies to the Water Authority, with the transmission taking place via the water management plan.

In the Netherlands, the OUV of the Amsterdam canal ring area is safeguarded on the basis of a coherent system of laws and regulations. Until the entry into force of the Environment and Planning Act, three systems will still be important for the canal ring area:

- The spatial planning system for planning protection.
- The system of heritage policy and legislation for the renovation and alteration of monuments.
- The water policy system.

The main lines of the spatial, heritage and water policies are described below, based on their relevance to the protection and safeguarding of the world heritage value of the canal ring area. The visions, plans, decisions and measures taken to safeguard the OUV by the government, the municipality and the water management are also described.

#### **Management measures**

- Ensure that the SOUV is safeguarded and that the designation of the nationally protected cityscape is reflected in the municipal basic set of rules and the area-oriented rules, being the prelude to the new Environment and Planning Act.
- Ensure that the SOUV is safeguarded and that the designation of the nationally protected cityscape is ultimately reflected in the Environment and Planning Act (by 2031 at the latest).
- Ensure that the SOUV is safeguarded and that the designation of the nationally protected cityscape is reflected in the instruments of the Water Authority, such as the water management plan.

#### **4.2.2 Spatial Planning Act and implementation of Environment and Planning Act**

The Environment and Planning Act introduces changes to the current system for spatial planning, heritage and water, i.e. the protection of the physical living environment. With the Environment and Planning Act, the Netherlands aims to bundle dozens of laws and hundreds of regulations with regard to space, housing, infrastructure, the environment, nature and water, and in that way to arrive at a new integrated environmental law. Under the new law, the Dutch system is and will remain decentralised, with each governing authority bearing its own responsibility. The way in which protection is regulated by law is changing in parts. The Environment and Planning Act calls for a different, more integrated approach, and there is a further shift of policy and implementation towards local authorities. With the new legal regime, built objects will be viewed more in the context of their environment, and the protection as a monument is to be combined with the protection of the historic environment through the Environment and Planning Act.

This does not alter the fact that the government sets rules in the Living Environment Quality Decree and the Living Environment Activities Decree for the protection of the World Heritage Site and the protected scapes. These rules must be respected by the municipalities. A number of these rules are listed in the box below.

### Rules for local and regional authorities under the Living Environment Quality Decree and the Living Environment Activities Decree

- **Decentralised rules for World Heritage Sites:**  
Decentralised rules also apply to World Heritage Sites. Municipalities must take World Heritage Sites into account in the Environmental Plan. For example with regard to the rules for a balanced assignment of functions to locations.
- **Customised rules and customised regulations:**  
In the Environmental Plan, municipalities can set customised rules and regulations for World Heritage Sites. These rules are set out in the Living Environment Activities Decree (Article 14.8 and Article 14.9). Municipalities can set rules for the following:
  - the preservation of the OUV of the World Heritage Site.
  - the specific duty of care aimed at the prevention of damage or destruction of the World Heritage Site (Article 14.7).
- **Instruction rules:** Municipalities can allocate functions in the Environmental Plan. In this respect a municipality should consider whether a certain function can affect the OUV of the World Heritage Site. This instruction rule is laid down in Article 5.131 of the Living Environment Quality Decree. In addition, the municipality must, where necessary, include rules that protect the World Heritage Site in the Environmental Plan. The Environmental Plan also provides the option of designating a World Heritage Site or parts of it as a municipal monument. This may be desirable for protection.

The City of Amsterdam and the Water Authority Amstel, Gooi and Vecht are working on the implementation of this new law. In the spirit of the Environment and Planning Act, Amsterdam has developed the “Amsterdam Local Vision 2050 – a human metropolis”. This Environmental Vision was adopted by the council on 8 July 2021. The vision describes the desired development of the city and

forms the framework for spatial developments. It replaces the Structural Vision on future urban development Amsterdam 2040 dating from 2011. Only the main green structure and the high-rise policy of the Structural Vision will remain in force until a replacement policy is adopted. In 2023, Amsterdam will introduce a new policy for high-rise developments in the city (see section 6.5).

By 2030 at the latest, Amsterdam aims to have an integrated Environmental Plan for the entire territory of the municipality, which will meet all the requirements of the Environment and Planning Act. Amsterdam is working towards a ‘new style’ Environmental Plan that consists of a combination of a basic set of rules and area-specific rules. The basic set of rules will be further expanded as a temporary Environmental Plan in the period 2023-2029.

The basic set of rules includes:

- The government regulations and tasks that are to be taken over by the municipalities (Dowry)
- The local regulations that concern the physical living environment (including large parts of the Heritage Regulation)

#### 4.2.3 Monuments and historic Buildings Act and regulations

The Monuments and historic Buildings Act focuses on the preservation, the protection and the restoration of built objects (official listed monuments) and archaeological sites. Until 1 January 2024, the spatial and functional protection of heritage values in the Netherlands will take place via the Spatial Planning Act. The Monuments and historic Buildings Act makes it possible to assign protected status to areas and to designate protected monuments. On 1 February 1999, the entire Amsterdam inner city (within the Singelgracht) was designated as a nationally protected cityscape, which provides for the planning protection of the canal ring area. On the basis of this designation, Amsterdam has arranged for this protection in its zoning plans and it is taken into account when issuing environmental permits.

With the introduction of the Environment and Planning Act, the canal ring area will retain its status as a nationally protected cityscape. The nationally protected cityscape status applies to the World Heritage Site, as do the national regulations (Environment and Planning Act).

#### **Status nationally protected scape**

A nationally protected cityscape or villagescape is designated with an instruction pursuant to Article 2.34, paragraph 4 of the Environment and Planning Act. The purport of this instruction is that in the Environmental Plan the function indication of nationally protected cityscape or villagescape is given to the area in question and that the appropriate protection is provided. The Environmental Plan must, among other things, provide for a ban on the demolition of structures, geared to the characteristics of the cityscape or villagescape. If so desired, the assessment rules for an Environmental Plan activity that concern the demolition of a structure can be expanded relative to the limited assessment framework of the General Provisions Act (Wabo).

The parts of the Heritage Regulation relating to protected cityscapes will be included in the basic set of rules of the City of Amsterdam in the context of the entry into force of the Environment and Planning Act, as a prelude to the new Environmental Plan. For the canal ring area, this is a continuation of the policy applicable before 2023, aimed at safeguarding the SOUV of the canal ring area.

#### **4.2.4 Water policy and Water Act**

The Water Act will be incorporated in the Environment and Planning Act, with many instruments returning in a similar way in the new law. Until that time, the Water Act (2009) applies. This law mainly regulates the management of water systems, including flood defences, bodies of surface water and groundwater. The law is aimed at preventing or limiting flooding, waterlogging and water scarcity, protecting and improving the quality of the water

systems, and enabling and fulfilling social functions through the water systems. Legislation assigns a number of duties of care to the Water Authority Amstel, Gooi and Vecht and the City of Amsterdam. The duty of care of the Water Authority includes the water level management in the canal ring area.

### **4.3 Municipal implementation of national policies, laws and regulations**

#### **4.3.1 Planning protection of the canal ring area of the City of Amsterdam**

The SOUV of the canal ring area is safeguarded in the various policy documents, plans and policy rules. The entire area of the core zone and the buffer zone has been designated as a nationally protected cityscape. The law requires that zoning plans in a protected cityscape should have a preserving character. Following the designation in 1999, the effect of this status was regulated in the Amsterdam zoning plans that are in force in the core zone and the buffer zone.

#### **Zoning plans**

The zoning plans have a preserving character and are aimed at safeguarding the special values of the inner city. Under the influence of social developments, the rules have turned out not to be static, but have evolved along with the higher demands entailed by the protection of the protected cityscape and the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

#### **Primary planning rule in zoning plan/temporary Environmental Plan**

The common thread in all the zoning plans in force in the area (including a number of minor plans) is that the protection of the world heritage status or the nationally protected cityscape (coincides one-on-one with the core zone and the buffer zone) is regulated via the plan control value / dual destination: cultural heritage. This is included in the zoning plans as a rule with a primary effect, meaning that this rule takes precedence over all the other plan rules.



### Example zoning plan western inner city

#### Article 23.1 Zoning description

- a. The land designated for 'cultural heritage value' is, in addition to the other zoning(s) indicated on the representation, also intended for the preservation, restoration and reinforcement of the cultural heritage and architectural values associated with the protected cityscape. The buildings that determine the cityscape are indicated on the representation with the specific building indications order 1, order 2 and order 3.
- b. The zoning 'cultural heritage value' is primary compared to the zonings 'Centre - 2', 'Centre - 3', 'Mixed - 1', 'Mixed - 1.1', 'Mixed - 1.2', 'Mixed - 1.3', 'Mixed - 1.4', 'Mixed - 1.5', 'Mixed - 2', 'Mixed - 2.4', 'Mixed - 2.5' and 'Civil'.

This primary rule is incorporated in all the zoning plans for the city district Centre. The rule is at times worded slightly differently in the plans, but the effect is guaranteed throughout the area. The primary plan rule means that every change, i.e. renovation, demolition, construction of new buildings (which occurs very rarely in the city district Centre) is to be assessed as to the effect on the cultural heritage values.

#### Building rules

The ban on merging is relatively new. This is a rule aimed at preserving the recognisability of the individual civilian residence and the historic parcelling, while also stimulating the cherished small-scale character.

### Example western inner city

#### Article 6.2.13 Merging not allowed

- a. Merging of buildings is not allowed.
- b. In case of demolition-new construction, the width of the buildings to be demolished must be restored.
- c. Contrary to the provision under a, mergers that are present at the time the draft plan is made available for public inspection and that have also been granted an irrevocable permit may be maintained, but may not be enlarged.

Other rules that oversee the protection of specific core values are, for example, the 'keuren' adopted from the period of the first construction, such as the prohibition on building in the 'keur gardens', with the exception of garden houses. These garden houses in turn are bound by specific dimensions and rules for use, which can be directly traced back to the period of the first construction. The roof landscape – the three-dimensional translation of the parcelling – is protected in the zoning plans by the so-called 'shrink film' of order 1 and order 2 buildings: existing building and gutter heights are the maximum permitted. In the zoning plans for the southern and eastern inner city and the eastern islands, this also applies for order 3 buildings (added building height with room for deviation). As regards exceeding the maximum building height for roof installations, it is only possible to deviate from the zoning plan (interior plan) if it can be demonstrated that the installations cannot be (entirely) located indoors. Another condition is that the roof landscape is not disproportionately affected.

### Protection of monuments (Amsterdam Heritage Regulation)

In Amsterdam, buildings with a value for the visual quality of the World Heritage Site are protected, with a distinction being made according to order 1, order 2 and order 3. The Heritage Regulation assigns order 1 to monuments and protected scapes. Order 2 and order 3 protection is granted by the valuation map and the order evaluation system (which is not part of the Heritage Regulation, but is included in the Building Aesthetics Document The Beauty of Amsterdam). In the case of order 1, demolition is not allowed, while demolition is possible in exceptional cases under order 2 and order 3, on condition that the new building to be erected in principle generates at least the same quality as the demolished building.

Due to the dual zoning Value-cultural heritage, the roof shape of order 3 buildings is additionally protected in the zoning plan 'Southern inner city' by the following provision: "If and insofar the original roof shape is still present, it must be retained or restored." For order 2 buildings, the roof and the façade must be retained.

Buildings with an order 3 designation date from before 1970, and fit in terms of scale and detailing into the façade wall, but have no added architectural or urban development value. Within the order 3 buildings, there are major differences in quality. It is therefore determined on the basis of a quality assessment whether the buildings in question have cultural or architectural heritage, building historical and/or urban development values. If that is the case, preservation is the basic principle. The quality level of the values mentioned will determine whether demolition/new construction is allowed to take place.

The zoning plans also contain rules with regard to the sidewalk zone (building line), usage rules, and there is the possibility of setting further requirements when granting permits.

#### **Umbrella zoning plans**

**Umbrella zoning plan Shopping Diversity Centre:** This zoning plan aims to stop the growth of, for example, shops, consumer care services and facilities aimed at tourists and day trippers in the inner city of Amsterdam. What is envisaged is a stop to functions that solely focus on tourists and day trippers. The intention is to contribute in this way to a city where residents, entrepreneurs, workers as well as visitors feel at home and welcome.

**Umbrella zoning plan Offices with desk function in the city district Centre:** The aim of this zoning plan is to align the rules with the traditionally existing order of functions, whereby the functions attracting

public attention are located in the side streets and not along waterways and canals. To achieve this, a rule has been added to all the zoning plans for the city district Centre that include zonings within which offices with a desk function are permitted, to limit the locations for such functions along the water. The background of this restriction on settlement along waterways and canals is that the buildings along the water have traditionally had a quiet residential character, whereas the side streets were meant for shopping. Consequently, the rule in this plan is in line with a traditionally existing order of functions, which protects the proper functioning of the city and, in line with this, the good residential and social climate along the canals.

#### **Quality Assurance Act for construction**

With the arrival of the Quality Assurance Act for construction, the status of the nationally protected cityscape and the many listed monuments means that construction supervision remains with the municipality and will not be transferred to market parties.

Procedurally, the protection of the World Heritage Site at area and building level is regulated by the zoning plans, Heritage Regulation, Building Aesthetics Document, Committee for Spatial Quality regulation and the current licensing system. In the canal ring area, the assessment of building plans and alterations to monuments is the responsibility of an independent committee, partly made up of heritage specialists. Monuments and Archaeology is the permanent advisor to this committee.

#### **Social control mechanisms**

Social control mechanisms are built into all the separate plan forms, such as the obligation to engage advisory committees (including the municipal Committee for Spatial Quality, as from 1 January 2024 the Committee for Environmental Quality) and offering stakeholders the opportunity to comment,

put forward their views or object to spatial visions or plans. All these plan forms also have consultation periods, during which the plans are available for inspection. In practice, stakeholders are frequently involved and consulted at an early stage in respect of new visions, plans and developments in an area.

#### **Instruments planning framework**

For large-scale spatial interventions, the planning regime requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure, in which the impact of the various decisions proposed must be weighed up integrally against each other. The EIA obligation applies to large-scale interventions in fields such as wind turbines, high-rise/residential buildings and industrial estates. When constructing or widening the national infrastructure, a Planning Procedures Decree is required, which must also include the EIA procedure. In practice, the EIA is already regularly broadened into an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which anticipates the arrival of the Environment and Planning Act and in which more attention is paid to, for example, health.

In addition to the legal system, other instruments are used to ensure that heritage is given a place in the planning consideration, for example in visual quality plans, visions for the future, cultural heritage assessments and high-rise impact analyses. The results of these studies and visions are used to substantiate and further develop the formal instruments, such as the Environmental Vision, the basic set of rules, the Environmental Plan and permits for developments in an area.

The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is another instrument that can be used to investigate the effect of interventions on the SOUV of World Heritage Sites in case of developments that are expected in advance to create tension with the SOUV. An HIA is used to determine the effect of proposed interventions on the world heritage value in advance.

The deployment of the HIA was implemented in the Netherlands in 2013. The instrument can be used for major spatial developments or interventions that do not necessarily take place within the core zone or the buffer zone of the World Heritage Site.

#### **Management measures**

- Ensure appropriate conversion of the three lines along which the planning protection of the UNESCO World Heritage Site is regulated in the municipal basic set of rules, the area-oriented rules and, in due course, the Environmental Plan (2030 at the latest).

#### **4.3.2 Heritage protection City of Amsterdam**

After the entry into force of the Environment and Planning Act, the Heritage Regulation will to a large extent be included in the basic set of rules. It is also stipulated in the basic set of rules that a permit procedure is required for demolition, renovation, construction and alterations in the World Heritage Site annex the nationally protected cityscape, including the associated (substantive and procedural) assessment.

#### **Protected cityscapes in the Amsterdam basic set of rules**

For protected cityscapes, the following matters are regulated in the basic set of rules:

- Restriction of permit-free construction. In the nationally protected cityscape of the canal ring area, permit-free construction is not possible.
- Demolition permit required for all the buildings in the protected scape.
- Construction permit remains required.
- Felling of trees protected in protected scape.

In addition, a WIOR permit will still be required for the design of public space on the basis of the Working in Public Space Regulation 2021.

Thus, a permit procedure with a quality test is at all times required for the area of the World Heritage Site or the nationally protected cityscape. The internal advice from Monuments and Archaeology and an assessment by the Committee for Spatial Quality or the Committee for Environmental Quality are part of this permit procedure. For this quality test, the Policy Framework for Monuments and the Building Aesthetics Document The Beauty of Amsterdam are used. The Policy Framework consists of two parts:

1. The Assessment Criteria: the assessment criteria indicate the options for adapting the monument (What is allowed?).
2. The Technical Instructions for the implementation of restoration and maintenance: the technical instructions indicate how the work must be carried out (How should it be done?).

The implementation of the Environment and Planning Act and the Amsterdam basic set of rules is not expected to have a regulatory impact on the degree of protection and safeguarding of the value of the canal ring area. Before the entry into force of the Environment and Planning Act, the rules in the zoning plans and the regulations for this area were already the strictest in the city, and this will remain so. The assessment will take place more integrally and participation will become more important. Monuments are protected on the basis of their status as national monument or municipal monument. In practice, the assessment of both is identical. Alterations to these monuments require a permit, whereby an assessment of the permit application in respect of the historical quality takes place by

both a building historian/architectural historian and a monument consultant. Advice from the Committee for Spatial Quality is also required as a standard part of the procedure. All this is laid down in detail in the assessment frameworks to be used. In case of the canal ring area, there are two exceptions:

- As is the case with all Dutch monuments, minor maintenance work does not require a permit.
- Indoor parts that have no historic monumental value are not subject to a permit.

In Amsterdam, government rules apply to national monuments. To municipal monuments identical rules apply. This is the case for buildings as well as for other structures designated as monuments (e.g. bridges). Further improving awareness with regard to the protection of the interiors remains a point of attention for the municipality and owners of monuments during renovations. This is achieved in part by sending information letters to new owners of monuments.

More than 450 trees in Amsterdam have a monumental status. In the nationally protected cityscape, the trees on quays and quay walls in the canal ring are designated as part and determining element of the profile to be protected (as is the SOUV).

Currently, the trees are primarily protected through the Amsterdam Tree Regulation.

The Advisory Committee on timber stands worthy of protection has been set up to advise the City



Council, solicited and unsolicited, on everything related to trees worthy of protection or trees that will qualify for this status within a reasonable period of time. The rules as set out in the Regulation will become part of the basic set of rules.

In addition to the Heritage Regulation and the Tree Regulation, there are other rules through which Amsterdam regulates matters that also affect the (perception) value of the heritage in the canal ring area.

#### **Management measures**

- Include rules from the Heritage Regulation and the Tree Regulation in the basic set of rules.
- Ensure in the basic set of rules that a permit procedure is required in the UNESCO World Heritage Site for demolition, renovation, construction and alterations, including the associated (substantive and procedural) assessment.
- Ensure that advice in respect of permits in the UNESCO area can be continued by Monuments and Archaeology.
- Ensure that the assessment of plans and permits by the Committee for Spatial Quality or the Committee for Environmental Quality can be continued.
- Ensure that developments are identified at an early stage and are assessed as to their possible effects on the World Heritage Site (see chapter 6).

#### **4.3.3 Water policy City of Amsterdam**

The municipality has a duty of care for the collection of urban waste water and the drainage of rainwater and groundwater. The way in which Amsterdam implements this is set out in the Municipal Sewage Plan, since 2022 Environmental Sewage Programme 2022/2027. The responsibilities of the Water Authority include water level management and the water quality of the canals. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

In terms of policy, both the City of Amsterdam (see section 4.2.2) and the Water Authority Amstel, Gooi and Vecht have anticipated the new law. In the Water Management Programme 2022-2027, the Water Authority has elaborated its policy in line with the Environment and Planning Act.

# 5 Organisation management canal ring area

## 5.1 Administrative management

The organisational structure as described in the 2009 Management Plan is no longer in line with the administrative system as it currently applies in Amsterdam. Adjustments were made to the administrative system of the city in 2014, 2018 and 2022 respectively. The latest adjustments have been laid down in the new Amsterdam Urban Districts and Urban Area Regulation 2022.

With the adjustment in 2022, attention was also paid to clarifying where the College of Mayor and Alderpersons and where the Executive Board of a city district are authorised to make decisions. The collaboration between the College of Mayor and Alderpersons, the Executive Boards and the civil service has been tightened up, with a manual for each task to ensure proper collaboration, including a general assessment framework that can be consulted in unclear or new situations. Measures are included to increase the participation and involvement of residents. The changes were mainly intended to ensure that the voice of local residents is heard more clearly in the policy of the municipality.

This new system will ensure that the city is governed by the City Council, the College of Mayor and Alderpersons, the District Committees and the Executive Boards of the districts, as the “extended administration” of the College of Mayor and Alderpersons. In this system, the City Council is the highest administrative body in the city. The council determines the main policy lines and monitors the implementation thereof by the College of Mayor and Alderpersons. The position of the District Committee in local government has been strengthened. The Executive Boards will be given more opportunities to take the local voice into account in their decisions.

### District Committee

The District Committee used to be an advisory committee, which meant that it could only issue advice. In the new system, the District Committee functions as a governance committee, which makes its input more binding. The committee will formally become part of the District Council. Advice, motions and proposals to the Executive Board carry considerable weight. Moreover, the District Committee will have a controlling role with regard to the Executive Board.

The City Council and the College of Mayor and Alderpersons draw up plans and rules for the whole of Amsterdam. They transfer certain tasks and powers to the Executive Boards of the several districts in the city and the administrative committee for Weesp, such as the design of streets and squares, greenery and parks, the collection of household waste, and welfare work in the neighbourhood. The Executive Boards are advised by the District Committees. They are the local representatives of the people.

The adjustments to the administrative system also entail that the Executive Boards of the city districts will be more bound by the advice of the committee members. The Executive Board is asked for advice on proposed urban policy. The District Committee may also decide to issue advice in this respect. In such cases, the City Council always gets to see the advice of the District Committee. Executive Boards will in future be obliged to ask the District Committee for advice on subjects such as area tasking, use of resources and significant spatial planning projects.

Below, it will be discussed in more detail how the management of the World Heritage Site of the canal ring area is regulated on the basis of this administrative system.

## 5.2 Siteholder and site manager

The Dutch state is formally responsible for the Dutch World Heritage Sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Within the Netherlands, with the exception of the Wadden Sea, the management of the World Heritage Sites does not rest with the national government. In 2010, siteholdership and therefore site management for the canal ring area was assigned to the Executive Board of the City District Centre. The World Heritage Office has been appointed as operational site manager and carries out the management tasks in collaboration with the Executive Board of the City District Centre.

In 2010, the City of Amsterdam and the Water Authority Amstel, Gooi and Vecht agreed to jointly manage the World Heritage Site as “shareholders”. This agreement was laid down in a covenant. The joint “shareholders” operation of Amsterdam and the Water Authority Amstel, Gooi and Vecht over the years gradually petered out and is increasingly organised in a practical way. In the operational management of canals, locks, bridges and quay walls, water level management and the use of the water, the parties largely work together along programmatic lines, whereby the status of the canal ring area as UNESCO World Heritage Site is involved in the implementation. This change to a mainly programmatic coordination with the Water Authority does not alter the fact that there must be a coordination mechanism with the Water Authority.

Given the administrative system that was changed in 2022 and the division of tasks and powers in the 2022 Amsterdam Urban Districts and Urban Area Regulation, siteholdership has been formally assigned by the College of Mayor and Alderpersons. This follows from regulations such as the 2022 Amsterdam Urban Districts and Urban Area Regulation and the Monuments and Archaeology Task List (2022). The description of task 4.6 stipulates that the work related to the UNESCO status of the canal

ring area will be carried out by the World Heritage Office under the responsibility of the City of Amsterdam.

Based on the same Regulation and Task List, the Executive Board of the City District Centre has various tasks to carry out in connection with the implementation of urban policy in this part of the city. These tasks frequently directly influence the quality of the living environment of the residents, but also help to protect and preserve the heritage values in the area. It has therefore been stipulated that the Executive Board of the City District Centre provides input to the World Heritage Office for the reports to UNESCO on the canal ring area World Heritage Site. This also implies coordination between the World Heritage Office and the Executive Board of the City District Centre regarding the implementation of these tasks.

### Mandated authority

By mandate the administrative body that mandates the power remains responsible for that power. This means that the administrative body that grants the mandate will always retain the authority to exercise it itself. In addition, instructions may be given or conditions set by mandate.

The siteholdership rests with the College of Mayor and Alderpersons and is mandated to Monuments and Archaeology. The implementation of various tasks for the protection and preservation of the canal ring area are mandated to the Executive Board of the City District Centre. Various organisational units within the municipality are charged with the implementation of tasks. The World Heritage Office provides comprehensive care for the adequate management of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, under the responsibility of the College of Mayor and Alderpersons.

### Management measures

- Report to the Dutch “focal point” Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands that the siteholdership has changed and rests with the Amsterdam College of Mayor and Alderpersons, with the integral site management being entrusted to the World Heritage Office.
- Strengthen the coordination mechanism between the World Heritage Office and the Executive Board of the City District Centre.
- Strengthen the coordination mechanism between the World Heritage Office and the departments and programmes involved in the management of the World Heritage Site through the implementation of tasks within the municipality.
- Set up a coordination mechanism with the Water Authority Amstel, Gooi and Vecht in addition to the programmatic involvement of the Water Authority in the management of the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

## 5.3 Organisation Amsterdam

### 5.3.1 Amsterdam College of Mayor and Alderpersons

The responsibilities of the Amsterdam College of Mayor and Alderpersons include the Amsterdam Environmental Vision adopted by the City Council. On behalf of the City Council it carries out several central programmes, such as the Housing Programme, the Boating Programme, and the Bridges and Quay Walls Programme. It is also in charge of dealing with climate challenges based on the Amsterdam Climate Neutral Roadmap and the Heat Transition Vision. The College of Mayor and Alderpersons is also formally the siteholder of the canal ring area UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### 5.3.2 Monuments and Archaeology and World Heritage Office

Monuments and Archaeology is part of the Planning and Sustainability Department. This department is one of the 12 departments within the Economic Services cluster.

The World Heritage Office is part of Monuments and Archaeology. The main tasks of the World Heritage Office and the site manager placed there are:

- Ensuring adequate management of the preservation and protection of the SOUV of the World Heritage Site.
- The early identification, investigation and, if necessary, reporting to UNESCO (via the State Party) of developments that may affect the SOUV. In addition to developments within Amsterdam, this also concerns regional developments from the Regional Energy Strategy, or the Amsterdam Metropolitan Region.
- Ensuring the propagation of the value and core qualities of the World Heritage Site.
- Maintaining contacts with the Dutch government, and via the Dutch government with UNESCO.
- Ensuring adequate monitoring of the State of Conservation and the progress/compliance of the management measures, as well as compliance with the periodic (six-year) reporting obligation to UNESCO.

In accordance with the 2009 Management Plan, the World Heritage Office is within Monuments and Archaeology responsible for the implementation of the Management Plan in all its facets. It follows from the Task List, and task 4.6 in particular, that the activities related to the UNESCO status of the canal ring area are to be carried out by the World Heritage Office (part of Monuments and Archaeology). Implementation tasks that contribute to the protection and preservation of the World Heritage Site have been assigned to the Executive Board of the City District Centre and various departments and programmes. In order to properly perform the tasks assigned to the World Heritage Office, it is necessary to reinforce the coordination mechanisms of the World Heritage Office (site manager) with the Executive Board of the City District Centre and the College of Mayor and Alderpersons. This also applies to the coordination with municipal organisational units and the Water Authority Amstel,



Gooi and Vecht, which carry out various tasks that affect the protection and preservation of the canal ring area as World Heritage Site. With regard to the management of the World Heritage Site, this coordination mechanism should be further organised and reinforced. This also includes making more detailed agreements about the division of tasks, as laid down in outline in the Regulation and in the Task List. It is also advisable that the World Heritage Office is sufficiently well-staffed to be able to structurally fulfil the range of tasks assigned to it.

In addition to the World Heritage Office, various (policy) staff members within Monuments and Archaeology have been charged with managing the World Heritage Site as part of their duties. Monuments and Archaeology advises on new policies, plans, programmes and visions concerning the UNESCO area and on concrete initiatives, projects and developments in that area. This also includes providing formal advice on permits, programmes and plans, including the contacts with the Committee for Spatial Quality or the Committee for Environmental Quality. At management level, Monuments and Archaeology organises the coordination around the UNESCO World Heritage Site with other organisational units within Amsterdam.

In the extensive and complex organisational structure of the City of Amsterdam, the cohesion between the various organisational units is regulated in the 2022 Amsterdam Urban Districts and Urban Area Regulation and the associated Task Register and Competences Register. These lines ensure that the protection of the OUV of the UNESCO World Heritage Site takes place from various organisational units and the tasks assigned to them without any hard organic coordination taking place by the World Heritage Office. It is therefore not the case that the coordination and direction of the World Heritage Site is centrally organised and regulated, although the World Heritage Office does have an important task in this regard in terms of manage-

ment, early identification of developments, monitoring and the propagation of the world heritage value.

Taking into account the interests and values of the UNESCO World Heritage Site and the status as nationally protected cityscape is an integral part of the policy and task performance of the organisational units of the City of Amsterdam and the Executive Board of the City District Centre.

This way of working is not entirely faultless. Not everything within Amsterdam is equally well and/or timely identified and coordinated with or brought to the attention of the World Heritage Office. The policy developed by the various organinal units is not always coordinated. Sometimes there are conflicting interests that clash with the UNESCO world heritage status. Because a permit is required for demolition, construction, renovation, extensions and alterations, there is a comprehensive safety net for most interventions. However, reinforcement of the coordination mechanism within the various organisational units of the municipality is required.

### **5.3.3 City District Centre**

The City Centre Approach is an important spearhead for the City of Amsterdam. The College of Mayor and Alderpersons is administratively responsible for the implementation of the City Centre Approach, as this has been a separate portfolio in the College of Mayor and Alderpersons since 2022. The administrative management is the responsibility of the City Centre Approach administrative team. This team consists of the mayor, the alderman for Economic Affairs and the chair of the City District Centre.

The official coordination for the City Centre Approach is the responsibility of the City District Centre. In order to guarantee the integrity, close cooperation takes place via the City Centre Approach administrative team with a number of different departments such as Public Space Surveil-

lance and Enforcement, but also Economic Affairs and Public Works. The City Centre Approach is also closely linked with programmes and measures such as the souvenir shops task force, vision on the visitor economy, undermining criminality brigade, bridges and quay walls, and master plan enforcement and cleaning.

The City Centre Approach administrative team also prepares the monitoring and organises regular consultations with partners in the inner city. This working method promotes short lines of communication with stakeholders and other involved parties in the inner city. The implementation programme for 2022 also functions as the Area Plan for the City District Centre.

The City Centre Approach is of obvious importance for the World Heritage Site and in particular for the control of tourist and visitor flows in the city, as a step towards more sustainable and higher quality tourism and a better image.

The College of Mayor and Alderpersons has mandated several tasks to the Executive Board of the City District Centre. These tasks are important for safeguarding the UNESCO World Heritage Site on the basis of the environmental and heritage law, such as:

- Deciding on applications for obtaining an environmental permit.
- Deciding on applications for obtaining an environmental permit for the demolition of a structure in a protected cityscape or villagescape.
- Granting or revoking an environmental permit for a protected monument (= national monument) and municipal monument and for alterations to an archaeological monument.
- The designation, withdrawal or modification of a municipal monument as well as the drawing up of the associated description and documentation.
- Deciding on applications for obtaining an environmental permit for felling a tree stand.
- Assessing reports on the admissibility of advertising on immovable property or obtaining exemption for advertising on or near the road.

- Withdrawing an environmental permit.
- Exercising powers regarding the parking of bicycles, mopeds and disabled vehicles.
- Deciding on applications for obtaining a permit to carry out work in public space (WIOR permit).

The above tasks are subject to the procedural obligations relating to the nationally protected cityscape or the UNESCO World Heritage Site, which entail that advice is sought from the Planning and Sustainability Department, which includes Monuments and Archaeology. The Committee for Spatial Quality or the Committee for Environmental Quality should also be asked for advice.

#### **5.3.4 Committee for Environmental Quality**

Since 2017, the Committee for Spatial Quality has been the successor to the Building Aesthetics Committee. After the entry into force of the Environment and Planning Act, the Committee for Spatial Quality will be continued as the Committee for Environmental Quality. The basis for the activities of the committee is anchored in a regulation. The committee issues advice on all applications for environmental permits and permits based on the Working in Public Space Regulation (WIOR). The committee monitors the cohesion between cultural heritage and spatial or environmental quality. In principle, the transition to the Environment and Planning Act will have a policy-neutral character and no substantive changes are expected to occur in the work and the range of duties of the committee. The most practical change is the adjustment of the legal advice period to eight weeks, with the possibility of a one-time extension of six weeks.

The committee works with several sub-committees: the integral committee for spatial quality, three area committees (one of which is for the inner city or the area of the World Heritage Site) and the committee for designating municipal monuments and protected scapes. Prior to the start of a formal process (licensing procedure), the integral commit-

tee for spatial quality aims to provide advice on an initiative in the preliminary phase. This was done, for example, in respect of the development of the Binnengasthuisterrein/University complex. This integral committee for spatial quality can play a role in the early identification of developments with a possible impact on the canal ring area, including developments that emerge from regional frameworks (Regional Energy Strategy or Amsterdam Metropolitan Region).

#### Management measures

- Ensure structurally adequate staffing of the World Heritage Office, in line with task 4.6 of the Task List and the tasks involved in managing the UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Improve the early identification of new policy intentions and developments with a possible impact on the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### 5.4 Involvement of stakeholders

#### 5.4.1 Amsterdam Heritage Consultation

The Amsterdam Heritage Consultation (Amsterdam Erfgoed Overleg) consists of representatives of the Amstelodamum Society, heritage association Bond Heemschut, the Cuypers Society, Monuments Amsterdam North Foundation, ProWest, Stadsherstel Amsterdam NV (city restoration), heritage association Vrienden van de Amsterdamse Binnenstad (the Friends of the Amsterdam Inner City Association), monthly magazine Ons Amsterdam, Heemkennis Association Ons Amsterdam, and Association Voordestad. The Amsterdam Erfgoed Overleg is involved in mutual consultations about matters concerning the protection of Amsterdam heritage, including the UNESCO World Heritage Site. Monuments and Archaeology actively participates in the Amsterdam Erfgoed Overleg and has the position of listener and facilitator. The Amsterdam Erfgoed Overleg draws up the agenda.

#### 5.4.2 Participation and communication with residents and stakeholders City District Centre

Within the City District Centre, communication with residents and stakeholders is carried out by area brokers who are close to residents and parties in their sub-areas. In the Centre East area there are eight area brokers (each with a part of the centre area) and in West there are nine. The area coordinators for East and West respectively coordinate the activities and in addition have an overarching role. They are also the first point of contact regarding initiatives being developed in their operating range (building projects, changes in public space, larger activities, etc.). In that way, the coordinators maintain a network with other municipal organisational units at an overarching level, and they pass on the information to the area brokers.

The choice to work with area brokers was prompted by the need to set up easily accessible contacts with the residents and parties in the areas of the City District Centre. In this way, the City District Centre gives substance to Amsterdam's ambitions to be close to its citizens.

#### 5.4.3 Stakeholders in the city

In principle, communication and participation regarding specific projects and programmes initiated by the City Centre run through the project or programme in question, and not through employees of the district organisational centre or the area brokers, except when it concerns a project or programme under the responsibility of the Executive Board of the City District Centre, which does run through the area brokers.

A large number of stakeholders are active in Amsterdam, with whom contacts are maintained with regard to various projects and programmes, both at official and governance level. The 2009 Management Plan provided for structured consultation with a number of stakeholders. In practice, this has proven not to be an effective working method.

Primarily, in addition to the Amsterdam Heritage Consultation, contacts with stakeholders tend to be in the context of current developments and concrete projects and programmes, and it seems more logical to link up with this where heritage interests play a role. The Executive Board of the City District Centre has regular consultations with both De Vrienden van de Amsterdamse Binnenstad (the Friends of the Amsterdam Inner City Association) and the Association Voordestad. In addition, the World Heritage Office organises activities to propagate the UNESCO World Heritage Site, in which stakeholders are also actively involved. An example in this connection is Wereldgrachten (the World Canals) educational project and the contacts around this project with educational institutions, museums and the City Archives. In the context of drawing up this new Management Plan, meetings and/or discussions, partly thematic, were held with several stakeholders:

- **Heritage:** Amsterdam Erfgoed Overleg, Outdoor Advertising Working Group Foundation, Stadsherstel Amsterdam NV
- **Promotion, tourism and recreation:** Amsterdam and Partners, museums, recreation entrepreneurs (catering, canal cruise industry, etc.)
- **Residents:** via the City District Centre area coordinators a meeting was held with a number of area brokers and representatives of residents' organisations in the Centre.

These meetings and conversations reflect a broad appreciation for the canal ring area as World Heritage Site. However, there are also concerns about the protection and preservation of the heritage value and the perception value of the canal ring area. These have been incorporated in the Management Plan, in particular in chapters 5, 6 and 7, and include:

- Better observance of and compliance with the rules that apply in the canal ring area for the protection and preservation of the World Heritage Site. This covers more than ensuring proper supervision and enforcement. It also includes timely compliance with the replanting obligation under the Tree Regulation, taking action in the event of illegal demolition, or preventing unauthorised advertising. What is properly regulated on paper turns out to be difficult to implement and comply with, which also leads to concerns and complaints from residents.
- Propagation of the values of the canal ring area, together with museums and cultural institutions, and in that way also attract different, more quality-oriented tourists to the city.
- Improve information to residents and Amsterdam Erfgoed Overleg about the protected status of the canal ring area, the progress of the Management Plan and the concrete activities undertaken by Amsterdam in that connection.

### **Management measures**

- Set up or connect to consultation structures with stakeholders based on concrete developments, projects or programmes.
- Inform residents and partners such as Amsterdam Erfgoed Overleg about the protected status of the canal ring area, the progress of the Management Plan and the concrete activities undertaken by Amsterdam in that context.
- Set up a contact point for identifying developments that have an impact on the values of the World Heritage Site; make better use of the current possibilities via erfgoed@amsterdam.nl.
- Introduce the status of the canal ring area and measures in the Management Plan in regular City District Centre consultations with residents and residents' organisations.
- Reinforce the cooperation with museums and cultural institutions in propagating the values of the canal ring area as UNESCO World Heritage Site and nationally protected cityscape.

# 6 Dealing with developments

## 6.1 City Centre Vision and Approach

For some years now, Amsterdam has been working on developing a vision for the city centre, which has become increasingly crowded due to the accumulation of functions. A vision written by Zef Hemel in 2019<sup>1</sup> and an implementation programme City Centre Approach produced in 2020 mark this development.

The City in Balance programme and the City Centre Approach have been merged into one integrated City Centre Approach programme, which is managed by the administrative team (see section 5.3.3). This implementation programme links up with existing programmes, such as: Agenda Amsterdam Low-traffic, 750 years of Amsterdam, Agenda Taxi 2020-2025, The Resilient City, Boating, and Bridges and Quay Walls. The world heritage status of the canal ring area serves as a framework and one of the starting points for the City Centre Approach programme.

The city centre implementation programme distinguishes four tasks:

- **Quality of life and public order:** restoring the housing and social climate by working on an attractive mix of functions, reducing nuisance and dealing with undermining criminality.
- **Economy and facilities:** providing a more diverse and higher quality range of shops, work, catering, social and commercial services, particularly aimed at those who live and work in Amsterdam.
- **Culture and beauty:** nurturing our heritage, emphasising our diversity and embracing cultural innovation.
- **Housing and public space:** putting a focus on more homes, a higher residential quality in a greener public space with more room for cyclists and pedestrians.

The City Centre Approach implementation programme distinguishes six priorities that together and in interaction contribute to the tasks in the inner city:

1. **Mixing of functions and diversity:** including promoting a healthy diversity in shops, catering, facilities, manufacturing industry and housing, conducting a broad discussion about the future of the red-light district, and regulating tourist traffic on the canals.
2. **Management and enforcement:** aimed at increasing the quality of life and reducing nuisance in the inner city, in particular where due to the number of visitors and the growth of the city itself it has become too busy and safety and quality of life are under pressure.
3. **A valuable visitor economy:** reassessing and reforming the visitor economy, aimed at visitors who enrich the city and reducing a visitor economy that entails anti-social behaviour and nuisance.
4. **Reinforcing cultural diversity and neighbourhood identities:** more attention to be given to art, culture, identity and innovation in the inner city. This also includes increasing the awareness and accessibility of the cultural offer and the UNESCO World Heritage Site.
5. **Promoting more and diverse housing supply:** working towards more residential areas in the inner city.
6. **Increased living space and more greenery in public areas:** offering more living space in combination with greening, sustainability and active management.

<sup>1</sup> Zef Hemel, "Een nieuwe historische binnenstad, Visie op de binnenstad van Amsterdam 2040" (A new historic city centre, Vision on the city centre of Amsterdam 2040). This vision was written by order of the mayor, but has not been adopted by the City Council.

The City Centre Approach is aware of the fact that the city is and will remain a busy place, and assumes that the functional combination of living, working, staying and recreation will continue to exist. The aims of the City Centre Approach include the improvement of the quality of life in the red-light district and the exclusion of certain types of shops in order to improve the quality of life in the city centre. It is the objective of the City Centre Approach is to keep the various functions that take place in the city centre in balance.

The importance of the canal ring area is included in the chapter on mixing functions and diversity in the City Centre Approach implementation programme. The canal ring area, i.e. the UNESCO World Heritage Site, to a large extent gives shape to the unique character of Amsterdam and specifically the inner city. The canals not only provide relaxation for residents, but are also a major attraction for visitors to the city. Within several themes and priorities, the importance of the canal ring area and the fostering of the heritage are explicitly mentioned. The pursuit of a better and more balanced mix, combination and diversity of functions, including the expansion of residential functions, is in line with, for example, criterion ii of the SOUV. The City Centre Approach also provides for a reduction of the reactive pressure on the canal ring area and limiting car use in the inner city. In principle, these are positive developments from the perspective of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. Where parts of the implementation programme can conflict with the heritage values, the requirements of the UNESCO World Heritage Site will have to be taken into account in the assessment and implementation. This applies, for example, to the redesign of parts of public space, such as small-scale greening.

### **Management measures**

- Regulating certain functions in the city centre based on the City Centre Approach, in order to increase the quality of life and the perception value of the centre and to reduce certain types of tourist flows in the centre.
- Maintaining and reinforcing the mix of functions based on the City Centre Approach, which mix has been present since the creation of the canal ring area (criterion ii).
- Taking the interests of the UNESCO World Heritage Site into account in the integral elaboration of the City Centre Approach implementation programme, as well as the feasibility of residents' wishes in conjunction with the preservation of the UNESCO heritage values.

### **6.2 Construction projects and redevelopment projects (housing, working, services)**

There are several larger (re)construction and redevelopment projects in and around the canal ring area. The status of these developments varies. Some have already passed the permit procedures and will be realised in 2023 or the following years. Other projects are still in the idea phase, so have yet to be put into procedure.

The majority of these developments have been in the picture for many years and have been the subject of discussion between initiators/developers and the City of Amsterdam. Several developments are partly the result of the plans and programmes of the City District Centre (Programmes Boating and Bridges and Quay Walls) or the City District Centre (City Centre Approach with underlying programmes). The latter group of projects are discussed separately in other sections of this Management Plan.

The table below lists the physical initiatives and projects with a possible impact on the canal ring area, each with a brief description of the project and an outline of the way in which a possible impact on the UNESCO World Heritage Site has been dealt with.

Project name	Project Description
<b>1 Construction Knowledge Mile Park</b>	Route to and from the University of Amsterdam and Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. In progress. Concerns measures with a limited part touching on the buffer zone. Does not have an adverse effect on the canal ring area.
<b>2 Renovation Waterloo plein</b>	Renovation Waterlooplein infrastructure and market (buffer zone) in 2 phases. In completion. Does not have an adverse effect on the canal ring area.
<b>3 Renovation Sint Annenkwartier</b>	Renovation of buildings, now that prostitution has disappeared. Was part of project 1012 (buffer zone). Is part of reducing nuisance for residents and tourist pressure on the canal ring area.
<b>4 Refurbishment Amsterdam Museum</b>	Plan for multi-year restoration/refurbishment museum location Burgerweeshuis. Preparations in progress. Heritage associations Bond Heemschut and Friends of the Amsterdam Inner City Association have filed legal proceedings against these plans. Procedure is ongoing.
<b>5 Transformation Flower Market</b>	Aimed at renovation of the market with fewer souvenirs, more experiencing and staying (core zone). Still under investigation, realisation awaits necessary resources.
<b>6 Expansion Artis Zoo</b>	Master plan for the future of Artis Zoo (buffer zone) is aimed at more greenery in the area. Concerns an improvement of the situation with either no or a positive impact on the canal ring area.
<b>7 Construction Frederikspark</b>	The current roundabout will become a residential area. DNB (the National Bank) is already working on demolition. Financial coverage not yet complete. Concerns an improved situation with either no or positive impact on the canal ring area.
<b>8 Inner ring road becomes bicycle street</b>	Part of low-traffic inner city and replacement of cars by bicycles. Concerns an improved situation with either no or a positive impact on the canal ring area.
<b>9 Renovation University Quarter</b>	The renovation of the university quarter is being carried out in close consultation with the Planning and Sustainability Department, including Monuments & Archaeology. Financing has partly been arranged, but partly depends on the university's financial resources. Renovation is a delicate operation with regard to the canal ring area status and will remain a point of attention during the renovation operation.
<b>10 Marine terrain</b>	Memorandum of Principles present. Land is not owned by the City of Amsterdam. The high-rise policy has been followed and a High-rise Effect Report has been drawn up. The aim is to reach a project decision in 2023. Heritage association Bond Heemschut has applied for a municipal listed building status for 5 buildings and the surrounding wall. On the basis of the project decision, the possible impact on the World Heritage Site will be further assessed.



Amsterdam assesses these developments against the requirements that apply in respect of the nationally protected scape and the SOUV of the canal ring area. Requirements laid down in the Environmental Vision/Structural Vision (high-rise developments), zoning plans (dual zoning), regulations (heritage, building aesthetics) and other frameworks for assessment. In June 2021, the Heritage Administrative Assignment was adopted by the College of Mayor and Alderpersons, establishing that the cultural heritage values must be the starting point for any area development.

To be able to realise the developments mentioned, a permit requirement applies, whereby research obligations can be imposed on the initiator. Procedural advice on such developments is issued by Monuments and Archaeology and the Committee for Spatial Quality or the Committee for Environmental Quality. Part of the assessment is a possible impact on the OUV of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, and whether sufficient measures have been taken to prevent this or to limit the effect. For most of the above initiatives, intensive consultation on the elaboration of the plans has taken place with Monuments and Archaeology from the early stages of preparation, whereby advice has frequently already been obtained in this preliminary phase from the Committee for Spatial Quality. This advice is aimed at making these projects possible within the framework set by the nationally protected cityscape and UNESCO.

It is important that new projects and initiatives are identified at an early stage and that initiators report in good time for the granting of permits. With the arrival of the Environment and Planning Act, the preliminary consultation phase will become even more important, also because the period for granting permits will in principle be limited to 8 weeks, which also makes it important to communicate this properly to possible initiators and developers. This also applies to municipal projects and programmes.

### Management measures

- Clear communication towards potential initiators of projects (including the own organisation) about the importance of preliminary consultations in the context of the granting of permits.
- Ensuring internally that the new Environment and Planning Act provides for timely involvement of Monuments and Archaeology as early as the preliminary consultation phase.
- Using the assessment options offered by the Committee for Spatial Quality or the Committee for Environmental Quality in the preparation phase of a project.



Figure 9: Map with locations of the 10 projects

### 6.3 Programme Bridges and Quay Walls

The canal ring area has 80 bridges and approximately 28 kilometres of quays that are part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site and the nationally protected cityscape. In total, there are more than 600 bridges in Amsterdam, which have an average lifespan of 100 years. In recent decades, the municipality has not carried out a great deal of maintenance. In 2020, the Bridges and Quay Walls Programme was launched to catch up. In the coming years, an average of 2 bridges per year and 1,5 kilometres of quay walls will be renovated. The involvement of the Monuments and Archaeology Department in this includes the deployment of an archaeologist, a building historian and a monument consultant.

The quay walls have no monumental status. They are, however, part of the profile as described in the nationally protected scape. Approximately one third of the bridges are municipal or national monuments, and the other bridges fall under the protection rules ("order 2") of constructions dating from before 1940 with a high architectural quality that contribute to the urban structure and/or the cityscape.

If the safety of the bridge or the quay wall cannot be guaranteed, replacement is the preferred solution. Due to the architectural quality or the monumental status, reinforcement and restoration are also to be considered, or replacement while retaining the form and the image-defining elements. The quay walls will be supported by temporary emergency constructions. From the point of view of the visual quality and the profile of the canal ring area, no vegetation should protrude above the waterline between the temporary emergency construction and the quay wall. A replanting obligation applies to the trees that have to be felled in the context of the repair of the quay walls. In practice, replanting trees is usually only possible after the repair of the quay wall has been completed.

As regards the work on the bridges, it is a point of attention that the bridges that are there now differ from the bridges that were built in the seventeenth century, if only due to the changed traffic and the arrival of the tram. When replacing a bridge, there is almost always a wish among users for width expansion and adjustment of the road surface for the requirements of use by trams and trucks (despite the stipulation that vehicles of more than 7,5 tonnes must apply for exemption from the entry ban). The intermediate pillar frequently has to be abandoned because the old construction proves to be too weak and reinforcement is not always possible. The risk in respect of replacing bridges and reinforcing quays is that the appearance of the canal will change (SOUV criterion iv) and the urban ensemble (SOUV criterion i) will become less visible. This is therefore a critical point in the assessment of measures in the context of the Bridges and Quay Walls Programme. In the Bridges and Quay Walls Visitor Centre, the programme focuses on the work being carried out on bridges and quay walls. For the impact on the UNESCO world heritage status, visitors are referred to the Amsterdam World Heritage Site visitor centre.

In addition to the Bridges and Quay Walls Programme, there are other urban developments that may influence the appearance of the bridges and quays. The Boating Programme of the City of Amsterdam strives for a minimum clearance height and width of the bridges and navigability of the canals. At an average level of 0.40 -NAP, most bridges have a vertical clearance of 2.20 m. A number of bridges, however, are not at proper height or have become too low due to subsidence. In those cases, the Boating Programme aims to raise the height of the bridge when replacing or restoring it. Where raising bridges is at odds with the monumental values or status of the bridge, a balance of interests will have to be made. The starting point is that the method of implementation does optimal justice to the monumental values and that the procedure takes place via an environmental permit.

In the context of the low-traffic inner city, the Traffic Department strives, where applicable, to widen the bridges to provide space for bicycle traffic, and in terms of nature and ecology the aim is to realise a wider ecological zone around the water or connections under or along the bridges. Wishes from other departments (facilitating transport over water, spreading water tourism), including the installation of facilities for loading and unloading and for embarkation and disembarkation, will lead to changes in the quays.

The challenge when renewing and renovating bridges and quay walls is to maintain the balance between traffic and other interests and the protection of cultural heritage. This is done with general guidelines and (object-oriented) customisation. In general, maintaining the building history is the most far-reaching form of preservation, but in practice (including recent replacement of bridges in the Vijzelstraat/Vijzelgracht route) this is not always feasible. Then the next consideration is to preserve the appearance of the bridge, the design of the abutments and the architecture as much as possible, also in case of replacement. Before this decision is taken, Monuments and Archaeology draws up a statement of significance for each bridge, which is the starting point for further plan development and provides an insight in the (im)possibilities for reinforcement of a bridge. This can differ per bridge. It is policy to always involve a restoration architect in the design process. Choices will be made in close consultation between the Bridges and Quay Walls Programme, Monuments and Archaeology, advice of Committee for Spatial Quality or Committee for Environmental Quality and the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.

The major task facing the Bridges and Quay Walls Programme in the coming years means that customisation per object will be less feasible and that a switch will take place to a more programmatic and area-oriented approach. The City of Amsterdam is currently laying down the frameworks for



Figure 10: Collapsed quay wall Grimburgwal

the UNESCO world heritage area in the “Working Framework for Heritage, Bridges and Quay Walls Programme”<sup>2</sup>, a total package for the visual quality in order to safeguard the SOUV while at the same time taking into account the dynamics of the surroundings and the use. The package provides for the evaluation of the cultural heritage values of each object, with a distinction being made as regards urban development and/or architectural values, structural values and typological values. These are mapped out in advance and will lead to a visual quality plan to be used as an assessment instrument by the Committee for Spatial Quality or the Committee for Environmental Quality. The visual quality plan elaborates the aesthetic requirements for abutments, quay walls, masonry and capstones. The Tree Regulation contains provisions on the preservation or replanting of trees that have been removed.

In most cases, work on bridges and quays in the seventeenth-century canal ring area will require a permit to be applied for prior to restoration or replacement. The application should in any case include a cultural heritage report providing an insight in the architectural heritage, the building history, the interior history, the colour history and the movement mechanism. In the zoning plans for the canal ring area, archaeological protection zones

<sup>2</sup> City of Amsterdam, Monuments and Archaeology Department, Working Framework for Heritage, Bridges and Quay Walls Programme (in development). The visual quality plan dates from 14 December 2020.

(archaeological dual zonings) are designated for the bridges and quays as well as for the canal bottoms. For the renewal of many bridges and quay walls, it must be established that no archaeological values will be lost during the work (obligation to investigate). The Monuments and Archaeology Department is involved in the design and permit process, both with regard to the assessment of these archaeological aspects and for the requirements and wishes regarding the protection of the (world) heritage through the involvement of a Heritage conservation advisor and a building archaeologist.

Contractors are given the requirements regarding heritage and archaeology, so that they can apply these in their design and during the implementation.

#### **Management measures**

- Determine Working Framework Bridges and Quay Walls Programme.
- Introduce Working Framework Heritage, Bridges and Quay Walls Programme as an assessment instrument for the Committee for Spatial Quality or the Committee for Environmental Quality.
- Continue (customised) consultations between Working Framework Heritage, Bridges and Quay Walls Programme, Monuments and Archaeology Department, Committee for Spatial Quality or Committee for Environmental Quality and the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.
- Continue involvement restoration architect, heritage conservation advisor and building archaeologist in the design of reinforcement or replacement of bridges or quays.
- Guarantee quality and supervision of the application of the frameworks from the Heritage Programme Bridges and Quay Walls when outsourcing/tendering work.
- As regards background and significance of UNESCO World Heritage Status, the Bridges and Quay Walls visitor centre refers to the Amsterdam World Heritage Site Visitor Centre.

#### **6.4 Infrastructure and traffic**

The canals have traditionally had a transport function, i.e. transport over water and storage and trade of goods on the quays and in the buildings. Due to the sharp increase in (passenger) car traffic, the transport function has shifted more to the road and a large part of the quays has been taken up for parking vehicles. This has changed the appearance of the canals since the mid-20th century. The transport function by road has also become dominant in relation to transport over water (related to SOUV criteria i and iv). Heavy traffic entails additional risks for roads, bridges and quays. The pressure put on the canal ring area, and more generally on the inner city of Amsterdam, by car traffic has led the municipality to adopt a policy for a low-traffic inner city and a parking free main canal. The approach to achieve a low-traffic inner city falls under the Mobility & Public Space Department and is in line with the ambition of the City Centre Approach implementation programme.

In general, the policy is aimed at redesigning the streets to become residential and making the living area more attractive by making it low-traffic. Less space for moving and stationary cars leads to a better mix of traffic. This works to the advantage of the slow road users and creates room for improvement of the living area along the quays. With this approach, the original combination of functions (living, working and traffic) is also reflected more favourably.

The Agenda Amsterdam Low-traffic lists 27 main measures, divided into immediate implementation (2020), implementation in the short term (2024) and the longer term (2040). The policy is aimed at step-by-step improvement, and is accompanied by extensive communication with those involved. Parts of the Agenda Amsterdam Low-traffic include:

- Realisation of the Long-term Bicycle Plan 2017-2022.
- Specific design for each area of traffic and parking facilities.

- Providing more space for facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.
- Design of more and better living areas.
- Creating spaces for loading and unloading.
- Encouraging waste collection via transport over water.

The new parking policy of the municipality provides for the gradual reduction of the number of parking spaces in the inner city and the canal ring area.

For the seventeenth-century canal ring area, an inspiration document<sup>3</sup> has been developed specifically for a parking-free main canal, which brings the use of space closer to the original layout of the canals, with a mixed zone for walking, staying, market and transshipment on the water. The document proposes three options for refurbishment:

- **Option A:** the least drastic option, in which the current layout is maintained with room for pedestrians along the façades and elimination of parking along the quays.
- **Option B:** more drastic, with a widening of the zone along the canal to provide more room for trees and pedestrians.
- **Option C:** the most drastic option, with larger trees than in option B, placed more towards the centre of the pavement. This will have consequences for the layout of the substrate due to the required root space for the trees.

The document states that these options can serve as inspiration for the plans for the redevelopment of (parts of) the canals. The impact of the most far-reaching option C in relation to SOUV criterion iv is not clear, nor how this option relates to the original historical layout of the quays, which – despite parking on the quays – has been largely preserved. In their public consultation response, the Friends of the Amsterdam Inner City Association<sup>4</sup> points out the importance of this historical profile with the regular planting pattern of trees along the water, the lampposts under the trees, and the classic three-way division of footpath, roadway, footpath,

preferably without the later introduction of raised curbs and furniture islands along the quays. Options A and B comply with this.

The inspiration document has not been laid down in policy by the City Council. In May 2022, the City District Centre proposed to redesign the first part of Herengracht (numbers 1 -103), which had been closed to car traffic since 2019 due to the poor condition of the quay. This provided for the permanent elimination of parking and the design of the canal as a residential area with a “shared space” for all road users<sup>5</sup>. The Friends of the Amsterdam Inner City Association responded with an opinion<sup>6</sup>, in which it supports the elimination of parking, but states that the residential area layout is contrary to the historical image, underlining once again the importance of the classic three-way division of footpath-roadway-footpath. Disrupting this division is at odds with the status of nationally protected cityscape and therefore with SOUV criterion iv. In addition, the Association advocates first adopting an implementation strategy for parking-free main canals by the City Council, before parts of the canal are redesigned in anticipation of this. This seems conducive to maintaining a uniform streetscape. A possible consideration is to draw up an HIA to provide insight into the impact of any adjustments to the historical profile of sidewalk-road-quay.

In addition to a reduction of parking on the quays, a policy is being developed in the context of the Amsterdam low-traffic policy to promote transport over water, both for the distribution of goods and for the underground storage and disposal of waste. This is done in conjunction with the Resilient City vision, the Boating Programme, the Agenda Taxi 2020-2025 and the Bridges and Quay Walls Programme. Facilitating more transport over water should lead to the construction of jetties and transfer stations and to a different logistical planning. In 2021, the first pilot for waste collection over water was launched.

3 Inspiration document parking free main canal, 25-05-2021.

4 See: <https://www.amsterdamsebinnenstad.nl/archief/docs/20211006-autoparkeervrije-hoofdgracht.pdf>

5 City of Amsterdam, City District Centre final design parking free Herengracht 1 to 103 ([https://www.amsterdam.nl/projecten/kademuren/maatregelen/herengracht-1-103/plannen/?PagClsIdt=16802946#PagCls\\_16802946](https://www.amsterdam.nl/projecten/kademuren/maatregelen/herengracht-1-103/plannen/?PagClsIdt=16802946#PagCls_16802946))

6 See: <https://www.amsterdamsebinnenstad.nl/archief/docs/20220527-inspraak-herengracht.pdf>

The Boating Programme also stipulates the large crowds due to passenger navigation on the canals, with 471 licensed passenger boats and the substantial amount of non-licensed boats, 80 of which are large, which structurally carry passengers. All this in combination with the bustle of pleasure craft. This leads to damage to the quays, traffic jams and undesirable behaviour on the water that does not fit in well with the values of the heritage (related to SOUV criterion iv).

From 2022, passenger shipping is regulated by:

- The introduction of a new licensing system for a maximum of 550 passenger boats.
- Dealing with the major nautical bottlenecks.
- A ban on passenger traffic carrying 12 passengers or more without a permit.

The ships are also made more sustainable (making them emission-free), applied primarily to passenger shipping, with the exception of historic vessels. Attempts are also being made to influence behaviour on the water through a communication campaign, combating excessive alcohol consumption and intensifying supervision and enforcement. Nuisance is combated by closing off the water from 11:00 pm until 7:00 am, dealing with irregularities at boarding and disembarkation points, and setting up new locations for embarkation, disembarkation, transfer and mooring. The bustle caused by pleasure craft is counteracted with a new vignette policy, increasing inland harbour dues and a stricter and harmonised mooring policy.

In addition to this regulation, the Boating Programme provides for an extensive Passenger Shipping Aesthetics Document 2019<sup>7</sup>, that sets requirements for design and layout of passenger ships. This concerns the prevention of excesses up to and including the incorporation of visual quality and form requirements in the permit issue.

### Management measures

- Make the inner city and the canal ring area increasingly low-traffic, including barring heavy freight traffic (>7,5 tonnes).
- Sustain attention for the canal profile, as described in the UNESCO file for obtaining world heritage status and the nationally protected cityscape. This plays a role in the redevelopment of the canals into a parking-free main canal and the application of the inspiration document parking free main canal when carrying out work.
- Assess design options for canals on cultural heritage aspects and lay down choices in an implementation strategy, to be adopted by the City Council.
- Promote transport of goods over water.
- Regulate bustle caused by passenger traffic and pleasure craft on the water.
- Redesign landing places.
- Regulate undesirable behaviour on the water through communication and supervision and enforcement.
- Pursue aesthetics policy for passenger shipping.

### 6.5 High-rise developments

UNESCO attaches great importance to the aspect of visual impact. Contemporary urban developments, such as high-rise buildings and modern architecture, can affect city silhouettes, the roofscape, sightlines or vistas, and threaten the authenticity and integrity of the historic urban landscape. Of these developments, high-rise buildings in particular can have a major visual effect on the canal ring area. UNESCO maintains that the high-rise policy of cities should be based on the international charters and treaties that apply to the World Heritage Site, including the Washington Charter and the Vienna Memorandum. Further guidance is provided by more recent papers of the World Heritage Committee and its advisory body ICOMOS on the social and cultural significance of the historic urban landscape in relation to contemporary developments in urban planning and architectural design. In essence, this

<sup>7</sup> City of Amsterdam, Boating Programme, Passenger Shipping Aesthetics Policy Amsterdam 2019

means for Amsterdam that high-rise developments are possible, on condition that the OUV and the authenticity and integrity of the canal ring area are not compromised. In concrete terms, this concerns the protection and preservation of existing visual axes/vistas, city silhouettes and the roofscape of the canal ring area.

The prevailing High-rise Vision 2011, the rules and the representation in the zoning plans provide for this protection and preservation. The High-rise Vision indicates where high-rise developments are possible, up to which height, and when a High-rise Effect Report must be made to investigate the impact on the urban landscape. High-rise developments are limited as follows in the vision:

- a. Low-rise buildings up to 22.5 m.
- b. Mid-rise > 22.5 m + 25% height of surrounding buildings.
- c. High-rise > 30 m.

At the time of the nomination, several high-rise projects had already been realised in the vicinity of the canal ring area or were at such an advanced stage in the procedure to be regarded as a given. This includes mainly high-rise buildings on the north side of the UNESCO area: on the banks of the river IJ (such as 'Ankers aan t IJ') and Amsterdam North. The development of Sluisbuurt is of a later date and, partly based on the High-rise Impact Assessment, the ruling of the Council of State and contacts with UNESCO (ICOMOS), the plan has been adjusted in such a way that the impact on the sightlines from the canal ring area has been reduced.

According to the High-rise Vision 2011, buildings in the UNESCO area (core zone and buffer zone) are considered to be mid-rise if higher than 22.5 metres or 25% higher than the immediate surroundings. In that case, a metropolitan effect may occur in the UNESCO area, which will affect the existing cityscape. In these situations a High-rise Effect Report is required in which all aspects, such as the impact

on sightlines and monuments and/or cityscapes, are to be taken into account. This report is assessed by the high-rise committee, with standard advice from Planning and Sustainability, including Monuments and Archaeology, as well as an assessment by the Committee for Spatial Quality or the Committee for Environmental Quality. The UNESCO world heritage status of the canal ring area has been included as a hard assessment criterion in the assessment framework for high-rise developments.

Amsterdam is developing a new policy for high-rise developments. In this new high-rise policy, four regimes are distinguished:

1. Yes, areas suitable for high-rise developments (transformation areas around public transport hubs).
2. Sometimes, in specific places (in post-war areas).
3. In principle no (in exceptional cases as an urban development accent in the 19th Century Ring, the '20-'40 Belt and IJburg).
4. No (in the protected cityscapes).

At the level of the building, four principles have been identified for a high-rise building to comply with:

1. High-rise buildings contribute to the liveliness of public space.
2. It is good to live and work in a high-rise building.
3. High-rise buildings last a long time.
4. High-rise buildings form part of the city silhouette in an attractive way.

Consequently, a set of protection instruments is and will remain present in the core zone and the buffer zone of the UNESCO area, as part of the new policy against high-rise developments above 20 metres.

The possible impact of the external effect of high-rise developments on the canal ring area has been limited on the basis of strict rules (preventing or mitigating a possible impact) in a zone of 2 kilometres outside the world heritage area.

By taking the (values of the) existing cityscapes and villagescapes into account through maintaining a 2-kilometre zone on the one hand and the characteristics of the spatial systems on the other, the new high-rise policy assumes that a careful way of dealing with heritage is safeguarded in the basis of the policy. The policy also includes an additional explanation of the visual impact of the sightlines. This makes it impossible to initiate matters that might subsequently turn out to be undesirable or unfeasible in a further stage of development (particularly from a heritage perspective). Based on this motivation, it is no longer required to draw up a High-rise Effect Report. However, the municipality can, where necessary, impose the drawing up of a High-rise Effect Report. Assessment by a high-rise committee or the Committee for Spatial Quality is cancelled in the new policy.

However, the external effect of the UNESCO World Heritage Site cannot be limited to the 2-kilometre zone maintained by Amsterdam in the new high-rise policy. Within the new high-rise policy explicit account will have to be taken of the impact that high-rise buildings may have on the SOUV of the canal ring area. All the more so since in accordance with the SOUV the sightlines must be protected on the basis of criteria i and iv. This does not mean that in the new high-rise policy a possible impact of high-rise developments on the World Heritage Site is entirely excluded. This may be remedied by drawing up an assessment framework or a high-rise impact analysis for the city, taking the UNESCO area into account. An alternative is that a High-rise Effect Report or a Heritage Impact Assessment is drawn up for plans with a possible impact on the World Heritage Site.

### Management measures

- Incorporate the principle of avoiding and limiting impact on values UNESCO World Heritage Site as a hard criterion in the high-rise policy, assessment framework and in due course the Environmental Plan.
- Draw up assessment framework high-rise developments or high-rise impact analysis.
- Draw up Heritage Impact Assessment upon identifying possible impact SOUV.

### 6.6 Heritage and archaeology

Amsterdam has publicly accessible and consultable digital maps showing the archaeological sites and buildings and historical maps: (<https://maps.amsterdam.nl/archeologie/>). These maps show various sites and archaeologically valuable locations in the city centre and the canal ring area.

Where spatial developments are concerned, Amsterdam weighs the importance of its archaeological heritage carefully and at an early stage, so as to allow developers and private individuals to anticipate and prevent planning delays. On the basis of zoning plans and in the environmental permits, archaeological regulations are included and requirements are set for building and construction work. If preservation of a site is not an option, archaeological field research will be carried out before the soil is disturbed, so that archaeological remains can be documented and finds are preserved. Only certified organisations that work according to the Dutch Archaeology Quality Standard are authorised to carry out archaeological research. This type of research always proceeds in stages and starts with a desk study followed, if necessary, by field research. After each research phase, the municipality will determine which parts of a plan area are eligible for further research or for protection, and which parts of the plan area are exempted.



The archaeological heritage of Amsterdam belongs to all its citizens. Consequently, finds made during excavations are permanently stored in the municipal archaeological depot, where they are available for researchers and exhibitions, for example at the educational ArcheoHotspot in the Allard Pierson Museum. In addition, all results of archaeological research are made accessible to the public.

#### Management measures

- Continue the current working method.

#### 6.7 Heritage and design of public space

In the City of Amsterdam, heritage has been identified as an important theme at policy level. When establishing and implementing programmes and sectoral plans, for example traffic, energy transition, bridges and quay walls (tactical level), heritage is usually not explicitly mentioned. When elaborating programmes and plans into measures in areas such as the canal ring area (operational level), care for heritage is generally discussed, prompted by the integrated care for environmental quality.

The standard for the Amsterdam streetscape is anchored in the Puccini method, based on which all the streets, squares and public gardens of Amsterdam are designed. This standard represents a high-quality physical design of public space. A design that is user-friendly, accessible, safe, manageable, sustainable, affordable and coherent, as well as beautiful. This standard for the Amsterdam streetscape consists of a policy framework and two technical manuals: green and red. The policy framework is based on five convictions:

- The user benefits from simplicity and naturalness.
- Craft at every scale level.
- Sustainability.
- 'Best practices' as well as innovation.
- Collaboration.

Based on these convictions, design principles have been developed to lay out public space throughout Amsterdam. The policy framework includes a Floor Plan, a Lighting Plan and the Main Tree Structure Plan, in which policy choices for the design of Amsterdam are laid down. The main points of the policy have been adopted in the Public Space Design Manual. For the canal ring area, proper maintenance and reinforcement of the tree structure along the canals and the 'keur gardens' behind the canal houses are part of the values to be protected.

In addition, Amsterdam is developing a new working method for a future-proof city based on the Integral Design Method Public Space. This method was primarily developed for biodiversity and climate adaptation, but the ambition is to use it more widely.<sup>8</sup> The working method includes an inventory of seven intersecting themes in order to formulate the general goals to be achieved in an area: water, living environment, materials, mobility, soil & substrate, energy, flora & fauna. These seven themes are reflected in the elaborations per area, in the selection of suitable measures and in the choice of appropriate designs, resulting in integrated and innovative solutions at street level. It is recommended that in future attention for heritage will be included as an eighth theme, or to explicitly include heritage in the living environment and materials themes. The working method is currently still being developed and its application must be further legally guaranteed.

<sup>8</sup> See <https://openresearch.amsterdam/nl/page/59863/deel2---werkboek>

Examples of interventions in public space whereby the importance of the World Heritage Site must be integrally taken into account are:

- **Asphalting roads and replacing sidewalks** with concrete tiles due to lower maintenance costs will immediately cause problems with SOUV criterion iv in the canal ring area. The chance that it will take place in this area is small.
- **Street furniture**, when replaced, changes its appearance or colour scheme, for example the replacement of urinals in fixed toilets, the introduction of green waste bins, and change of street lighting.
- **Placement of signs by third parties**, the location of which is usually determined on the basis of public order and safety, can disrupt the value and the visual quality of the canal ring area (relates to SOUV criteria i and iv).
- **Advertising, parking, and flags;** billboards, analogue and digital advertising with LED screens, were already a point of attention at the time of and shortly after obtaining UNESCO status. That is still the case, partly because contracts are ongoing, but also because entrepreneurs continue to install LED screens and advertising billboards. Other billboards, including bicycle indications, parking spaces, instructions for counteracting undesirable behaviour such as shouting and alcohol consumption in the streets, are also at odds with the values and the visual quality of the canal ring area (relates to SOUV criteria i and iv).
- **Placement of objects for utilities**, such as adapting and installing additional electrical boxes (transformer boxes) for the power supply, or constructing (underground) waste containers (relates to SOUV criteria i and iv). Such interventions are partly permit-free. It is being investigated whether these boxes can be placed under the permit requirement of the Amsterdam Public Works Regulation 2021. Reuse of old transformer boxes where possible has been agreed with the network operator.

The design of public space is also part of the City Centre Approach (section 6.1), where the quality of life and the quality and perception value of the inner city have been identified as important challenges. An essential part of this is that the canal ring area and public space in the canal ring area are clean and undisturbed by graffiti and all kinds of objects. The impact on public space has already been discussed in the section on infrastructure and traffic (6.4), where the preservation of the canal profile is also discussed.

#### Management measures

- Incorporate SOUV canal ring area as starting point in the Puccini method (e.g. protection canal ring area and tree structure).
- Include heritage in the Integral Design Method Public Space as the 8th theme or as an explicit part of the themes living environment and materials.
- Make decisions on long-term contracts for the placement of analogue advertising pillars, etc., and enforce rules for analogue and digital advertising.
- Investigate whether it is possible, in the interests of the heritage, to include the currently permit-free objects (including transformer boxes) in the permit requirement under the Amsterdam 2021 Working in Public Space Regulation in the context of the (re)design of public space.

#### 6.8 Climate change

The consequences of the effects of climate change are a matter of concern for UNESCO, to which the Management Plan should pay attention in accordance with the July 2021 “Operational Guidelines” (this was not yet a subject of the 2010 Management Plan). Therefore, this topic is discussed in more detail below.

#### Climate change approach

In Northwest Europe, climate change leads to an increase in the average temperature (by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius), a (faster) rise of the sea

level, subsidence of the soil, an increase in the number and intensity of peak showers, an increase in periods of drought. Risks in this connection are flooding, waterlogging, subsidence, heat stress and loss of or undesirable changes in biodiversity. Risks associated with this can relate to all three SOUV criteria. Examples are the physical damage to buildings and the surroundings, or reduced perception value of the heritage.

As is required of every municipality in the Netherlands under the national Delta Programme for climate change (Spatial Adaptation Programme), the City of Amsterdam has carried out a stress test to map out the city's vulnerability to climate change. This was carried out in accordance with the 2019 agreement, and will be regularly updated. The results of these stress tests will be used when drawing up a climate adaptation strategy for Amsterdam.

### Flood probability



- Overstromingskans
- Geen significante overstromingskans
- Extreem kleine kans: <1/30.000 per jaar
- Zeer kleine kans: 1/3.000 tot 1/30.000 per jaar
- Kleine kans: 1/300 tot 1/3.000 per jaar

Figure 11: Map flood probability

The chance of any particular location being confronted with a flood is expressed in the site-specific flood probability for 2050, caused by a breach of a primary or regional flood defence. The canal ring area has a very small (once in three thousand years) to extremely small (once in thirty thousand years) chance of flooding. Taking into account more and less extreme scenarios, the flood depth in the area will be between 0 and 50 centimetres at the most.

The canals, the rivers IJ and Amstel, the North Sea Canal and the Amsterdam-Rhine Canal have one common level. The chance of flooding from the sea is determined by the probability of a breach of the primary flood defences of the North Sea Canal and IJsselmeer. Protection of the primary flood defences is national policy of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, and has received increased attention since 2008 with the establishment of the Delta Programme.

### Risks of waterlogging



- Knelpunten
- Extreem urgent
- Zeer urgent
- Urgent

Figure 12: Map waterlogging

9 High Water in the Storage Basin Special Control Plan, adopted 18-09-2013

The risk of waterlogging and damage to quays, roads and buildings by extremely heavy rains and increased supply of water from rivers is expressed by urgency in the stress test. As a storage basin system, the river Amstel and the canals are at the limit of what they can discharge and store. An extreme rain shower can increase the load, causing lower-lying parts of the city, including the parks and the northern district, to be flooded. The forecast is that in 2050, 8% more rain will fall than in 2019. In the canal ring area itself, there are hardly any urgent or very urgent situations.

In the buffer zone of the UNESCO area, a small part of Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal, part of Spuistraat, as well as Lindengracht and Willemstraat (Jordaan quarter) are vulnerable. Just outside the core zone, this applies to Fokke Simonzstraat.

In case of high water, a phasing has been agreed in the “High Water in the Storage Basin Special Control Plan”<sup>9</sup> according to which a crisis organisation is activated and measures are taken, in close collaboration with the Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management and other water authorities. Under average conditions, the level in the storage basin can vary by 0.15 metres (NAP -0.45 NAP to -0.30) around the target level of -0.40 NAP. In normal circumstances, this target level is achieved by the control capacity present in the canal system itself. However, this is limited and also works fairly slowly, due to the presence of many old locks, gates and bulkheads. If the water supply is excessive, it will be drained from the centre of Amsterdam to the North Sea Canal and the Amsterdam-Rhine Canal. In theory, the level in the city can rise by approximately 0.40 metres, but due to the presence of residential sewer outlets and overflows and emergency outlets of the sewerage system at -0.15 NAP, it is in practice limited to 0.25 metres. Peak showers of 150 – 200 millimetres are already flooding basements in the inner city. Outside the city, further discharge to the sea via the North Sea Canal takes place by grav-

ity flow at low tide. If that is not possible, pumping will take place by using the IJmuiden pumping station of the Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management. In the event of rising water levels in the city (from -0.15 NAP and higher), a large number of emergency measures have been agreed, which can be successively implemented. The plan starts with the drainage of water to Markermeer by gravity flow (if the level is low enough), followed by the deployment of the Zeeburg pumping station in combination with the closing of barriers at the IJ front (obviously with major consequences for shipping), mobilising extra pumping capacity (NUON power station, Spuisluis in Oranjesluisen, Noordersluis IJmuiden) and closing the emergency barriers (Breukelen, Driemond) up to and including the closure of the entire Amstel front and ultimately the flooding of the De Ronde Hoep calamity polder<sup>10</sup>. The Water Authority does not consider it realistic to gear the system to extreme situations, such as a peak showers of 150 – 200 millimetres.

For the near future, the water authority is investigating<sup>11</sup> whether the drainage and storage capacity for Amsterdam will have to be increased. One scenario is that the calamity level in the North Sea Canal is increased by 0.20 metres in order to make more use of the existing drainage capacity, and to add extra and flexibly controllable pumps to drain the water to the sea. The Water Authority Amstel, Gooi and Vecht also aims to improve the flow in the canals of Amsterdam, for example when bridges are being renovated. The adjustments may affect the requirements for the protection of the heritage, but will mainly take place under water and will not affect the shape and appearance of the canals.

A subject in the Amsterdam Environmental Vision 2050 is research to be conducted into the re-excavation of canals filled in the past. This is linked to making the inner city more climate-proof, in combination with efforts to make it low-traffic, and might also strengthen the SOUV of the World Heritage Site.

<sup>10</sup> See *High Water in the Storage Basin Special Control Plan* pages 7 – 13.

<sup>11</sup> *Storage Basin Plan Water Authority Amstel, Gooi and Vecht 2.0, 2022. The Storage Basin Plan is an elaboration of the Water Management Programme 2022-2027*

## Drought

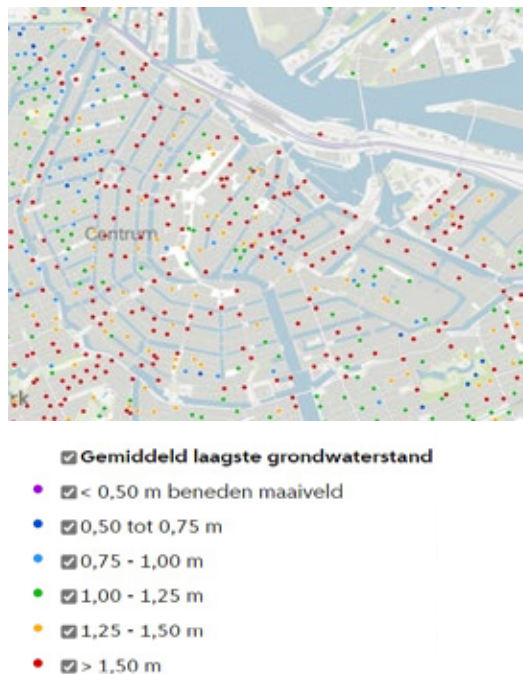


Figure 13: Map drought/groundwater levels

Drought is mapped out by determining a 10-year average of the lowest groundwater level. Groundwater levels that are too low can present a problem for greenery (trees, parks), cause subsidence, affect vulnerable foundations, etc. The areas where the current groundwater level is already low may be particularly vulnerable to more extreme dry spells due to climate change. With some exceptions, the canal ring area faces low groundwater levels everywhere (from 1.25 to more than 1.5 metres below ground level), which makes it susceptible to desiccation. Amsterdam has a large area with wooden pile foundations. The most vulnerable are the 19th Century Ring and the '20-'40 Belt. The seventeenth-century canal ring area was constructed more robustly. At the time, the tides had to be taken into account and the tops of the wooden piles were placed deeper. At low tide they will not run dry, which reduces the risk of pile rot – and

consequently subsidence. The level in the North Sea Canal, which is the same as in the canal ring area, can only go down to a limited extent, because otherwise deep-lying ships will hit the tunnel tubes. The importance of shipping, the priority given to safety and the fact that the flood defences cannot withstand water levels below -0.50 metres NAP, plus the preventive need to avoid foundations drying out, mean that Amsterdam has a high priority in the Dutch water distribution.

Desiccation is combated at the small-scale level of homes, streets and neighbourhoods in the Amsterdam Rainproof programme, and with measures that follow from the Climate Adaptation Implementation Agenda (April 2021) of the City of Amsterdam. Based on this agenda, residents and businesses are informed about greening, water storage and disconnection of rainwater drainage, and application thereof is encouraged. The agenda is aimed mainly at combating extremes in the groundwater level by phasing down peaks. This is important for the canal ring area, although based on the protection of the heritage there are restrictions as to the construction of façade gardens, flowerbeds and the disconnection of rainwater drainage at the front of buildings (relates to SOUV criteria i and iv). Opportunities exist for green roofs and especially in the spacious green indoor gardens and 'keur gardens' behind the houses. This is limited by the fact that it frequently concerns private property and mandatory imposition is not really possible.

On a larger scale, the groundwater can be influenced by locally active groundwater replenishment, with the aim of preventing groundwater levels from becoming too low. The City of Amsterdam has made agreements in this respect with the Water Authority Amstel, Gooi and Vecht in the Climate Adaptation Implementation Agenda<sup>12</sup> and the Amstel, Gooi and Vecht Storage Basin Plan 2.0<sup>13</sup>, which include the sufficient supply of water from the river Lek and the IJsselmeer area. Compartmentation in the canal sys-

<sup>12</sup> Climate Adaptation Implementation Agenda 2022, page 86

<sup>13</sup> Storage Basin Plan Water Authority Amstel, Gooi and Vecht 2.0, 2022

tem should prevent the city from ‘emptying’ at low water levels. The city storage basin can also in its entirety be closed off from the surrounding storage basins of the North Sea Canal and the Amsterdam-Rhine Canal and from the Amstelland storage basin. The retaining structures in the water required for this are locks and sealable baffles or storm surge barriers. In the event of collapse of a water barrier within or outside Amsterdam, a large part of the canal system could “empty” into the land behind it. It is necessary to maintain the water level in the city, because too low a level (which might lead to too low groundwater levels) could lead to the collapse of quays and damage to buildings (subsidence).

The impact of prolonged drought is counteracted by the supply of water, for which the Water Authority Amstel, Gooi and Vecht is entirely dependent upon the water supply from the river Rhine: “When the water supply at Lobith decreases, the amount of water flowing to the river Lek, and via the river IJssel to the IJsselmeer area, also decreases. ... It is expected that the frequency of low river discharges will increase in future.”<sup>14</sup> The latter has already been observed in the past five years.

When the water supply is low, the water quality also decreases, with drawbacks for biology, health and the quality of life (blue-green algae, odours). These are of a temporary nature and do not affect the structure of the canal ring area. However, the groundwater level is not established at a fixed value, as is the case with surface water. This is because there is no “groundwater management” but a “groundwater care task” when it comes to the responsibilities of the municipality for the shallow groundwater. In practice, the groundwater level sometimes reacts quickly, but usually slowly. In addition, there are places with (too) high and (too) low levels located close together. An extensive monitoring network is maintained with monitoring wells (a city-wide basic network and project-specific measurements). Follow-up with measures is not always possible and effective, because there is a great deal

of variation and an advantage for one object can generate a disadvantage for a neighbouring object.

### Heat stress



Figure 14: Map heat stress

Heat is mapped with the average wind chill factor for 1 July 2015 displayed between noon and 6 pm. This day has been selected nationwide as the representative heat day for the summer period from April to September. In the current climate, this temperature is reached once every 5.5 years. The canal ring area has to deal with high temperatures, but less so than the rest of the urban area, logically due to the presence of water. During tropical days, Amsterdam residents go en masse in search of cool places in public space (including parks and water) causing increased pressure on outdoor space. The heat makes outdoor space unpleasant to stay in and to work, play sports, shop or recreate. In addition, the reflection of solar radiation on buildings leads to

a further increase in temperature. Extreme heat poses risks for human health and the perception of the area (relates to SOUV criterion ii), not necessarily to the physical aspects of the heritage.

Excessive heat is counteracted by stimulating cooling off. The City of Amsterdam expects benefit from the additional evaporation of plants and trees, which underlines the importance of the preservation (if necessary replanting) of trees along the canals and the ('keur') gardens behind the canal houses. Installing green roofs that remain out of sight from public areas as much as possible is also an option.

#### Management measures

- Implement national flood risk management policy.
- Improve the flow of canals, drainage and storage capacity, water level management and research raising calamity levels.
- Monitor groundwater levels and actively replenish groundwater level where necessary.
- Disconnect rainwater drainage, in combination with expansion of soil infiltration and greening of private and public areas.
- Expand options for green roofs (hidden from street level as much as possible).

#### Energy and heat transition

The City of Amsterdam has formulated a policy to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 55% in 2030 and by 95% in 2050 compared to the reference year 1990. The municipality intends to be completely natural gas-free by 2040 and to cause no more CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by traffic on Amsterdam roads by 2030.<sup>15</sup>

Approximately 52% of the current CO<sub>2</sub> emissions comes from homes, 21% from business use and 18% from social buildings. For the homes, the Amsterdam ambition means that all 650.000 residential and other buildings in Amsterdam must be natural gas-free in 2040. One way to achieve this is

to connect 110.000 homes to a heating network, for which a new infrastructure will be installed. For the inner city and the canal ring area, Amsterdam is in principle committed to the use of sustainable gas and the existing gas infrastructure. This will prevent major interventions in the UNESCO world heritage area, while there will still be room for other forms, such as a heat pump or ATEs system. A point of attention is the risk that far-reaching insulation and adapting buildings to low-temperature solutions will infringe on the monumental status of buildings and interiors.

The Regional Energy Strategy (RES) 1.0 of the energy region North-Holland South, lists various types of search areas for the Amsterdam sub-area, each with their own opportunities and challenges. General search areas for solar energy are large roofs, parking lots and noise barriers. In addition, there are location-based search areas for solar or wind energy, such as land along roads or canals, and land on or around industrial estates. These location-based search areas are indicated on the maps of the sub-regions in the RES. The search areas in the RES 1.0 are broad. In the follow-up process, together with local residents and stakeholders, the most suitable location for solar panels or wind turbines will be determined. The RES maps currently contain a number of search areas where the impact on the canal ring area (sightlines) must explicitly be taken into account in the follow-up process, for example when drawing up Environmental Impact Reports.

Other policy elements include making existing homes and buildings energy-efficient, energy-neutral construction of new buildings, and fitting all suitable roofs with solar panels. To this end, the electricity network will have to be expanded. The climate policy also refers to other policy components, such as more room in the city for pedestrians, cyclists and children playing, and a reduction in car traffic, encouraging sustainable modes of transport such as cycling and public transport to keep the city accessible and reachable.

<sup>15</sup> *New Amsterdam Climate roadmap Amsterdam Climate Neutral 2050, City of Amsterdam March 2020, page 6 public version.*

The installation of extensive home insulation (façades, roofs, glazing) and solar panels, construction and connections to a heat network and expansion of the electricity network can affect the appearance of the canal ring area, the buildings as well as the public space and the substrate (SOUV criteria i and iv). Even with relatively simple measures to homes, such as the installation of insulation or HR++ glass, the monumental status of buildings located in the canal ring area must be taken into account.

Nationwide possibilities are being sought to give more space to the installation of solar panels on roofs of historic buildings and monuments. Within the City District Centre, owners of heritage who want to install solar panels are facilitated through the Sun on Centre approach. It has been investigated on which roofs solar panels can be installed that remain out of sight. Where possible, space is provided for installing solar panels on the rear of buildings or on outbuildings. In case of large buildings such as the Hermitage and the Hortus, heat and cold storage is applied, but those options are limited for homes.

In the elaboration of the energy transition in the “Heat Transition Vision 2020”, the municipality therefore states: In the old inner city (...) both a heat network and all-electric are very expensive or cannot be integrated, taking into account the current technical state of the art. This is partly due to the ‘crowded’ substrate and the old, sometimes monumental state of the buildings (...). For large parts of the historic centre (...) affordable, sustainable heat options are not yet available at this time. It is therefore expected that the gas network will remain here for the time being. In principle, the municipality is committed to “green gas or green hydrogen gas”<sup>16</sup> and the use of the existing natural gas infrastructure. Room will remain for other solutions, such as a heat pump or ATEs.

If this green gas option cannot be realised, drastic measures regarding buildings and infrastructure will still be required. When pursuing such measures, cultural heritage elements, the UNESCO area, protected villagescapes and cityscapes, national monuments, etc. must be taken into account. This care for cultural heritage is identified in the Environmental Vision 2050 where it concerns the comprehensive assessment of the placement and construction of energy and heating systems.<sup>17</sup>

#### Management measures

- All homes and buildings in 2040 natural gas-free through a combination of insulation, solar panels (see measure below) and use of other heat sources.
- Explore whether and how the values of the World Heritage Site and the desire for solar panels on roofs can be combined.
- Investigate which solutions are possible if the green gas option, as currently included in the Heat Transition Vision, cannot be realised. In the current vision, the use of green gas or hydrogen gas and the existing gas infrastructure in the inner city is anticipated. At the moment, there is no provision for the application of a heat network or ‘full electric’ solutions in the canal ring area.
- Take into account and assess the impact of the RES 1.0 search areas on the canal ring area in the follow-up process. Incorporate interests protection canal ring area in the environmental impact assessments to be drawn up.
- Comprehensive assessment of cultural heritage elements when installing energy and heat systems in the UNESCO area, including an unavoidable and already underway reinforcement of the electricity network.

<sup>16</sup> Heat Transition Vision, City of Amsterdam 18 August 2020, page 25

<sup>17</sup> Environmental Vision 2050, City of Amsterdam, 8 July 2021, page 122



## Biodiversity

Climate consequences for biodiversity are not part of the stress tests that Amsterdam carries out, but promoting biodiversity does form part of the Amsterdam Rainproof programme. This programme encourages residents and businesses to take measures in order to collect water during abundant rainfall and to store it for drier times, for greening to combat extreme heat while at the same time increasing the diversity of species. Measures include promoting the planting of diverse and climate-resistant plants when preparing residential sites for construction, developing ecological banks and improving the soil structure. Furthermore, greening of the environment (replacing tiles with greenery in public and private spaces and installing green strips) and greening of private gardens, balconies and roofs is promoted.

For the canal ring area, the climate resistance of the trees is important as part of the design as a whole (SOUV criterion iv). There are also opportunities for improvement of biodiversity in the inner gardens behind the canal houses and for installing nesting houses and swallow boxes under roof tiles. Urban policy for greening and water buffering with façade gardens and allowing walls to overgrow or placing water barrels (particularly at the front of buildings) does not fit in with the historic character of the canal ring area and is contrary to the SOUV (criteria i and iv).

### Management measures

- Take into account the historic character of the canal ring area when disconnecting rainwater drainage, in combination with soil infiltration, greening private and public areas (particularly in gardens at the rear of canal houses), installing nesting houses and boxes, and planting diverse and climate resistant plants.
- Conservation of ferns in quay walls (protected species).

*18 Storage Basin Plan 2.0 page 11*

## 6.9 Natural disasters, calamities and risk management

### Calamities involving high and low water.

According to the Water Authority Amstel, Gooi and Vecht, the storage basin system is just about adequate in the current situation, but has reached its limits. In view of climate change, the system is not sufficiently future-proof in terms of water discharge, availability of fresh water and limiting salinisation.<sup>18</sup>

By around 2050, the sea level is expected to have risen to such an extent that water discharge from this region to the sea will have to take place almost entirely through drainage, because gravity flow will no longer be possible. Climate change also means an increase in precipitation (8% in 2050) and longer periods of extreme drought. The Water Authority Amstel, Gooi and Vecht has drawn up calamity plans in accordance with the requirements of the Water Act, including “high water in the storage basin” (based on the Water Management Programme) and the “water shortage and drought” control plan (laid down in the Storage Basin Plan 2.0).

As mentioned in the chapter on climate change (see 6.8), measures for the prevention of calamities focus on extreme drought as well as extreme supply.

The Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management is currently renovating the IJmuiden pumping station and has an extra pump at its disposal for situations of failure or maintenance of a pump. In the next 10 years, extreme events can probably be accommodated, but additional measures will be needed after that. Increasing the discharge capacity is directly related to the larger nationwide system of the North Sea Canal/ IJsselmeer/ Markermeer.

### Management measures

- Improve discharge capacity to North Sea and Markermeer.
- Keep calamity plan for high water levels, including phased measures, up-to-date.
- Expand pumping capacity and risk spreading in the long term (+ 10 years).

### Risk profile security region

The City of Amsterdam is part of the Amsterdam-Amstelland Security Region, which has drawn up a regional risk profile in accordance with Article 15 (2) of the Security Regions Act. After a broad risk assessment, the relevant incident types included in the table below have been selected<sup>19</sup>.

Theme	Nr	Type of crisis/ Type of incident
<b>Health</b>	1	outbreak infectious disease
<b>Social</b>	2	incident during major festivities and demonstrations
	3	terrorist attack in the Security Region
<b>Natural environment</b>	4	flooding of a polder/dike breach
	5	drought
	6	waterlogging due to extreme precipitation
	7	severe storm
<b>Vital infrastructure</b>	8	electricity supply failure
	9	gas supply failure
	10	(deliberate) disruption, failure or misuse of a digitised process, (information) system or information service
<b>Built environment</b>	11	major fire in object with vulnerable target group
	12	major fire in extremely tall buildings
	13	major fire in underground buildings
	14	collapse/ subsidence
<b>Technological environment</b>	15	incident flammable/explosive substances, rail transport
	16	incident flammable/explosive substances, water transport
	17	incident flammable/explosive substances, stationary unit
	18	incident toxic substances, road transport
	19	incident toxic substances, stationary unit
	20	overheating (or fire) in bulk storage
<b>Traffic and transport</b>	21	incident in tram and metro tunnels and underground stations
	22	incident at take-off or landing at or around an aerodrome
	23	incident medium to large passenger shipping
	24	incident train traffic

The risks 4, 5 and 6 have already been discussed above in the section on climate change (see 6.8).

Of all the risks identified, (effects of) large and complex fires, breakdown of vital facilities, water and extreme weather, aviation, a pandemic and terrorism have been given priority.

<sup>19</sup> Risk profile 2021 – 2024, Security Region Amsterdam-Amstelland

Below the main risks and the possible impact on the UNESCO World Heritage Site are set out:

- **Large and complex fires** present a risk in dense inner city areas such as the canal ring area, and in buildings with people who are unable or less able to leave without assistance, such as nursing homes, hospitals and prisons. In addition certain objects, for example those belonging to cultural heritage, are regarded as high priority.
- **Breakdown of vital facilities** (gas, electricity, digitised processes, information services) produces chain effects: a minimal origin can have major consequences and effects. As a result, these types of incidents score relatively high.
- **Water and extreme weather** (floods/ drought/ precipitation/ storm) also produce chain effects. Climate changes cause a slight increase in risk. Violent storms are becoming more frequent and periods of heat waves and drought are getting longer.
- **Aviation** the proximity of Schiphol, which also includes flying over the inner city of Amsterdam, means that there is a slight risk of an aircraft crashing in the canal ring area.
- **A pandemic** (such as COVID-19) has major consequences for citizens and the business community, but also for the continuity of care, the government and the emergency services. For the World Heritage Site, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to what now appears to be a temporary reduction in tourist and recreational pressure on the area.

- **Terrorism** refers to a terrorist attack, resulting in deaths and injuries and with major socio-psychological consequences. Recent incidents and the assessment of the probability by the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism have pointed out the importance of this risk. The impact on the World Heritage Site is mainly related to attacks with explosives that cause damage to the built environment (buildings, quays, bridges, canals, etc.)

The Amsterdam-Amstelland Security Region was set up to manage the risks mentioned. It was established on 1 January 2008 as a coordination partnership in the field of crisis management. Partners in the Amsterdam-Amstelland Security Region are the fire brigade, the police, Medical Assistance for Accidents and Disasters, the Public Prosecution Service and the municipalities of Aalsmeer, Amstelveen, Amsterdam, Diemen, Ouder-Amstel and Uithoorn. The mayors of these six municipalities jointly form the Security Board. The mayor of Amsterdam is the chair of the Security Board.

During the period 2016 – 2020 there have been major fires, such as a fire at Chemtura in 2016 and at the Urbanus church in Amstelveen in 2018. Gas leaks and (attempted) ram raids have also become more frequent in recent times. Prolonged power failures occurred in 2016, 2017 and 2018 in Amsterdam, Amsterdam South East, Diemen and

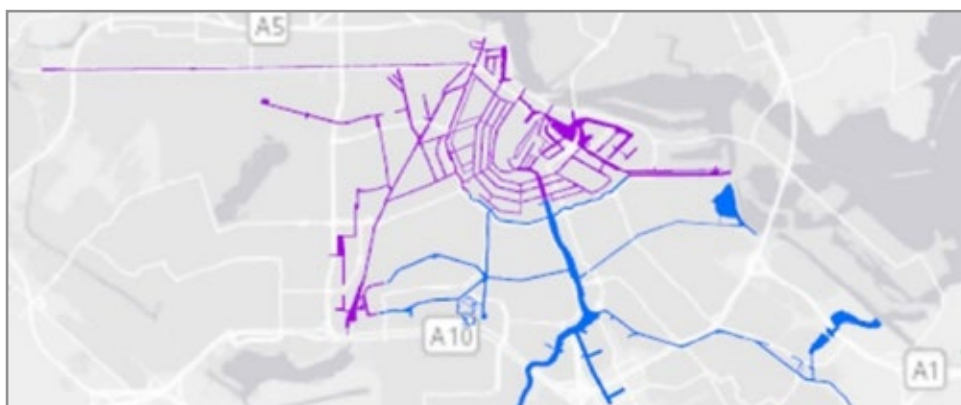


Figure 15: Amsterdam city storage basin (purple) and connecting Amstelland (blue), Vecht (green) and 's-Gravenlandsevaart (red, far right of image) storage basins. It is clear that the canal ring area, the North Sea Canal and the last part of the Amsterdam-Rhine Canal (purple) form one level area.

Ouder-Amstel. In the same vein, there was also a major national outage at KPN on 24 June 2019 with various consequences, including the failure of the emergency number 112. In addition, the COVID-19 crisis had a major impact on daily life and health care.

Specifically for the canal ring area, the risks of fire prevention and transporting hazardous substances over water should be pointed out. For the transport of hazardous substances over water (risk number 16 in the table) the harbour master, among others, has been designated as the competent authority (mandate) by the Minister of Transport, Public Works and Water Management. Transport of hazardous substances, for example kerosine, takes place in Amsterdam harbour, across the river IJ and on the through-going shipping route East (via the river Amstel and Nieuwe Herengracht) and West (via Kostverlorenvaart). This shipping route is the alternative for the situation in which kerosine transport via the pipeline is (temporarily) not possible. In connection with environmental safety, the navigation channel in the harbour is surrounded by a nautical safety zone. This is a strip of fifteen metres within which ships are allowed to sail, but where no permanent accommodation (structure, moored vessel) is allowed to be located. Transport of hazardous substances must be reported to the harbour master in advance. If the transport is by inland waterway, the harbour master will consult with the nautical waterway manager Amsterdam Inland Waterway Management about the opening of the bridges, so that the transport can sail through the city unimpeded.

In addition to general prevention and control by the Amsterdam Fire Brigade, fire prevention is guaranteed by the architectural conditions of the Building and Housing Inspectorate. Under the responsibility of the city districts and on the basis of the statutory regulations, inspectors of the Building and Housing Inspectorate carry out the fire safety test for simple

permit applications. The Amsterdam Fire Brigade has up-to-date fire safety information for the buildings. The Amsterdam Fire Brigade will continue to be charged with providing advice in complex cases by giving mandatory substantive advice with regard to fire-technical substantive aspects.

The crisis management organisation in the Amsterdam-Amstelland Security Region is regulated at three levels: strategic decision-making lies with the municipal or regional policy team, which includes the administratively responsible parties, among whom is the mayor of Amsterdam who is also the chair of the security region. Tactical management is carried out by a regional operational team with representatives of the emergency services, the Public Prosecution service, defence, communication. Operational control in combating site-specific crises is provided by the Incident Command Post. These roles are laid down in the Security Regions Act.

Not included in the Amsterdam-Amstelland Security Region's risk analysis is the impact of storms and plant diseases on the trees in the canal ring area. Many of these trees are protected. If a tree is not protected, a weighing of interests takes place. If a tree is allowed to be felled, a replanting obligation applies. There is a separate protocol for the detection of Dutch elm disease.

#### **Management measures**

- Set up and keep up to date risk analysis and risk management by the Amsterdam-Amstelland Security Region.
- Anticipate climate changes and the consequences of a slight increase in the risk of waterlogging and extreme weather (see also section 6.8.1).
- Safeguard safety zone and unimpeded passage for transport of hazardous substances over canals.
- Carry out fire safety tests by Licensing Supervision and Enforcement.

### 6.10 Recreation and tourism

Growing tourism requires regulation, including spreading and streamlining the flow of visitors through the city. Overcrowding and nuisance caused by tourism (particularly the kind of tourism associated with alcohol and drug abuse) obscure the beauty of the heritage. In addition to the massiveness of the flow of tourists and their behaviour, they also attract certain types of shops and a growth in the number and size of the terraces (including parasols, plant containers, outdoor heaters and screens), with an impact on the values and visual quality of the canal ring area (relates to SOUV criteria i and iv).

Through the City Centre Approach, the city is committed to attracting more culturally inclined visitors to support the tourism sector, without contributing to the nuisance. Together with the tourism sector, a plan was drawn up in 2020 for “redesigning the tourism sector”<sup>20</sup>. The City Centre Approach calls for more attention to art, culture, identity and innovation in the inner city, increasing awareness and easy access to the cultural offer. The UNESCO World Heritage Site will help to ensure that as many Amsterdam residents as possible will benefit from this.

The policy is aimed at spreading tourism across the city and promoting a better visitor economy with more diversity. Spreading tourism focuses on a better distribution between the centre on the one hand and the areas outside it on the other: the neighbourhoods around the centre as well as the wider environs of Amsterdam. In addition, measures have been proposed such as moving the terminal for cruise ships (sea and river cruises) outside the city centre, implementing a new policy regarding window prostitution and coffee shops, and combating the monoculture of the range of shops in the central area. In 2020, a residents’ initiative, supported by 30,000 Amster-

dam residents, asked the municipality to set limits on mass tourism under the motto “Amsterdam has a choice”. Based on this, the municipality has adopted a regulation and indicated that measures will be taken once the number of 20 million overnight stays is exceeded. This limit is expected to be exceeded in 2023/2024. The Redesign Visitor Economy Vision 2025 contains measures to limit nuisance from tourists and to provide for the future-proof development of the visitor economy. The Vision on Tourism in Amsterdam 2035, adopted at the end of 2022, sets clear boundaries and outlines the transformation to a sustainable visitor economy. Amsterdam is committed to improving the quality of life, by combating nuisance and overtourism and by controlling the number of overnight stays. It also focuses on a multi-core city, responsible entrepreneurship and cooperation with the region. Concrete measures include adjustment/earlier closing times of the catering industry and the prostitution in the red-light district, and a Stay Away campaign.

#### Management measures

- Regulate and spread tourism across the city.
- Allow no new hotels in the inner city.
- Combat monoculture retail supply.
- Attract more culturally inclined, no nuisance-causing visitors.
- Take measures and draw up new vision visitor economy at more than 20 million overnight stays.

### 6.11 Social developments

In the seventeenth century, Amsterdam was the largest trading city in the world, and the important exchange of values that this entailed is part of SOUV criterion ii. Amsterdam was primarily important as a merchant city, thanks to European trade with the Baltic Sea ports and the associated return trade elsewhere in Europe. In addition, overseas trade took place through the Dutch East India

Company and the Dutch West India Company. This trade cannot be seen separately from the colonial past of the Netherlands and the involvement in the slave trade and slavery. The International Institute of Social History has conducted research into the history of slavery of the City of Amsterdam. This research has been made publicly available in the book “Amsterdam and the History of Slavery”. The conclusion from this research was that Amsterdam was directly, worldwide, on a large scale, multilaterally and for a long period of time involved in the slave trade and slavery. A legacy that is visible in the historic canal ring area and in the art in the city.

Amsterdam apologised for its slavery past during the Ketji Koti commemoration in 2021. In expressing its apologies, Amsterdam has explicitly stated that this gives the City Council “an additional obligation to commit itself on the one hand to increase the knowledge about and acknowledgement of what happened during the slavery past, and on the other hand to combat the consequences arising from the impact of this past: (institutional) racism and inequality”. In 2021, the Rijksmuseum had a major exhibition about the Dutch history of slavery. Amsterdam residents and visitors can also delve into this history elsewhere in the city and online, for example in the visitor centre of the canal ring area. The World Canals educational project, fully updated in 2022 by the World Heritage Office in close collaboration with the Amsterdam Museum, was expanded with an extra lesson in the classroom dealing with Amsterdam’s slavery past. This lesson is offered free of charge to schools and is taught by trained museum teachers.

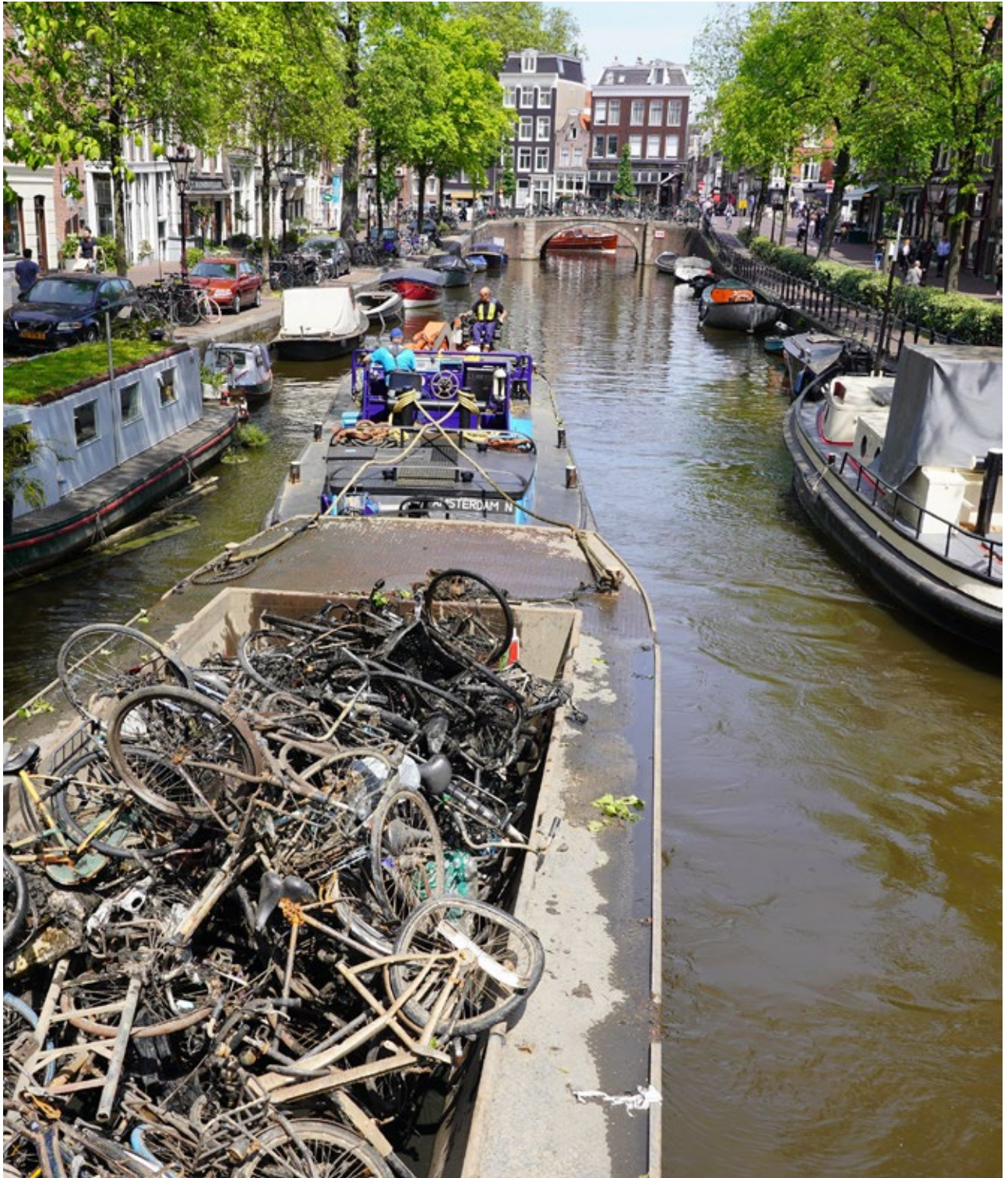
Together with a social coalition, the City of Amsterdam is working to have the impact of the slavery past widely discussed, and investments are being made in the arrival and the structural financing of the National Slavery Museum in Amsterdam. In recent years, Amsterdam has set up an extensive programme to combat discrimination and racism and to promote the emancipation of groups in

society. This approach will be further reinforced in the coming years, in collaboration with the stakeholders in the city, such as social organisations, educational institutions, employers and anyone else who wishes to contribute to this.

#### **Management measures**

- Pay attention to the slavery past in propagating UNESCO world heritage status.
- Position the role of the canal ring area in the city’s slavery past in the Slavery Museum, Wereldgrachten education project, other projects, exhibitions and programmes (including programmes aimed at combating discrimination and racism), etc.

*20 City of Amsterdam City Centre Approach, implementation programme December 2020.*



*Figure 16: Removing bicycle wrecks from the water is also part of the maintenance of the canals*

# 7 Propagating heritage

## 7.1 Communication strategy

Around the acquisition of the world heritage status, active communication was directed toward the residents of the city on the subject of the canal ring area World Heritage Site, through the publication of reports and informative stories for the municipal newspaper (Stadscourant). However, this supply of information has gradually levelled off.

Amsterdam is currently working on the propagation of the World Heritage Site through various channels. This is being implemented with the limited resources of the World Heritage Office. Public information about the World Heritage Site consists of several tracks:

- Visitor centre (see section 7.2).
- Website Amsterdam.
- Brochures and apps.
- Collaboration with other World Heritage Sites.
- Programmes, conferences and fairs.

A relatively new element in propagating the World Heritage Site is the greater attention being devoted to the fact that the wealth of Amsterdam from the end of the 16th century was partly obtained through unjust trade, including the trade in enslaved people. This is featured more and more frequently and made open to discussion. It concerns the Dutch West Indian Company that started trading in enslaved people and the robbery trade on which Amsterdam's prosperity was also built. Attention is paid to this in the elaboration of Amsterdam World Warehouse and the new Slavery Museum that is to be opened in Amsterdam.

### Website Amsterdam canal ring area

Amsterdam has a special page on its website about the Amsterdam canal ring area World Heritage Site. This website contains information about:

- Why the canal ring area is inscribed on the World Heritage List.
- What makes the canal ring area so unique.

The website contains information about the visitor centre and the World Canals educational project. In addition, information about the canal ring area can be found on the website of UNESCO Netherlands and the international website of UNESCO.

### Brochures

From 2022, Amsterdam has a brochure available in Dutch and English about the unique values of the World Heritage Site. A map is part of the brochure. The brochure may become available in other languages in the coming years. However, Amsterdam will first focus on developing walking and possibly cycling routes linked to an app. These routes build on the already available brochure with the map. The digital resources are given more emphasis next to the printed material.

### Collaboration with other World Heritage Sites

From 2010 to 2020, the current visitor centre in building De Bazel was used as the visitor centre of the Dutch World Heritage Foundation. On this location, the Dutch World Heritage Sites were presented (including the Dutch overseas World Heritage Site). Amsterdam takes an active part in this foundation and the collaboration between the Dutch World Heritage Sites, and has been serving as secretary on the board for many years. Amsterdam intends to continue this.

Internationally, Amsterdam has been a member of the Organization of World Heritage Cities for a number of years. Also Amsterdam has started exchanging experiences and knowledge with other European cities faced with similar issues related to the management of World Heritage Sites in connection with tourism, climate change and energy transition. At the beginning of 2023, a first visit was made to Florence, also based on the City Centre Approach.



Van Wereldformaat (World Class) is an initiative of the three collaborating UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Defence Line of Amsterdam, the Beemster Polder and the Amsterdam canal ring area. These three World Heritage Sites are within cycling distance of each other. At first glance, the three UNESCO World Heritage Sites seem very different. Yet they have a lot in common. Visitors to the Amsterdam canal ring area, the Beemster Polder or the Defence Line of Amsterdam will discover the building blocks of the Netherlands. They tell the story of the centuries-long battle against the water, the emergence of a civil society in the Golden Age and the Dutch tradition of designing our country. More information about these building blocks – past and present – can be found on the [Vanwereldformaat.nl](http://Vanwereldformaat.nl) website. The website also contains several cycling routes developed specifically for one of these World Heritage Sites, as well as a route connecting the three World Heritage Sites in the province of North Holland.

### Programmes, conferences and fairs

Amsterdam cooperates with requests for TV and radio programmes about the World Heritage Site. There was active participation in the TV programme *Het Klokhuis*, in which attention was paid to Dutch World Heritage Sites in several broadcasts. *Het Klokhuis* is aimed at children in the primary education age group. Through the World Heritage Office, Amsterdam annually participates in the Cycling and Walking Fair. Incidentally, contributions are made to conferences and similar events.

### Management measures

- Propagate values of the World Heritage Site via website, brochures, collaboration with other World Heritage Sites, participation in programmes, conferences and fairs.
- Pay attention to the slavery past when propagating the UNESCO world heritage status.
- Continue participation in Van Wereldformaat as an information service.
- Initiate working visits with other European (world) heritage cities.
- Make use of digital resources such as social media, apps, podcasts, digital walking routes.

### 7.2 Visitor centre

From 1 June 2021, the new Amsterdam World Heritage Site visitor centre has been established in building De Bazel. In this renovated, freely accessible Amsterdam World Heritage Site visitor centre, the focus is on information about the Amsterdam canal ring area and what makes this World Heritage Site so special. The unique values that UNESCO has attributed to the area are central in the interactive exhibition about the World Heritage Site. The unique values of the canal ring area come to life in animations on a large projection screen in the shape of the historic inner city. Visitors can find in-depth information about the area. In addition, they are literally given a face in six portraits of people who live, work and recreate in this part of the city. The original function of the visitor centre is highlighted by an information column with an interactive map on which the Dutch World Heritage Sites are presented as inscribed on the UNESCO list from mid-2021.

### Management measures

- Ensure that the information provision in the visitor centre for the canal ring area is kept up-to-date.



Figure 17: Visitor centre Amsterdam World Heritage, Vijzelstraat 32

### 7.3 Education and information

In collaboration with the Amsterdam Museum, Wereldgrachten educational project has been running since the 2012-2013 school year. This educational project focuses on primary education groups 7 and 8 (ages 10-12). The programme includes lessons from museum teachers in the classroom and a visit to the visitor centre, followed by a boat trip and a visit to Museum Van Loon (tour of historic canal house).

There is not yet a specific educational programme for secondary education about the canal ring area. Adult education is linked to specific times of the year, such as the annual Heritage Day. On request, there is participation in excursions, and lectures to be given to adults and (inter)national students.

The Bridges and Quay Walls programme has opened a visitor centre where information is provided on the work it carries out. Visitors are referred to the Amsterdam World Heritage Site Visitor Centre.

Since 2003, the Monuments and Archaeology Department has regularly provided the Restoration Techniques for Monuments course. This course consists of eight course days, spread over a period of some four months. Constructions, façades, roofs and interiors are covered, in addition to the restoration philosophy, laws and regulations and sustainability. The course is attended by building inspectors, architects and property managers. An extensive Restoration Techniques manual is available with the course.

Various heritage associations in Amsterdam regularly provide courses and lectures on the architecture and urban development of the Amsterdam inner city. For example, Vrienden van de Amsterdamse Binnenstad has knowledge transfer as one of its statutory objectives.

### Management measures

- Implement educational programme canal ring area in collaboration with educational institutions and museums.
- Reinforce collaboration with parties in Amsterdam Heritage Consultation, museums, cultural institutions and other stakeholders regarding knowledge transfer, education and information.

### 7.4 Research and cultural education

Through Monuments and Archaeology, the City of Amsterdam has set up a chair in heritage at the University of Amsterdam. This chair is broadly oriented. The World Heritage Site is a substantial part of this chair. Amsterdam also collaborates with several universities in the field of research and innovation, such as Erasmus University, Delft University of Technology and Eindhoven University. An example in this respect is the participation in the research into “democratising cultural heritage governance for sustainable and ethical behaviours, policies and practices in Europe”, which is being initiated by Delft University of Technology, Newcastle University, CSIC-IPP Madrid and NIKU Oslo with the participation of Newcastle, Oslo and Amsterdam. There are also exchanges with international students.

The City Centre Approach framework for agreements for 2023 states that it is the aim to give shape to the collaboration between the University of Amsterdam, the Allard Pierson Museum and Monuments and Archaeology by setting up a physical location in the form of an archaeological workshop. The workshop has a multiple purpose:

- Use by Monuments and Archaeology for processing of finds and the transition depot.
- Use by the Amsterdam Centre for Ancient Studies and Archaeology of the University of Amsterdam for practical education and scientific research.
- Use by the Allard Pierson Museum as an extension of the ArcheoHotspot (e.g. for school classes).

The connection between the University of Amsterdam, the Allard Pierson Museum and the City of Amsterdam thus acquires added value for all layers of knowledge and education on a substantive and practical level.

#### **Management measures**

- Utilise possibilities of the chair to reinforce information provision and historical awareness of the canal ring area.
- Participate in studies that contribute to (historical) information and reinforce the context of the canal ring area in contemporary society.
- Set up an archaeological workshop as a collaboration between the University of Amsterdam, the Allard Pierson Museum and Monuments and Archaeology.

#### **7.5 Promotion and marketing**

Amsterdam has made little or no use of the status of the canal ring area as World Heritage Site in its promotion and marketing approach. After obtaining the status, cooperation was sought with the Amsterdam Tourism & Convention Board on the provision of information about the World Heritage Site. A video about the canal ring area was removed from the website, partly because of the already considerable growth in tourism. In 2012-2013, there were also discussions with the tour shipping companies (marked as a top attraction by the Tripadvisor website and app and by others) to include information about the World Heritage Site in the canal cruise, but they refrained. As it was, Amsterdam was a tourist city with many visitors to the canals and the city centre every year, so there was no reason for Amsterdam Marketing to use the acquired world heritage status to further increase the tourist flow.

With the City Centre Approach, the municipality intends to ensure that the inner city will once again become a place where all Amsterdam residents like to be and feel at home. This development has been underway from 2019. In addition, efforts are being made to attract quality tourists. Through the City Centre Approach more attention is paid to art, culture, identity and innovation in the inner city. The world heritage status, in combination with museums and a vast offering of art and culture, fits in well with this. The successor of Amsterdam Marketing, amsterdam&partners, is engaged in promotion and marketing in this respect. It is a public-private foundation aimed at reinforcing the reputation of the Amsterdam Metropolis among residents, visitors and businesses. It intends to contribute to the quality of life, attractiveness and prosperity of a sustainable and inclusive Amsterdam Metropolis, by building up a better reputation and by guiding residents, businesses and visitors. This is to be achieved through the use of the proper data and insights, new technologies and stories that make a lasting impression (storytelling).

#### **Management measures**

- Incorporate the canal ring area in promotion and marketing of the inner city as a place where all Amsterdam residents and quality tourists like to be and feel at home.

# 8 Resources

## 8.1 Management and maintenance costs

### 8.1.1 Costs of management and maintenance of public space

The costs of management and maintenance of the public space of the canal ring area are borne mainly by Amsterdam. Parts of the water management are the responsibility of Amstel, Gooi and Vecht (water management plan), while some specific aspects (water distribution and flood protection) are the responsibility of the national government. These organisations are responsible for the costs of their own assignments, tasks and measures to be taken.

Within Amsterdam, the management and maintenance of the canal ring area is part of the various programmes in which the management, the maintenance and the design of public space is regulated across the board. This also partly concerns adjustments in public space that are necessary in the context of, for example, climate and energy measures. In this connection, the heritage interest is always one of the many aspects, in addition to public order, safety, accessibility, quality of life, climate, etc. These programmes include the integral costs for the maintenance, management, replacement, renovation and refurbishment.

The costs incurred from a heritage perspective are frequently difficult or impossible to specify, partly because they are elements of a broad integrated approach. The heritage interest, including the UNESCO area, is a part of regular processes, such as the often-required permits for the implementation of measures. In section 6.7 above, the way in which considerations and choices in respect of the use of resources for public space are determined on the basis of the Integral Design Method Public Space was discussed. It was also indicated in this connection that it is necessary to position the heritage more strongly within this Method.

Maintenance and management of public space covers the physical design, including management and maintenance, as well as the functional use and preservation of the perception value of the canal ring area. This translates into maintenance levels for public space, but also into regulation of visitor flows, and supervision and enforcement. Within Amsterdam this is incorporated in various agendas and programmes, such as the City Centre Approach implementation programme. These programmes include measures that contribute to safeguarding the OUV of the canal ring area, preserving the quality of life and the perception value of the area, and increasing awareness of the area for Amsterdam residents and visitors to the city. These agendas and programmes also concern integral costs for the implementation of measures that incorporate heritage costs and often cannot be specified in more detail.

### 8.1.2 Costs of management and maintenance of buildings (particularly canal houses)

The costs of regular management and maintenance of the monumental buildings are borne by the owners or managing authorities of the canal houses and the other buildings and land. Owners of a national monument can apply for the Conservation of National Monuments Subsidy for the maintenance of buildings. The National Restoration Fund provides subsidy possibilities for provincial and municipal monuments in respect of restoration (homes) and adaptive re-use and/or restoration and/or preservation of immovable cultural heritage that has not been built as a home.

Within Amsterdam, most canal houses, including the land, are privately owned. Various buildings and land in the canal ring area are the property of the City of Amsterdam or the Central Government Real Estate Agency. In such cases the City of Amsterdam and the Central Government Real Estate Agency respectively are responsible for management and maintenance of buildings, outbuildings and land. Amsterdam is also responsible for the management

of the (monumental) bridges and quays in the canal area (Bridges and Quay Walls programme), the trees and public greenery. In addition, social housing owned by housing corporations is spread throughout the canal ring area. Just like the other private owners, the corporations are responsible for management and maintenance.

Within Amsterdam, several organisations play a role in the management, maintenance and restoration of buildings and objects in the canal ring area in which the City of Amsterdam has a participating interest. These are:

- **Stadsherstel Amsterdam NV:** founded in 1956. Stadsherstel ensures that iconic Amsterdam heritage is preserved by purchasing and restoring dilapidated monuments (14% share). This is done in the public interest of restoring and preserving historic Amsterdam buildings. By purchasing rundown buildings and giving them a suitable destination after restoration, the streetscape and the quality of life in the city are improved.
- **Beurs van Berlage Exploitatie BV, Vastgoed BV and CV:** since 2008 the municipality has been a shareholder (25% share). The Beurs fulfils a cultural, creative, public and social function, including the preservation of cultural heritage in the city, and therefore serves the public interest.
- **NV Zeedijk:** founded in 1985, with the aim of halting the deterioration of Zeedijk by buying up buildings, restoring them and renting out the business premises to bona fide entrepreneurs (78% share). NV Zeedijk has purchased nine buildings in Oudebrugsteeg. In the coming years, these will be transformed into homes and functions that fit in with the City Centre Approach. In recent years, the focus has been on ensuring a proper balance between residents and visitor-oriented functions in the Zeedijk area, as a counterweight to the increased bustle in the city. Improving the quality of life is a public interest.

- **Stadsgoed NV:** as a social real estate investor, Stadsgoed N.V. (17% share) specifically aims to reinforce the residential function, quality of life and accessibility of the inner city of Amsterdam by acquiring, managing, operating, renting and letting of buildings. The public interest is to maintain and increase a liveable, safe and sustainable inner city, in particular postcode area 1012, being the medieval core of the city.

These participations provide an extra impulse to the maintenance and management of the buildings in the canal ring area.

## 8.2 Costs of propagating heritage values

The costs associated with propagating the heritage values and the furnishing, operating and managing of the visitor centre are borne by the World Heritage Office / Monuments and Archaeology. In 2020, approximately € 50.000 was invested in the refurbishment of the visitor centre. In addition, investments were made in:

- developing a new brochure – approximately € 7.500.
- developing an app – approximately € 50.000.
- updating the Wereldgrachten educational project, in conjunction with the Amsterdam Museum - approximately € 100.000, of which half is borne by the municipality. The municipality also subsidises the culture boat that is used for the World Canals educational project.

In addition, a new monitor is being developed that may also be made accessible to the public. The current preparation and development costs, including research into the public experience, amount to € 15.000 and will further increase in the coming year.

### 8.3 Capacity and resources

The costs of propagating the heritage values of the canal ring area (section 8.2) are financed from the budget for the World Heritage Office. In the past, funds from the Visie Erfgoed en Ruimte could also be used for some of these investments. The costs of participation in umbrella organisations and meetings of approximately € 5.000 are part of this budget.

From 2018, the capacity that until then was spread over the City District Centre and the World Heritage Office, has been transferred in its entirety to the World Heritage Office. The current capacity of the World Heritage Office is approximately 2.1 FTEs. In addition to the World Heritage Office, a large number of employees within the City of Amsterdam are through their regular duties involved in the protection and preservation of the canal ring area. This includes the team at Monuments and Archaeology for advice on permits and plans, and the staff of the Committee for Spatial Quality or the Committee for Environmental Quality.

Spread over the many organisational units of Amsterdam, staff is available to work in the inner city and the canal ring area on tasks such as the implementation of numerous measures from the various programmes of the Central City and the City District Centre. The preservation and management of the heritage is frequently only a part of the tasks. Therefore, this staff formation is difficult to quantify.

### 8.4 Knowledge and skills

As the largest city in the Netherlands, Amsterdam has a highly qualified administrative organisation. The functions within the World Heritage Office are filled at higher vocational or university level.

Moreover, the size of the various organisational units means that a high degree of specialisation in particular subjects is possible. Employees operate in numerous national networks. Training and education are part of human resource management policy in the city. In part, the city employs its own specialists to independently shape this training and education. A particular example of this is the Restoration Techniques for Monuments course, which has been provided by the Monuments and Archaeology Department since 2003.

As a member of the Dutch World Heritage Foundation, there is also an active exchange of knowledge and experience regarding the management of a World Heritage Site. The civil service is shaping UNESCO's 'Capacity Building' programme (in collaboration with Belgium and Luxembourg), in which the Amsterdam site manager participates.

#### Management measures

- Ensure that the costs of administrative measures to be taken, including management and maintenance, are comprehensively incorporated in the municipal budget as well as in the budgets of organisational units, projects and programmes.
- Ensure structurally adequate staffing of the World Heritage Office, in line with task 4.6 of the Task List and the tasks involved in managing the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

# 9 Monitoring

## 9.1 Target monitoring

The monitoring of the OUV of the Amsterdam canal ring area is aimed at obtaining and utilising structural information for the management of the site. This entails:

1. Monitoring the state of repair of the canal ring area and its attributes (buildings, bridges and quays, infrastructure and trees).
2. Timely identification of developments that could affect the OUV, as a basis for intervention measures aimed at preventing or ensuring proper management of such developments.
3. Monitoring the progress of management measures.
4. Safeguarding the demands of UNESCO's six-year Periodic Reporting requirement.

The management system includes a wide range of indicators to monitor each of the above goals.

Several monitoring reports have been issued in the past, as well as a Periodic Reporting to UNESCO (2013). Certain elements of these monitoring reports can possibly be used as a reference for further interpretation of long-term trends. There is no real zero measurement on the four components. However, basic information is to be found in the 2010 nomination file.

The rhythm and frequency for monitoring the four components above varies from continuous attention and alertness aimed at early identification of developments and threats, to annual progress reports and the six-year Periodic Reporting to UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee.

The monitoring system basically provides for a two-yearly monitoring report. For some more complex indicators, a lower-frequency monitoring of the indicators is maintained, specified per target.

The perception survey conducted in 2022 will also be carried out regularly on the basis of a lower frequency. It is specified for each indicator how it should be monitored, whose responsibility it is, as well as the monitoring frequency. The input for the monitoring system and the preparation of a biennial monitoring report is provided centrally by the World Heritage Office.

### State of repair

In the context of the nomination in 2010, the state of repair of the canal ring area was extensively mapped out from the point of view of authenticity and integrity, and elaborated in the background topics. In the Netherlands there is also the National Monuments Register, in which monuments are registered but in which the state of repair is not structurally recorded. For internal use, Amsterdam has the Amsterdam Monuments Information System, in which all the municipal and national monuments are recorded. All permit procedures are also linked to this Information System and are accessible to Monuments and Archaeology and the Committee for Spatial Quality or the Committee for Environmental Quality.

In addition, Amsterdam has its own monitors on specific themes. An example of this is the Amsterdam bridges and quay walls monitor in the context of the Bridges and Quay Walls programme. With the aid of this monitor, the state of repair of bridges and quay walls is monitored.

### Timely identification of developments

Early identification of developments that may affect the SOUV provides the monitoring with a particular alerting and safeguarding function. In this process it is important to keep a close eye on developments in and around the canal ring area that could harm the SOUV.

### Progress Management Plan

It is important to keep track of the implementation of the management measures through proper control of the Management Plan.

### Periodic Reporting to UNESCO

The monitoring provides the input for the Periodic Reporting to UNESCO, which in principle takes place every six years.

### 9.2 Monitoring system

The World Heritage Office has asked the municipal Research & Statistics Department to assist in drawing up the Amsterdam World Heritage Monitor on the basis of approximately 50 indicators. These indicators relate to buildings, infrastructure, transport and tourism, etc., and are derived from the Periodic Reporting (block 4). The Research & Statistics Department thereby ensures that information for these indicators is made available throughout the city and is bundled, analysed and graphically represented, and provided with an explanation.

Until 2016, the request for monitoring data took place on a biennial basis, but it has since stagnated. Biennial monitoring reports were drawn up until 2016. The request made to the Research & Statistics Department in 2022 was prompted mainly by the need to have information made available and have it bundled for the UNESCO Periodic Reporting. This mainly concerns data requested in block 4 of the Periodic Reporting. The Research & Statistics Department has indicated what is demanded for each item/question, which indicators are referred to, from which source data can be obtained and at which level data can be made available. It has also been made clear:

- Which questions/items are not relevant.
- For which questions/items there are no data available.
- Which questions/items cannot be obtained quantitatively from the Amsterdam databases.
- Which questions/items require a more qualitative assessment.

The World Heritage Office will discuss with the Research & Statistics Department the manner and shape in which structural and frequent collection of data, analysis and reporting can be achieved. It is being considered to develop a dashboard with the key data for monitoring the UNESCO World Heritage Site. This dashboard will in principle be updated once every two years. The possibility of making the monitoring, or part of it, accessible to the public is being investigated.

The monitoring will address the following elements:

- **Awareness of UNESCO World Heritage Site:** in 2022, as part of the monitoring, a study was carried out regarding the awareness of the world heritage status of the canal ring area among Amsterdam residents and visitors, domestic and foreign tourists. This study is a follow-up to a study conducted earlier in 2012. This type of study has a lower frequency of about once every five years.
- **Progress of management measures:** in the Management Plan, a large number of management measures is included. The state of affairs regarding the implementation/realisation of these measures will have to be collected by the World Heritage Office from within the organisation of the City of Amsterdam and partly also from outside it.
- **Timely identification of developments:** an up-to-date inventory and analysis of developments has been drawn up in the context of the Management Plan. This analysis shows that some developments mentioned at the time of the nomination in 2010 are still relevant.



- **Safeguarding State of Conservation based on licensing:** in Amsterdam, a licensing, supervision and enforcement report is issued annually in the context of the Environment and Planning Act (space, environment, construction, demolition and renovation). This information is not specified for heritage (theme) or canal ring area (area). However, the internal digital Amsterdam Monument Information System provides Amsterdam with information on the processing of permit procedures for monuments and cityscapes (municipal and national). This information makes it clear which procedures have been followed, including the way in which the protection of the canal ring area has been dealt with.

#### **Management measures**

- Set up and maintain an initially biennial World Heritage Site Amsterdam monitor, under the direction of the World Heritage Office in collaboration with the Research & Statistics Department.
- Develop a dashboard that will also (in part) be accessible to the public.

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## Appendix 1: Bibliography Management Plan 17th-century canal ring area of Amsterdam

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