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Real estate with a heart

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good





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Welcome!

When J.H.F. Schopman established this company, his three founding principles were these: think, believe, and dare to be different. The business got off to a flying start, and grew rapidly between the wars. By the 1930s we were building entire residential blocks in Amsterdam and Haarlem. In those days they were in outlying areas, but now they're protected urban views within the cities' ring roads. Our tenants live and work there because they appreciate the beauty, accessibility, and striking architecture of these places. Our original dynamism is still very apparent today.

We approached some of our tenants and asked them to tell us about themselves. They were happy to do so, and the result is a very diverse picture. One couple has been renting apartments from us continuously for 46 years, while others have turned our properties into elegant shops and restaurants that make the city a better place. Four tenants - Bolon, Il diVino, Visque, and St.Jean – have each rented recently renovated corner properties, two of which we acquired only a few years ago. We saw their potential, and our technical department worked with contractors to translate our vision into beautiful renovations. Then our rental department chose responsible tenants whose businesses would complement the properties. We're very selective about our tenants, and they repay us by making the buildings even more beautiful. They stand out, enrich the environment, and often encourage neighbours to do the same with their properties. So together we make the city even more attractive.

When we do larger renovations and new builds, we draw on our knowledge of smaller properties to create an attractive living environment from day one. And we work with like-minded architects. Ana Rocha describes the lengthy and delicate process involved in carrying out a project for us, and Ronald Jansen talks about his upward extension of an old telephone exchange, respecting the existing infrastructure with a bold but low-key design. Studioninedots and the supervisor of Amsterdam City Council describe how they worked together to transform a raw industrial space into a cool urban live-and-work space.

In all of these projects, we've sought to create a mix of functions in an attractive setting and with an emphasis on detail – just as our founder did over a hundred years ago. The story of J.H.F. Schopman and his company is told by two of his descendants who have been closely involved behind the scenes in the development of our business and the Sint Antonius Stichting. I am very grateful for the important role they have played.

With the help of the Sint Antonius Stichting, two organisations are working to make a difference in places that are very different to the Netherlands in terms of health and wellbeing. Using rental income from our complexes, BuildHer and 100WEEKS are achieving goals of which our founder himself would have been proud.

These and other stories in this bulletin are key aspects of our business. They make every working day special, and we want to share them with everyone who makes them possible.

Tim van Schijndel
Director, AHAM Vastgoed



Living and working next to a park

Following a spectacular makeover, the former telephone exchange on Middenweg will host residential and work units, with a view of Frankendael Park.





This building, in the Amsterdam School style, dates from 1923. It was designed by the architect Albert Boeken, who worked for the municipal Public Works department and was responsible for designing numerous corporate buildings and schools. The exchange, which until recently was owned by KPN, is currently being developed by AHAM Real Estate. On a sunny morning, we walk through the dismantled building together with Rik Nahuijsen and Rosanne van Ek. He is AHAM Real Estate's project leader and she is the project coordinator. We enter an imposing space consisting of two 1000 square metre areas, featuring a monumental staircase and numerous details we recognise as characteristic of the Amsterdam School. The main entrance, which was formerly situated on the park side but was then moved to the Kamerlingh Onneslaan side when that street was built, will once again be located on the park side.

Jewel in the neighbourhood's crown

Most conspicuous on the building's current

frontage are the sculptures by Hildo Krop surrounding the entrance, which were taken from the old post office on Herengracht. **Rik:** 'After we purchased the building, we put out a tender to several architects and Ronald



'An imposing space with numerous details we recognise as characteristic of the Amsterdam School'

Janssen's plan won the day.' He unfolds the blueprints. On the top floor we see an extension that adds 50% to the building's height. **Rik:** 'Until just over a year ago, KPN rented the building from us. We have applied to the council for licences for the rooftop extension as well as the change in function.'

Rosanne: 'We acquired temporary tenants, like artists who have been able to set up their studios here, a potter, there's even a band that rehearses here.'
Rik: 'Then we began tackling the question of how to turn this into a magnificent building where people can enjoy living and working,





Front and rear side with ‘rooftop extension’

but that is also a jewel in the neighbourhood’s crown. Our starting point was to make the street-level frontage as vibrant as possible. So, no residences whose tenants draw the curtains in the evening. That would create a very lifeless façade. That’s why we’ve explored the option of a commercial function for the ground floor and possibly auxiliary hospitality

on the side façade, radiating openness towards Middenweg. In order to be able to operate this property profitably, we had to add an additional floor on top, because even just bringing the building in line with contemporary standards requires a huge investment. And then you still have to persuade the council that it’s a good plan.’



Rosanne: ‘The size of the residential units will vary from 48 to 115 square metres and due to the additional floor, some residences will include a mezzanine in which you’ll be able to look five metres up. Plus a roof garden and a green roof.’
Rik: ‘The plan we submitted to the council was the way we had envisaged things. The next

thing is to submit a draft application which they will assess according to urban planning and aesthetic level criteria.’
Rosanne: ‘Following feedback from the department of urban planning, we made some adjustments to our original idea, in order to enable more connection with other buildings in the direct vicinity and to create an urban



architectural balance with the church on the other side of the park.'

Rik: 'Our intention here was really not to go for the highest possible profit, but rather to create something appealing for the city. It's going to be real eye-catcher. We are not developing to sell, but rather to operate for the long term. This approach affects how you choose things like materials. We chose to create a high-quality extension using natural stone, partly because that connects nicely with the ornaments on the existing building.'

Rosanne: 'The council seriously complimented our plan and approved the draft application.'

Rik: 'We have a green light, so now we're waiting for the official licence.'

Historical value

If you visit the 'Het geheugen van Oost' (Memories of Oost) website, you'll not only see a brief description of how the telephone exchange was built, but also a plea from local residents: no hospitality, please! So there won't be any of that, except perhaps a small hospitality section for corporate tenants.

Rosanne: 'We also did some historical research, which resulted in a list of elements we want to retain because of their historical value.'

Rik: 'For example, the staircases, the doors to the hall, lighting elements, tiles on both sides of the hall. We will also leave the ornaments on the chimney untouched as far as possible.' Once the renovations are completed, the building will host 33 residential units, four large office spaces, spaces for auxiliary hospitality

and on the other side of the building, three artists' studios.

Rosanne: 'This will bring back at least a few artists. The residences will be a mixture of social rental accommodation, mid-range rentals and private sector.'

Architect Ronald Janssen calls it 'a very remarkable building'. He says: 'I lived nearby for seven years without knowing that it was a telephone exchange, I thought it was a school or something. It has a wonderful symmetrical U shape and two residences that kind of embrace the courtyard. The Hildo Krop sculptures, which were installed later, give the building even more heritage value.'

As for the choice of materials, he says: 'When we began thinking about what type of materials we wanted to use, we looked at what

materials were already incorporated in the building. That's why we chose granite. It's high-quality and fits very nicely with the materials previously used in the building. If we had chosen, say, aluminium or something, the contrast would have been much starker.' The way the extension is divided vertically is also directly related to the lower section, he emphasises. 'The ground floor windows are smaller than those on the first floor and we continued that line up to the extension. So, from small to medium-sized and then large in the extension. We are going to return the window frames in the ground floor to the way they originally were, so yes, we are treating the building with the utmost care. There's a long way to go, but it is going to be magnificent.'



Pioneer tenants

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Hans (72 and Gon (70) Homburg have been renting from AHAM for 46 years, the last fifteen of which they’ve spent in a wonderful ground-floor apartment, around the corner from Amsterdam’s Vondelpark.

Delightful, is how Gon and Hans Homburg describe their ground-floor home built in 1910 on Amsterdam’s Saxen Weimarlaan. The house has a garden, it’s spacious, has high ceilings and plenty of light. Plus it has some original details, like the connecting door featuring stained glass windows, which Hans points out. ‘Aren’t they lovely?’ As

well as the authentic stencils in the hall. ‘They appeared when I was removing the old wallpaper.’ The Homburgs have been living here for fifteen years, but their relationship with AHAM goes back much further. ‘It’s been going strong for 46 years. That’s even a year longer than we’ve been

married,’ says Hans, laughing. He opens a photo album to snapshots of the rooms they lived in on Amsterdam’s Koninginneweg, where they first met. The album also contains a 1976 letter from the Amsterdamse Huizen Administratie Maatschappij (Amsterdam Housing Administration Society or AHAM) stating that the couple is eligible to rent an apartment on Valeriusstraat for 375 guilders a month. ‘We were each paying 200 guilders for a room, so that was progress,’ says Gon. ‘It was quite a challenge to make the place liveable,’ adds Hans. ‘In those days, apartments like that were offered with holes in the floor. Fortunately, I’m a handy person.’

Three years later, when their son Robert was born, they told AHAM they needed more space. AHAM offered them two or three alternatives and they chose the third floor in the building they currently live in. For 26 years they were satisfied tenants, but had nevertheless always looked down longingly at the large garden with its horse chestnut tree. They are nature-lovers. Hans studied dendrology, he’s a botanical illustrator, a tour guide and like Gon, for many years he coordinated



the volunteers at Vondelpark rose garden. In 2007, the previous tenant moved out and the Homburgs were able to relocate from the third to the ground floor. Besides the wall decorations, the place had a few other surprises in store for them too. It turned out there was a conservatory, featuring stained glass windows. Gon adopted this delightful spot, with its doors opening onto the garden, as the location for her favourite pastime: making bobbin lace. Hans has his own mancave where he practises his numerous hobbies: the basement, which measure no less than 50 square metres. That was another surprise. They both enjoy the garden to the full. ‘Whenever the

weather permits, we like to have breakfast outside at the picnic table and we light the Dutch oven,’ says Hans. ‘It’s a barbecue for cooking stews in,’ Gon explains.

They are happy in this house, so in November 2021, when they had reached the 45th anniversary of their first rental contract with AHAM, Hans wrote to his landlord to tell him how delighted he and Gon were with their home. Gon: ‘AHAM appreciated the gesture immensely.’ Hans, cheerful: ‘That’s why we’re featuring in their magazine now.’

‘Whenever the weather permits, we like to have breakfast outside at the picnic table.’

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Tuna Wellington in Zuid

The Visque fish restaurant and oyster bar is located on the most attractive corner of Willemsparkweg.

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What? A fish restaurant and oyster bar, located in a basement. ‘We don’t have a fixed menu, but we always have fresh fish,’ jokes Bastiaan Beijer, who runs the eatery with his brother Menno. Why this location? ‘When my brother and I were looking for a property, we weren’t yet sure About what sort of hospitality establishment we were going to start,’ says Beijer. ‘We fell in love with this corner property because of its location. Visque is situated in the prettiest section of Amsterdam-Zuid. It’s more or less adjacent to Vondel-

park and it’s the perfect size – we wanted an intimate space. In addition, we absolutely loved AHAM’s proposal to excavate the basement and create a space below street level. That’s how Menno and I got the idea to open a fish restaurant and to build a cocktail and oyster bar in the basement.’

Striking feature: According to Beijer, the basement offers additional possibilities. ‘We rent it out for parties and guests who come to dine can also go downstairs for a drink at the bar first,’ he says.

‘Personally, I really like that change of scenery.’ And when the weather’s good, you can also eat and drink outside, in front of the beautifully restored façade.

Speciality: ‘That’s our Tuna Wellington, which has been on the menu since we opened. We took the dish off the menu once for a day, but guests were sorely disappointed. People come here especially for it. We are the only place in Amsterdam that serves Tuna Wellington.’



Visque,
Willemsparkweg 2,
Amsterdam.





How do you renovate a building
rich with architectural value?
Arthur Staal's bank branch on
Haarlemmerplein was already a
remarkable building – soon it will be
even more worthy of its listed status.

The transformation of Haarlemmerplein

On the corner of Haarlemmerplein, at number 2, stands a striking building. It is constructed from bricks, natural stone and lots of glass. Its walls are solid, but the building does not look overly heavy. That's due to the choice of materials, but also because of the interplay of vertical and horizontal lines, as well as distinctive elements such as its windows, which resemble shop windows. This conspicuous building style, dating from 1972, is architect Arthur Staal's trademark. Amro Bank commissioned the building from Staal. The bank would go on to commission numerous other works from him. The building, which AHAM has owned for the past few years, received accolades from a wide variety of admirers from the moment it was built. Het Parool columnist Nico Merx, for example, wrote that this design demonstrated banks 'did not necessarily' have to be ugly. 'It fits perfectly into its surroundings, and its striking façade pleasantly refreshes the row it heads up.' Other bank offices designed by Staal can be found on the corner of Stadhouderskade, on Van Woustraat, Kinkerstraat and on Rozengracht. He also designed the De Brakke Grond cultural centre on Nes and De Amstel rowing club's conspicuous clubhouse with the adjacent Shell petrol station. But Staal is mostly known for two eye-catching designs on the northern bank of the IJ river in Amsterdam-Noord. In 1971 the first of the two appeared on the riverside opposite the Central Station. It was called Overhoeks Tower, known colloquially as 'the Shell Tower' and is a true landmark of Amsterdam-Noord. The tower is illuminated at night and nowadays hosts a rotating restaurant

with a panoramic view. It's popular among tourists, who know it as the ADAM Tower. In the early 1970s, oil giant Shell wanted to showcase what a modern and progressive company it was and how well it took care of its workforce. In 1976, Staal built a hypermodern company cafeteria for employees of 'Royal Oil' in the Tolhuistuin park, alongside the tower. Both buildings, which essentially belong together, are by now both listed. In Het Parool recently, an architectural historian praised the former Shell cafeteria, currently the Tolhuistuin restaurant, as follows: 'What makes the pavilion so remarkable is that it is incredibly hefty, but at the same time its legs gently elevate it, as it were. Its interior is



also on a human scale, it has an intimate atmosphere, a certain snugness. I think it's very cleverly designed.'

Municipal listed building

In recent years there has been much appreciation for Staal's work. Partly as a result of this, the council recently declared AHAM's former Amro Bank branch office at Haarlemmerplein 2 a listed building. Staal was born in 1907 to an equally renowned architect, Jan Frederik Staal, and began his career as an advocate of the Nieuwe Bouwen (New Construction) style. This school of architec-

ture, radically innovative for its time, promoted the concept that a building's design should be determined by its function and technical structural aspects. No frills. On the other hand, the Nieuwe Bouwen style did appreciate ornaments and symmetry. In Staal's work you will always find diagonal lines or extensions between the angular blocks. He himself described it as 'a style of pure, classical simplicity – never blustery or pathetic.'

In 1935 he won the Prix de Rome. The prize not only consisted of a gold medal, but it also included a fully funded study trip to the Mediterranean. The adventurous





thirty-something travelled for no less than three years across Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia on a motorbike. In North Africa, he focused in particular on village and city squares.

After the second world war, his career took off in Amsterdam, partly thanks to the city's numerous post-war reconstruction projects. He designed entire residential neighbourhoods including in Amsterdam-West and Velsen, but his corporate buildings were his greatest achievements. One of Staal's most impressive works in the 1964 Metropool building on Weesperstraat. In the early 1990s, part of the huge office building was demolished; the section on the corner of Nieuwe Prinsengracht was replaced by newbuild. The council decided to prevent any further similar damage to Staal's work because of its architectural value. As a result, when AHAM planned to transform the former bank branch on Haarlemmerplein, they were determined to respect Staal's design. Tim van Schijndel, AHAM Real Estate's CEO, was comfortable with this approach. Even though, four years ago when he approached Ana Rocha and asked if she would be interested in the project, the building hadn't been listed as a modern heritage yet.

Rocha had just won the 2018 Dutch Design Awards with her Microhouse work. Which prompted Van Schijndel to call her. 'We didn't know each other,' relates Rocha, 'but Tim asked if I would be interested in competing for the position of architect for the transformation of Staal's building on Haarlemmerplein.' The building not only needed to be refurbished. The ground floor was to serve as



Ana Rocha: 'We are literally following Staal's hand-drawn designs.'

a commercial property, but the former offices on the floors above would be repurposed as residential apartments. Moreover, an additional residential floor needed to be added. 'AHAM wanted a rooftop extension.' Rocha was immediately interested. 'It's a really interesting building at a major Amsterdam location. A great example of 1970s bank architecture, designed at a time when banks were intended to be friendly and transparent. Small scale, accessibility, that's what the building represented.' Rocha was born in Portugal and studied architecture in Porto. Both her parents being artists, they instilled a love of form and images in her from a very young age. She often spent holidays in the Netherlands as a child and, fascinated by

brick architecture, she decided to complete her studies at Delft Technical University. In order to compete for the selection, she decided to partner with Pelle Poiesz, director of HP Architects, and Jeroen Wassing and Karolina Wrzosowska, from the same agency. 'It was a complex, challenging assignment, which is why it was interesting to work on it with several colleagues.' Two months later, the decision was taken. Based on their design sketches, AHAM selected them. The next step was to meet with the Amsterdam city council to discuss a draft design. It became clear right away that the council would not accept any alterations to the original façade. 'However, the Spatial Quality Committee, the Urban Development Depart-

ment and the Listed Buildings & Architecture Agency all wanted to see how a rooftop extension on the building could be realised,' says Rocha. 'We joined forces with municipal architects and experts and ultimately we became a single team. We worked together in a real spirit of collegialism.' Soon after, the council began the procedure to have building listed. At the same time, Rocha and her colleagues began an in-depth study of Staal's architecture. They looked at all his original drawings in the archives. They discovered, for example, that the natural stone panels were removed from the entrance of the former Amro Bank building on Haarlemmerplein, as was a wonderful display window at the front made of folded glass. The good news is that the architects have been given permission

to return various original architectonic elements which were removed. 'AHAM is a wonderful party with affinity and passion for architecture,' says Rocha enthusiastically. 'We are going to clean, restore or repair all the original components – even the folded glass is going to be replaced. We are literally following Staal's hand-drawn designs.'

Rooftop extension

One huge architectonic challenge remained: the additional residential floor. 'As far as the council was concerned, the building was complete,' relates Rocha. 'They didn't think the roof extension was necessary. But it was conceivable. Plus it was what AHAM wanted, and they were financing the entire renovation. What we had to figure out was how to

'It's a really interesting building at a major Amsterdam location.'



honour Staal's work while at the same time creating high-quality residential units.' In an effort to come up with an answer, she put herself in Staal's shoes. What would he have designed if he had been commissioned to expand his own building? Rocha examined Staal's rooftop extensions in depth and created countless sketches. She realised that he had already crowned the building with a stone corner piece. Everyone agreed this

pinnacle should remain prominently visible. 'We deliberately made sure the rooftop extension did not rise above the corner accent,' she says. 'And we kept away from the existing façade line. We decided it would be great to create one large apartment rather than two or three smaller ones. We wanted to make sure the new residential floor would not be too conspicuous. It had to remain less prominent than the rest.'

Ultimately, there will be six apartments in the former offices, plus one extra large residence on the roof. They applied for a construction permit in late February. Rocha hopes their new design will enhance Staal's listed building. 'Cities are organic and personally I think it's fine to tinker with a listed building, especially if that contributes to its financial durability.' She calls it a huge responsibility. 'You want to do it well, for Arthur Staal and for

the city. And for the building and of course also for AHAM, who after all are the ones making the entire project possible.' According to her, you can never please all the public anyway. 'Some people find this building really ugly. But others feel it's very special. Like with all architecture throughout history, there are beautiful and ugly things. But those are umbrella terms. The point is that the building should be a face of an era in Amsterdam.'





Tenant: Kelly Admiraal **Address:** Grensstraat 15-3
Size: 71 square metres **Bedrooms:** Two

Best natural light: In the bedroom
Most striking feature: The wooden beam in the living room



Aid that works

Sometimes, development aid is perceived as at best a drop in the ocean. This idea has been around forever and is tough to combat. Fortunately, this has not always been the case for the philanthropic foundation Sint Antonius Stichting (SAS). For example, the foundation contributed to Michael Kremer’s scientific work. Kremer went on to receive the 2019 Nobel Prize in economics for demonstrating what kind of aid actually works.

A great example of a social enterprise that achieves ongoing practical results and that has received crucial support from SAS since its inception, is 100WEEKS. This online platform provides a vehicle for people to donate money directly to the poorest women in various African countries. With SAS’ support, 100WEEKS has demonstrated that

this approach really works. Besides supporting several charities which achieve wonderful results in the field (and are evidence-based), SAS also helps promising nonprofits still in the process of establishing themselves. A great example of this is BuildHer. This incubator in Kenya trains women with low levels of formal education for skilled jobs in the construction industry. It is one of the fastest growing sectors in Kenya, so these positions are much sought after.

We would like to present some of the amazing stories behind 100WEEKS and BuildHer. They are just two of the sixty charities that comprise our meaningful portfolio, which SAS is able to support in part thanks to the rent you pay.

Suzanne van der Velden, General Manager
Effective Philanthropy Sint Antonius Stichting



Kenyan architect Tatu Gatere is cofounder and director of BuildHer. This nonprofit trains poverty stricken women to be construction workers. In four months, the women learn carpentry, bricklaying and painting skills.



Building a better life

Tatu Gatere: ‘When I ask the women on our programme why they have enrolled, without exception they tell me: “I want my children to have a better life than me.” Which is precisely why I founded BuildHer. I want future generations to face fewer problems than the women who participate in the programme.

These women live in the slums of Nairobi and have had little or no formal education. Many of them have been married off as teenagers because their families are so poor that it makes sense for them to get their daughters out of the house at as young an age as possible. That means fewer mouths to feed. The girls view



‘Thanks to the support of the Sint Antonius Stichting I was able to expand the program’

marriage as a way out of their family misery. But then they get pregnant and discover that life repeats itself. Their husbands beat them, just like their parents did before. There is not enough food, hygiene is poor, diseases are rampant and they have no access to medical care. They see no way out of poverty, because as uneducated women they are condemned to work the absolute lowest paying jobs. ‘When I set up BuildHer in 2018, I assumed women from the slums would be eager to enrol in a course that would offer them the opportunity of properly paid work. But when I began recruiting, I hit a wall of mistrust. Many of these women are so severely traumatised and suspicious, that they will not easily trust strangers. It was only when I approached them through their local acquaintances, that they dared to register. That is no longer necessary today, because the women who have completed the programme are our best ambassadors. They work paid jobs through our partners in the construction industry, which is booming due to the country’s population growth. In addition, I have designed a line of furniture, which former students manufacture. ‘I am from the Kenyan middle class myself, but my parents also couldn’t afford to send me to university. I really wanted to study architecture. That’s why I left for the US, where I was able to pay for my own studies by working my way through college. After I graduated, I worked as an architect in Seattle, but ultimately, I wanted to return to Africa. Via South Africa, I ended up at a major architectural agency in Nairobi, where I designed ultra-modern buildings for the happy few. But I felt I was betraying myself; I wasn’t making the world a better place. ‘One day, I attended a UN conference about improving public spaces in the slums around Nairobi. It blew my mind, it was a revelation for me. I became so inspired that I quit my job at the commercial architectural agency. Driven

by a desire to reduce the inequality between rich and poor in the construction industry, I began working on a design project in a settlement in a slum. ‘There I observed that women are extremely modest and reticent, partly because they never have an opportunity to use their potential. I wanted to empower them because I saw that these women also had incredible strength, the willpower to improve their own fate and their children’s fate too. ‘Education became the starting point from which I set up BuildHer. Partly thanks to the support I received from the Sint Antonius Stichting, I was able to expand the programme. The women receive training in technical skills, but also in life skills. It really moves me when participants tell me that the programme has given them self-confidence and enabled them to be more assertive at home too. They stand up for themselves, they’re no longer dependent on their husbands and they decide independently to send their children to school. That is a huge success.’

www.buildher.org



Money for wellbeing and dignity

Jeroen de Lange and Gitte Büch are founders of the 100WEEKS social enterprise. This online platform enables people to donate money directly to poor women in Rwanda, Ghana, Uganda and Ivory Coast. Women selected for this programme meet a number of strict criteria and receive eight euros a week for a period of 100 weeks.



*Gitte:
‘The concept of giving
money is great: it’s a
simple solution for a
complex problem.’*



Gitte: ‘The objective is to empower women who are living in extreme poverty, allowing them to save and invest in their future.’

Jeroen: ‘I was a diplomat for a long time and lived with my wife and children in several African countries. I also worked for the World Bank in Uganda for two years.’

Gitte: ‘I lived in Tanzania, where I worked for local NGOs. After that I lived in Vietnam with my family, where I worked for the United Nations.’

Jeroen: ‘When I was working for the World Bank in 2008, I heard about an experiment in Uganda in which women simply received money. The idea behind this was that people themselves know best what they need. After the World Bank I felt restless, I wanted to do something in developmental aid. That’s when

the two things came together: the radical new aid concept of giving cash unconditionally and my professional experience. I jotted my idea down on a sheet of paper and set up the foundation.’

Gitte: ‘And then you called me. Jeroen and I have been friends since secondary school. He knew that after I returned from Africa, I had been head of communications at War Child. The concept of giving money is great: it’s a simple solution for a complex problem. Using a similar model to Airbnb, we connect supply and demand through the 100WEEKS platform: the donors and the women in poverty who receive money.’

Jeroen: ‘Our basic objective is to be as cost-effective and large-scale a vehicle as possible for lifting people out of poverty. We give the money to women because numerous studies

show that they generally use money more sensibly than men do. Unlike men, female participants spend the money on their entire family.’

Gitte: ‘Every Monday, the women in our programme receive eight euros of mobile money on their phone. Besides money, they also follow classes in entrepreneurial skills, hygiene, sexual and reproductive health. The women participants support each other, they save together and also provide loans to each other. Learning to manage money is part of the training.’

Jeroen: ‘When they start, we also assess the participants’ mental wellbeing. Many of them are depressed. They are so deeply ashamed of their poverty that they no longer even dare to attend church services. Poverty is not just a lack of money, it’s also a lack of knowledge and social connections. These women are caught in a poverty trap. That’s true of roughly one billion people all across the globe. It is almost impossible to escape this trap by yourself. But once they’ve been on our programme for a few months, you see a turnaround. The money

helps the women regain their wellbeing and dignity.’

Gitte: ‘We constantly measure the impact of our programme and donors receive regular updates. The programme really stops after 100 weeks, it is not open-ended. The objective is for these women to stay out of extreme poverty. The results are incredibly positive. Over 80% of participants accomplish the objective. One person bought a plot of farmland, another opened a hairdressing salon, a group of women got together and set up a pig-breeding farm. The effects are permanent. In other words, we have found the solution for helping individual people out of poverty.’

Jeroen: ‘The Sint Antonius Stichting has been crucial for 100WEEKS. We started in 2015 with 5000 euros from friends and relatives. The SAS was the first major philanthropic fund to demonstrate faith in our idea. Because they were willing to take a risk, we were able to take a giant leap forward. That would never have been possible so quickly without their financial support.’

www.100weeks.nl



Bolon's woven floors

Showroom with an unmistakably Amsterdam character

What? The Swedish designer brand Bolon weaves sustainable designer floors and carpeting made from recycled and hypoallergenic materials. The pioneering idea to create woven floors from recycled textile waste, first emerged over seventy years ago. By now, Bolon covers floors for countless corporate projects all over the world. They also designed and manufactured carpeting for such locations as

Amsterdam's Felix Meritis debating centre and Netflix' Amsterdam office.

Why this location? 'We were looking for a showroom for Bolon Benelux with an unmistakably Amsterdam character,' says country manager Harm Bron. 'This property on the river Amstel has sufficient floor space and light, beautiful high ceilings and a spectacular view across the Amstel.' The property's

appearance also contributed to Bolon's decision to set up shop here, according to Bron. 'It still has a characteristic steel support construction in the façade, and pretty, honey-coloured glazed tiles.'

Striking feature: The renovation of the façade, dating from 1910, resulted in quite a few surprises, says Cors van Duijvenbode, project lead at AHAM Real Estate. 'One of the things we discovered was a totally rusted steel lintel construction. That was one of the reasons the renovations took six months rather than the two months we had planned for.'

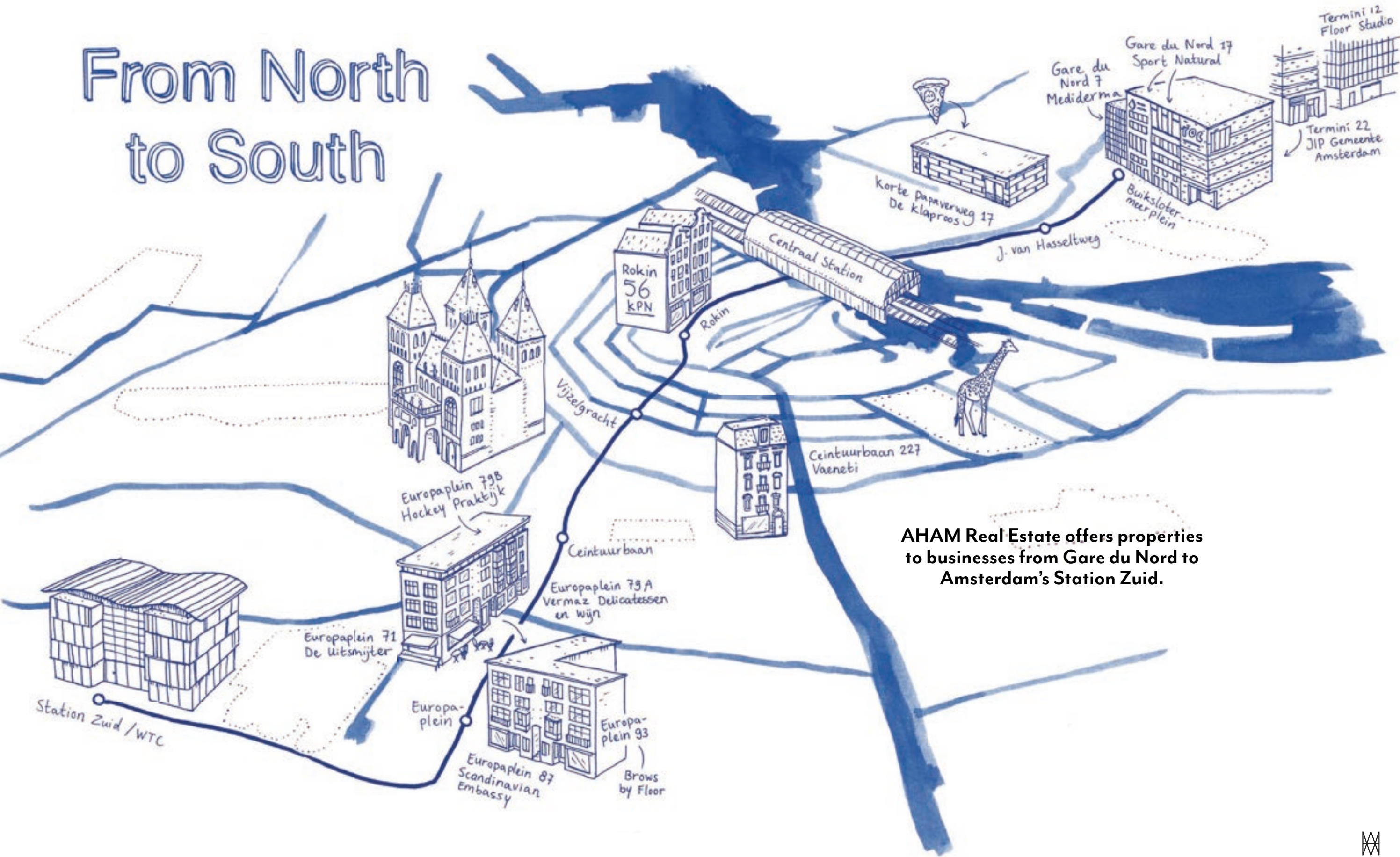
Speciality: There were some fun surprises too. 'We found several ornaments which we had repaired by a restorer from Friesland. We also discovered that there had originally been a pointed zinc tower on top of the building. Unfortunately, a previous owner had removed it. Happily, though, the beautiful original curved glass windows in the curved wooden window frames were preserved. As were the natural stone skirting boards.'



Bolon's Benelux Showroom, Amsteldijk 43h, Amsterdam.



From North to South



**AHAM Real Estate offers properties
to businesses from Gare du Nord to
Amsterdam's Station Zuid.**

De Uitsmijter

Europaplein 71
www.deuitsmijter.nl

**Vermaz Delicatessen
en Wijn**

Europaplein 79A
www.vermaz.nl

Hockey Praktijk B.V.

Europaplein 79B
www.hockeypraktijk.nl

Scandinavian Embassy

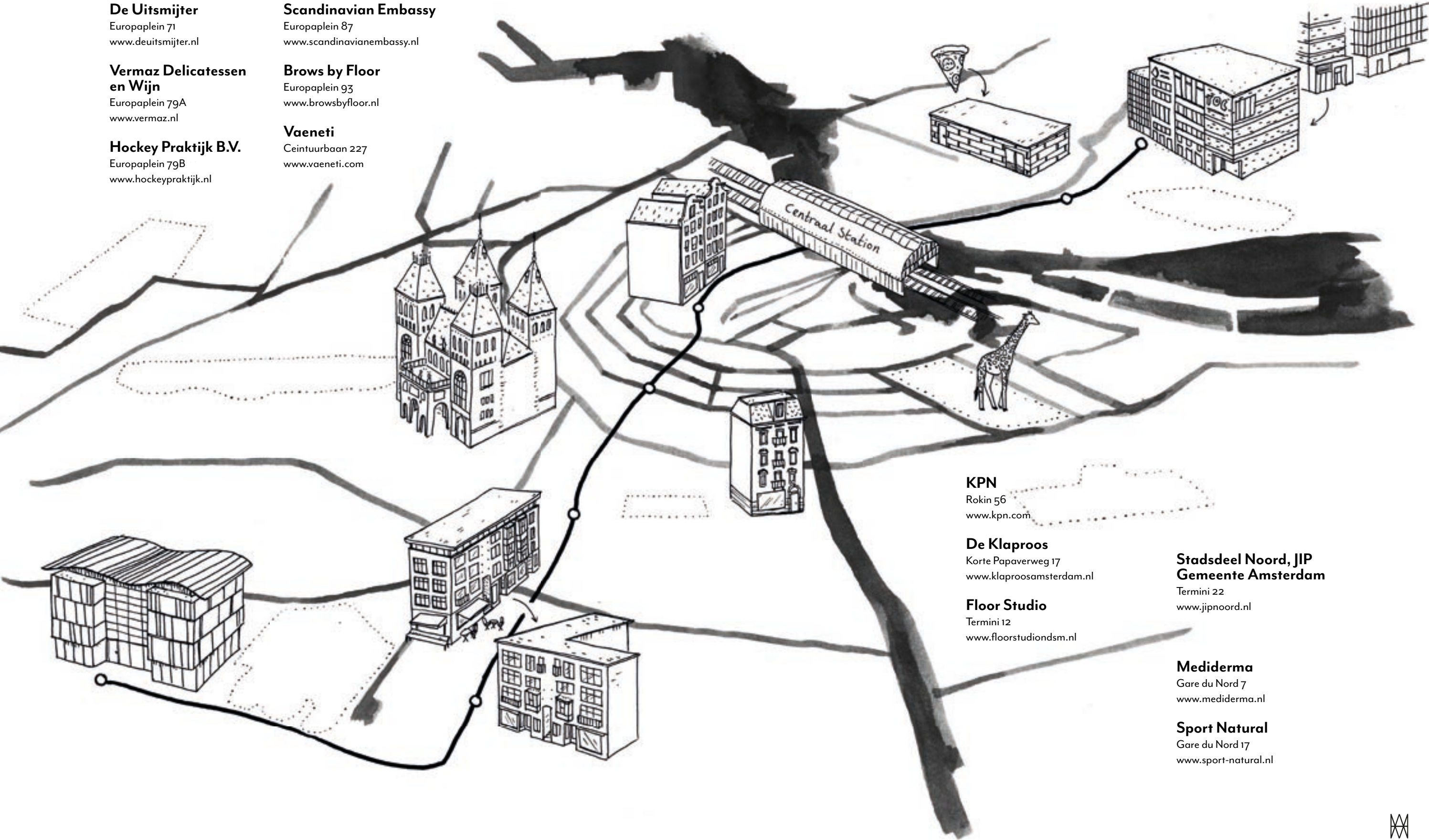
Europaplein 87
www.scandinavianembassy.nl

Brows by Floor

Europaplein 93
www.browsbyfloor.nl

Vaeneti

Ceintuurbaan 227
www.vaeneti.com



KPN

Rokin 56
www.kpn.com

De Klaproos

Korte Papaverweg 17
www.klaproosamsterdam.nl

Floor Studio

Termini 12
www.floorstudionsm.nl

**Stadsdeel Noord, JIP
Gemeente Amsterdam**

Termini 22
www.jipnoord.nl

Mediderma

Gare du Nord 7
www.mediderma.nl

Sport Natural

Gare du Nord 17
www.sport-natural.nl



Plumber Léon Dekker

For many tenants he’s a familiar face and the first person they call when there’s a problem. A portrait in ten questions.

38 **1**
Let’s start at the beginning, where are you from?
LD: ‘I’m from Middenbeemster, a small farming village between Purmerend and Alkmaar, in the middle of the polder landscape. Together with his brother, my father ran his own technical installation company, which still exists today. He has retired, though. I have a brother, who went in a different direction, but many people in my extended family work in plumbing. A cousin, two uncles – plumbing is in our blood, you could say. My eldest son is currently training in technical installation too.’

2
How did you learn the trade?
LD: ‘First I attended LTS (technical secondary school), and then I trained at what used to be called the Hoogovens steelworks school, where we were taught fitting and maintenance. I was given a job in an ore preparation plant, which was filthy work. Turned out to be the filthiest job at the whole steelworks. During breaks I would look

around me: one guy had a finger missing, the other only had one thumb. I thought: this is not the place for me. After military service I registered for the CIOS sports academy, but I didn’t finish that. In the end I wound up doing the same as my father. At first through a temp agency and later on as a partner in a small firm called M.C. Post. AHAM was one of their customers, so I’ve been working for them for a very long time. I worked for at least eight years there, then I became a partner and even later I was able to take over the company myself. Ultimately the name L. Dekker appeared on the front of the business. That was about ten years ago now.’

3
Do you employ any staff?
LD: ‘I prefer doing everything myself, even though the work is physically quite demanding, but I prefer to be in charge of everything myself. Sometimes you hear people say, the more staff the more stress, so I never went down that road.’

4
What makes a good plumber?
LD: ‘The first thing is, of course, that he has to know his trade. You have to be technically skilled, although nowadays various plastic appliances make life easier. But not just anyone can do it, you have to really master the trade. Also, you have to be customer-friendly and clean up any mess you make. I always make very clear arrangements.’

5
Give us an idea of the things a plumber does.
LD: ‘Let’s start with what we call the rough work, so for example renovating a house. That requires installing new water pipes, new gas pipes, a new heating system, so central heating piping, you’ll need ventilation, flue gas extraction up to the roof. That’s all work done by plumbers. Then there’s finishing work, so when the house is almost completed, you install the toilet fittings. But part of our work is also investigating and fixing water and gas leaks. There’s always something

‘Plumbing is in our blood.’



going on, especially in older buildings of which AHAM has quite a few.'

6
Do you have to retrain too?
LD: 'Yes, nowadays you need to get 'CO Vakmanschap' (carbon-monoxide skills) certification, so I did a training course for that, but the rest is stuff you either know or don't know. I am fortunate to have had a boss in the old days who knew a whole lot and taught me everything he knew.'

7
Tell us something about what it's like when you visit people's homes.
LD: 'Oh, let's just say it takes all sorts. Some people are very tidy, others are... a bit messy, you might say. In the old days, some people would leave all their rubbish lying around. Fortunately you see that less and less now, because people who can't take care of themselves receive help. But you do see some strange things. Like once I was called out for a blockage and I had a bottle of that sulphur dioxide. At the time that was new, and it was eco-friendly too. I poured it down the drain in the kitchen sink and it reacted with the water, shot right back out, onto my work trousers which immediately started to melt. All of a sudden I was standing in my underpants in someone's kitchen. Thank goodness I didn't get that stuff in my face. At another house the toilet was blocked. So I removed the toilet bowl and started using one of those drain cleaning coil machines. When I pulled the coil back out,



there was a huge bunch of dental floss stuck on it. That was pretty disgusting. These people had been flushing dental floss down the toilet for God knows how long. But generally speaking, people are really happy when I solve a problem for them. So it's rewarding work too.'

8
Are most customers friendly?
LD: 'Absolutely, I don't have any complaints about AHAM tenants, haha. Seriously, I don't.'

9
Do you ever encounter issues that make you think: nice people, but they'll never learn?
LD: 'Yes, for example, people who pour grease or oil down the drain. You really shouldn't do that. A lot of people rinse dirty dishes and

pans in the sink before they put them in the dishwasher. That's not a good idea. You're better off putting them straight in the dishwasher, or wiping them off with a paper towel. But not down the drain, not even with washing-up liquid, because as soon as grease comes into contact with cold water, it solidifies. So never pour oil or grease down the drain, or in the toilet either. Collect it, or throw it in the bin.'

10
What makes you most proud of your work?
LD: 'I'm proud that I've created a good company with a good reputation. Even former AHAM tenants who have gone on to buy a house, still come to me. So I'm proud of that, even though I'm sometimes offered more work than I can handle.'

MINOR REPAIRS DECREE

Who does what in and around a residence?

Sometimes it's unclear which repairs a landlord is responsible for and which ones you as a tenant must take care of yourself. That's why this has been determined by law in the Besluit kleine herstellingen (Minor Repairs [Tenant's Liability] Decree), Which sets out in detail who is responsible for what. You can read the decree at www.wetten.nl. The government (Rijksoverheid) website also offers a clear summary. Both tenant and landlord are responsible for maintaining the residence. On behalf of the landlord, AHAM Real Estate takes care of major maintenance of the interior and exterior of your residence. As the tenant, you are responsible for minor and day-to-day maintenance of the rented accommodation. You are also responsible for repairing damage you yourself caused. For example, the landlord is responsible for outdoor painting work, but whitewashing interior walls and ceilings is the tenant's responsibility, as is securing stair handrails and cleaning ventilation grilles in the residence.

Fire safety

No one wants to experience a house fire. Nevertheless, every year the fire brigade receives thousands of reports of fires in homes. Fortunately, there are many things you can do to improve the fire safety of your home. It is very important to keep communal spaces and stairwells clear. This contributes to the safety in your home. In many of our residences in Amsterdam, we find people put shoes, coat racks with coats and even prams in the stairwells. This is extremely dangerous and we urgently request that you remove these sorts of items. Objects cluttering up spaces where people walk can get in the way if you need to escape a fire. It also makes it more difficult for the fire brigade to get into the residence. Do you have a tumble dryer? If so, clean the dust from the filter after every use. Don't leave chargers in plugs when you're not using them and only use approved extension leads. For additional tips on how to improve fire safety in your home, visit the fire brigade's website at www.brandweer.nl/onderwerpen/woningcheck

Pipes

You can easily cause pipes to become blocked by using them incorrectly. This can lead to unpleasant situations. The tenant is responsible for cleaning and unblocking the indoor plumbing (up to the connection point to the municipal sewer or the main sewer pipes). In other words, the tenant must pay to fix blockages caused by flushing away things like frying grease, baby wipes, a toilet block or other items that are not supposed to be flushed away. If a pipe is blocked, always first try unblocking using hot water and washing soda. If this doesn't work, you can hire a plumber yourself. You can also get in touch with our day-to-day maintenance workers, who will assist you.



The chairmen of AHAM

Real estate with a heart

AHAM Real Estate has been around for over a hundred years. Its owner, the Sint Antonius Stichting, was founded in 1933. We spoke to two people closely involved, about the past and the challenges for the future.

42

This story starts in 1906, when Johannes Henricus Franciscus Schopman established a real estate business, now known as AHAM Real Estate. Originally a pastry chef, he started his real estate business with a couple of properties he inherited. Not only was J.H.F. Schopman an astute businessman, he was also a very devout Catholic. These two themes – the creation of a real estate empire and the duty of every religious person to care for their fellow human beings – would come to determine how AHAM developed.

Through the generations

We spoke to Dick Schopman, third generation and former member of the company's management, and his nephew Maikel Wilms, fourth generation chairmen of AHAM's Supervisory Board, as well as treasurer in the Sint Antonius Stichting management. How the company developed has not been extensively documented, but in 2006 a centenary booklet was published. It reveals that Schopman was a man with entrepreneurial spirit and a keen eye for business. In other words, a real entre-



Dick Schopman and Maikel Wilms, third and fourth generations.

43





Solebaystraat 2 to 58. Owned by J.H.F. Schopman en Zonen B.V. since 1934

preneur. He was both owner and manager and he remained in charge of everything until a ripe old age. There are no exact figures, but when he handed the baton on to his four sons in the 1960s, the real estate company had an estimated 2000 properties in its portfolio. Two sons, assisted by two grandsons, remained in charge until the mid-1980s. The picture both descendants now paint is that the entre-

preneur, who had expanded his company with courage and perseverance, was succeeded by three generations who consolidated the business rather than focussing primarily on growth. Over the years, the company's business interests had been parked in numerous corporations. In addition, in the 1930s J.H.F. Schopman set up three charitable foundations, of which the Sint Antonius Stichting would become the largest. By the time the elder

Schopman died, most of his assets had been transferred to these foundations. 'His sons and their successors,' says Dick Schopman now, 'were managing directors and/or commissioners, but they never owned AHAM.' Maikel Wilms adds that, 'the company's growth from around the 1970s to the early 2000s was limited.'

Sint Antonius Stichting

Starting in 2005, the company initiated a process of further professionalisation. The new management of the Sint Antonius Stichting, now the largest shareholder of the real estate business, began to realise how much potential the company had. They saw an opportunity to inject the founder's entrepreneurial spirit back into operations and they encouraged new investment and large-scale maintenance. In 2012, the Sint Antonius Stichting took over complete ownership of AHAM. 'It was absolutely obvious that the company had huge potential,' says Maikel, 'and it took a while before we were able to unlock this potential. The drive for professionalisation meant new management, no longer descendants of the founder. In addition, a Supervisory Board was established in 2015, which meant a more professional monitoring of the company's dealings and operations. Meanwhile, AHAM Real Estate has expanded and is now a company with a total balance of over one billion euros, around 2500 properties under its management, 35 employees, and it is organised like a dynamic real estate company.



Selection of projects

When asked about future challenges, Maikel says: 'The basic principle is that all company profits go to the people who need it most, and these are people in the third world. That is challenge number one. At the Sint Antonius Stichting, we are in an exceptional position



Maikel Wilms: 'It was absolutely obvious that the company had huge potential.'





AHAM resides here

in that we don't have to engage in fundraising and we have a lot of leeway in defining our policies. A few years ago, we decided on principle to invest in innovative projects.' Dick: 'We also professionalised that process over the years too. Initially, we operated through Dutch organisations that work in the third world, like Liliane Fonds, Wilde Ganzen and similar outfits.



Dick Schopman:
'His sons and their successors never owned AHAM.'

Later on we began to do this work much more directly. About three years ago, Suzanne van der Velden joined us. As a professional, she select projects and studies and assesses proposals and reports. An important thing to add is that at a certain point we decided to commit to innovation. So, rather than support yet another school, we support initiatives that create



Vrijheidslaan 90, 92, 94, 96, 98, 100. Owned by J.H.F. Schopman en Zonen B.V. since 1923

change. And increasingly we work with African organisations and projects that have been set up and are being implemented in Africa itself. This is based on the recognition that we don't necessarily know what is best for people there.'

The future of the city

Maikel: 'Another challenge facing AHAM is the situation in cities. There clearly is a shortage of homes. We are eager to help develop Amsterdam, so besides the private rental market, we also invest in social housing and mid-range rental accommodation. Many homes need to be built and everyone is aware that this is no easy task. It would be great if we could increase the speed at which new homes are being delivered. We ensure that our properties remain in good shape, through careful renovations and maintenance. When we refurbish a residence, if it's at all feasible we insulate it to A-label standards and we are fully

committed to doing that in the future too. This reduces energy consumption and makes the homes more comfortable to live in. We are also mindful of the heritage value of our portfolio, all with the objective of earning a profit for the foundation. For the outside world it can be tough to comprehend that all of AHAM's profits actually go to the third world. When it's Bill Gates, people believe him, but some people have questioned our work. And of course, there is some inherent tension between the demands of turning a profit and the objectives of the Sint Antonius Stichting, that's not always an easy balance to strike.'

'I think it's important to emphasise,' says Dick, 'that we never aim for the highest possible yield, we are not focused on obtaining the absolute maximum. But we do have to operate according to the dictates of the market. We owe that to the foundation and the work that it facilitates.'



Divine wines

Il diVino in Hilversum specialises in unfamiliar grape varieties and wines.

What? Il diVino specialises in unfamiliar grape varieties and wines from undiscovered wine countries, in other words: proprietor Ewout Jansen sells exciting wines. ‘We have many wines from the Balkans and other eastern European countries. In addition, our range includes numerous organic wines as well as orange and natural wines.’

Why this location? ‘This property is at walking distance from Foodhall Mout, close to the shopping centre and less than five minutes from Hilversum train station,’ says Jansen. ‘I had been renting the retail property at number 6 since 2008 and in 2018, AHAM approached me to tell me the hairdresser at number 4 was leaving and to ask whether I would be interested in incorporating that empty property in my shop. I was interested.’ In early 2019, AHAM started an extensive, four-

month rebuilding project and the results were amazing, according to Jansen. ‘They removed the wall between the two properties, giving me a wonderfully light, refreshing shop, with 140 square metres of floor space. So there is also enough room for the workshops we give here.’

Striking feature: ‘Passers-by can see the entire interior of the shop from the street,’ says Jansen. ‘That makes the threshold very low for people to step inside.’

Speciality: ‘The Pinot Grigio Italo Cescon is a super delicious wine in a beautiful tall bottle containing a piece of vine,’ says the wine dealer.

Il diVino,
Bussemerstraat 6,
Hilversum.



What happens when you renovate a building?

Each year, an average of 120 houses are renovated for AHAM Vastgoed in Amsterdam and prepared for rental. What do these projects involve, and who does what? We spoke to AHAM's project manager Freek Tames, and two of its long-standing contractors: Eric Jonk, of SEKU Bouw, and Ronald Bronder, of Bronderbouw.

AHAM | Freek Tames | project manager How many contractors do you use for renovations?

'We work with six to seven long-term contractors, so it's a small, close-knit team. We always start with a plan showing the new layout, including any structural alterations. Then we get an open bid from the contractor, and start as soon as possible after this has been agreed.'

'We do about 120 renovation projects a year, so it's important that they dovetail as closely as possible. The contractors buy their own materials, following our specifications. We set high standards for the quality of the materials we use, and sustainability is important too. We strive to ensure that every home gets an "A label", the highest energy rating.'

'We're also a lot greener than in the past. We don't just pave over all our gardens en masse, and we install green roofs if possible.'

'During the construction, my colleagues and I drop in to discuss progress and take immediate action if anyone encounters a problem. We know one another very well, and we know exactly how we all work, so we have a very good level of cooperation.'

SEKU bouw | Eric Jonk, contractor | Johannes-verhulststraat + Haarlemmer Houttuinen How long have you been working for AHAM?

'About five years. They send us requests for quotations on a continuous basis, which is good, because it helps us to keep people busy.'

We know exactly what they want, so we always meet their expectations. We renovate properties for AHAM, with a focus on interiors. We offer a complete package, from gutting to handover, with the exception of basements.

How does that work?

'When we get an inquiry, I submit a quotation. After AHAM has agreed this I draw up a plan, and we begin the gutting in close consultation with them. The apartment is completely emptied, and then we start on the rebuilding, beginning with the walls.'

'We surface these on one side so that the electrician and plumber can start work on them, and then we surface all the other walls and start the finishings. The last step is to install the timber flooring, and then the cleaning contractor comes in and the final handover takes place.'

Can you describe what happened with the Johannes Verhulststraat project in Amsterdam-Zuid?

'All AHAM homes are high end. You feel good when you hand one over, because you've made something beautiful. You see the quality everywhere, including AHAM's designs, where the focus is on comfort, and the quality is also reflected in the choice of materials.'

'We installed an oak herringbone floor in Johannes Verhulststraat, which is a slightly more upmarket area. It's details like this that make homes beautiful. All the wooden doors and doorframes have casings, which give the home a classic look. This house had a basement which wasn't yet being used, so we installed underfloor heating, and then screed



on top of that, and then a Mosa herringbone-tiled floor.

‘We put three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a toilet and a walk-in wardrobe in the basement. The living room, kitchen and another toilet are on the ground floor. The garden is at basement level, so we put in a beautiful steel staircase from the ground floor to the garden.

‘We didn’t use any plastic, and the window frames are made of hardwood. We buy the materials ourselves in accordance with AHAM’s specifications, and their project managers come round about once a week so we can take them through everything. It works really well. Working in this way means you can incorporate any changes quickly, and give them a great end result.



‘When you hand over an AHAM house, it makes you feel good because you’ve made something beautiful’

‘Haarlemmer Houttuinen is an example of how we sometimes have surprises. We found woodworm during the demolition, so we brought in the project manager and explained what we could do about it.

‘There were three floors. We replaced the unusable beams with new wooden ones in accordance with the structural calculations, and reinforced the undamaged ones by attaching an extra beam and incorporating it into the wall of the building.

Bronderbouw | Ronald Bronder | Legmeerplein

‘Our relationship with AHAM is based entirely on trust. We’re perfectionists, and we work well together. Covid made planning more difficult, and it’s still a challenge sometimes because it can take a long time to get materials delivered. Also, prices have gone up a lot as a result of inflation.

What sites do you renovate?

‘We prefer to do renovations on accessible sites where we can get materials in and out easily. AHAM tell us beforehand what they want, and they retain overall control. If we do have any



problems, the reporting lines are short and we can resolve them with the relevant project manager.

‘We do all our own procurement, and I tell them beforehand what it’s going to cost. It always works out well, because it’s enjoyable work and we get on so well. Much of our work is in Amsterdam, for example in Groenendaalsestraat, where we’re doing a lot, and in Legmeerplein, the Rivierenbuurt, and the city centre. We’ve carved out something of a niche for ourselves in Amsterdam.

‘We know exactly what we have to buy, and everything is standardized. All our materials are attractive and sustainable, from wood floors to doorframes with beautiful ornamental mouldings, high-quality casement and stained-glass doors, and luxury bathroom tiles.

Renovation

‘We started by gutting everything, and then rebuilt it in accordance with the drawings. We clean up as we go, and AHAM knows that we’re tidy workers. If we come up against something unexpected during a renovation, it

means more work, and it’s easy to take on too much. We put our hearts and souls into our work, and quality and trust are our two main priorities.

‘AHAM represents continuity for us. I’ve been working with them for four or five years, and I’ve done about 75 apartments. The one on Legmeerplein is about 55 square meters. It has an old fashioned hook outside so you can lift the materials inside, but we also have a lift transporter. The renovation will take about 13 weeks. If it needs utilities it may take longer, but AHAM doesn’t mind.

‘The properties are well insulated with quality-certified materials. Recycling is also very important: we don’t throw away anything from the demolition, and everything is reused if possible.

‘The rest is recycled by a waste processor. We also ensure nothing gets wasted during the procurement process; I personally take care of it. We make sure the result is flawless, and precisely meets AHAM’s expectations. They like that, which is good.’



Coffee and cake at de Lindengracht

Home-roasted coffee and plant-based pastry in the Jordaan

What: A café serving coffee roasted in Amsterdam (MOTO and Dak Coffee Roasters) and plant-based pastry baked on site. ‘I wouldn’t call it a bakery,’ explains proprietor Yann Pierre-Jean. ‘I wanted to offer something tasty with the coffee and I found the available vegan pastries too dry. So we started baking ourselves.’

Why this location? ‘This spot is incredible,’ says Pierre-Jean. ‘The Jordaan district is a unique, old part of Amsterdam and there’s a market here every Saturday on Lindengracht. So the location is amazing and my café is located in a historic corner

building with huge windows at the front and the side. When I walked past and saw that it was available to rent, I immediately called AHAM.’ Once his business plan was approved, the property was renovated, keeping authentic elements such as the floor

and the stained-glass window above the front door, Pierre-Jean relates. ‘The combination of classical elements and the modern, minimalist interior design is amazing and is a perfect fit for the Jordaan.’

Striking feature: ‘When the sun shines through the coloured glass above the door, the colours reflect on the white wall. I love it.’

Speciality: ‘We serve the best plant-based croissants in Amsterdam,’ claims the

proprietor. ‘But most people queue up for our pistachio cruffin, a croissant made from rolled muffin dough, filled with homemade pistachio paste. And for our coffee, of course.’

Saint-Jean,
Lindengracht 158, Amsterdam





A new development



Over the next few years, the Buiksloterham former industrial estate, which includes Papaverwerf, will be developed into a sustainable residential and work area. For the first time in its history, AHAM will take on the role of developing investor in a new construction project.

Just like the 1900 design by erstwhile director of municipal public works Johan van Hasselt for the Buiksloterham reclaimed land, today's plan also focuses on creating a space to live and work in. Hasselt's plan designated most of the polder for heavy industry and activities linked to the port, also enabling factories to be relocated from urban residential neighbourhoods to the opposite side of the river IJ river with an eye to fire and healthy & safety issues. Here and there, villages were established to house workers from the factories. Over the course of time, more and more enterprises set up shop in Buiksloterham. Numerous steel and waste incineration plants, chemical industries and Fokker also settled here. Later still, most of the larger companies left the city and Buiksloterham became more of a standard industrial estate, which slowly but surely deteriorated. After the 2007/2008 crisis only made things worse, the council launched an experiment by allowing experimental residential construction. These were initially known as self-construction plots and later CPC's CPOs (Collective Private Clientship). These initiatives serve as the basis for the 'Circular Buiksloterham' manifesto, signed by the council and all the parties who operated in the area. The signatories agreed that the area should become an innovative, circular and sustainable area, with a completely unique and experimental character.

Master plan

'We've now turned that into a kind of master plan,' explains Paco Bunnik, urban planning supervisor for Buiksloterham. 'When I set up the urban planning framework, I invited external designers to participate, such as a landscape architect and four architectural agencies, who worked together with our municipal design team. The result was a robust plan. Over the next ten years, this area will become much more compact. Thousands of residences will be built in Buiksloterham, as well as facilities for work, education, sports, culture and hospitality. The council owns approximately half the plots, the other half are owned by numerous owners. Which is fine. We will enter a dialogue with these owners and explain our plans to them. Some

will want to participate in the plans right away, others will not. So how the resulting plan is going to develop is not entirely predictable. What is certain is that this is going to become a distinctive urban district on the banks of the river IJ with a raw and experimental character. A mixture of old and new, where sustainability, innovation and circularity will play a pivotal role. As supervisor of this area, I'm watching the various developments through a social, urban planning and architectural lens. I'm in contact with the architects and developers as part of the process of creating the provisional and final designs, and I advise the aesthetics committee who provide final recommendations regarding the environmental licence for the construction plans.' In addition, Buiksloterham is a really innovative area for sustainable local development, resulting in it recently receiving the SKG Award for sustainable local development. The jury of professionals praised the visibility with which the Amsterdam council, together with residents, developers and enterprises, has transformed what was a monofunctional industrial estate into a circular, inclusive urban district.

Papaverwerf

Papaverwerf is part of the Papaver triangle in Buiksloterham. 'This was originally a

'We aim to build for the future of this city.'



European location,' explains Stijn de Jongh, associate partner at Studioninendots architectural agency. European is an international competition for young architects. 'UP4, an Italian-Swedish architectural agency for aspiring architects, won the competition for the configuration and plans for the Papaver triangle. Often, the agency that wins the European design never actually constructs the design, but in this case, they succeeded in setting up a partnership. AHAM approached

us with a request to create the architectonic plan, but UP4 is partnering with us. Because of Studioninendots' knowledge of construction in the Netherlands, we are in charge, but we're pleased to have a partner in developing this plan and we are eager to contribute to creating real opportunities for young architects. Papaverwerf will be our first architectonic implementation of the plan. Each plot has a plot passport containing a description of the intended outcome. So it's an important document. For example, we want to retain the district's industrial character. We want to dedicate space for manufacturing enterprises. For example, furniture makers, car companies, but the area should also host creative craft enterprises, wholesalers and industry. So there should be spaces big enough for a forklift to drive inside. This tells you something about the size and scale of the street-level frontage of the buildings,' de Jongh emphasises.

New chapter

'For us, Papaverwerf is an exciting new chapter in our history,' explains Betty Tania, head of commerce at AHAM. 'In the old days, AHAM only invested in existing real estate. We subse-



quently got involved in new construction, but as late investors, so when the properties were almost completely developed. Now, Papaverwerf is the first time we have participated in an inner-city newbuild development at a stage when there is nothing more than a memorandum yet.’ The council compiles a memorandum like this to outline the criteria a plan must meet, what needs to be developed and what requirements it must satisfy. The plan should then subsequently be worked out in full. Tania: ‘We purchased Papaverweg from the developer Buro Amsterdam and we will be delivering its realisation. We have continued the partnership with the Studioninedots architectural agency (and UP4) and we have delivered the preliminary design. The council is working on the zoning plan. After that we have to apply for licences and the construction work will be put out to tender. So far, the development is proceeding successfully.’ Bunnik: ‘For example, one major emphasis in the zoning plan is that the city must remain a place where living and working generate added value in the same area. In the past, you would see, say, garages above where people live. We want to bring that combination back into the city.’

Partnership

This area is currently already buzzing with commercial activity. AHAM is also approaching companies, encouraging them to set up shop in Papaverwerf. ‘We have restructured our organisation to be able to manage these



types of projects,’ Betty Tania explains. ‘We now develop the entire plan. Including the urban planning aspects. This is based on a zoning plan that requires implementation, so we have both urban planning and legal experts on our staff. As of May first, we have hired a senior developer. This knowledge is becoming an increasingly important part of our work. We are ready for our new role.’ Stijn de Jongh is happy about the partnership: ‘We feel it’s a positive development that AHAM is involving local businesses. We know from experience that the more local connections you can incorporate in an area right from the get-go, the more successful the future development will be. For us, the industrial character and the existing productive commercial activity is such an important aspect of the architecture of Papaverwerf, that we have prioritised it. We have designed a six-metre-tall street-level frontage, designated for manufacturing enterprises. Above this are two office blocks and a residential block. We value this industrial look, which is why we’ve made the frontages tall enough for manufacturing industry to operate inside. The inte-

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densification
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riors of these six-metre-high spaces include mezzanine floors, raised areas for office space. You sense this supersize dimension from the street. On top of the street-level frontage is a residential block, a work building and a building in which these two functionalities intermingle. We have created as dynamic a living space as we can. Plenty of hustle and bustle at ground level, but also exciting elements higher up. So at some locations you’ll find a roof garden and there’s a stylish stairway connecting the highest residential unit and a roof garden. But there will also be a connection high up between two blocks.’

Ecological ambitions

‘Wherever we can, we try to create added value,’ says Paco. ‘For instance, the spaces between building will be filled with courtyards and sports pitches. The ecological bar has been set high for this plot. Not just by the council but also by AHAM. Construction

Stijn de Jong:
‘Oppor-
tunities
for young
architects’

costs are 15% to 30% higher than normal, but AHAM aims to construct sustainable, future-proof buildings here. This way, AHAM will be adding genuine value to residential construction. The construction must be energy-neutral. This is one of the council’s requirements. But we also want the buildings to look appealing. We also feel it’s important to become sustainable in our use of buildings, enabling a space to be used for a variety of functions.’ Stijn de Jongh is pleased to hear this. ‘We are mindful of the BENG Act (Almost Energy-Neutral Building) in our designs. We apply architectonic elements to achieve the BENG criteria. For example, we have designed awnings all around the buildings, to minimise the amount of direct sunlight getting into workspaces and homes, reducing the need for air-conditioning. In the residential units, the awning is combined with a balcony, and in the workspaces the awning is also a facility that can be used by window-cleaners. Right from the start, we also included water retention in the architectonic. 40 percent of every plot is green. Roof gardens, spaces between buildings, but also sections of the façades can be planted with greenery.’ ‘Amsterdam rainproof,’ adds Paco Bunnik. ‘We are approaching the heyday of landscape architecture.’ AHAM is happy with these municipal objectives. Betty Tania: ‘For us, sustainability is always high up on our list of priorities. We aim to build for this city’s future.’



‘What I like about this work is that you really get to help people.’

Since 2010, Jurgen Kuipers, owner of Pienter Estate Agents, has managed AHAM’s properties in Almere, Lelystad and Zeewolde. ‘It makes me happy when I can make other people happy with a lovely, affordable home.’

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Over the course of his seventeen years as an estate agent, Jurgen Kuipers has kept notes on all his clients. After all, real estate business is people business, he explains. ‘Every transaction is worthy of a story.’ But he remembers the young couple from Brabant who he helped to find an AHAM property last year, as if it happened yesterday. ‘He was a police officer who was being transferred to Almere and his wife was pregnant. They were looking for a rental property, but they weren’t making any progress at all. Most commercial rental companies couldn’t care less who rents or buys their properties. I listen to the stories the clients tell me,’ says Kuipers. ‘If I have ten different requests for rental properties, I’ll go for the people who need the property the most.’ Even though he says so himself, he made the police officer from Brabant and his wife very happy.

‘When they viewed the house on De Klenckestraat they jumped for joy. And that makes me happy too.’

Career move

It was an unfortunate circumstance that prompted the 57-year-old Jurgen to become an estate agent all those years ago. Until 2003 he had been perfectly happy working in the sales & marketing department at an ICT company, but in the wake of the internet crisis the company went bust. ‘The day I came home and announced I’d lost my job, my wife Arita said she was very curious what I would do. We had two children, a nice house and a lease car – it all had to be paid for. Arita gave me two weeks to think it over,’ he recalls, laughing. On deadline day he thought back to a career choice test he had once

taken, long before. ‘What that test showed up was my previous position, and real estate.’ He became interested after looking at information about an estate agent training course, and enrolled. In 2005, after he got his qualifications but received one rejection after another to his job applications, he decided to become self-employed. With help from his wife. ‘Arita was working part-time at a construction company and began assisting me in the real estate work too, doing things like drawing up contracts.’ The Kuipers still work together. ‘Is that good for our relationship? Ha! We sometimes clash pretty wildly, but we had to choose: either we would make our business and our marriage successful, or we would have to part ways. We went for the first option.’ It wasn’t a difficult choice, he says. ‘As an estate agent, you see and hear everything that goes on behind other people’s closed doors. And when you become aware of how much misery some other people suffer, it makes you want to go the extra mile for your own marriage.’ But, he emphasises, what he likes about this work is that you



really get to help people, especially through managing the AHAM rental clients, which he has been doing since 2010.

Housing market

His real estate agency has a hundred properties in its portfolio, spread across Almere, Lelystad and Zeewolde. The nice thing about renting out AHAM properties is that they are affordable and well-renovated. Many of them are also located in excellent neighbourhoods, like Landgoederenbuurt in Almere Buiten where the young couple from Brabant now live. Actually, most of the people who come to live in Almere are from Amsterdam and

IJburg, notes the estate agent. Even in that relatively new district in Amsterdam, there is a scarcity of homes. But the housing market in Almere is completely overheated too, observes Kuipers. ‘In 2021, house prices rose by twenty percent. Twenty percent! A simple, 100 square metre terraced house without a garage in Almere Duin will already set you back 600,000 euros. Unbelievable. It’s not rocket science, though. Interest rates are low and demand for homes is high. Prices won’t be coming down any time soon. Unless the government intervenes fiscally.’ Kuipers is all in favour of rapidly constructing large numbers of affordable houses, as minister De Jonge advocates,

although he doubts the government will succeed in realising these plans. ‘When you consider that it takes on average seven years to construct and deliver a street with fifty houses, it’s immediately obvious that the government is still playing catch-up.’ Kuipers has a busy schedule, but together with a friend he’s trying to make time to write up his seventeen years’ worth of notes as a collection of anonymised short stories. Kuipers aims to have the book ready by the end of the year. Still, he admits, just like with the ongoing plans to build more badly needed homes, it’s not a given that he’ll succeed. ‘We’ll see.’

‘Every transaction is worthy of a story.’



Colofon

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