



Morgen

#05

Vastgoed met een hart

AHAM
VASTGOED

Building and preservation





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Time

As you discover while perusing the pages of this edition of *Morgen* magazine, the layers of time are multifaceted. In recent months, several projects in our buildings have served to drive this point home. Quite by chance, we discovered a seventeenth-century ceiling hidden behind and protected by a nineteenth-century ceiling in a house on the Singel. Despite extensive earlier excavations during the construction of the IJ tunnel, we were surprised to uncover four layers of history on Rapenburg, each with its own story to tell. The same Rapenburg site has recently been embellished by a beautiful mural, which will be covered up in a few months' time by a new building erected in front of it. In this bulletin, we share the stories and infectious enthusiasm of the art historians and archaeologists involved with these projects. Our passion for real estate and its development is boundless, while we also strive on a daily basis to preserve the inherent qualities of our buildings. This is exemplified by the transformations at Park Frankendael in Amsterdam and the Kruisweg in Hoofddorp. In both cases, we have extended existing buildings which we have predominantly retained, simultaneously enhancing the environment and providing much-needed new housing stock. The extensions mark the start of a new layer of time, and with a little luck, they will remain visible for centuries to come. While it is currently easy to distinguish between the old and the new, in 100 years' time this will be somewhat less apparent. Enthusiastic historians of the future will be able to recount how, in the early years of the millennium, AHAM Vastgoed stood out as an advocate for high-quality urban development across the Amsterdam region – to which they may well add 'and was sometimes unstinting in its expenditure'. Our dual role in reducing the Netherlands' pressing housing shortage through our development projects at home while simultaneously facilitating projects in Sub-Saharan Africa reflects a particular layer of time. In this bulletin, the Sint Antonius Foundation showcases several of the projects that it supports. These consist of initiatives that seek to provide basic information and healthcare and that can be guaranteed and increasingly expanded for generations to come. All of this is made possible today thanks to Jo Schopman, who founded our company more than a century ago, followed by the Sint Antonius Foundation soon after. His initiative continues to flourish, and the AHAM team and our commercial tenants remain happy to implement it to this day and in the future. How do we do it? Read this edition of *Morgen* to learn all about it.

Tim van Schijndel
Managing Director AHAM Real Estate



What every renter needs to know

Anna is AHAM’s Legal Policy Officer and deals with legal and regulatory issues as well as housing fraud and nuisance.

Property damage

‘Quite a few tenants are still unaware of the fact that they should always take out home contents insurance,’ says Anna. ‘The rule is that the tenant is always liable for any damage to a property’s interior. Damage to the building itself is covered by AHAM’s building insurance, but as soon as you cross the threshold, everything is the tenant’s responsibility.’ Expats are often unaware of this, because as Anna knows all too well, this is not always the case in other countries. ‘For example, if a pipe bursts somewhere causing water damage, the costs arising from any damage to the interior are borne by the tenant. Therefore, every tenant needs to have home contents insurance.’

Certified

In recent times, a lot of attention has been paid to what is and is not working in the housing market, and this attention is being translated into new legislation. Anna says: ‘The Gas Boiler Act, which came into force on 1 April 2023, means that only certified installation companies are authorised to work on gas combustion installations. This hasn’t changed anything for AHAM, because we’ve been working with Vos Centrale Verwarming for years and they are certified.’ Every year, Vos makes an appointment with every AHAM tenant with a gas boiler to carry out a service. ‘Tenants pay service charges as part of their rent and this is included within them as a fixed item,’ explains Anna. ‘Outside of this annual service, tenants can always call if they have a problem with their heating and Vos will come and fix it; this is covered by the tenancy agreement unless the cause is tenant negligence.’

First come, first served

On 1 July 2023, following on the heels of the Gas Boiler Act, another relevant law came into force: the Good Landlord Act. This law establishes guidelines for landlords and its intention is to prevent undesirable rental practices. Anna: ‘Landlords have to comply with certain standards, but fortunately, AHAM had always adhered to these even before they became law. For example, landlords must have a transparent selection procedure when recruiting new tenants, to prevent discrimination. AHAM’s selection procedure is very simple: first come, first served, providing the prospective tenant meets the conditions for the relevant property. This new law obliges us to mention our selection procedure in advertisements, but this has been the only new step we have had to take. We also always tell rejected tenants why they have been rejected. In AHAM’s case, this is nearly always because someone else got there first.’

‘Every tenant needs to have home contents insurance’

Financial matters

The Good Landlord Act also contains guidelines on financial matters. Anna explains: ‘Deposits cannot be more than two months’ rent. And a deposit must be returned within two weeks of the end of the tenancy. If works need to be carried out, then this period is in principle thirty days. There is also a new role for the municipality; they can enforce rules by imposing fines when rules are violated. And if a landlord fails to do what is required of him, then this law gives the municipality the option to take over the management of the property in question.’ Finally, Parliament recently passed a new law, aimed at protecting tenants on a financial level. Anna: ‘The Affordable Rent Act has extended the scope of the points system that has already existed for a while. Since 1 July, not only social housing, but also the middle rent sector now falls under this rent regulation.’ Parliament hopes that this law will protect more people’s security of existence by making more homes with a rental value of up to €1,200 a month available for middle incomes. The government website says that it estimates that the rent of nearly 300,000 homes will go down by an average of €190 a month and that 113,000 rental homes will return to the affordable sector. Anna sums it up like this: ‘This law is going to change a lot.’

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2024/06/25/wet-betaalbare-huur-aangenomen-en-van-kracht-vanaf-1-juli>

In recent years, AHAM has increased the sustainability of more than a thousand homes.

ting them with proper insulation to ensure comfortable living and sustainability. This matters to tenants because it makes their homes comfortable and they consume less energy during colder periods than in homes that have not been eco-retrofitted.’

www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/energielabel-woningen-en-gebouwen/energielabel-woning

Energy labels

Ricardo de Vries is a certified energy performance consultant, who works at Bargmann & Van Ek Bouwconsulting B.V. This firm, which advises on all aspects of construction projects, has worked for AHAM since 2011. Ricardo explains: ‘Every home that is rented or sold needs to have a valid energy label. This is mandatory and allows homes to be compared for energy efficiency.’ The labels run from G, the least economical, to A++++ at the top of the sustainability ladder.

Ricardo explains how you go about creating an energy label: ‘We inspect the house and look at its energy efficient characteristics, such as how well it is insulated and what kind of installations it has. All these variables are entered into a software package which then creates a report of the energy needs of the home, its energy consumption, and what share of this is renewable, for example, because it has solar panels. The energy class is assigned from the report, and given a letter grading A to

G. The label is valid for ten years.’ In recent years, AHAM has increased the sustainability of more than a thousand homes. Ricardo: ‘In Amsterdam, sustainability is sometimes difficult in older homes that are not very large, because good insulation and sustainable installations are not always possible and also take up a lot of space. It’s sometimes a real puzzle to come up with a good solution. AHAM has been working actively for years to bring many of their homes up to energy label A, by eco-retrofit-





Paper and lots of tea

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Paper & Tea started out in Berlin and now has branches across Europe. In spring 2024, the company opened a new tea shop on lively Utrechtsestraat, in a characterful building with a surprisingly relevant history.

Matcha is trendy. And at Paper & Tea, you'll find everything you could possibly need to make amazing Japanese green matcha tea at home. This tea shop was opened on Amsterdam's Utrechtsestraat last April in a building dating back to 1715, and from which tea – alongside coffee and cacao – had been sold in the late nineteenth century. The range was undoubtedly more restricted at the time because nowadays the offering is simply overwhelming: Taiwanese Oolong tea,

green tea from the Nepalese side of the Himalayas, fermented Pu'erh tea from Yunnan, Greek mountain tea with hints of peppermint and lemon, white tea with bergamot oil and more.

Whichever blend you opt to sample will be brewed for you behind the wooden bar. You can then savour it on the sofa in the shop or upstairs in the lounge, where tea ceremonies are conducted on request and where, in good weather, the door is left open to the roof terrace. 'We want our tea to provide moments of peace and create memories,' says manager Zuhail Alpkonlar. 'We sell matches and postcards so people can light candles or jot down thoughts while they drink tea. And you can also find delicious tea-flavoured chocolate here too.'

The concept seems just as popular as matcha. Last year, Paper & Tea, a company founded in Berlin in 2011, expanded by a further 23 branches. It currently has 35 shops across Europe – including one in Utrecht and two in Amsterdam. All the products are organic and sustainable. Even the shopping baskets are made from paper – recycled, of course – and the chocolate wrapper is made from tea leaves.



www.paperandtea.com
Paper & Tea – Utrechtsestraat 36

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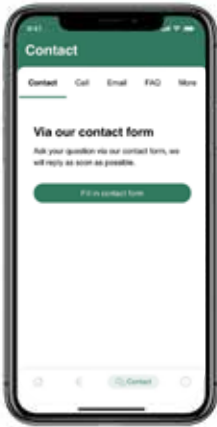
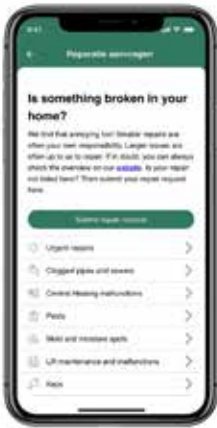
AHAM Tenant App

AHAM recently launched an app for tenants. This bilingual app simplifies the communication between tenant and landlord.

8 Lise-Lotte Moeres, Project Manager Real Estate Management, and Jarno de Jonge, Head of Strategy & Organisational Development, are the people responsible at AHAM for the development and implementation of the app. Jarno: 'We are always working behind the scenes to optimise our communication with tenants. This app simplifies contact between tenants and AHAM. We think it's important for tenants to be able to reach us easily. And from our side, this app has the benefit of structuring the way we run our processes. The app was developed by Zig Innovations in collaboration with our ICT partner Ctac.'

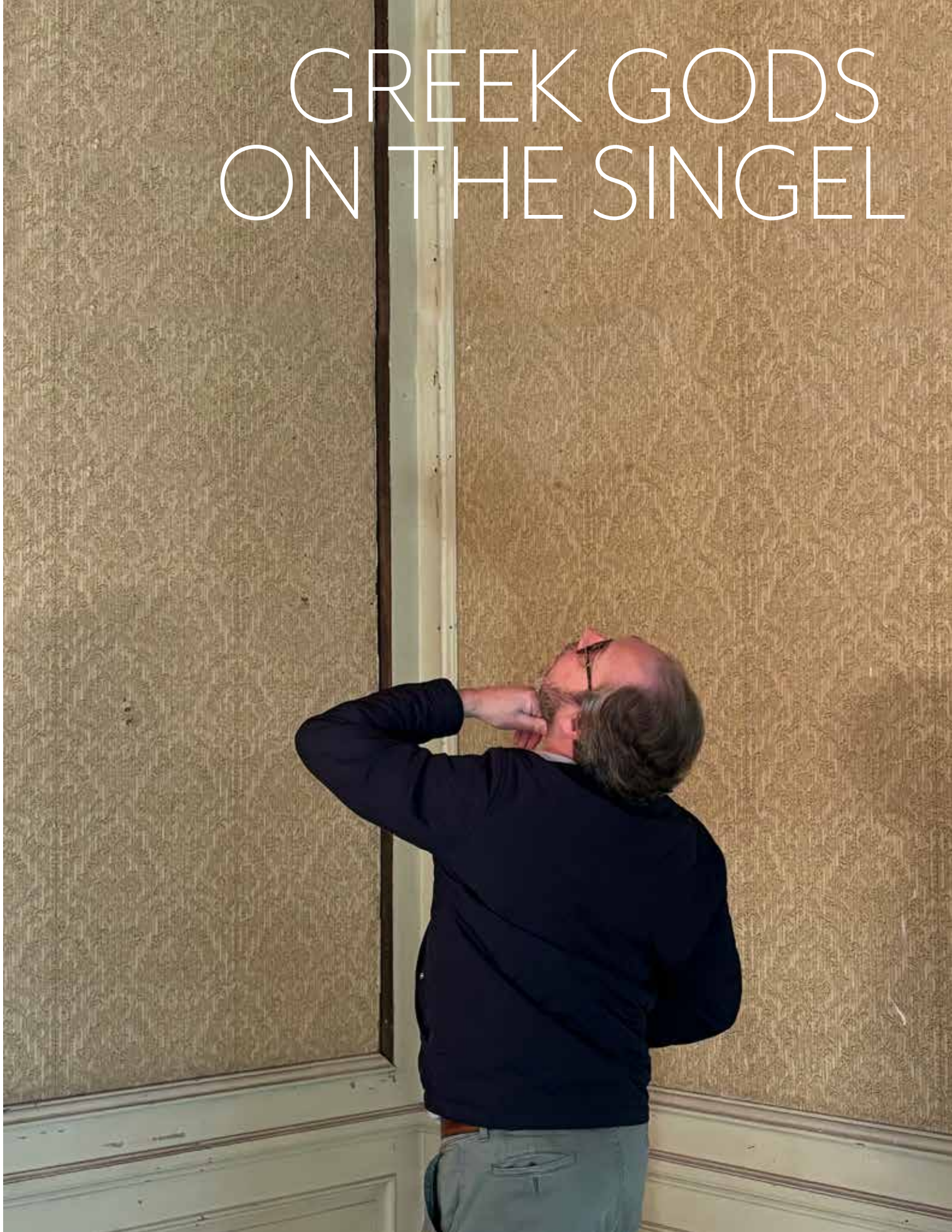
Tenants can use the app to submit repair requests, view their financial standing – such as rent arrears or the status of service costs – and, of course, they can also use the app to pay their rent via iDEAL. Jarno: 'In our latest customer satisfaction survey, we asked our tenants what features they wanted in an app, and we took it all on board. We then launched the project in December of last year. If you've got a question about renting at AHAM, you can look at our Frequently Asked Questions and find the answer straight away.' Lise-Lotte: 'For example: what falls under the Minor Repairs Decree? But also questions about service contracts and who you should call if you've got mice or if your boiler's broken down.'

All tenants have been contacted to notify



them about the app with instructions on how to download it and who to call if they encounter difficulties. Lise-Lotte: 'This has made it easier for tenants to report issues and we get better information because we know immediately which tenant has a problem at which address.' Jarno: 'And we can also use the app to send relevant messages to our tenants. We can now communicate upcoming renovations or planned maintenance more easily.' Lise-Lotte: 'Of course, we will also continue to send letters to any tenants who don't have an email address and who therefore cannot use the app. The app is a nice addition to our existing tenant services.'

'We asked our tenants what features they wanted in an app'



During the recent renovation of a canal house on the Singel, unique seventeenth-century ceiling paintings were discovered. AHAM called upon art historian Antoon Ott to study the rare ceiling in this historic monument.

GREEK GODS ON THE SINGEL

In the last edition of *Morgen*, we wrote about the renovation of this double-fronted canal house at Singel 270-272. This historic monument – which AHAM has owned for decades – was being eco-retrofitted. The front and rear facades were refurbished and insulating monument glass was installed in some of the windows. During this renovation, changes were also made to the interior of the building which had been converted into offices. But to everyone's astonishment, when a sober, late nineteenth-century stucco ceiling was taken down, rare ceiling paintings were discovered behind them. These included depictions of mythological tales from the life of the Roman demigod Hercules, painted on wooden boards. These seventeenth-century paintings are older than the house's eighteenth-century cornice gable would at first suggest. This facade hides a much older house of which this painted ceiling is a tangible legacy.

Gold leaf

We told the municipality of Amsterdam about this unusual discovery. They sent out a building historian and an architectural historian from the Department of Monuments and Archaeology to see it. Never before had they seen such a unique seventeenth-century ceiling painting. Once upon a time, Amsterdam must have had many ceilings like this, but they have been lost, sometimes by being overpainted. 'We were thrilled to







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discover this one,' the experts told *Het Parool*. The paintings on the Singel only remained visible to the experts for a short period of time. Since then, they have been covered over again with a ceiling that matches the walls of the room. This will help conserve them in good condition. However, they have been carefully photographed and docu-

mented by the art historian and lawyer Antoon Ott, owner of the Artilaw agency. AHAM hired him to carry out extensive art historical research. He has not yet completed this, but will write a report on his findings in due course. He is giving us a sneak peek in this edition of *Morgen*. 'At the start of this year, I got to see a small piece of the ceiling,' says

Ott. 'It was beautiful; the gold leaf is still in good condition.' The canal house has been modified several times over the centuries and has eighteenth- and nineteenth-century elements. 'But its core is probably late sixteenth-century,' Ott discovered. 'The building was already shown on a 1597 map of the city.' During one of the city's expansions, it was built as a large residential house just outside the fifteenth-century city walls. At the time of its construction, this sixteenth-century house was on the city's outskirts.

Fashionable

Ott managed, through painstaking research at the Amsterdam City Archives and elsewhere, to track down the identity of the owner who commissioned these ceiling paintings. He was Jan van Os, a wealthy, unmarried merchant and probably the second or third person to live in the house. The transaction documents reveal that he bought it in 1624. At the time, Van Os lived on the Warmoesstraat which was one of Amsterdam's most expensive streets. Ott

believes that his motivation for moving was the need to acquire more living space. He had recently become the guardian to three nephews and nieces, following the deaths of his brother and sister-in-law in 1623. Their children had come to live with him. Jan van Os had a successful trade in furs, as well as operating as a banker and money lender. He invested some of his wealth in real estate and after buying the house on the Singel, went on to purchase other properties on the Herengracht. But he was no self-made man. Ott: 'His father, who was from Antwerp, was one of the Dutch East India Company's (VOC's) first shareholders. His legacy was the foundation of his son's fortune.' In Ott's opinion, the fact that this wealthy merchant had mythological stories painted in the front room of his house fits perfectly with the time. 'These kinds of paintings were fashionable because they allowed the wealthy to demonstrate to their guests that they were familiar with the stories of classical antiquity.' There are other mythological

figures in addition to Hercules, including the Greek god Apollo, the nymph Daphne, Diana, goddess of the hunt, and the head of Bacchus, god of wine. There are also occasional animals including birds, dragonflies, snails and a mouse. The scenes from the life of Hercules were freely copied

from prints of 1563 by the artist Cornelis Cort. The other images are direct copies from the famous Latin narrative poem of the *Metamorphoses*, by the Roman author Ovid. 'His ancient myths were immensely popular,' says Ott. 'The first Dutch translation of Ovid was published in 1557 with illustrations to help people understand thesto-

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Project Managers Freek Tames and Antoon Ott





Antoon Ott: 'Ancient myths were immensely popular'

ries.' Some 178 woodcuts were made to illustrate this first vernacular edition. 'They were reprinted multiple times. The Rijksmuseum's print cabinet has all of them; and this is how I was able to identify the seven pictures that were copied by whoever painted this ceiling.'

Decorative painters

The painter probably discussed with his patron Van Os exactly what should be depicted in the medallions, the round paintings in the middle of the beams. 'It is striking that the painter only copied the main elements of the original

woodcuts,' says Ott. 'He left out background details, presumably to make the stories easier to identify.' Ott does not think that the actual painting work took all that long. 'You can see that the images were painted very rapidly. In the seventeenth century, decorative painters of this sort were called "kladschilders". There is zero chance of discovering the name of a painter like this.' Ott is still currently investigating the origins of the ornaments. 'The painted decorations that sometimes end in amusing bird heads are all based on ornamental prints. I have been searching for the originals in the collections of the British Museum, the Louvre and elsewhere. It requires a lot of work.' The seventeenth-century merchant-million-

aire Van Os did not only have his ceiling painted. While combing the archives, Ott discovered that in 1630, he also had a series of eight costly tapestries woven with images of the Roman general Mark Antony and the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra. 'That shows how artistically ambitious Van Os was.' Van Os owned the property until his death in 1657. The big question is whether the front room was the only one painted. 'I suspect there were more ceiling paintings,' says Ott. 'But we'll probably never know.' Once the renovation is complete, a lamp will be hung in the contemporary office building with a composite photo of the ceiling paintings on the shade. This will ensure that something of this canal house's unusual art history remains on show.

'These kinds of paintings were fashionable because they allowed the wealthy to demonstrate to their guests that they were familiar with the stories of classical antiquity'



Cheerful surprise at Oostenburg

Oostenburg is up and coming, but it’s already got a distinct character of its own. This character is a great match for Restaurant Papa Zatarra, bringing bustle, hospitality and colour to an industrial and sustainable neighbourhood.

Restaurant/neighbourhood café Papa Zatarra catches your eye immediately. Its terrace with plants and colourful cushions making a cheerful splash in Oostenburg’s industrial street scene; its tall glass facade reveals a tropical interior. ‘What we want to do with our business is bring colour to the neighbourhood,’ says Tara Bonimbie, who runs Papa Zatarra with her Hotel School friend Max van Dée. This is hospitality with a mission. ‘We work with youth care to provide young people from disadvantaged backgrounds with opportunities to come and work with us,’ says Tara, who grew up in youth care herself. ‘The word Papa in the name symbolises the hospitality we are striving for.’ AHAM thought it sounded like a great concept so they showed this large corner property to this pair of restaurateurs. ‘Oostenburg was not a neighbourhood that we knew, but it proved to be the perfect location,’ says Tara. ‘We fell not

only for the large, high space with glass facades that can be completely opened up, but also for the surroundings with their historic factory buildings.’ She says this neighbourhood is up and coming. ‘You can find all sorts of start-ups, creative breeding grounds and little shops in the area, and soon the old Van Gendt Hallen, food hall and the Drift Museum will open too. The bustle will only increase.’ You can walk into Papa Zatarra for a drink and a bite to eat at any time of day, and Tara and Max organise pub quizzes, football nights and salsa parties to bring a lot of life to the brewery. ‘Dancing is fantastic in this vast space. We’ve got space for 120 guests. When we push the tables and chairs to the side, we’ve got a huge dance floor.’ And this is a great place for anyone who likes cocktails: ‘Max comes from the cocktail industry.’

www.papazatarra.com
Restaurant Papa Zatarra – Jacob Bontiusplaats 10



‘The bustle will only increase’



‘A great place in a prime location’

In May, marketing consultant Douwe Runne (48) moved into a 1930s house on Professor van der Waalsstraat in Haarlem. He is a happy man.



‘Nice, huh,’ says Douwe Runne as he closes the front door, pointing to its rounded top. ‘It’s an original 1930s detail. But what I fell for straight away is the light in this house. I get the morning sun in the front garden and I get the sun in the back garden in the afternoon until late in the evening. Light’s important to me. Especially in less happy times. I’m getting divorced. That’s why I was looking for a new home.’

‘For a few months, I lived in a one-room apartment in the centre of Haarlem. But there wasn’t any room for my three children there. This is a real house, with a parking space in front of the door, a front and back garden and three bedrooms. Actually, we’re still a room short, but if everything goes to plan, my 18-year-old will go and live in Amsterdam. And otherwise, we’ll have to make other arrangements. For example, we might put a bed in the attic. It’s amazing as it is and my children think so too. Just like me, they think it’s a great place in a prime location. The youngest two are 13 and 15 and they can cycle to school from here in just five minutes. I can cycle to my gym in five

minutes and can get out of town by car in next to no time.’

‘As soon as I saw the house, I wanted to live here. There were several candidates, but I was lucky. I intend to take good care of it; I’m someone who likes to do DIY and gardening and there are quite a few things round here that need fixing. I repaired the shed door and put new locks on it. I haven’t started painting yet. But in the two months I’ve lived here, I’ve done quite a bit to the overgrown garden: I’ve levelled the ground, sown new



grass, cleaned the tile path, and cut two and a half metres from the width of the hedge. Now I need to turn my attention to the pale fence; I’m going to cover it with a layer of bark. I’m also going to sow grass where I cut the hedge back, and I’m going to get a sun lounger so I can lie in the sun. Wonderful! I’m very happy with the garden and am thinking of making a vegetable garden so that – now that I am single – I can ask ladies if they’d like to come and see my tomatoes. Haha!’

‘The nicest place in this house is my bedroom. It’s spacious and it also has a large balcony overlooking the garden. I’m often woken by the sunlight streaming in and when I have the time, I go downstairs to make coffee and then bring it back to drink in bed with the balcony doors open.’

‘I’m thinking of making a vegetable garden’





A special building project in a special place

An AHAM construction project shone a light on the history of Rapenburg, a former island. Archaeologists made unusual finds there telling us more about Amsterdam over the centuries.

When you drive towards the IJ tunnel, you see a large mural at Rapenburgerstraat 89, at the site of the former Spar supermarket. It is a beautiful picture with lots of colourful people. At top left, 'Schopman Confectioner's' is depicted (in Dutch). At lower right, the artwork's creators have added their name: Amsterdam Signpainters. This is not graffiti. AHAM commissioned this work. 'It's a gesture to passers-by,' says Rik Nahuijsen, Project Manager Realisations at AHAM. 'Of course, it is much nicer to look at a mural like this than at a grey street front and a building pit.' The name Schopman is a reference to the founder of modern-day AHAM Vastgoed. 'At the beginning of the last century, Jo Schopman was a confectioner. However, his father was a contractor-carpenter and this prompted him to seek his fortune outside of the confectionery business and to develop real estate, at which he soon excelled. As he became more prosperous, he combined expanding his business with an idealistic approach.' Rik says smiling: 'Schopman was a religious man who donated a large part of everything he had to charity.' AHAM is still idealistic and

'We found waste from the eighteenth century, including food scraps'

this is expressed in the mural at Rapenburg, which Rik says has been well-received by local residents.

Cesspit

In the meantime, hard work has got underway. The old supermarket has been demolished and will be rebuilt in the same place while 24 rental apartments will be constructed on a neighbouring site next year. On the morning of our visit, the last foundation piles were being driven into the ground; ground – between Rapenburg and the Foeliedwarsstraat – in which, Rik tells us, archaeologists have made unusual discoveries in recent months. ‘That’s because we dug five metres deep, so we could build a bicycle cellar and shop storage. And, of course, because Rapenburg is one of the oldest parts of Amsterdam.’ In the site shed, Rik pulls up old city maps on his laptop, some of which date from the

sixteenth century. ‘Rapenburg was an island from 1592; it only merged with the city after 1950,’ says Rik, who proceeds to show us photos of the archaeological finds. ‘We found the remains of an old dry dock and these here are the foundations of several houses. The men over there in blue overalls are the archaeologists. They did a few weeks of research excavating the soil, layer by layer. They were very enthusiastic about their discoveries.’ Ranjith Jayasena is one of the archaeologists who worked on the dig. He works for the Municipality of Amsterdam at the Department of Monuments and Archaeology, and can tell you more about the finds. ‘The building site is located on the former island of Rapenburg, which was built on the banks of the IJ in 1592. This was done by shoring up the bank with rubble and roof tiles, then raising it with a thick layer of clay and peat. During our dig, we discovered a chequerboard of neatly arranged

“sandwiches”; archaeology is rarely as beautifully visible as it was here.’ According to Ranjith, this reclaimed land was used as a shipyard. ‘During our investigations, we found a boardwalk impregnated with tar in places.’ The plots between the Foeliedwarsstraat and Rapenburg were built on sometime before 1625, he says. ‘Two of these – complete seventeenth-century houses at Foeliedwarsstraat 36 and 38 – were nicely brought into view. One with a tiled fireplace from the seventeenth century. And a cesspit.’ Cesspits are gold mines for archaeologists because waste is dumped in them and they contain many objects as a result. Ranjith tells us how they discovered things in this one too. ‘Pieces of earthenware crockery like plates, cups and bowls. We still need to piece together the puzzle of the shards. But we also found waste from the eighteenth century, including food scraps. This is still being investigated but we



Ranjith Jayasena

hope soon to have a detailed picture of what was on the table at the time,’ says Ranjith.

Amsterdam School

Rik conjures up another historical image on his laptop screen: Rapenburg as a shipyard. It shows twenty men or so, lined up to push a boat into the water – or rather set it afloat. It is entitled: ‘Launching a boat’ (in Dutch). ‘Nice, isn’t it?’ says Rik. ‘Rapenburg is a special place.’ And he proceeds to show us how residential accommodation of a very particular style is being built on this special piece of land. These two- and three-room apartments – and one five-room apartment – are being built in the style of the Amsterdam School. Two sorts of brick of two different sizes laid both horizontally and vertically are being used to create the look. The mortar will be applied deep between the bricks, à la Amsterdam School. ‘It’s not a job for your common-or-garden brickie,’ says Rik. ‘This is true craftsmanship.’ But this is not the only thing that sets this new-build project apart: ‘The apartments are getting zinc roofs with dormers and the plinths are going to be made from natural stone; there’s a lot of attention to detail.’

The mortar will be applied deep between the bricks, à la Amsterdam School.



Amsterdam Sign-
painters at work



Rik confesses that it was not easy to design the building plans for this busy site. ‘The complex is located at the mouth of the IJ tunnel, so the municipality of Amsterdam stipulated that the apartments had to have a so-called quiet facade to prevent noise pollution from the passing traffic. This means that the windows on the IJ-tunnel side are not allowed to open.’ Nonetheless, all the homes will have a balcony at either the front or the back. ‘Jaap Dijkman Architects solved the problem of the quiet facade by designing loggias: enclosed balconies with windows opening inward.’ The project needs to be ready in a year’s time, in the second half of 2025. What will happen to the beautiful mural then? ‘Unfortunately, it’s going to be lost behind the new facade.’



Leading by example

This year, thanks to your rental contributions, Sint Antonius Foundation Projects (SAS-P) has once again been able to make a difference by supporting ambitious leaders of social action. The commitment of about fifty partners – including Dandelion Africa, Muso and Wandikweza – has supported millions of people with good healthcare, good education, and a fairer chance at a better life.

‘Leading by example’ is the adage by which Wendo Aszed, founder of Dandelion Africa, lives. And what an example she is! By eliminating female genital mutilation from dozens of communities, she is offering girls prospects for equality and a healthy life. Fortunately, there are more people like Wendo, who devote their lives to social impact. It is people like this, who SAS-P seeks to support. In this edition of *Morgen*, not only do we want to introduce you to Wendo Aszed, but also to Djoumé Diakité, Ari Johnson, and Mercy Kafotokoza, the inspiring founders and leaders of Muso and Wandikweza. It is in Sub-Saharan Africa that issues such as climate change, pressure on raw materials and the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic are felt the most keenly, especially among the poorest members of society. Closer to home, support for international solidarity is coming under increasing pressure. For these reasons, philanthropy and SAS-P’s mission are now more pressing than ever.



Suzanne van der Velden, General Manager Philanthropy Sint Antonius Foundation



Breaking the poverty spiral

Wendo Aszed (45, photo above) is the founder of Dandelion Africa, an organisation dedicated to improving the health and economic opportunities of girls in Kenya.

In the isolated farming villages of north-western Kenya, more than half of all girls do not go to school. Poverty is the main reason, but traditional gender roles also stand in their way. Many girls in the region undergo female genital mutilation as a result of the deep-rooted belief that you are only a real woman once you have had ‘the cut’. But once cut, the majority of girls never finish school. They marry young and have lots of children because they are not allowed to use contraception without their husband’s consent.

Illiterate
Kenyan Wendo Aszed is convinced that to break the poverty spiral, it is indispensable to send girls to school and provide them with education – including on family planning. She knows what she is talking about, because Aszed herself was a village girl and almost illiterate until she was eleven. Thanks to the help of her stepfather – a doctor – she was able to embark on an impressive educational catch-up race. She moved to Nairobi and learned English from him. ‘I’ve been very lucky,’ says Aszed, but she’s also incredibly smart. She went to boarding school, graduated from university, and became a bank executive. She moved with her family of five children to the western Kenyan countryside years ago, for her husband’s work. There, she saw the fate of so many vulnerable girls and young women, with whom she could so easily iden-

tify. It motivated her to found Dandelion Africa in 2010, empowering young women in all possible areas. It has a long list of activities: Dandelion Africa provides contraceptives at fifty locations in remote areas and it also provides sanitary towels at 56 village schools. The charismatic Aszed says: ‘Many girls stay at home out of shame when they are on their period because they don’t have sanitary towels. They simply miss three or four days of school a month.’ The NGO has built three medical centres in the region where women can give birth safely. Employees provide sex education in schools and coach women to save and to start their own farms. Dandelion Africa also strives to increase political awareness among entire village communities in the region. The population is trained to hold politicians to account when it comes to things like the construction of water pipes or roads. We tell them: ‘Follow the money. Pay close attention to whether the promised funds are spent on improvements in the countryside. And post on social media if things aren’t going right.’

Key Role
Aszed is able to innovate quickly, thanks to the confidence that her sponsors – SAS-P

‘I raised my boys to be feminists’
included – have in her. ‘As a result of the climate crisis, our area was hit by flooding,’ she says. ‘It affected more than two thousand people and their farms. We have now moved over to smart agriculture and are using this technology in our projects to be better prepared for future disasters.’ In 2014, Dandelion took on a new challenge in Africa by deliberately involving boys in their programmes. ‘Schoolboys came to us themselves,’ says Aszed. They saw that Dandelion Africa only focused on girls, while as boys, they wanted sex education too, as well as information about female genital mutilation (FGM). This was an eye-opener for Aszed. ‘After all, they get girls pregnant and also benefit from family planning.’ There are many obstacles in breaking down the patriarchy, and boys can play a key role. ‘We begin by informing schoolboys about menstrual hygiene and the dangers of female genital mutilation,’ she says. ‘And the boys pass this information on to the girls.’ One of her own sons was among the first batch of schoolboys. ‘I raised my boys to be feminists,’ says Aszed. ‘I put all my lessons into practice according to my adage of leading by example.’



Accessible care

30



Nurse Mercy Kafotokoza (52, photo above) is the founder of Wandikweza. This organisation provides medical assistance in remote areas of Malawi, and one of its goals is to reduce maternal and child mortality.

Many African children are brought up by their grandmothers, as was Mercy Kafotokoza in Malawi. As a nine-year-old girl, she made a promise to her grandmother that she would become a nurse when she grew up. Kafotokoza made this promise just after her uncle had tragically died from a seemingly innocuous infection. He had had a tooth pulled without anaesthesia and the wound would not stop bleeding. Her uncle was rushed to hospital 50 kilometres away. But first, her grandmother had to sell a few chickens so she could pay for the transport. When he finally reached the hospital on the back of a farm cart, it was too late and the infection had spread. Kafotokoza's heartbroken grandmother blamed

herself for the loss of her son. She moved to the city and became a maid. And she paid for the education and nursing training of her granddaughter who fulfilled her promise and became a nurse.

Avoidable

Kafotokoza's grandmother died recently; she was 97 years old. 'We spoke on the phone almost every day,' says Kafotokoza. But her grandmother got to see the success of Wandikweza, the NGO Kafotokoza founded in 2016 to bring medical care closer to the inhabitants of Malawi. It made a big impression on Kafotokoza when a woman died in front of her eyes while giving birth to twins in hospital. 'It was avoidable, just like my uncle's death. The heavily pregnant woman would have had to walk many miles to the hospital. And the hike had taken it out of her.' After this new tragedy, she thought, *this has got to change, everyone should have the right to accessible medical care, close to home*. But this is not available to everyone in Malawi. Eighty-four

'We do not make assumptions about the problems we'll find, but we look at the actual situation'

percent of the population live in remote areas where there is no medical help, and most lack the money to pay for care. The country has shockingly high maternal and child mortality rates. At least forty out of every thousand children under five die. The majority of deaths could be prevented with the right medical care.

Mopeds

The creative, solution-oriented Kafotokoza quit her permanent hospital job. She developed a care model in which a mobile medical team provides care in remote villages. The medical team holds eight consultation days a month at different locations, treating around three hundred patients a day. Complaints range from pneumonia and diarrhoea to STDs.

The development of children up to the age of five is carefully monitored. The team can test for HIV and malaria and provide medication and contraception. 'We work closely with village communities,' says Kafotokoza. 'We do not make assumptions about the problems we'll find, but we look at the actual situation.' For example, she put together a network of locals who can detect medical complaints at an early stage. There are also 'nurses on bikes' who ride around on behalf of Wandikweza, making home visits to pregnant women and their children up to the age of five. In emergencies, a nurse can always be on site within 30 minutes. Maternal and child mortality have dropped dramatically since the arrival of these nurses on mopeds. Wandikweza is growing exponentially and has already helped more than 350,000 people. Changemaker Kafotokoza, a married mother of three, now heads an organisation of 130 employees. But she also takes care of herself: 'I get up at 4 am. I start by meditating; that keeps me in balance.'



Fight against child mortality

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Muso is an organisation that makes healthcare available to residents of Mali and Ivory Coast. Founders Djoumé Diakité and Ari Johnson tell us how child mortality in Mali has fallen spectacularly thanks to their NGO.

In 2005, when Malian doctor Djoumé Diakité and his American colleague Ari Johnson made plans to improve the healthcare of the poor population of Mali, 15% of children under the age of five used to die. As it was not possible to establish the exact cause of this high infant mortality and the poor health situation in general, the doctors and six other medical experts moved to Yirimadio, a fast-growing suburb of Mali's capital Bamako.

'We wanted to live among the people we wanted to help,' says Diakité. 'People in the communities are the ones who know best what they need. We asked them about the healthcare obstacles they faced.' People said that they had to travel huge distances to get medical help. This meant they often arrived too late. And they had to pay for every medical procedure and every medication. Johnson: 'If you barely have enough money to eat, then medical care is unaffordable; and that's the case for most Malians. I started out thinking that malaria was the leading cause of death, but I learned from the locals that reality was more complex. People die from infections that could be cured with a simple course of antibiotics.' Many deaths are preventable when health-

care is affordable and accessible, concluded the founders of Muso, a group of eight Malians and Americans. They formally founded Muso in 2008 and made a joint commitment that no one should have to die while awaiting medical care.

Free

The non-profit organisation now provides free medical care and medicines in poor areas of Mali and also in parts of neighbouring Ivory Coast. An essential link in the organisation is a network of some 1,100 female district nurses who make home visits, including to remote villages in the desert. This allows them to reach people who were previously deprived of any form of medical care. They treat common diseases like malaria and diarrhoea on the spot. In the event of complications, seriously ill patients and pregnant women are quickly referred to clinics for free specialist care.

'It's a privilege to be able to do this work'

Djoumé Diakité



Muso recruits and trains these district nurses themselves.

Muso has been so successful that within a decade, infant mortality in Yirimadio has dropped to 0.7% – the lowest rate in the entire Sub-Saharan region and comparable to the infant mortality rate in the United States.

Johnson, CEO of Muso, attributes a large part of its success to its connections with various philanthropic partners – including SAS-P – but also to a fruitful cooperation with the Malian government. Diakité says that a lot of diplomacy was required to get local administrators and politicians on board. But the scientific medical research that Muso carried out is very convincing. Their research showed that child mortality drops spectacularly when children are monitored and given basic medical care up to the age of five.

In recent years, Mali has been plagued by war violence, but despite this, infant mortality has remained low in the area where Muso operates. 'We and our partners have learned that we are able to set up a care system that can even counteract the impact of war,' says Johnson. 'It's a privilege to be able to do this work,' adds Diakité.

Ari Johnson (left)

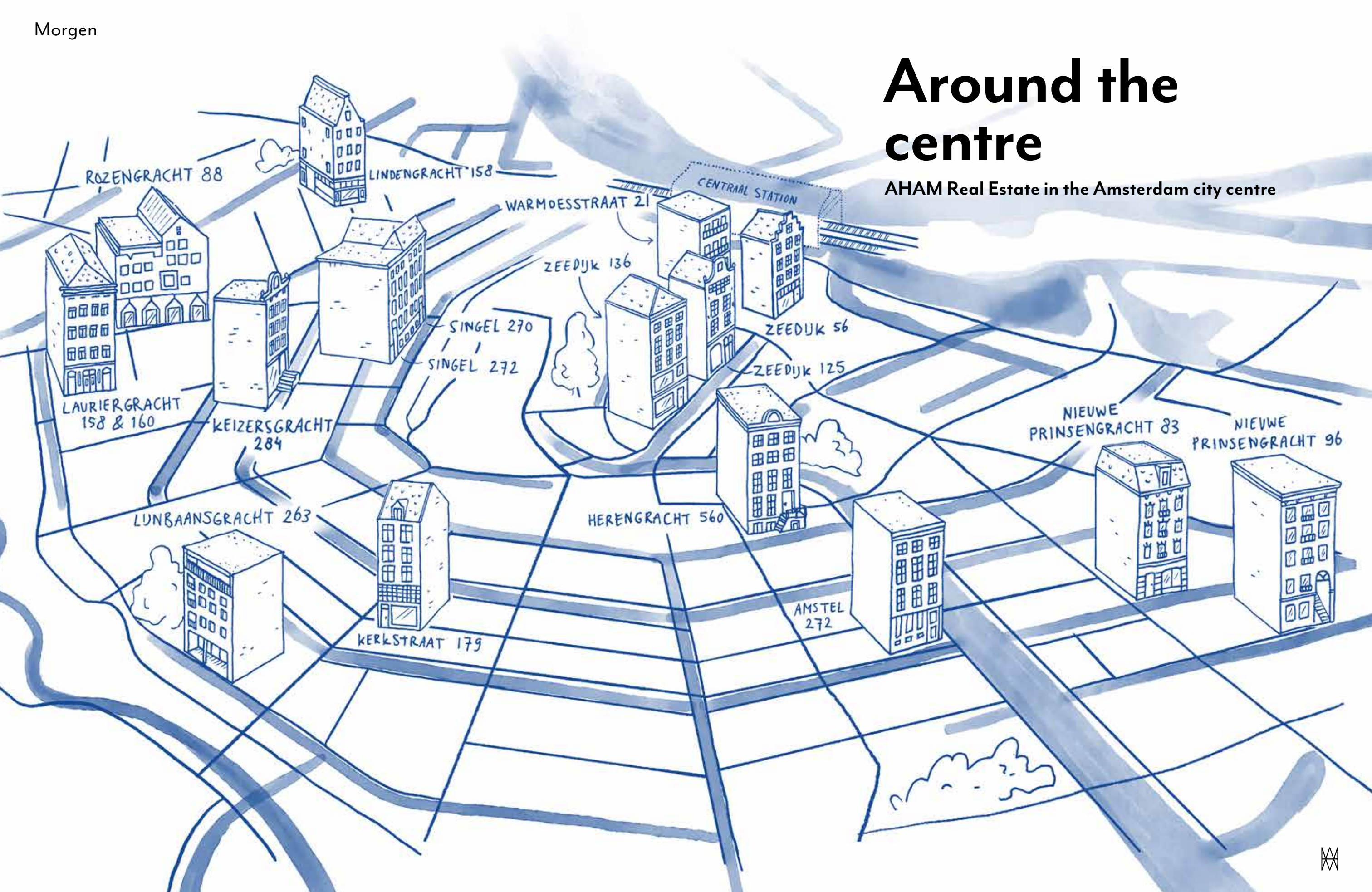


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Around the centre

AHAM Real Estate in the Amsterdam city centre



Work in progress

The former telephone exchange

AHAM bought the former telephone exchange on Kamerlingh Onneslaan in 2016. The building – originally designed by architect Albert Boeken in 1923 in the Amsterdam School style – has undergone a spectacular transformation and its first tenants will soon move in. When AHAM chose architect Ronald Janssen's proposal they were not taking the easy route. A major issue was whether the design of the extension in height – which was to raise the height of the building by a factor of 1.5 – would be convincing enough to get the municipal authorities to agree to it. However, thanks to its fine, careful detailing and high-quality materials and architecture, the plan was warmly received: civil servants,



Morgen

welfare and district administration were enthusiastic about the proposal, and thought it would be a gem for the area. The renovation was started in 2022 and the building will soon house 33 homes, four business premises, and the catering facilities to support them. Rik Nahuijsen, Project Manager Realisations at AHAM, says that the final building phase is complete and that delivery is scheduled for October. More than 400 interested individuals have subscribed to the newsletter about the rental of these homes which range in surface area from 48 to 150 square metres. ‘That demonstrates how beautiful everyone thinks this building is,’ he says. ‘The only hiccup is that just like everywhere in the Netherlands, we are dependent upon the capacity of utility providers, but it’ll all work out in the end. Everyone is full of praise for what we’ve achieved and we take it as a great compliment that some of our neighbours would now like to move in too.’



‘We take it as a great compliment that some of our neighbours would now like to move in too’



Accuraat opens doors

40

AHAM works with door-and-window supplier Accuraat Raam & Deurtechniek, a family business that makes sure windows and doors do what they are meant to do.

‘Accuraat Raam & Deurtechniek specialises in everything that turns and opens and can be locked, and we’ve been doing this for about twenty-five years.’ These are the words of Nicolette Kuiper-Pennings, who is the joint owner of Accuraat, alongside her husband Quintin. Brother Ron is also part of the business and next year both a nephew and Nicolette and Quintin’s son will come on board too. It really is a family affair.
It all started with a 1990s locksmith’s shop. Ron: ‘At the time, there were cobblers who also made keys and that’s where people went when



they had problems with their locks. Nicolette’s husband began working from the shop as a mobile locksmith: opening locks when people were locked out of their homes, changing locks, that sort of thing. He provided a 24-hour service. All sorts of complementary products and services, such as windows, soon followed, and bit by bit the company expanded.’

Complex

Nicolette: ‘We started to do more complex things; and at the same time, we did maintenance for a lot of buildings. Nowadays, we do all the maintenance and repairs for AHAM’s doors and windows. This means that we are familiar with a lot of buildings and know which doors, hinges and locks they contain; we know

‘We do all the maintenance and repairs for AHAM’s doors and windows’

which materials have been used at which complex. This knowledge allows us to keep certain parts in stock, so that we can intervene quickly when there’s a problem. It’s great work.’ Accuraat works for several other real estate companies in addition to AHAM. They no longer work for private individuals. ‘We’re too busy for that. We stopped our 24-hour service long ago. AHAM works with another specialised company for emergency callouts,’ says Nicolette.
How do they feel about working with AHAM? ‘AHAM renovates residential properties to a high standard, hinges and locks included, so we always get parts from their main supplier. AHAM has its own style, and I like that. We have a fixed point-of-contact with them who reacts quickly and is always available, which is really great. And something that we like a lot is that they always think about us and thank us with kind words or little gifts; not many companies do that.’
Ron: ‘The nicest bit about callouts to private



homes is the personal contact. We are always welcomed with open arms because we come to solve problems. For example, there is a lady in Bos en Lommer, who rents her home from AHAM, and who drives around in a very flashy van. Now, when we see her van anywhere in the city, we toot our horns at each other; we really like that.’

Accuraat Raam & Deurtechniek
New Yorkstraat 37, Lijnden, www.accuraatservice.nl

Ron Pennings
and Nicolette
Kuiper-Pennings



Old-school tattoos

The lively Jordaan gained a beautiful tattoo shop when Anne Dekker opened Studio Sailor in Spring 2024. On the historic Korsjespoortsteeg Anne Dekker and her team engage in the art of tattoo with passion and ink.

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The striking image of a sailor with a seagull perched on his shoulder adorns the window of this building at the corner of Korsjespoortsteeg and Langestraat. This is where Anne Dekker (38) opened tattoo shop Studio Sailor last May. ‘The name is a nod to the sailors who were among the first to get tattooed,’ she says. Anne has a preference for traditional images from about a century ago – things like



anchors, roses, birds and women – although she gives them her own artistic twist. Tattoos of chairs, shoes and other everyday things are also typical of Anne’s style. She herself got her first tattoo 17 years ago; it was a swallow. She has lost count of how many she has gotten since. The number 136 on the fingers of her right hand recall the number of days her baby son, Zafir, lived. ‘His death made me decide to do what I really wanted: tattooing.’ She started an apprenticeship four years ago, and in 2023 she started her own business in Tweede Goudsbloemdwarstraat. But that space soon became too small for her expanding customer base. ‘AHAM came up with this corner building as an alternative and I’m super happy with it. I’ve now got four tattoo tables, three

‘We are always open to customer ideas’

in the basement and one upstairs for longer sessions.’ And she’s in love with the street. ‘Everything is higgledy-piggledy which I think’s really charming. Everyone knows everyone here and that atmosphere of familiarity really works for Studio Sailor.’ The studio’s five employees want to do more than just make nice images; they also want to provide a great experience. ‘Customers trust us with their bodies, so we make time for them and their wishes. We are always open to customer ideas.’

www.studiosailor.com
Studio Sailor – Korsjespoortsteeg 13A

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The Set Company: ‘We give tangible form to a design agency’s ideas’

In a new office building on Oostenburg, The Set Company has created an interior with a very natural feel.

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Kees Starink (photo on the next page) is co-founder of The Set Company which he manages jointly with Jorrit Kortenhorst. Starink runs the business side, while Kortenhorst has the final creative say. Over the course of thirty years, The Set Company has grown into a company with a staff of 45, working for leading clients. Starink: ‘I went to furniture-making school in Rotterdam and then – it was 1981 – started building sets for commercials and films. I found the world of sets – creating a dream world – very special. I ended up in a group of people who shared the same passion, and at one point we built the sets for pretty much all Dutch commercials and feature films. In 1996, we started our own workshop/studio next to the studio of First Floor Features in Almere. We have done all of First Floor Features films – *The Lift*, *Amsterdamed*, the *Flodder* films – several films by Alex van Warmerdam, *False Light* by Theo van Gogh, as well as television series. Three years later, we moved to Czaar Peterstraat because it was easier to be in Amsterdam from a logistics standpoint. During that period, the work for film and TV dropped off, so we started focusing more on interiors for the catering industry and companies; in Amsterdam, for example, we do a lot of catering establishments.’ But private individuals soon made their way to The Set Company too: ‘Before long, we got asked to make very high-end furniture for customers like Tommy Hilfiger and Calvin Klein, for whom we also did the interior archi-



‘We built the sets for pretty much all Dutch commercials and feature films’

texture for offices, showrooms and restaurants; we still work for these clients.’ And the film and TV industry picked up again: ‘We recently built the sets for a Netflix film about the hostage situation in the Apple Store in the Hirsch building on Leidseplein.’

Exciting things

When asked about the story of The Set Company, Starink says: ‘We started out as just a couple of very creative guys; we don’t like repeating stuff, but always want to do fun and exciting new things. That’s the point where it all gets too demanding for other providers and they drop out, but that’s what we enjoy and it sets us apart from our competitors. We rise to the challenge of difficult and creative assignments. Another of our strengths is that we’re always flexible and can deliver quickly,

because we have the right people and the right machines in house. We are totally used to delivering everything on time. This is partly because we come from the film world: we’re good with deadlines, and that’s not always the case with furniture makers. I’m really proud that we now have a very good team and a strong company. We have very professional and skilled people, who often stay with us for a long time. Most stay with us for ten to fifteen years. And we’re not hierarchical; we really don’t see the need. Of course, it’s clear who takes the ultimate decisions, but everyone can say their bit and everyone’s opinion counts in this company.’

Natural elements

The Set Company was recently commissioned by AHAM to complete a new construction project on Oostenburg. Its design was made by the Belgian design agency Going East. Starink: ‘These are three office spaces in a new building on Oostenburgermiddenstraat. They



consist of a first floor and a fifth and sixth floor connected by a mezzanine. We were introduced by the architect Bastiaan Jongerius. He also developed the building that we currently occupy ourselves. Going East was then asked for a design proposal and they brought us in at a very early stage to provide input in the final design. But we're very clear that we don't want



to be concept designers: we're the people who execute the work. We make recommendations to the client and provide sample materials. If they like what we suggest, we carry it out. We give tangible form to a design agency's ideas. We were warned that AHAM is a demanding client, but working with the AHAM team has been very smooth. There was a delay in construction, so the office was ready later than planned, but by late July it was ready for us. We didn't have much time for this assignment, but we demonstrated how quickly we can work,' says Starink. Starink describes the ambiance they created for this office as sleek and timeless, with a strong sense of natural elements; of wood, with coconut on the floor, and little plastic. 'It's got a good feeling,' says Starink. 'In the end, I am very happy with how this project turned out.' The Set Company is continuing to grow and a new generation is being trained to take up the reins. When asked what Starink will do then, he replies: 'We're already thinking about new



De Meent: common land

De Meent Farm is located just outside Amsterdam. It is a place where undocumented people and other socially vulnerable groups with labour market disadvantages can come to help with the day-to-day activities of running a small mixed farm. The project is an initiative of the Protestant Diaconate of Amsterdam in collaboration with J.H.F. Schopman en Zonen BV, owner of AHAM Vastgoed.

50 It is pouring buckets on the day of the interview. A godwit flaps past the grey clouds; sightings of this meadow bird are increasingly rare because so few farms still leave room for nature. But at De Meent, nature is starting to make a comeback and meadow birds are returning. The Protestant Diaconate bought De Meent farm four years ago and then sold it to J.H.F. Schopman en Zonen BV (owner of AHAM Vastgoed) last year with the aim of tackling this social project together. This means that AHAM is the real estate developer while the Diaconate runs the De Meent project. 'The Diaconate is part of the Amsterdam Protestant Church and has been carrying out social work in the city since the seventeenth century. It owns real estate that it lets out, it has housing groups for vulnerable people, and it's developed a range of projects

for undocumented and homeless people,' explains Geert Westert, Manager of Operations at the Diaconate. 'We'd been planning to add a farm to our projects for a long time – a welcoming place outside the city providing space for refugees and undocumented people. We've now brought that about at De Meent. Together, we produce high-quality, local and sustainable food for social and food projects in the city such as Het Wereldhuis, De Schakel and the walk-in houses of De Regenboog Groep. It is wonderful to be doing this with AHAM. There are lots of participants – each with their own impressive life story – who say that a day's work here brings them a

'We find high-quality nutrition very important, especially for people who really need it'

little peace. They find temporary respite here for their traumatised minds.'

Diversity
AHAM – whose ultimate shareholder is the Sint Antonius Foundation which supports many charities, mainly in Africa – also wanted to participate in a new social project in the Netherlands, and in particular, in Amsterdam. The objectives of De Meent fit seamlessly with their social mission. AHAM has already begun the development of several buildings. The interview takes place in a large construction shed which is serving temporarily as a care farm; on that morning several participants are sitting round a large table peeling garlic and peppers. The atmosphere is jolly. 'We start off every morning with a little ritual,' explains Marten Verdenius, the farmer at De Meent. 'We open with the word of the day. We then translate that word into the languages of everyone present, so that we can learn from one another and celebrate diversity. After that, we divide up the jobs that need to be done in construction, the garden, animals and the kitchen. The

Marten Verdenius (left)
and Geert Westert



participants are different every day. As a farmer, I am the fount of agricultural knowledge at the farm. I began volunteering at the Diaconate because I love working with socially vulnerable groups and preferably, I like them to be as diverse as possible. My other pastime is agriculture. I studied it in Wageningen and I've always worked in agriculture. I've been able to unite both ambitions at this farm. The farm had been empty for ten years. The meadow has been designated a biodiversity offset for the provincial road. Because it is a nature reserve, there are restrictions on its use. These restrictions require reduced human intervention allowing nature and biodiversity to recover. Of course, nature still needs to be managed, but we meddle with it less.'

'We are so close to the city and yet you enter a completely different world here'

Overgrown

'No-one had done anything to this place for ten years and it was totally overgrown. I felt like a farmer from the Dutch TV series *Ik vertrek* [I'm leaving], in which people set off to begin totally new lives abroad. Where to begin? The farm covers 31.5 hectares of land. Initially, it was literally reclamation and pioneering. I began with participants who were unable to find suitable work for themselves here and needed the right guidance to achieve a good harvest. We now have a permanent team of five who supervise the participants and have divided up the work between them. We

have people for the garden, the kitchen, the animals, the land and construction.'

De Meent literally means 'common land' and that fits nicely with the philosophies of both the Diaconate and AHAM. It is about the common interest and benefits. The Diaconate and AHAM want to create a welcoming community here and strengthen the connection between De Meent, its participants and the city.

'All the food that we produce here is intended for the social eating projects organised by the Diaconate and other city institutions,' emphasises farmer Marten. 'We are a relatively small-scale



farm. Because we have pasture land, we have grazing livestock, like cattle. We raise them for meat. We also have some sheep. We keep chickens both for their meat and their eggs and the pigs plough the land around here. Pigs love to turn over the soil and eat all the roots and seeds leaving the soil clean in no time. When it comes to vegetables, we grow everything in the vegetable garden here, which is now some 1,200 square meters. Sustainable and organic food is usually not an option for people whose budgets are almost non-existent. We think high-quality nutrition is very important, especially for people who really need it. And that's why we grow this food here.'

Artisan

'The animals live a full life here, even though our mission is to provide food for projects. Cows have almost double the normal lifespan and are artisanally butchered at a real butcher's. And the chickens also roam free around here for a year and a half

to two years. We might think that they're only good for chicken soup, but Africans love a sturdy chicken with a bite. We want to move increasingly towards a plant-based diet, but there's still some room for meat.'

Everything is currently under development on the land at De Meent. The frame of the main barn by the main farmhouse has been built. Soon the participants will be able to work with the produce from the land in there. They will be able to cook and organise various activities inside. It is going to become the heart of the farm. On the other side of the road, housing for a residential group is very nearly ready. The house will have room for 14 residents. AHAM has almost completed the farmhouse at the property as well. That is where Marten is going to live. And there is also going to be room for a bed and breakfast for people who want to stay for a few days at a farm.

'We have three lines of work on the farm,' explains Marten. 'We have nature management on the 31.5

hectares of land. We have the farm where we produce food for eating projects for socially vulnerable groups. And thirdly, we have the development of a creative workspace. Once the farm is complete, we will build a creative workspace to accommodate artists and craftsmen. This will allow us to learn from each other and foster the cross-pollination of ideas. We can learn from other participants' craft and industry knowledge. And in turn, the participants can learn from the artists who come here. The idea is that the artists should use locally sourced materials as much as possible. The connection between farmers and citizens is also an important theme across the entire project. We are going to organise workshops on themes such as "how to grow organic food" and community activities like making hay or building terp mounds. I think that going out into the countryside and shaping the land together with citizens can strengthen the ties between the city and the country. The city is so close and yet when you come here you enter a completely different world. The world of the farmer. De Meent is looking to connect and involve citizens with nature. This needs to start from an awareness that nature management matters and that we are all responsible for it. This can come in all sorts of different forms; it will soon be possible to organise fundraising dinners here or an open-air cinema in the countryside.'

Would you like to volunteer at De Meent for a longer period of time? Or do you have knowledge that can be put to good use on a farm? Then register at www.demeent.amsterdam



10 questions for Tim van Schijndel

Tim van Schijndel became the Managing Director of AHAM in 2014.

1
What's your background?
TvS: 'I grew up in Maastricht. After leaving school, I went to TU Delft to study Civil Engineering and Geosciences and ultimately graduated in Utility Construction: designing the construction of large buildings.'

2
What was your first job?
TvS: 'After graduating, I joined the Kats & Waalwijk Group in 2000, now part of Sweco. My first job was as an associate consultant in the Plan Development Department, which was project development for third parties. It was a very agreeable company to start at.'

3
How long did you work there?
TvS: 'In 2006, thanks to a happy coincidence, I was asked to become the Director of a genuine social housing corporation in Rotterdam: WoonCompas. It's a foundation which belongs to 21 churches who are truly idealistic stakeholders only working on projects which make a direct contribution to society. These spanned from healthcare centres to homes for people with intellectual disabilities. The major part was housing

provision for senior citizens. What appealed to me about that job was that I got a different role, in combination with a clear social mission. Consultants work with other people's resources; here my choices had a direct impact on the foundation's assets, which was fundamentally different. At the beginning of this century, financial yield was the driving factor in the world of real estate. Little attention was paid to architecture, sustainability or social investments. That was something I believed was really lacking in the considerations of the investors I had worked for previously. So, when I got the opportunity to lead an organisation with a social purpose, I seized it with both hands.'

4
How old were you at the time?
TvS: 'I was twenty-nine. I have a clear memory of talking it over with my wife and father. I wanted their take on it. They both said that they thought it was a good idea, because it was more in line with my values. Above all, I was lucky that people trusted me. I am grateful to them for that to this day. When

you're twenty-nine, people are willing to give you opportunities, which is great.'

5
What did you mainly learn at the time?
TvS: 'I was the youngest of my colleagues. I had enough confidence to take the job on, but you need other people to get things done. The best way to do that is to try to see things from other people's perspectives. Even then, I was very passionate about my work and had a tendency to sometimes forget to bring other people on board such as my enthusiasm for getting things done. I soon came to understand that you need a combination of "empathy and ideas" to run a business properly. You are responsible for other people and as a manager you regularly get to hear about their individual concerns and although these shouldn't be dismissed out of hand, you also have to focus on keeping the company moving forward. I've done my very best to find a balance in this, and it's something I still try to do.'

'When I got the opportunity to lead an organisation with a social purpose, I seized it with both hands'



6

In 2014, you joined AHAM as a Director. What struck you the most at the time?

TVS: ‘It was a bit of a shock at first. I found a somewhat inward-looking club, in which too few people felt responsible for the company as a whole. However, there were a few people who did and fortunately they stayed on. What struck me too was the difference between Rotterdam and Amsterdam in terms of investment culture. In Rotterdam, if you came up with a good idea, you often got an opportunity because there were fewer investors at the beginning of this century. In Amsterdam, there were ideas and money galore. You had to do more to get a foot in the door. Furthermore, the relationships within the company were not always good. On the positive side, there was solid market knowledge and there was some talent. My job was clear. The company was under-performing and the results needed to improve significantly in terms of dynamics, information, structure and financial yield. AHAM is the asset manager of a charitable foundation and that foundation wants to fulfil its purpose to the best of its abilities. This requires competent asset management. In a nutshell, we needed to bring entrepreneurship back into our corporate culture. The company was financially sound and there were plenty of opportunities now that the end of the economic crisis was in sight; we needed to seize those opportunities.’

‘For the first few weeks that I worked here, I was blown away by the gorgeous buildings in the most beautiful locations that we already owned’

7

Didn’t that put you under a lot of pressure?

TVS: ‘A justified pressure, I think. I had seen the numbers and knew they needed to be much better. And I have to say, the company was already in transition at the time. The three descendants of our founder, J.H.F. Schopman, deserve all the credit here; since 2007, they have shown great determination in reforming the foundation and the company. And improvements had already been launched by my predecessor.’

8

What was the hardest thing about this job?

TVS: ‘Initially, most of my energy went into redefining business processes, which meant, for example, ensuring that things were properly defined and delegated. Another example, we were not monitoring renovations well enough; we needed to keep a closer eye on budgets and construction times, and we needed to pay attention to the speed of lettings. We needed to improve all this, and thanks to our combined efforts, we did it quite fast, after which we were able to take on additional activities to increase our dynamism and growth potential. Since 2014, this company’s focus has shifted from being a property manager to an active investor-developer on behalf of the charitable foundation. The

main thing was that we had an amazing portfolio of real estate built up over a hundred years. For the first few weeks that I worked here, I jumped on my bike every day and was blown away by the gorgeous buildings in the most beautiful locations that we already owned. To return to your question: the hardest part of this job was recruiting great, skilled people for all the roles in the company.’

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And the best part?

TVS: ‘That it worked. That there are lots of people around here now who have a real love for what they do and for architecture. People who, like me, believe that it is possible to create very beautiful building projects with acceptable rents while also supporting socially significant projects. So we haven’t been twiddling our thumbs! Over the past ten years, we have eco-retrofitted more than a thousand homes, often raising them from a G label to an A label – and we’re talking about homes that are more than a hundred years old! We also see that our way of working, in which high quality goes hand-in-hand with functionality and yield, has proved to be a model for other businesses. We set them an example. And we are increasingly being discovered by all kinds of third parties, from both the building world and government. I am proud to be able to provide so many Amsterdammers with great places to live and work. And I am proud of the fact that, in comparison with 2014, we now pay out more than five times as much to the foundation, which helps people in places in the world where it is most needed.’



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And what is your biggest challenge currently?

TVS: ‘The biggest challenge in this country is building new homes. And to shape a sustainable society with a greater focus on the public interest. Construction costs have soared inexplicably and we also note that government measures are not always fit for purpose. It upsets us to see how often building projects are delayed when we know what a need there is for new construction. And then on top of that, we get a package of regulations which do nothing to make the landlord’s role easier. A great thing about our position is that we are both owners and managers, so we can make long term decisions. This is reflected in the choices we make for locations and beautiful materials. We experience how the amazing portfolio that our colleagues created a hundred years ago is still of great value today, but quite often we also choose entrepreneurs who are just starting out in the knowledge that dynamism is important for the city. Carefully expanding our portfolio is a big responsibility. The fact that our very committed shareholders and supervisory board members also allow us the scope to realise social projects with a greatly reduced financial yield, providing they have crystal-clear goals, is the last thing I would qualify as allowing our current-day desires to create future burdens. This is an additional source of inspiration for our strong team: a team which has grown from fourteen to forty people, is still young and talented, and a great pleasure to work with.’



Work in Progress

Wood in Hoofddorp

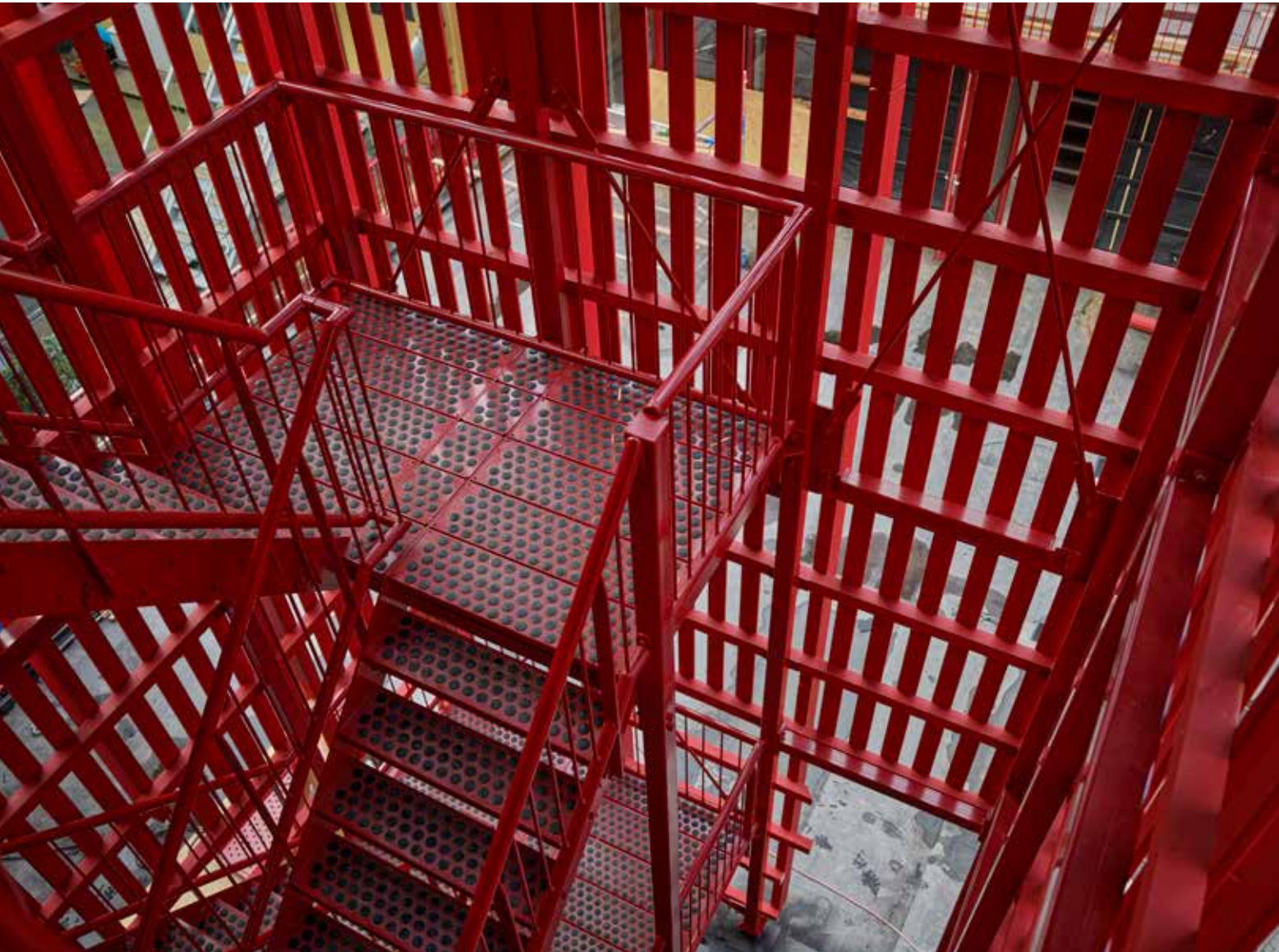
In 2021, an opportunity arose to completely rebuild on the site between the narrow Tussenweg and the busy Kruisweg in Hoofddorp. The supermarket had left creating the possibility of building up to 14 metres high, just like the neighbours. AHAM seized that opportunity with both hands and made plans to build ten homes above a commercial space. Architect Ronald Janssen created a design for a wooden building, which despite being more expensive, is also lighter and more sustainable. The structure is spectacular, with a facade clad in red-coloured wood boards,



giving the building a most luxurious look. Project leader Freek Tames: ‘We started building last year and the whole project will be ready for delivery in September. We are able to say that this entire operation, which was executed by Heembouw Wonen and Heembouw Architecten, went almost without a hitch. A lot of passers-by comment upon the building – which with its red boards and elongated windows is really spectacular.’ The business space downstairs, with a surface area of about 350 square metres, is still for rent; it could be let to another supermarket, offices or catering – all of these would be permitted. The ten homes above it vary in size from 45 to about 80 square metres. Freek Tames: ‘There was a lot of interest at the open day in early July. And something we said even before we started work on the building has become reality: this building brings cachet to the area.’



‘This building brings cachet to the area’



‘AHAM is a great, professional, club’

Dave Oudejans (42) is a hospitality broker and the owner of Duijn Horecamakelaars in Amsterdam.

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‘I grew up in the hospitality industry; my parents had several hospitality businesses in North Holland, and I grew up expecting to go to Hotel School. But I also knew from my parents that hospitality-industry life is tough; you’re busy day and night, and it puts a lot of pressure on your social life and family life. I wasn’t sure that that was what I really wanted. So, I then decided to study Brokerage and Real Estate Studies at the University of Applied Sciences. In my final year, I had to find an internship and write a thesis. This is how I ended up at Brals & Duijn Horecamakelaars in 2005. A year later, Brals left the company which continued under the name of Duijn Horecamakelaars. I subsequently took the company over.’
There are currently six people working at Duijn Horecamakelaars. Oudejans describes the area they cover as Greater Amsterdam. ‘So as well as the city itself, you have Purmerend, Zaandam, along the coast – Haarlem, Bloemendaal and Zandvoort – heading north to Hoorn and Alkmaar, and even Het Gooi.’

Goodwill

Hospitality brokerage is basically a specialty within corporate brokerage. ‘We undertake

the buying and selling of catering establishments. You sell the goodwill and you transfer the rental contract and the permits to the new operator through something called a substitution, plus all the associated obligations towards suppliers, employees, etc. As well as that, we also handle the purchase of catering companies. So unlike ordinary brokers, we don’t only mediate the purchases and sales of real estate, we always actually deal with the transfer of a company. We also handle the transfer ourselves, you don’t have to go to the notary.’ Hospitality brokers therefore need a background in finance as well as knowledge of rental law. ‘You need to be able to read balance sheets and use them to make company valuations. For every ten transactions we handle, eight of the entrepreneurs start out with a different concept, but later decide to take over a different type of operation, for example, because of its location.’
Oudejans has the following to say about the market for hospitality entrepreneurs: ‘It is on the move again. There were lots of purchases in 2023. After the Covid-19 years, entrepreneurs wanted to throw themselves back in with new ideas, and this is set to continue this year too. But you can see that people are a bit



‘The residents of this city love eating out or going out for a beer’

more cautious nowadays. This is because of all sorts of price hikes, purchasing and personnel included. At the moment, hospitality entrepreneurs are also struggling to recruit enough staff. In addition, many entrepreneurs are still burdened with paying back their Covid-19 debts. You notice that people are generally more conservative and wait longer to take decisions.’
Evolving
On the other hand, Oudejans knows that Amsterdam is always evolving. ‘The residents of this city love eating out or going out for a beer. And of course, there are lots of tourists who ensure the city’s always evolving. In that

respect, the picture here is different to the rest of the Netherlands. It is a dynamic profession; you get to deal with all sorts of people, from neighbourhood café owners, through hoteliers, to Michelin-starred chefs. That diversity makes this field really fun.’ Oudejans thinks that the labour market is the hospitality industry’s biggest challenge. ‘It is very important that people really begin to view hospitality work as a profession again, and not as just a side job. Consumers also want to be served by professional staff.’
When asked about working with AHAM, Oudejans describes it as a ‘great, professional club’. ‘They have a beautiful real estate portfolio with a range of hospitality and a long-term vision.’



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