

Action Programme on

Spatial Planning and Culture

Architecture and Belvedere Policy

2005 ——— 2008

Summary



2010



1980



1950



1920



1890



1860



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Belvedere Policy

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Summary

The impact of urban and rural development on spatial quality in the Netherlands has increased in recent years. It brings pressure to bear on the economy and the environment, but also on culture, including architecture and the design of areas and landscapes. The Dutch government aims to realise spatial quality by integrating and strengthening economic, ecological and sociocultural values in spatial planning.

The Action Programme on Spatial Planning and Culture focuses on cultural features in spatial planning by increasing the involvement of the design disciplines in spatial planning and by bringing cultural history to bear on development. It is desirable to involve the design and cultural history disciplines at an early stage in the development process because this will help ensure that the thought processes involved in spatial planning issues and processes are more complete and integrated and thus reinforce the integration of cultural and user value with value for the future. The government wishes first and foremost to emphasise that achieving spatial quality is a *cultural exercise*.

The main objective of the Action Programme on Spatial Planning and Culture is to improve the spatial quality of our buildings, villages, cities and landscapes. The action programme combines architecture policy and the Belvedere policy (aimed at strengthening the influence cultural history has on spatial planning) and is a step towards increasing the volume and consistency of cultural policy input in spatial development policy. Linking the architecture and Belvedere policies in a single programme will reinforce the basis for cultural objectives in spatial policy and broaden interministerial cooperation.

Embassy buildings: architecture and interior design
representative of the Netherlands (Dutch embassy in Maputo,
Mozambique)



1 Combining architecture policy and Belvedere policy

The processes of maintaining and developing spatial quality are inextricably linked. The connection between cultural policy and spatial policy in the Netherlands has been shaped in past decades by three consecutive architecture policy documents and by the Belvedere Policy Document. The Action Programme on Spatial Planning and Culture brings together the implementation of both the architecture policy and the Belvedere policy. The Programme builds on the successes and lessons of the past years, rather than introducing new aims and policy objectives. The emphasis is on implementing policy and on relating it to specific spatial development issues. On that basis, the government wishes to join up more closely the elements of its cultural policy that generate spatial quality.

Architecture policy

The Netherlands has pursued an autonomous architecture policy since the beginning of the 1990s, with the aim of fostering spatial quality. The first architecture policy document, *Space for Architecture* (1991), signed by the Ministries of Health, Welfare & Cultural Affairs (now Education, Culture & Science) and Housing, Spatial Planning & the Environment, addresses commissioning practices and improving the architectural climate. This policy document led to the establishment of a cultural infrastructure, with institutions such as the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAI), the Netherlands Architecture Fund and supported the establishment and activities of local architecture centres. The second policy document, *Architecture of Space* (1996), broadened the policy to include urban development, landscape and infrastructure. This policy document was signed by the Ministries of Education, Culture & Science (OCW); Housing, Spatial Planning & the Environment (VROM); Agriculture, Nature Management & Fisheries (now Agriculture, Nature & Food Quality) (LNV); and Transport, Public Works & Water Management (V&W). The third policy document, *Shaping the Netherlands* (architecture policy 2001-2004), built on *Architecture of Space*. The government launched several activities to promote architectonic and spatial quality on every scale. The activities are meant to increase the input of the design disciplines in spatial and architectonic projects and create favourable conditions for other public authorities and stakeholders, whether private or public. A new element introduced in the third architecture policy document is the series of ten Major Projects, with which the government sets out its own role and contribution under the motto “practise what you preach”. Each of the ministries involved – VROM, OCW, LNV, V&W and Economic Affairs (EZ) – adopted at least one project and the Office of the Chief Government Architect guaranteed architectonic quality and early-stage involvement of design disciplines. A number of these Major Projects are continued as model projects in the Action Programme on Spatial Planning and Culture.

Belvedere policy

Due to the spatial dynamic and rate of building production in recent decades, too little account was taken of the quality of existing construction and surroundings in many spatial development projects. This changed with the development of cultural historical investigations and the notion that an area-oriented approach was preferable to the tradi-

tional object-oriented method of protecting the cultural heritage. As insights in the heritage protection sector changed and a broader field of vision was introduced in architecture policy, at the end of the 1990s OCW, VROM, LNV and V&W worked with the Netherlands Department for Conservation and the National Service for Archaeological Heritage to develop a new policy strategy called Belvedere. Under the motto 'conservation through development', the Belvedere policy fosters a development-oriented approach that increases the prospects for maintaining the cultural heritage while enabling spatial planning to benefit from cultural history considerations. The aim of the policy is to strengthen the importance of cultural history in spatial planning and design. As a source of inspiration, cultural history can lead to a wide range of interpretations and applications: from restoration, reconstruction and borrowing to contrasting or ignoring. In the framework of the Belvedere Policy Document (2000-2009), the government stimulates initiatives aimed at increasing the influence of cultural history on spatial development in the Netherlands. The Belvedere project office, set up in 2000, plays a coordinating role in the implementation of policy, which is strongly geared towards influencing governance and society, professional development and network-building.

The New Rijksmuseum: high-quality renovation of
a large historic building



The New Holland Water Line: conservation and development of historic defences in a dynamic landscape environment (Fort Rijnauwen)



Business park architecture: fostering quality of site layout, landscape and buildings: High Tech Campus, Eindhoven



2 Spearheads

Land-use planning in the Netherlands is a mosaic of disparate actions throughout time: an infinitely detailed design. Each generation builds on the historical layers it inherits. In our rapidly changing living environment, historical structures, objects and new additions give us clear markers to hold on to. Acknowledging this is a cornerstone of the Action Programme on Spatial Planning and Culture.

The nature and quality of the changes in the process of spatial renewal demand that cultural arguments are reflected in spatial planning. What significance or characteristic should a spatial development project express? Obviously, this question cannot be answered in general terms. In order to identify, use and add cultural characteristics it is necessary to conduct a specific analysis and create an appropriate design for a particular area or site. The government wishes to encourage those who carry out spatial development projects to give this matter serious consideration in practice. The action programme promotes two factors that are very important for well-considered, culturally aware spatial interventions: design studies and effective commissioning.

Design studies

Cautious development requires an integrated approach and a clear vision of the future. This can only be achieved by thoroughly analysing existing qualities and by generating a design impulse that either reinforces prevailing concepts or deliberately breaches them. Design studies focus on exploring ways of transforming urban and rural areas, within the scarce space that is available. The emphasis is on interweaving the old and the new, cultural singularity and modern building specifications, within an interdisciplinary approach. Performing design studies safeguards quality and is a way of dealing with history in contemporary designs. By creating a link between design and research, convincing designs can be produced that leave scope for future, unforeseen, developments.

Commissioning practice

Whether they are building a house, restructuring an urban neighbourhood, building a road or railway line, laying out a nature reserve or a business park, public and private clients play an essential role in the creation of spatial quality. The complexity of building and planning requirements places even heavier demands on designers and, increasingly, on clients. Attention to quality at every level and generating support for the plan are permanent challenges. The expert, creative and inspirational way in which a client develops and focuses his objectives is often the key to success in a project. Improving commissioning practice is one of the key elements of this action programme.

Design of motorway routes and their surroundings:
improving the quality of roads and their surroundings
(Gouwe Aqueduct)



3 Action

The government has selected several projects specifically for the Action Programme on Spatial Planning and Culture, and exhibits them as model projects, presenting the resources and facilities of the combined architecture and Belvedere policy. The projects cover urban and rural areas, road building and water management, separately and integrally. They emphasise the importance of interdisciplinary design studies on every scale: from the man-made landscapes of the Green Heart and the major rivers to the interiors of embassies and the New Rijksmuseum. The projects are in line with the implementation programmes of the seven ministries that have subscribed to this action programme and with the investment programmes for urban and rural areas. The projects are divided into four categories: model projects, projects aimed at the statutory framework, investment programmes and projects aimed at stimulation, facilitation and knowledge development.

Project objectives

- to enhance the cultural factor in spatial planning by including design input (at an early stage) in current spatial projects and investments, with a view to influencing specific planning decisions
- to stimulate an integrated approach and cooperation between the disciplines of cultural history, architecture, urban development and landscape architecture
- for government to pursue good commissioning practices and carry out inspirational, integrated implementation projects, on the basis of coordinated interministerial cooperation
- to stimulate and co-facilitate good commissioning practices and integrated plan development with local government and private sector clients, the primary implementers of spatial development policy
- to stimulate interdisciplinary design studies in order to incorporate historical data, the current situation and new elements into designs and to achieve cohesion at higher levels
- to use the expertise and effectiveness of the extensive system of architecture and national heritage organisations
- to foster international orientation and cooperation in the implementation of the Action Programme on Spatial Planning and Culture.

Model projects

A few model projects have been selected from among government construction activities. Each has its own policy spearheads based on societal themes. The projects differ in terms of the role of government, the phase, the scale and the design component.

Model projects

- The New Rijksmuseum: high-quality renovation of a large historic building
- The New Holland Water Line: conservation and development of historic defences in a dynamic landscape environment
- Design of motorway routes and their surroundings: improving the quality of roads and their surroundings
- Business park architecture: fostering quality of site layout, landscape and buildings
- Improvement of professional commissioning practices: fostering spatial quality in new projects
- Embassy buildings: architecture and interior design representative of the Netherlands

- Change of function of sites and structures formerly used for Defence purposes: ensuring that new users take cultural and historical values on board
- Afsluitdijk (IJsselmeer Dam the closes off the former Zuiderzee): 75 years of civil engineering design
- Limes: design perspectives along the frontier of the Roman Empire
- Design in the Green Heart: designing the centre of the Randstad, the conurbation in the west of the Netherlands
- Post-war districts: urban renewal with an emphasis on cultural quality
- Water as element in spatial design: tackling water-related issues through design
- World heritage: preservation and development of world-famous cultural heritage sites

Statutory framework

Ways of promoting the objectives of the architecture and Belvedere policy more effectively are being explored with regard to several specific parts of the statutory framework: the Academic Titles (Architects) Act, environmental impact assessments, listed sites and building appearance requirements. The government takes a conservative position with regard to new legislation.

Investment programmes

Additional objectives and funds were added to the ISV (the government's investment fund for urban renewal, a financing scheme for municipalities) to accentuate the cultural component of urban renewal. To improve the spatial quality of the Netherlands' landscapes a similar participation in the ILG (the government's investment fund for rural development, a financing scheme for the provinces) is under investigation, to focus attention on cultural history.

Stimulation, facilitation and knowledge development

The activities vary from stimulating bottom-up initiatives through the grant schemes, supporting local architecture organisations, programmes for design studies and stimulating good commissioning practices, to archiving architecture collections and stimulating multidisciplinary education and cooperation between educators and practitioners. The government is investing in the development, retrieval and exchange of knowledge for professionals and the general public through debates, exhibitions, education programmes and international exchanges. The system of architecture and heritage preservation organisations plays a key role here.

4 Working on spatial quality together

Central government

The Action Programme on Spatial Planning and Culture is a unified effort of seven ministries: Education, Culture & Science (OCW); Housing, Spatial Planning & the Environment (VROM); Agriculture, Nature & Food Quality (LNV); Transport, Public Works & Water Management (V&W); Economic Affairs (EZ); Foreign Affairs (BuZa) and Defence. They are jointly responsible for implementing the programme effectively. Each ministry has a specific, thematic responsibility for components of the architecture and Belvedere policy, namely the implementation of the projects it is involved in.

The Action Programme is an important element of the government's cultural policy and is part of the implementation agenda of the Spatial Policy Document, the current government's vision on spatial development in the Netherlands. OCW and VROM share political responsibility for coordinating the action programme. In addition to its thematic responsibility, LNV bears a general responsibility for Belvedere policy and landscape policy.

Local government

The local authorities (municipalities, provinces and water boards) were involved in outlining the Action Programme on Spatial Planning and Culture. Most of the model projects in the programme either involve other authorities directly or are highly relevant to them. Including cultural objectives in the agreements on investment funds for urban and rural areas (ISV and ILG) stimulates local government to pay attention to design quality and cultural history in their considerations and decisions on spatial planning. Several projects are intended specifically for local governments, including the grant schemes for projects, the Cultural History Knowledge Infrastructure, the landscape development plans and the activities of the Belvedere project office. Other projects may be of value to other authorities indirectly (as examples or spin-off) or at a later stage.

Chief Government Architect and Board of Government Advisors

The Chief Government Architect's remit is to provide central government with solicited and unsolicited advice on spatial planning, infrastructure and landscape development, to guarantee the quality of legislation, to stimulate education, to coordinate the substance of architecture policy, to promote cultural commissioning and improve general appreciation of architecture in society. The Chief Government Architect issues specific recommendations to the ministries on design and architects, advises the Government Buildings Agency about government buildings, listed buildings, cultural heritage and the visual arts. An essential element here is the debate on design in relation to the other aims of the users, which determine their own building programme and budget.

Since 2004 the Chief Government Architect has chaired the Board of Government Advisors, a broad advisory committee with a flexible thematic working method. The Government Advisors for Landscape, for Cultural Heritage and for Infrastructure are respectively appointed from the staff of LNV, OCW and V&W. They advise their 'own' ministry on relevant policy issues and advise the government on design and policy issues regarding architecture in the broadest sense of the word. The

Chief Government Architect and Board of Government Advisors have an advisory role in practically every project in the Action Programme on Spatial Planning and Culture.

Belvedere Project Office

The government established the Belvedere project office to stimulate the implementation of the Belvedere policy. The office is where cultural history, planning and design meet policymaking and implementation. The activities it pursues are aimed at knowledge development, knowledge dissemination, network-building and putting Belvedere policy into practice. Each year a programme of activities is planned to facilitate other authorities and civil society organisations and create the conditions needed to bring the goals of the Belvedere policy within closer reach. The activities the project office has planned up to 2009 are partly aimed at transferring the Belvedere philosophy to mainstream organisations and encouraging them to internalise it.

Architecture and heritage organisations

The system of architecture and heritage organisations is an inextricable and essential part of architecture and Belvedere policy. These organisations devise initiatives aimed at politicians and policymakers in central and local government, planners, builders and project developers, the design profession, cultural historians and a wide public. The organisations have the latitude to chart their own course and carry out their tasks. In its support of the system of architecture and heritage organisations, central government selects organisations that have a national or international profile and remit. In addition to this 'central-government based system', there is an intricate network of rural, provincial and local knowledge centres and organisations that all contribute to the quality of the living environment in their own way.

Implementing organisations, professional associations, knowledge institutions and clients help stimulate spatial quality, too. In their specific capacities, they are involved in the new spatial development tasks the Netherlands will face in the years to come. Professional associations and knowledge institutions have an important role to play in the exchange of knowledge and expertise. Institutions of education and research provide the 'building blocks' needed to redesign the Netherlands. Both companies and public authorities exert influence in spatial projects, from individual buildings to extensive rural and urban areas.

Change of function of sites and structures formerly used for Defence purposes: ensuring that new users take cultural and historical values on board (Elias Beeckmankazerne, Ede)



Post-war districts: urban renewal with an emphasis on cultural quality: Vinkhuizen, Groningen (De zwarte hond)



5 Financial investments

The financial investment government is injecting into architecture and Belvedere policy consists of general funding for the Belvedere programme and the architecture organisations and of specific project budgets for the programme activities.

VROM and OCW have earmarked € 10.5 million yearly (2005 figures) for grants to architecture organisations. The largest grant (€ 4.5 million) goes to the Netherlands Architecture Institute and € 3.3 million goes to the Netherlands Architecture Fund, to implement the architecture grant scheme.

VROM, OCW and LNV have set aside funding for the Belvedere policy for a 10-year period (2000-2009). The annual budget is € 7.4 million (2005). This budget is used to pay equipment costs and for the activity programme of the Belvedere project office, a grant scheme (€ 1.4 million a year) and the cultural component in the investment fund for rural development (€ 2.25 million for both 2005 and 2006).

For the period between 2005 and 2009 VROM and OCW have earmarked € 4 million each per year for the cultural component in the fund for urban renewal (ISV).

The model projects and other specific activities in the action programme are funded by the seven ministries involved. In many cases resources come from larger project budgets, without being designated specifically for the objectives of the Action Programme on Spatial Planning and Culture.

Aknowledgements

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More information

www.minocw.nl/cultuur

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