

Summary Nota Belvedere

1. Context and terms of reference

The Netherlands faces major spatial changes. At the same time, the cultural identity of the human environment is more than ever before an item on the political and social agendas. That identity can be strengthened by placing greater emphasis on the development-oriented utilization of existing cultural-historic values. Cultural history, spatial planning, integrated design and good 'clienthood' can be made to interact more effectively and more creatively. Within the dynamic of the new there must be consideration for, and creative utilization of, cultural-historic values as a matter of course. There is thus a joint assignment of local and provincial authorities, central government and private sector organizations. Because the task of designing and structuring the Netherlands is such a great one, there are numerous opportunities at all levels of scale for these various actors to play their part through an integrated approach based on cooperation.

The work to be done is in both the rural and urban areas, with the emphasis on catching up on missed opportunities in the rural areas. In the urban areas, opportunities exist in terms of restructuring, such as in the revitalization of existing qualities. The Belvedere approach centres around the development of a cohesive national policy which will allow cultural-historic identity to take a major role in directing the future development of the Netherlands.

The context within which the relevant activities are to take place is one of increasing social awareness of the cultural value of our human environment. This awareness is further raised by the discussions concerning the effects of the overall spatial assignment on the appearance of the Netherlands. There is particular concern about the loss of diversity and quality in the rural areas. This demands that the trends to date are broken and that consideration for existing values are linked to the greatest degree possible to an offensive, development-oriented approach based on cultural history.

The challenge has already been accepted with enthusiasm by a number of provincial and local authorities. They are developing policy within which cultural history becomes an important factor within spatial planning and which raises the quality of the spatial interventions. Much of the future plans and projects will be developed at this level of government.

At national level, the division of responsibility in matters of cultural history (mainly between three ministries and various other subsidiary departments) has stood in the way of this integrated development-oriented approach. However, the accent is now shifting towards greater interdepartmental cooperation ('decompartmentalization') and the acceptance of responsibility for large and complex projects and problems. Related to this is the broader use of cultural history as a means of improving the quality of the human environment. Here, the relationship with such aspects as nature and landscape, water management, recreation and tourism and architecture must be deliberately reinforced in order to achieve greater added value for society as a whole. This will lead to greater involvement of the Dutch community at large in our cultural heritage.

The heightened awareness is also demonstrated by the fact that private parties and organizations now recognize more and more opportunities for cultural history. These parties are significant (potential) actors, with considerable know-how and expertise in the areas of planning design, management and communication. Their contribution can be supported and broadened by a government which provides them with the necessary opportunities and frameworks, and which actively promotes cooperation within the joint assignment.

Within this context, a cohesive and consistent government policy is essential. The objective of such policy must be to allow cultural-historic identity to take a more prominent role in directing spatial structure. Various initiatives of such policy are now available and enable significant progress to be made. The next step must be to amalgamate and coordinate these individual initiatives, whereby the whole will be greater than the sum of the parts.

2. Vision and position

Cultural history is 'the story of the country and its culture' and is thus also the ongoing story of the spatial design of that country, past, present and future. Central to the vision must be the social need to regard cultural history in an integrated and development-oriented way, and to use it as a source of inspiration. So doing, the plans of today can be placed into the long-term perspective.

The time is now ripe to link cultural history and spatial design more closely with each other, whereby added value for society will be created. 'Cultural capital' will then be utilized as 'cultural assets'. This calls for a change of attitude on the part of all involved - the public, administrators, planners and cultural-historians alike. The conflict between old and new must not be the central consideration, but rather the opportunities of utilizing the cultural assets as a rich source of inspiration.

This entails a more effective and creative way of seeking concrete and innovative solutions. Spatial planners and designers, for instance, must be even more aware of the existing cultural-historic qualities, while the cultural history sector must learn to anticipate future developments. This calls for an integrated approach from all three cultural history disciplines, with active and intensive efforts to form alliances with other sectors and interests. There must therefore be an area-specific approach and vision. This memorandum states and seeks to justify this area-specific approach.

Only through this form of integrated cooperative approach will all the opportunities for the spatial design of the Netherlands become apparent. The value of the new policy lies not in restriction, but in creating space for innovation.

3. Conservation and renewal

The Belvedere Memorandum lays the foundation for a new system of policy development which is based on a gradation of cultural-historic values and a gradation of the spatial dynamic. The exact form this model is to take will be determined by the Fifth Policy Document on Town and Country Planning. In the current document, the emphasis is the assessment of cultural-historic value and on the formulation of basic principles for future cultural-historic spatial policy.

The Belvedere Map - the *Cultural-historic Values Map of the Netherlands* - is presented as an instrument and method for the assessment of cultural-historic values. The map has been compiled using expert assessments by central government and provincial authorities, based on the three perspectives of archaeology, historic urban design and architecture and historic topography. The map distinguishes between areas with *sectoral cultural-historic values* and those with *combined cultural-historic values* - the Belvedere areas. The map forms the basis of the area-specific policy.

Significant spatial trends have been identified within the Initial Paper on Spatial Planning and their implications are likely to be considered further in the Fifth Policy Document on Town and Country Planning and other government policy document. There are three developments taking place which offer particularly good opportunities for cultural history: the changing

approach to water management, the dynamic of the countryside and the changing pattern of urbanization. These developments are outlined in this document along with their implications for cultural history.

The basic principles for the extension of existing cultural-historic spatial policy are the greatest possible degree of decentralization and significant participation by private sector organizations. Three separate approaches have been identified: reinforcement of the generic policy, the introduction of supplementary area-specific policy and the support of the thematic approach. The main objectives stated in the memorandum are:

Cultural-historic identity is to be seen as a determining factor in the future spatial design of the Netherlands, for which government policy shall aim to create appropriate conditions.

This central objective can be seen in terms of the following subsidiary aims:

1. To recognize, and to maintain the recognizability of, cultural-historic identity in both rural and urban areas, as a quality and basic starting point for further developments.
2. To strengthen and exploit cultural-historic identity and the qualities which go to define such identity, in those areas of the Netherlands which are most valuable in terms of cultural history, the so-called *Belvedere areas*.
3. To create appropriate conditions for the initiatives of third parties aimed at a thematic strengthening of cultural history.
4. To disseminate knowledge concerning cultural history and to promote opportunities whereby cultural history can be used as a source of inspiration in spatial planning and design.
5. To promote cooperation between citizens, organizations, local and regional authorities and government.
6. To improve the practicality and use of existing instruments.

4. Spatial policy

This chapter describes the measures which aim to achieve the first two objectives within the spatial policy: To recognize, and to maintain the recognizability of, cultural-historic identity in both rural and urban areas, as a quality and basic starting point for further developments, and to strengthen and exploit cultural-historic identity and the qualities which go to define such identity, in those areas of the Netherlands which are most valuable in terms of cultural history, the so-called *Belvedere areas*.

An indication is given of how cultural and cultural-historic identity can become a full, permanent and valuable component of spatial planning, design and management. This applies to the entire country, but to the *Belvedere areas* in particular.

An area-specific approach is to be developed for the *Belvedere areas* in which proper consideration is given to the special intensive combination of sustainable conservation of

existing identity by means of area-specific protection, and spatial development as a means of strengthening that identity.

Central government is reticent to adopt its own thematic approach to cultural history, but welcomes such initiatives on the part of others. On this point, policy is intended to be mainly stimulatory in nature.

5. The development of knowledge and cooperation

The vision presented in this memorandum can be effective only if there is sufficient support within society. Historic awareness and the availability of knowledge and information become essential, as does broad and ongoing cooperation. Policy therefore devotes considerable attention to increasing the availability and accessibility of knowledge and information, and to encouraging the formation of alliances.

The coordination of cultural-historic knowledge whereby it will be available to all concerned - including private citizens - is seen to be a matter of great importance. It will demand efforts by all involved. The government is also to make efforts in this regard. Ways of making such information available within a few years will be investigated. Existing data is to be used, and there must be greater cooperation between the organizations involved (provincial support organizations, the national point of contact, linkage of the various knowledge centres' databases).

The division of cultural history into various disciplines - archaeology, conservation of monuments and historic geography - is seen to be a complicating factor preventing the integrated accessibility of knowledge. Based on the Belvedere philosophy, the four individual knowledge centres (RDMZ, ROB, IKC and DLO-SC) will strive to achieve efficient coordination between themselves.

The promotion of expertise among all actors is seen to be of crucial importance. The providers of professional training (in both design disciplines and cultural history) are encouraged to seek out and rectify the omissions in their programmes. Dialogue between the cultural-historians, planners, designers and clients is encouraged. One tried and tested means of doing so is to support example projects at local level. As was seen in the 1980s, this can lead to a considerable degree of cooperation and initiatives on the part of those involved.

In the exploratory survey of spatial trends (such as the three trends described in Chapter 3), it falls to the cultural-historians to develop a tradition of anticipatory research, based on their own discipline, expertise and interests. The development of such forms of research will be encouraged.

Sustainable conservation of the cultural heritage must not be left to the government alone, but must be given form through effective cooperation with market parties, other levels of government and special interest organizations. Each practical case will involve a different form of coalition or alliance. The area-specific approach both calls for and makes possible a broad range of cooperative alliances. Given the great importance of private sector organizations to cultural history, the government intends to insist on the involvement of private entities and social organizations in the area-specific approach to the Belvedere areas.

6. The end as beginning

Just as this policy makes use of valuable components of existing policy, so can the various areas of general policy benefit from the specific policy developed here. Much is to be gained if the potential of cultural history is exploited within current and future policy.

Concepts of the policy proposed here can be of significance for urban planning, architecture, nature and landscape, agriculture and water management. Today's new buildings are tomorrow's heritage, and hence the motto must be: "Build something that people will still be proud of in a hundred years' time!"

The proposed cultural history policy can have a 'trickle-down' effect on other areas of policy, such as that for architecture, urban regeneration, nature, landscape, recreation and the environment.

In one respect, this memorandum breaks new ground: a process has been set in motion whereby it is not currently possible to fully see where it will lead. The process will entail time and effort being devoted, without there being any certainty that this effort will bring any immediate rewards. Accordingly, an outline of the follow-up action until 2002 is given as an appendix to this memorandum.

7. Finances

The basic principle here is that the interests of cultural history form part of the planning procedure and hence of the regular planning costs. In order to apply this principle to the Belvedere programme, the government will in the first instance work towards more effective use of existing sectoral resources. Further to this, additional resources will be made available, rising from NLG 11 million in 2000 to 18 million in 2003 and subsequent years. A special budget will be allocated with which experience can be gained in the development-oriented approach to cultural history, while structural resources will be made available to enable larger-scale investments to be made in achieving actual improvements in quality.

Appendix: Areas

There are areas which contain cultural-historic values throughout the Netherlands. In some areas, however, there is an accumulation of values and/or an integration of values, whereupon these areas are of special significance to cultural-historians.

Such areas have been identified in close consultation between central government and the provincial authorities. They have been indicated on the map and a description is given in terms of *characteristics*. A number of *key features* which determine the cultural-historic character of an area have been identified. The descriptions do not attempt to make an exhaustive listing of these features. Those given are representative and can serve as anchors for spatial policy.

In addition to the cultural-historic description of each area, a number of important *developments* are listed. These developments, which may be seen as opportunities and/or threats, give rise to the dialogue which must be conducted concerning the cultural-historic values. Some developments are specific to one particular area, while others affect several areas.

The *policy opportunities* are then described. These are aspects which may facilitate further development or strengthening of the cultural-historic values. Finally, a set of *strategic policy options* is given: proposals for a possible approach to the areas.