

The building blocks...

...Of our future

For as long as we can remember, we as human beings have been closely connected with the world around us. The need to create a pleasant environment is an essential instinct of which plenty of examples can be found throughout the history of the world. Building a safe refuge against sand storms, a

primitive trading settlement or even a simple roof over our heads: thanks to archaeological research and exceptional finds, the world can cherish the legacy of generations gone by. Structures built in the past can also provide insight into the minds of people from another era, with a passion originating from visions that often transcended the commonplace. Just think of the pyramids of Egypt, the temples built by the Aztecs and the Incas in South America and the Mayans in Central America. Age-old cities in Asia, such as enchanting Samarkand in Uzbekistan, or - closer to home - in Europe, the beautiful cities of Rome and Athens. They show what man was capable of, often with inadequate means but with an iron will, a great deal of perseverance and heavy physical labour. In all its facets, this was the labour of mankind – mentally as well as physically.

Building for the man in the street

Since the industrial Revolution (18th century), developments in the world have closely been following upon each other. In an economic, political and social sense, the continents of Europe and America have developed into densely populated areas. The cities governed their region as their beating hearts and held within



Oosterdokseiland - ODE (Eastern Dock Island)



Interior 'Gasthouder'

them the promise of the future: living, working and prosperity - all for which people traded life in a rural community for life in the city. However, it took until after the First World War before progress, with a view to living conditions and employment, could be determined as a steady and increasing line. A general standard of prosperity is something we have only been able to speak of since a few decennia, but if you consider the history of architecture, you will come to some interesting conclusions.

Building is more than giving voice to an era, the need for housing or a shortage of business space. Architecture also amplifies emotion and works as a marker for a period in time, something imposing to (literally) look up to in times of hardship. Building can give hope and can shape our image of the

future. This is what prompted civil servant Jacob Wiersema (1916-2005), together with his colleague Sytze Dijkstra, to start a company that by now has grown into one of the largest real estate companies in the Netherlands and in Europe. His vision was a simple one: he wanted to realise affordable housing for the man on the street, who in the nineteen-forties, was still living in poverty, often in a hovel. Now, we have come sixty years forward. The goals set by Bouwfonds have actually changed with their times, but are still strongly rooted in the tradition of social commitment of the previous era. Until 1980, its founder Wiersema stood at the helm of a strongly expanding enterprise.

Industrial heritage

Working together with partners has always been a prerequisite, since the day that Jacob Wiersema went on his way to convince city and municipal planners of his inspired plans. Bouwfonds is aimed at safeguarding our future and stands for sustainable enterprise, and in that, also for sustainable cooperation. By the end of 2006, Bouwfonds MAB Ontwikkeling was taken over by the Rabobank Group and is now, together with Rabo Vastgoed, part of Rabo Bouwfonds. As Bouwfonds, the company can stand firmly on its international foundations, with a focus on three core activities: development, financing and asset management. In the Netherlands, this company has small and large-scale products in its portfolio, for both residential and business markets. A municipality like Amsterdam forms a great attraction in the area of city planning and, as a



Westergasfabriek (The Westergas Factory)

result, also offers numerous possibilities. On the one hand, there is a tremendous call for change and renovation. On the other hand, a sound vision of the future also plays a part in this, a vision with a passion for this city, which has led to some impressive projects. We have already discussed the Industrial Revolution, which certainly had a tremendous influence in the Netherlands. There are still plenty of industrial monuments around, but often these are no longer used as they were originally or can no longer meet the demands of modern civilization. Bouwfonds takes social commitment seriously and buys these monuments to guarantee a certain degree of continuity: as our industrial heritage, but also from a well thought out re-allocation plan for the building and/or its surrounding area.

De Westergasfabriek (The Westergas Factory)

One of Amsterdam's industrial state monuments, dating back to 1885, is the Westergasfabriek, the former Westergas factory site. Its area measures 14 hectares, with numerous buildings and installations. When it was built, it was considered an architectural tour de force, based on an architectural style that is known as the Dutch Renaissance. Gas production out of coal was in full swing here until the nineteen-sixties. When the natural gas deposits of Slochteren were discovered, the gas factory in Amsterdam became superfluous. After its closing, the heavily contaminated site was temporarily in use as a storage and workplace facility for the municipal power company. In 1992, the site was discovered by artists and innovative entrepreneurs;

it appeared to be the ideal location for a host of cultural events and activities.

Bouwfonds handled the clean-up operations and restoration of existing buildings. The area is redeveloped into a multi-cultural centre for different art forms (music, theatre, dance and visual arts) as well



Westergasfabriek (The Westergas Factory)

as an attractive accommodation for conferences, trade fairs, seminars and festivities with a festival area. A new park has been developed around the existing buildings. The construction of this park also accentuated a connection of the area to the Brettenzone, an important green area for the Nieuw West and Groot Amsterdam districts. The park was opened in 2003 and was designed by landscape architect Kathryn Gustafson: an aesthetic and ecological environment (ponds, gardens, fields of flowers, green areas, footpaths) in combination with historical buildings, which, after a thorough renovation, represent a particular atmosphere and theme. All in all, a visit to the Westergasfabriek is a unique experience, where the spirit of the past perfectly mingles with contemporary reality.

The Amsterdam Zuidas District

Of course, Bouwfonds does not limit itself only to the renovation of industrial monuments. In a large municipality such as Amsterdam, urban develop-

ment projects are always under discussion. The area between Amsterdam-Zuid, Buitenveldert, the RAI Congress Hall and the VU University has already given rise to an important project for this capital city. The Zuidas district is located near Schiphol Airport and has important access roads (the A10 motorway and a railway line) running through its centre. The Amsterdam town centre is easy to reach from here and there are good connections with the surrounding popular residential areas. The Zuidas district has now entered its third phase of planning and work has started on several office buildings. As a developer, Bouwfonds is involved in the following projects: Eurocenter (realized in 2006) and Amsterdam Symphony; two multi-functional buildings with housing, offices, a hotel, parking lot, bars and restaurants). It is of course in our line of expectation that more projects will be realised in the future and that the Zuidas district will be completed in 2035.

Eurocenter

This building was designed by architect René Steevens and consists of three buildings. The four-storey residential tower includes a two-storey underground parking garage. The other building is nine storeys high and is intended for businesses. The first floor will provide housing for a host of business-related facilities such as a grand café, a restaurant, conference rooms and retail facilities to serve the businesses in the building. There will be room for 81 luxury apartments of six different types (including a fine penthouse). The remaining space will be used as office space, shops, cafés and restaurants. 'Living in new dimensions' is a slogan that appropriately describes life in the Eurocenter complex. It will be the first residential tower in the Zuidas district, located only a stone's throw away from the Rai railway station. Here too, we aspire to the 21st century ideal of combining high-quality living, working and recreation. The buildings will all be equipped with modern air-conditioning systems, and we will be aiming for the most environmentally and ecologically



Zuidas District

Bouwfonds MAB Ontwikkeling



Eastern Islands at river IJ

sound use of energy possible. The Eurocenter is located in the Vivaldi district, just south of the A10 ring road between the Amstelpark and the Beatrixpark. Plans have also been developed for the construction of a new park with a park building. Green is, of course, an important factor in Amsterdam's 21st century urban experience. A park, with suitable sports and other facilities will contribute to the concept on which the goals for this specific part of the Zuidas area are based: an attractive and modern urban living and working environment. Experienced architects, both from the Netherlands and abroad, have been asked to design this new urban area in Amsterdam. Vivaldi will be divided into 92,000 square metres of office space, 93,000 square metres of living space and 15,000 square metres of other facilities. Another important aspect of the Vivaldi district is its function as the gateway to the Zuidas district. The image of 21st century life will certainly be reflected in a building such as the Eurocenter, but once the Amsterdam Symphony building has been completed, the Zuidas district will have found its true 'pièce de résistance'.

Amsterdam Symphony

On one of the best locations in the Zuidas district, in continuation of the Minervalaan and at the heart of the new city district, the prestigious Amsterdam Symphony building is expected to be finished in 2008. The project forms part of the Gershwin district, which comprises the southern part of the new Amsterdam Zuidas district. It will mainly be developed as a residential area with layered constructions and architecture for connoisseurs. Convenience, comfort and accessibility are the key words. Architect Pi de Bruyn (De Architecten Cie) designed the Symphony complex (he is also responsible for the urban development plan for the Amsterdam Zuidas district) and has been doing some ground-breaking work. Red bricks, staggered façades and the unusual application of colours all serve to give the building an elegant look. It will house offices,

apartments, a hotel, retail facilities, a theatre and indoor parking facilities for 600 cars. The complex is located on a square where water will play a prominent part. Amsterdam Symphony, activities and dynamics around-the-clock, against a multi-functional backdrop of the city. This is exactly the concept for the future that the Zuidas district aspires to.

De Westelijke Tuinsteden

Another district that is not unimportant to the Groot-Amsterdam area is the Westelijke Tuinsteden, the western garden cities, which have undergone some tremendous changes since their construction in the nineteen-fifties. Demolition, renovation and new construction will provide a new introduction to the idea of a suburb where living is still very attractive. In the Geuzenveld-Slotermeer district, the well-known Plein '40-'45 square was given a revitalising 'facelift' in 2001, which not only improved its image but turned it into a connecting element between living and shopping areas. High-quality



shops, supermarkets and retail facilities, an indoor parking garage and pleasant cafés and restaurants have turned the square into a favourite meeting place for residents and visitors alike. The Osdorp district has also gained a fine complex for both private and public housing called the Stadstuinen (the City Gardens). The buildings were designed by DP6 Architectuurstudio and consist of eight blocks of



Stadstuinen (City Gardens)

apartment buildings and single-family houses with an underground parking garage. This concerns both properties for rent and for sale. The underlying principle of a suburb or garden city – light, air and space – is expressed perfectly and the view of the water and the park all serve to meet the requirements of a pleasant living environment.

That the plan was attractive to a lot of people became apparent from the fact that all the houses were sold less than a year after they had been finished. In these projects, Bouwfonds was inspired by the principles of its founder Wiersema, for whom affordable housing and a high quality of life for every income group was paramount.

Living and working on the IJ

As the capital city of the Netherlands, Amsterdam knows how to keep the attention of the international community as a ‘Gamma world city’. Developing a densely populated area as efficiently and comfortably as possible for its inhabitants is no easy task. Nevertheless, urban development plans are always developed, designed and subsequently carried out with a vision. Bouwfonds is involved with the development of the IJ-oevergebied, a district on the banks of the river IJ, and without a doubt, one of the most unique locations for urban living. The Westerdokseiland, an island on the Western Docks, affords an amazing view over the water and is close to the city centre as well as its Central Station. The multi-functional project ‘La Grande Cour’,



Stadstuinen (City Gardens)

located to the south, will provide 250 apartments, 2500 square metres of office space and an underground parking garage. The complex consists of three eight-storey residential towers with courtyards (the ‘cours’) and shared roof gardens for its residents. Public housing and free sector and mid-range properties for rent and for sale will ensure an adequate mix of residents. Its innovative design by the Dutch architect Jeroen van Schooten, in collaboration with Heren 5 and Architecten Cie, is one whose construction offers a great deal of space and light.

The Oosterdokseiland (ODE) (Eastern Dock Island) is Bouwfonds’ showpiece. In 1998, the company won a competition held by the Municipality of Amsterdam for the development of this area. A complete new piece of inner city is springing up there. A development of 200,000 m² where innovative architecture combines business with pleasure: with space for living, working, studying, shopping, going out and relaxing – providing the liveliness of a city with a new impulse. Twelve famous international architects are involved in completing the urban development plan compiled by Erick van Egeraat of Associated Architects. It is divided into six parcels, precisely connected in a network of streets, squares, alleys and public spaces. Facilities in the area of business, culture and fine food dominate ODE’s character; it will be a wonderful place to live with

a view over the IJ and the historic inner city. The largest hotel in the Netherlands (550 rooms) will open its doors here in 2010 and, thanks to the perfect location and the accompanying accommodation (conference and meeting rooms), it will also serve as a congress centre. In addition, 17,000 m² will be available for shops, cafés and restaurants; 82,000 m² for business premises and 7,500 m² for entertainment and culture and 300 apartments. A prominent part will also be played by the library and the conservatory of music.

The first building is now in use. The largest Public Library in the Netherlands has been established on the ODE. The objective was to change its former industrial character (it housed the TPG Post Office for years)



Public Library

into an accessible centre suited to the town centre, with plenty of room for knowledge, culture and the business sector. When Bouwfonds took on the development of the ODE, it was obvious that the Public Library of Amsterdam, which was located on the Prinsengracht at that time, was no longer able to fulfil the present requirements. A space on the ODE would therefore meet the objectives of the Municipality. At the end of 2007 the Amsterdam Conservatory of Music will also open its doors.

Passionate about the city

Bouwfonds is passionate about Amsterdam. Not in the least because the city demands the combination of different disciplines where urban infrastructure, possibilities and limitations are concerned. The pillars on which Bouwfonds is built as an organisation are the application of multi-functionality, an eye for multiple small-scale activities and the ability to take inventory of the living requirements of your target group. In this, we are looking at long-term issues within a social context, just as our founder Jacob Wiersema.



Public Library



Public Library



Public Library



Exterior Public Library