

To  
The Minister of Education, Culture and Science  
Mrs I.K. van Engelshoven  
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**Date:** 18 December 2017      **Contact:** Raad voor Cultuur, T. 070-310 66 86, Prins  
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**Reference:** RVC-2017-1231 / RLI-      Raad voor de leefomgeving en infrastructuur,  
2017/2915      T. 06 2180 0302, Bezuidenhoutseweg 30,  
2594 AV Den Haag  
**Cc:** The Minister of the Interior  
and Kingdom Relations and  
Presidents of the Senate and  
House of Representatives  
**Attachments:** 2  
**Re:** Letter of advice 'A Broad View of Heritage: The interactions between heritage and transitions in the  
physical environment'

Dear Mrs Van Engelshoven,

On 3 July 2017 your predecessor asked the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Rli) and the Council for Culture (RvC) to issue a joint letter of advice on a future-proof heritage policy and heritage system. This request for advice was prompted by the launch at the beginning of 2017 of the Heritage Counts (*Erfgoed Telt*) policy process in which your ministry is reviewing its heritage policy in the light of a number of current developments.<sup>1</sup> This letter contains the advice by the Rli and the RvC in support of this policy process. In view of the overlap between environmental and planning policy and heritage policy we are also sending this letter to the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The presidents of the Senate and of the House of Representatives have also been sent a copy of this letter.

## Request for advice and approach taken

The request for advice sketches several developments that affect the physical environment in the Netherlands and will continue to do so for some decades to come, such as climate adaptation and the energy transition, population growth (in the cities) and decline (in the rural areas), a changing population structure and further decentralisation of government functions. These and other ongoing transitions have an effect on the cultural heritage in the Netherlands. It is not always clear exactly what impacts these transitions will have on the immovable cultural heritage or which policies, which strategies and which instruments will be needed in future.

The following five questions were put to the Rli and the RvC:

- Which transitions are most urgent regarding the immovable cultural heritage?
- What effects do these transitions have on the cultural heritage, and is current heritage policy – both for heritage sites and for heritage areas – sufficiently future-proof?

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (2017). *Projectplan Erfgoed Telt: naar een toekomstbestendig erfgoedbeleid*. The Hague.

- How can cultural heritage contribute towards making these transitions?
- Is there a need for new strategies and policy instruments (or adapted instruments) and, if so, what are they?
- How should the tasks and responsibilities for such strategies and instruments be divided among government authorities and other parties?

The request for advice, like the Heritage Counts policy process, confines itself to the immovable cultural heritage in the Netherlands (see text box below), because this is where the relation with the physical environment is most obvious. In line with the request, our advice concerns the aims of the Heritage Counts policy process, which also means that it is limited to the scope of the Heritage Act and the forthcoming Environment and Planning Act.

#### **Definition of immovable cultural heritage**

In this advice, 'cultural heritage' (or simply 'heritage' for short) is taken to mean immovable cultural heritage. This includes historic buildings, archaeological sites and other monuments, town and village conservation areas and cultural landscapes. In this we follow the definition of cultural heritage as stated in the Explanatory Memorandum to the Environment and Planning Act. In the Environment and Planning Act, cultural heritage is limited to objects and sites in the physical environment.

Because the term 'cultural landscapes' has strong associations with the countryside, we use the term 'areas' instead. Under 'areas' we include both urban and rural areas. A heritage area may therefore be anything from a post-war reconstruction district or historic town or city centre to a fen meadow area or historic military landscape such as the Stelling van Amsterdam (Defence Line of Amsterdam).

When we refer to monuments we mean both archaeological and constructed heritage, but particularly built heritage – irrespective of whether or not it has a protected status.

#### *Approach*

This advice was prepared by a joint committee of the Rli and the RvC. The draft advice was discussed in a joint meeting of the two councils and subsequently adopted by each council. The advisory committee arranged expert meetings with representatives from knowledge institutes and heritage organisations, and practical experts on three themes: physical, socioeconomic and governance transitions. A number of interviews were held to garner additional evidence (see Appendix 2).

#### *Positioning of the advice*

We see this letter of advice as having an agenda-setting purpose. If desired, parts of the advice can be worked out in more detail at a later stage. This is in fact already being done to a certain extent in the advice on Monuments & Archaeology currently being prepared by the RvC, which complements the present letter of advice. We are pleased to note the attention and financial resources given to heritage in the 2017–2021 Coalition Agreement. You have indicated that your vision letter to be issued in spring 2018 will address how these funds will be allocated.

## **Transitions and other developments with an impact on the environment**

To answer the questions in the request for advice we have made an inventory of transitions that could have an impact on the immovable cultural heritage in the Netherlands. We have discussed and appraised this inventory in the expert meetings.<sup>2</sup> In the inventory we have made a distinction between three sorts of transitions that could have an impact on built heritage and heritage areas:

<sup>2</sup> In this advice, references to transitions should be read as also including other developments. Brief descriptions of the transitions and other developments in the physical environment can be found in Appendix 1.

1. physical transitions: the energy transition, climate adaptation and accelerating land subsidence;
2. socioeconomic transitions: the transition to the circular economy, widening territorial differences (e.g. between rapidly growing cities and declining regions), greater emphasis on regional identity, upscaling (e.g. in agriculture and services), secularisation, changing demographics (diversification and ageing) and the growth in tourism;
3. transitions in governance: changing relationships between government authorities, institutions and citizens, progressive decentralisation of governance and the rapid advance of digital communication technologies.

These transitions will almost certainly have a major impact, but it is not clear how they will develop or what their precise effects will be. One thing is clear, though. As described below, the dynamic pace of change in the Netherlands will have different effects on built heritage assets than on heritage areas.

#### *Effects of transitions on the built heritage*

Some transitions are already having an effect at the building level:

- Of the physical transitions, the energy transition in particular has consequences for the built heritage. Many heritage buildings are poorly insulated and it is often very difficult to insulate them without damaging their cultural and historical values. Energy-saving and energy-generating measures, such as fitting solar panels, also sometimes meet with resistance when they have a deleterious effect on the cultural and historical values and the general appearance of a building.
- In addition, in some areas subsidence is having an increasing effect on the building stock. This can result in the loss of cultural and historical value of the built heritage in these areas.
- Socioeconomic transitions, such as secularisation, population decline in rural areas and the increasing scale of operations in the agricultural, services and retail sectors, regularly lead to heritage assets being given different uses or becoming vacant. At the moment this is most visible in the growing number of vacant agricultural buildings<sup>3</sup> and empty religious properties such as churches and monasteries.

At the same time, other transitions present opportunities for the built heritage:

- The growth of tourism and the leisure industry means larger numbers of potential visitors as well as possibilities for new uses (e.g. as hotels, conference centres, B&B, etc.).
- The growing interest in regional identity is leading to greater interest in heritage.<sup>4</sup>
- The use of digital communication technologies makes it easier for people to learn about heritage features and the stories behind them.
- Technological developments and innovations in the physical environment make it easier to maintain heritage assets in perpetuity.
- Redevelopment of the built heritage can contribute to the development of the circular economy.
- Transitions in the field of governance mean that government is not solely responsible for dealing with these threats or seizing the opportunities that arise. More is expected of regional and local authorities and active citizens, either individually or collectively.

#### *Effects of transitions on areas*

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<sup>3</sup> Gies, T.J.A., Nieuwenhuizen, W., Naeff, H.S.D., Vleemingh, I. & Paulissen, M. (2016). *Landelijk gebied en leegstand: aard, omvang en oplossingsrichtingen van huidige en toekomstige leegstand agrarisch vastgoed in Nederland*. Wageningen: Wageningen Environmental Research.

<sup>4</sup> Broek, A. van den & Houwelingen, P. van (2015). *Gisteren vandaag: erfgoedbelangstelling en erfgoed-beoefening. Het culturele draagvlak*. nr. 15. The Hague: SCP.

The effects of these transitions on urban and rural areas are more complex. A single area may be affected by a number of different transitions at the same time and so planning and designing the various interventions to ensure a high quality outcome may be a considerable challenge. Examples include finding the land required for solar farms, wind turbines and biomass production (energy transition) or for water storage, raising water levels and such like (climate adaptation), and the increasing scale of agricultural production. We expect that the outcomes will differ considerably between regions, not only because of the diversity of regional landscape characteristics, but also because of the wide differences in economic and population pressures.

Based on information obtained in the expert meetings and other evidence, we observe that it is proving difficult to maintain the quality of many urban and rural areas, although the picture is highly varied. Urban and rural areas in the Netherlands have always undergone change, but we are particularly concerned about the impact of the current changes on landscape quality in certain areas. In its 2016 advisory report *The Connecting Landscape*<sup>5</sup> the Rli advised that this issue should be properly addressed in the National Environmental Strategy. Preparing an environmental strategy (a policy instrument in the new Environment and Planning Act) also provides regional and local authorities with an opportunity to address the issue of the future qualities of the cultural landscape.

### **Paradigm shift: more attention to added value for the environment**

Since the beginning of this century government policy on managing heritage assets has been guided by the motto 'conservation through development'. This principle appears to have been widely embraced, not just by the heritage sector (government, owners and practitioners) but also by society at large. At the same time, heritage policy is gaining more concrete expression in conjunction with planning and environmental policy.

#### **Change in government policy for managing heritage assets, 1999–2011**

In recent years the previously rather conservative government policy has been transformed into a more development-oriented approach to managing heritage assets.<sup>6</sup> Major steps in this direction were made in particular by three documents: the *Belvedere Memorandum*<sup>7</sup> (1999), the policy letter on *Modernising Monumentenzorg*<sup>8</sup> [Modernising Monument Management] (2009) and *Character in Focus: Vision for Heritage and Spatial Planning*<sup>9</sup> (2011). These documents take a much broader and more dynamic view of heritage: from building to area, from preservation to development, from loss of culture to a culture of profit. Except for the preservation aspect, heritage asset management is increasingly about the heritage experience and making good use of assets. In *Character in Focus* heritage is explicitly linked to issues such as population decline, the energy transition and flood risk management. This policy trend has led to a

<sup>5</sup> Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (2016). *The Connecting Landscape*. The Hague.

<sup>6</sup> Janssen, J. (2014). 'Modernising Dutch heritage conservation: current progress and ongoing challenges for heritage-based planning and management'. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, 105, 622–629.

<sup>7</sup> Ministries of OCW, LNV, VROM & VenW (1999). *The Belvedere Memorandum: A policy document examining the relationship between cultural history and spatial planning* [translation of *Nota Belvedere; beleidsnota over de relatie cultuurhistorie en ruimtelijke inrichting*]. The Hague.

<sup>8</sup> Tweede Kamer (2009). *Monumentenzorg. Beleidsbrief van de ministers van Onderwijs Cultuur en Wetenschap, van Volkshuisvesting Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer en Landbouw, Natuur en Voedselkwaliteit aan de Tweede Kamer*. Vergaderjaar 2009–2010, 32 156, nr. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Tweede Kamer (2011). *Kiezen voor karakter: visie erfgoed en ruimte*. Rapport. Vergaderjaar 2010–2011, 32156, nr. 29, bijlage 118632 [English translation *Character in Focus: Vision for Heritage and Spatial Planning* available from the Cultural Heritage Agency website:

[https://culturalheritageagency.nl/sites/default/files/u6/publicatie\\_Characterinfocus%5b1%5d.pdf](https://culturalheritageagency.nl/sites/default/files/u6/publicatie_Characterinfocus%5b1%5d.pdf)]. Updated in 2017: Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (2017). *Erfgoed en ruimte: kiezen voor karakter!* For the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Amersfoort.

statutory obligation to protect cultural heritage in spatial plans. In turn this opens up more room for public input because individuals and civil society organisations are able to make their views known about the importance of cultural heritage during the plan-making stage.

However, putting this into practice is another matter. Attempts to make heritage policy part of a more integrated physical planning approach are as yet few and far between. Although heritage conservation is increasingly being used as a means to generate a quality uplift in new urban developments, water storage projects, habitat restoration projects, etc., the focus and financial resources are often still limited to preservation, without first holding a public discussion about the significance and meaning of the building or monument itself and for the surrounding area. These discussions do now increasingly take place at the regional level, sometimes at the instigation of the provincial authorities, which under the decentralisation of government tasks in the field of planning and culture are going to play a more prominent role in the heritage sector.

The forthcoming Environment and Planning Act, especially the environmental strategy documents it provides for, offers opportunities for managing heritage assets at various scales (local, regional, national and international). The 2017–2021 Coalition Agreement states that the National Environmental Strategy will define the policy framework for the protection of national interests. We believe that the vision set out in the National Environmental Strategy should not be limited to a strategy of conservation, but be geared primarily towards development.

Under the influence of the policy described above, heritage management has undergone a paradigm shift during the past twenty years or so. Heritage is increasingly looked at from a development perspective with a view to creating added value for the surrounding environment. At the same time, a process of 'de-institutionalisation' has been set in motion: heritage is no longer just what the experts say it is, but also what stakeholders have to say about it. Slowly but surely a more democratically legitimate approach to heritage management is gaining ground. Admittedly, though, this de-institutionalisation is not happening everywhere. This is because although the heritage sector in the Netherlands is highly proficient in preserving monuments, we see that there is room for improvement in linking up with parties that are involved in development projects but are not part of the 'heritage community'.

We conclude that heritage policy and spatial planning policy are increasingly responsive to the transitions in the physical environment. At the same time, we note that this trend in policy has not yet been widely adopted in practice:

- The conservation of immovable cultural heritage is not yet fully embedded in all planning policies.
- Land and property owners, developers and public officials often view heritage policy as a stand-alone policy (handicap) and not as a connective intersectoral policy (inspiration).
- Discussions about heritage tend to be restricted to buildings, but it is areas that deserve more attention.
- Too little use is being made of heritage and the widespread interest in it as a source of inspiration for the development of historic buildings, monuments and heritage areas.

In the light of these points for improvement, below we set out three lines along which heritage policy can be developed. These are existing trends in heritage policy which can be taken further. We use these lines as a framework on which to hang our conclusions and recommendations. Stated briefly, in keywords, these trends are:

- from collection to connection;
- from building to use;
- from objects to areas.

## From collection to connection<sup>10</sup>

The national collection appears to be well looked after. Most national and other heritage buildings and monuments have been restored and have found a suitable use. The quality of the country's heritage assets would therefore seem to have a secure future. But is maintaining quality the only touchstone for the future? We think that in the light of the transitions described above we have to go a step further and connect with the *social* challenges. For one thing, this would create more opportunities to put the motto 'conservation through development' into practice. In our opinion, the heritage sector in general is not sufficiently in touch with the major social issues of the day. Responding to the physical, socioeconomic and governance transitions by no means precludes the maintenance of quality. Successful examples of such an approach include the redevelopment of the Westergasfabriek in Amsterdam and the renovation of the Afsluitdijk (the IJsselmeer closure dam), whose significance as a monumental entity has always been recognised and was an important consideration in the planning. In any event, when selling and developing its properties, listed or not, the government should set a good example and make this connection.<sup>11</sup> This requires good commissioning practice, but at present the government is still selling many heritage objects to the highest bidder and potential social benefits are not being taken into the equation.<sup>12</sup>

The nation's heritage will benefit from a more offensive approach in which the preservation of monuments is cast in a new light: not as an end in itself, but in support of the transformation processes taking place in the Netherlands. Heritage should be a vehicle for our development as a society. If cultural heritage is taken on board at the beginning of a development process, it can play a useful part in tackling social challenges. This happens all too rarely, even though the level of public commitment to heritage is high: 25% of the population have 'some connection' with heritage<sup>13</sup> and 10,000 volunteers are actively involved. This is also recognised in the 2017–2021 Coalition Agreement. However, the heritage sector has so far proved insufficiently capable of mobilising this widespread goodwill to ensure heritage is routinely placed in a positive and inspiring light at an early stage of planning procedures. This also requires good commissioning practice by the government authorities concerned.

Another relevant question is what the changing and varied demographic structure of the Netherlands means for our heritage. Indeed, as the population as a whole ages, so will the membership of the various volunteer organisations, such as the local history societies and historical associations. Moreover, a growing number of people have a migration background. Will this lead to a change in the level of interest in our heritage? Or will interest in other types of heritage grow (such as a shift from tangible to intangible heritage)? And what forms of heritage are appreciated by young people or by Dutch citizens with a migration background?<sup>14</sup> It is important that those involved with heritage acknowledge these changes and respond to them, because new perspectives on heritage also present opportunities. Heritage can bind communities together by giving meaning to the environment. Stories about heritage give young people and newcomers a handle for identifying with their environment and can be vehicles for bringing

<sup>10</sup> This heading is taken from the title of a chapter (*Van collectie naar connectie*) in *Kiezen voor karakter; Visie op erfgoed en ruimte* (2011) [Character in Focus: Vision for Heritage and Spatial Planning].

<sup>11</sup> This applies to all government agencies that manage properties.

<sup>12</sup> Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (2014) *Managing Surplus Government Real Estate: Balancing public interest and financial gain*. The Hague. See also the interview (in Dutch) with architect André van Stigt, initiator of the redevelopment of De Hallen in Amsterdam. Accessed on 27 November 2017 via [www.goudenpiramide.nl/actueel/interviews/interview-03](http://www.goudenpiramide.nl/actueel/interviews/interview-03).

<sup>13</sup> Broek, A. van den & Houwelingen, P. van (2015). *Gisteren vandaag: erfgoedbelangstelling en erfgoedbeoefening*. *Het culturele draagvlak*. nr. 15. The Hague: SCP.

<sup>14</sup> Sanderman, M. (2017). 'Zoektocht naar de nieuwe Nederlander in het erfgoed'. *Nieuwsbrief VOER*. Essay closing the Heritage Philosophy course 2016. 27 March 2017.

different viewpoints together. Stories about heritage assets can therefore act as a bridge not only between the past and the future, but also between different groups in the population.

It is also important to note that heritage does not always bring people together, but can in certain cases sow seeds of division between different groups in society. One example of this is the debate about the monuments associated with the slave-owning period of Dutch history; another is the refusal by Ede Municipal Council to protect 'Mussert's wall' because there was too little support among part of the population to uphold the memory of the NSB (the main Dutch fascist and national socialist group in the 1930s). For this reason the only stories about heritage that can count on broad public support are those told by multiple voices. In this respect, heritage is not a solidified reality; monuments and heritage areas, along with their associated stories, are constantly changing. The system for selecting and valuing heritage assets should take this dynamic into account more than at present.

The intangible values of built heritage and heritage areas currently only have a modest influence on the processes of selection, designation and development. What is missing is a certain sensitivity to the emotional associative and affective side of cultural heritage: the way in which individuals and groups connect (or feel connected) with buildings and places. To make the connection, stories about heritage must resonate with the target group and, if possible, come from the target group itself. There are inspiring examples of this in practice, such as the Verhalenhuis Belvédère in Rotterdam (a meeting place for people and a place for collecting special life stories) and the Brugwachtershuisjes in 's-Hertogenbosch (see text box).

**Brugwachtershuisjes in 's-Hertogenbosch temporarily transformed into artworks**

The Zuid-Willemsvaart canal that runs through the centre of the city of 's-Hertogenbosch dates from 1937. There are three bridge operator's cabins along the route of the canal. These cabins lost their original function when the Máxima Canal that bypasses the city was completed in 2014. They have been included in a redevelopment plan for the section of the Zuid-Willemsvaart that runs through the city. In the meantime, artists have been invited to explore what the cabins stand for to provide inspiration for the redevelopment. The aim is for art to strengthen the bonds between the cabins and the local population and thus legitimise their continued maintenance.<sup>15</sup>

The use of stories will require a change in mindset: from creating, valuing and preserving collections to a context-oriented and more dynamic approach to heritage. If the heritage sector is to succeed in making connections, it will have to abandon its current defensive and static approach in favour of a more offensive, flexible and integrative approach.<sup>16</sup>

The current government policy already takes a step in this direction as the provinces and municipalities have been given the policy leeway to switch to a more offensive approach. In our opinion, therefore, the system does not need to be reformed. We think that much of the solution lies in a change in the attitude and actions of the sector itself rather than in new policy. However, this will make new demands on the expertise and training of heritage professionals.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See [www.brugwachtershuisjes.nl](http://www.brugwachtershuisjes.nl).

<sup>16</sup> This approach is also promoted by the Federatie Instandhouding Monumenten. See: Federatie Instandhouding Monumenten (2017). *Erfgoed in transitie: visiedocument van de Federatie Instandhouding Monumenten*. Amsterdam.

<sup>17</sup> See the pamphlet by Joks Janssen and Platform VOER (in Dutch) with ten suggestions for the new role of the heritage professional. Accessed on 27 November 2017 via [www.platformvoer.nl/pamflet-nieuwe-rol-erfgoedprofessional](http://www.platformvoer.nl/pamflet-nieuwe-rol-erfgoedprofessional). See also Knoop, R. & Schwarz, M. (ed.) (2017). *Straatwaarden: in het nieuwe speelveld van maatschappelijke erfgoedpraktijken*. Amsterdam: Reinwardt Academie.

## From building to use

The second line of development in the heritage policy we propose has also been going on for some time. In recent years attention has shifted from greenfield development to infill development, redevelopment and building conversions in existing urban areas, partly in response to the financial and real estate crisis. In fact, conversion would seem to have become the new new build. This trend has been given a considerable boost by numerous examples of successful temporary uses.<sup>18</sup> During the crisis vacant buildings were not demolished to make way for new building development, but refurbished for temporary uses as bars, cafes and restaurants or as premises for business start-ups and small craft enterprises. This is how new cultural hotspots have arisen. Isolated and inaccessible factory sites have been developed into business incubators, which at the same time lend a new identity to the surrounding residential neighbourhoods. The old Honig factory in Nijmegen and the former NS station workshops in Tilburg (see text box) are striking examples of this process. Also, temporary activities frequently develop into unexpected forms of permanent use. It is important to maintain this approach in times of economic growth and increasing housing shortages.

### **Redevelopment of the NS station workshops in Tilburg**

The empty NS workshops in the railway zone in Tilburg presented a unique opportunity to lift the profile of the city centre by redeveloping these properties and the surrounding area. The initiative was not limited to conserving the cultural and historical heritage value of the railway zone, but also exploited the potential for spatial and economic development and improved mobility in the city. The NS workshops now house a media cluster, but also offices of provincial agencies such as BKKC (Brabant Centre for Art and Culture), Kunstbalie (an organisation that supports art education, amateur artists and community art) and Brabant C (funding for culture and creative industries). The municipal council has made good use of the potential for temporary uses, including inexpensive office workplaces, creative activities, and dancing and sports facilities. The temporary uses are a planned prelude to permanent uses such as homes and employment.<sup>19</sup> Temporary use creates time to look for permanent occupiers and also helps to identify who these occupiers could be.

The shift outlined here is one from a focus on the building to a focus on the user or occupier. What is needed is a widespread realisation that the answer to rising vacancy rates lies not so much in instruments to prevent damage to the historical and cultural values of buildings, but rather in instruments that stimulate smart use of those buildings. Moreover, vacancy is not only a consequence of the financial crisis, but also of demographic and economic shifts such as those that can already be seen in declining areas. A condition for the conservation of property, therefore, is its potential for use. Temporary use pending a permanent function is part of this and, as the examples show, can be an appropriate solution. This requires cooperation between public and private parties.

For heritage management this means switching from 'selection and designation' to 'brokerage and conversion' – in other words, seizing the opportunities for use presented by wider development projects. Getting interested parties around the table and brokering deals may be more important than providing funds. Instead of just focusing on the heritage quality of the building, the use and the user should be given a more prominent role. Successful solutions for conserving a building or area involve considering the wishes of the user, looking at it with an architect's eye and doing the sums from a developer's perspective, all of which require an open mind, good cooperation between the parties involved and a flexible attitude from the heritage professional. Moreover, the financial instruments should be geared more towards mobilising funding from the market and the community than at present.

<sup>18</sup> It is now legally permitted for a temporary use to last ten years instead of five.

<sup>19</sup> Platform31 (2015). 'Koester wat je hebt!' *Impressieverslag Stadslab Tilburg 31 maart 2015*. Accessed on 27 November 2017 via [www.platform31.nl/wat-we-doen/programmas/ruimte-en-economie/agenda-stad/stadslabs](http://www.platform31.nl/wat-we-doen/programmas/ruimte-en-economie/agenda-stad/stadslabs) Platform31 (2015).

Of course, it will not always be possible to find a suitable user. In declining areas, for example, it will become increasingly difficult to find users for all the vacant heritage buildings. On top of which, the policy instruments are largely unable to respond to the increasing differences between regions. In individual cases it may be best to adopt a 'conservation through restraint' approach in which derelict buildings could be given new uses, for example as 'eco-ruins'.<sup>20</sup> This might give declining regions new possibilities for nature conservation, tourism and recreation.

## From objects to areas

A third promising development to which we draw attention is from focusing on buildings to focusing on areas. Under the various transitions in the physical environment, many areas in the Netherlands are undergoing substantial restructuring and redevelopment. Policies and financing for these operations are geared primarily to individual buildings and owners, whereas the effects of these transitions are expected to be felt mainly in the *areas* in question. The protection of landscape quality is largely neglected in national policy<sup>21</sup> and statutory protection for cultural landscapes needs reviewing. While adequate regulations for protecting the built heritage are in place, the protection regime does not take sufficient account of the landscape or urban design context.

To turn this situation around, attention should be given to both scales – buildings and areas. Monuments and historic buildings are not insulated from their environment, but are exposed to external influences and derive some of their value from their position within the context of the surrounding urban or rural landscape. Conversely, monuments and historic buildings lend extra significance to their surroundings. It is important that this mutual dependence between building and area is recognised. Landscapes can play an integrative role by bringing transitions that take place on a larger scale into the world of local and regional heritage.

The history of individual heritage objects in an area often says a lot about that area and vice versa, and it may be important for transition projects to draw on these stories. An analysis of the history and past uses of an area often helps to ground and give direction to the story of the future, and can also generate support for a new phase in its development. A further challenge is to tie stories into new social challenges and transitions. Good examples of how such connections have been made can be found in various provinces.<sup>22</sup> The design study by Sijmons et al. for sustainable energy generation in the Stelling van Amsterdam (Defence Line of Amsterdam) and the Hollandse Waterline (Hollandic Waterline) is one such example.<sup>23</sup>

Major development projects in the Netherlands almost never start from a clean slate. Increasing use is made of area assessments and the investigative and integrative abilities of designers. This approach is facilitated by the forthcoming Environment and Planning Act. Under the philosophy of this Act, heritage must not be considered merely as an assessment criterion at the end of the

<sup>20</sup> See <https://www.primafocus.nl/geografie/ecoruine-oost-groningen/> (in Dutch)

<sup>21</sup> Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (2016). *The Connecting Landscape*. The Hague

<sup>22</sup> For example in the province of Zuid-Holland with the heritage lines (Provincie Zuid-Holland (2016).

*Beleidsvisie Cultureel erfgoed en Basisvoorzieningen Cultuur 2017-2020*. The Hague) and in Noord-Brabant where various heritage typologies (industrial, military, religious, etc.) are used in connecting stories (Provincie Noord-Brabant (2015). *De (verbeeldings)kracht van erfgoed: beleidskader erfgoed 2016-2020*. 's-Hertogenbosch.)

<sup>23</sup> H+N+S Landschapsarchitecten, Volharding Breda & Ro&Ad Architecten (2017). *Energielinie: erfgoed in transitie*. Amersfoort; Sijmons, D., Hugtenburg, J., Hoorn, A. van & Feddes, F. (2014). *Landschap en energie: ontwerpen voor transitie*. Rotterdam: NAI010.

development planning process, but should be included in the process right from the start. This should be actively encouraged by all involved.

Knowledge about the heritage and its stories is crucially important to this approach. Modern technologies can bring this to life by visualising the different layers of history, reinstating lost artefacts and making unexpected connections. The new digital system being built to support the Environment and Planning Act provides opportunities for making use of information and knowledge exchange systems to draw attention to heritage values at the beginning of development projects.

The heritage sector (governments and stakeholders/practitioners) must insist that heritage is given the prominent position it deserves in spatial developments. As the knowledge, know-how and capacity required generally go beyond what is available at the local level, and as many municipalities do not possess the knowledge and expertise needed to make an active input to development projects and planning processes on heritage issues, national government will have to make agreements on heritage representation with regional and local government organisations, such as the Association of Provincial Authorities (IPO), the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) and the Association of Regional Water Authorities (UvW). National government is in a better position to equip the regions with the necessary expertise, for example by assembling the necessary integrative knowledge and providing research and design capacity.

**Knowledge of heritage and its stories: Gelderland’s Arcadia**

The Veluwezoom area in the province of Gelderland has many extensive estates, country houses and castles, such as Middachten Castle and Estate, Rosendaal Castle, Huis Zypendaal, Doorwerth Castle and Villa Sanoer. The municipalities of Arnhem, Renkum, Rheden, Rozendaal and Wageningen are aware that these country estates make up a harmonious and historic landscape entity (sometimes referred to as Gelderland’s Arcadia) and have been working together to develop these qualities since 2008. One of the fruits of this cooperation is a regional vision which can serve as a reference framework for projects that local authorities want to take up with the landowners in the zone. This municipal partnership has also set up projects such as ‘History in Stories’, in which 170 people were interviewed about the area and the stories they have of it. These were then used to produce a series of tourist booklets, an archive of visual material and an app with films, photos and stories.<sup>24</sup>

**Conclusion: from bricks to stories**

The common denominator in the three trends outlined above is the importance of placing heritage assets in a broader perspective. Stories help. Stories connect, inspire and give direction to the next development phase of heritage buildings and areas. Most of the built heritage is in a good condition; it is now time to shift the focus to telling those connecting stories: from bricks to stories.

One of the lessons we took away from the expert meetings is that the transitions do not so much require amendments to the policies and statutory regulations regarding cultural heritage, but rather that steps should be taken to bring about a change in culture within the heritage sector.

*Heritage is a source of quality and inspiration in development projects*

Heritage can be an important focus for quality and inspiration in development projects. We therefore argue for a developmental approach in which heritage is used as a source of inspiration at the start of development planning processes and not as an assessment criterion at the end of the process. A slogan used in the past when facilitative planning was on the rise is relevant here: ‘from handicap to empowerment’. Environmental and planning policy should be receptive to this. Good commissioning practice is needed to ensure heritage is well placed in the planning process

<sup>24</sup> See [www.geldersarcadie.nl](http://www.geldersarcadie.nl) (in Dutch)

and the key to this lies in the stories surrounding heritage assets. Heritage has the potential to crystallise the stories about an area and in doing so it can help to identify the DNA of a place, area or region, increase the understanding of an area, serve as a source of inspiration or provide a solution. Such stories can also be made visible through design studies that provide direction for spatial developments. Moreover, they can form a link with social challenges. We see here a significant role for the design disciplines and argue for broader stories from multiple perspectives and different periods, also because this brings to light the centuries-long development dynamic. The adaptations that have to be made to the physical environment under the new transitions will be both drastic and inescapable, but when viewed from a historical perspective they are in a sense also a constant factor.

In this respect, the preparation of environmental strategies provides an opportunity to broach the subject of heritage values, based on surveys and design exercises, at an early stage. Conversely, heritage is also a vehicle for getting people to take part in consultation and participation exercises during the preparation of environmental strategies – not only because the general level of interest in heritage is quite high, but also because the stories provide knowledge and inspiration to feed discussions about the future of the area under consideration.

#### *Transitions: accounting for uncertainties and differences*

The transitions we have identified in this letter of advice as developments that may have an impact on the immovable cultural heritage in the Netherlands are subject to uncertainties and will be accompanied by permanent change. It is almost certain that these transitions will occur, but how and to what degree they will occur remains uncertain. An adaptive approach will therefore be needed, one in which governments will have to adopt a vision and governance mechanisms that are 'situational' and versatile – all the more because the connection between heritage and the transition challenges demands a complex form of cooperation between diverse stakeholders who hold quite different opinions about policy and governance. Natural partners (such as housing associations) have been given a smaller role and new partners (such as water authorities) are waiting in the wings. Patience will be needed while trust is established as a basis for these new partnerships. Heritage partners often still underestimate the new transition challenges. To help them meet these challenges they should call upon the positive forces in society favourable to heritage and support and trust them. Development is a multi-actor process that relies on the attitudes and skills of all those involved.

At the same time, the transitions will probably work out differently in each region and therefore give rise to regional differences. We argue that this diversity should be recognised,<sup>25</sup> which means that instead of a generic policy, new place-based strategies should be developed and accompanied by financial and other instruments. Immovable heritage can act as a peg to hang the story of the area on. This is not expected to lead to conservation in all cases, and so selectivity must be an option.

## **Recommendations**

We have come to the conclusion that where the transitions affect the physical environment, their main impacts will be at the area level. The impacts on individual built heritage assets will be less pronounced. We consider that the management and accommodation of the transition challenges at the area level (both urban and rural) belong primarily to environmental and planning policy. Heritage policy therefore does not need to be overhauled, but it will need further development. Neither does heritage need to be given a special place in environmental and planning policy,

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<sup>25</sup> In relation to this, see also: Interprovinciaal Overleg (2017). *Aanbevelingen en inzet provincies voor een toekomstbestendig erfgoed beleid: Erfgoed telt*. The Hague.

because it is already one of the interests that are given full consideration when weighing up the wider pros and cons of development proposals. In future the legislative framework for this assessment will be provided by the Environment and Planning Act. This is not to suggest that nothing needs to be done, though. The transitions will have major impacts on the structure and appearance of Dutch cities and landscapes and it will be crucial to anticipate and respond to them. To this end we make the following main recommendation:

*In the light of this request for advice, there is no need to amend the main thrust of national cultural heritage policy, but it should be further developed along the existing three lines: from collection to connection, from building to use, and from objects to areas. Particular attention should be paid to supporting a change in culture within the heritage sector and embracing the governance philosophy of the Environment and Planning Act.*

In addition, we make the following recommendations on the three lines of policy development.

*From collection to connection*

1. Encourage the heritage sector to participate in the transitions. When developing local, regional and national strategies and development programmes, explicitly state how cultural heritage can help to speed up the desired transitions.
2. National government should set the standard for good commissioning practice, for example by putting the use and divestment of national monuments and listed buildings in the service of the transition challenges.
3. Link grant aid for the preservation of immovable heritage to the contribution it makes to the transitions.
4. Look to 'new' groups such as young people and Dutch citizens with a migration background for support and active involvement. To gain their interest and participation, use stories that resonate with or originate from the various target groups.

*From building to use*

5. Encourage the heritage sector to view heritage assets more from the perspective of future users and the immediate surroundings.
6. Stimulate temporary use of heritage assets, taking a flexible approach to regulations and, where necessary, the use of financial resources.<sup>26</sup> This will prevent loss of value.
7. Design financial instruments so that resources are devoted to the monuments that need them most, while being sensitive to regional differences.<sup>27</sup>
8. In regions of economic and demographic decline where heritage assets fall vacant without the prospects of a new use, investigate the possibility of taking a 'conservation through restraint' approach in certain cases and permitting a process of controlled decay.
9. Look for a vehicle to mobilise funds from the market and society, such as the creation of private funds with tax advantages.<sup>28</sup>

*From objects to areas*

10. Encourage use of the environmental strategies to be drawn up by national government, provinces and municipalities under the new Environment and Planning Act to accommodate and manage the transitions.

<sup>26</sup> The Environment and Planning Act broadens the scope for decision-making.

<sup>27</sup> For example, it is easier to find new users for empty buildings in urban regions than in declining regions.

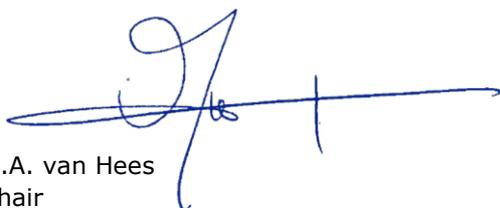
<sup>28</sup> A report by Crimson Architectural Historians discusses the option of a social monument fund which can be used to respond to bottom-up organisations and citizens' initiatives. Such a fund would be fed by private money and would limit the administrative burden on government (compared with a grant scheme). Pronkhorst, A., Rots, S. Dorman, E. & J. Kools (2017). *Monumenten als aanjager voor maatschappelijke gebiedsontwikkeling*. Research by Crimson Architectural Historians in cooperation with Fakton. Rotterdam.

11. Also encourage the use of these environmental strategies to give shape to the shared responsibility for the heritage quality of the landscape, which does not respect administrative boundaries.
12. Ensure the Environment and Planning Act is supported by good knowledge management so that the necessary information on heritage is available for use at an early stage of development processes in the region.
13. Make agreements with representative organisations such as IPO, VNG and UvW on the necessary knowledge, know-how and capacity (in FTEs and time) to ensure that heritage interests are included in development processes and the preparation of environmental strategies.
14. Stimulate a design approach to development and the preparation of environmental strategies.<sup>29</sup>
15. Make grants conditional upon considering built heritage assets in relation to the further development of the area.
16. Practice and education should both pay due attention to the networking and interpersonal skills heritage professionals need to ensure that heritage is included in transition processes affecting the physical environment.

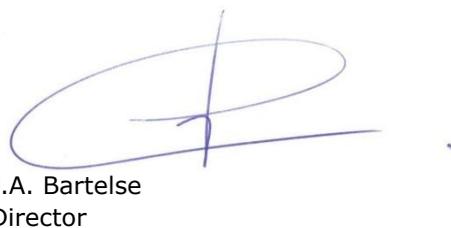
Finally, we are aware that these recommendations go beyond the scope of your portfolio. The heritage sector itself will also have to act on these recommendations. In view of the reciprocal relation between heritage policy and environmental and planning policy we recommend that you discuss these matters with the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The number of transitions involved also makes it advisable to coordinate policy with your ministerial colleagues at the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy.

Yours sincerely,

Council for Culture

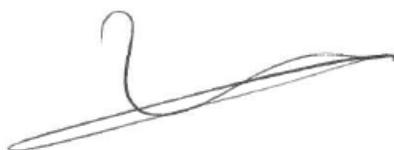


M.A. van Hees  
Chair



J.A. Bartelse  
Director

Council for the Environment and Infrastructure,



J.J. de Graeff  
Chair



R. Hillebrand  
General Secretary

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<sup>29</sup> This could be supported by the Creative Industries Fund NL and the Action Agenda for Architecture and Spatial Design.



## Appendix 1: Transitions and Environmental Trends

We have made an inventory of possible transitions and environmental trends that could affect the immovable cultural heritage. The transitions have been divided into three categories: transitions in the physical environment, socioeconomic transitions and transitions in governance.

### 1. Transitions in the physical environment

#### 1.1 Energy transition

Achieving the targets set in the 2015 Paris climate agreement will require an energy transition to reduce the use of fossil fuels. We will have to make use of other, sustainable energy sources and make more efficient use of energy.<sup>30</sup> This transition is already partly underway and its importance to society is becoming increasingly clear. The implications of this transition for the physical environment include retrofitting buildings for energy saving, use of the landscape for energy generation, redesigning the energy network and decentralising energy generation from the national to the local level.

#### 1.2 Climate adaptation

Although the exact nature and tempo of climate change is still uncertain, it will in all probability have major consequences for the physical environment, such as periods of drought, more frequent and more intense peak precipitation, a greater probability of hot summers and peak discharges in the rivers, more rapid subsidence and rising sea levels.<sup>31</sup> Our urban environment will have to be adapted to cope with these changes. The same goes for the floodplain landscape, where adaptation will include raising the dikes and the construction of side channels and retention basins. The Delta Programme 2018 aims to do just this by 'redesigning a great many locations in order to reduce the increasing damage caused by waterlogging, heat, drought and urban flooding.'<sup>32</sup>

#### 1.3 Subsidence

Large parts of the Netherlands are affected by subsidence. This gradual settling is partly a natural process and partly caused by human activity.<sup>33</sup> In the past this subsidence was offset by the regular deposition of clay and sand when the rivers burst their banks. Since then the construction of dikes and dams has constrained the rivers within a narrow, artificial floodplain and so these sediments are no longer deposited over the natural floodplain. Subsidence is a particularly big problem in the fen meadow areas, where the natural subsidence has been speeded up by lowering the water table, which results in oxidation of the peat and shrinkage of the soil.<sup>34</sup> The oxidation of peat also releases large quantities of CO<sub>2</sub>. Other causes of accelerated subsidence are the extraction of minerals, such as salt and gas, and subjecting weak clay and peat soils to excessive loads. One of the difficulties in tackling subsidence is the lack of a clear owner of the problem: there is no obvious 'guilty party' responsible for the subsidence.

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<sup>30</sup> Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (2015). *A Prosperous Nation Without CO<sub>2</sub>: Towards a sustainable energy supply by 2050*. The Hague.

<sup>31</sup> Ligtoet, W., Bree, L. Van & Dorland, R. van (2013). *Aanpassen met beleid: bouwstenen voor een integrale visie op klimaatadaptatie*. PBL: The Hague.

<sup>32</sup> Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment & Ministry of Economic Affairs (2017). *Delta Programme 2018: Continuing the work on a sustainable and safe delta*. The Hague.

<sup>33</sup> See [www.natuurinformatie.nl/ndb.mcp/natuurdatabase.nl/i000331.html](http://www.natuurinformatie.nl/ndb.mcp/natuurdatabase.nl/i000331.html) (in Dutch)

<sup>34</sup> Kwakernaak, C., Akker, J. van den, Veenendaal, E., Huissteden, K. van & Kroon, P. (2010). Mogelijkheden voor mitigatie en adaptatie: veenweiden en klimaat. *Bodem* 3. 6–8.

## 2. Socioeconomic transitions

### 2.1 Circular economy

The desire for a more sustainable society and other economic and political considerations are driving the shift towards a more circular economy.<sup>35</sup> The Rli defines the circular economy as 'an economic and industrial system that is based on the reusability of products and raw materials and on the capacity of natural resources to recover, that minimises the loss of value in the overall system, and that aims to create value at every stage of the system.'<sup>36</sup>

### 2.2 Spatial differentiation

The transitions described below contribute to the increasing differences between regions in the Netherlands. These differences are widened by government policy, in particular via the distribution of government spending. In recent years the emphasis in economic policy has been on further strengthening existing economic strong points, for example under the Peaks in the Delta programme, and weak regional economies are no longer given additional support.

#### *Rural decline*

Population growth in the Netherlands has been levelling off in recent years. The Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency expects that over the next 15 years the population of one in four municipalities will decline by more than 2.5%.<sup>37</sup> This demographic decline will occur primarily in the rural areas. As family sizes are decreasing, this population shrinkage has not yet led to a drop in the number of households and so it has not yet been translated into an increase in vacancy rates.

At the same time, rural regions are experiencing an economic decline because of a net migration to urban regions, especially by the young, the well-educated and families with children. Migration from the north, east and south of the Netherlands consists mostly of young people moving to the Randstad in the west.<sup>38</sup> Together with the national ageing of the population, this is causing the size of the working population in the rural regions to shrink, leading to a weakening of the economic capacity, which in turn puts a strain on the vitality and accessibility of services and facilities in rural areas.

#### *Growth in urban areas*

While the rural areas are declining, the urban areas are growing. They are increasingly popular for living, working and leisure activities among both young and old.<sup>39</sup> People are attracted to the historic character of the cities and want to live near the services and amenities they provide. Employment is also increasingly concentrated in the major towns and cities. The cities are therefore expanding and becoming economically more important.<sup>40</sup> As a consequence, urban areas are undergoing a process of densification and the available space is being used more efficiently. The government is stimulating this trend with its policy on brownfield and infill development – the 'ladder for sustainable development' in Article 3.1.6 of the Spatial Planning Decree.

<sup>35</sup> Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (2015). *Circular Economy: From Wish To Practice*. The Hague.

<sup>36</sup> See [www.natuurinformatie.nl/ndb.mcp/natuurdatabase.nl/i000331.html](http://www.natuurinformatie.nl/ndb.mcp/natuurdatabase.nl/i000331.html) (in Dutch)

<sup>37</sup> Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving (2015). *De Nederlandse bevolking in beeld: verleden, heden toekomst. 24 infographics op basis van de CBS/PBL-regionale bevolkings- en huishoudensprognose*. The Hague.

<sup>38</sup> Cultural Heritage Agency (2014). *Attract and Connect: Population decline and the heritage in Europe. With practical examples from Germany, the UK, France and the Netherlands*. Amersfoort.

<sup>39</sup> Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (2015). *Circular Economy: From Wish To Practice*. The Hague.

<sup>40</sup> Centraal Planbureau & Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving (2015). *De economie van de stad*. Uitgevoerd op verzoek van de ministeries van Economische Zaken en van Infrastructuur en Milieu. The Hague: CPB.

### *Educational divide*

The drift to the city is creating a spatial division between the highly educated and the low-skilled. The highly educated are increasingly moving to the cities, which causes a net reduction in educational level in the rural areas and increases the economic power of the urban areas while weakening that of the regions. This divide also influences citizen participation levels. The more highly educated generally take a more active part in public discussions about planning and development because they are better able to get their message across and more able to represent their interests.<sup>41</sup>

### *Differences within cities*

It is not only the differences between cities and regions that are widening, but those within the cities as well. Urban populations are segmented and fragmented in all sorts of ways: by age, income, family situation, reliance on care, employment, country of origin and ethnicity. In many ways these divisions are in danger of becoming deeper.<sup>42</sup>

### *2.3 Regional identity*

Cities and rural regions are increasingly aware of their differences and each wants to exploit these differences to set themselves apart from the rest.<sup>43</sup> This is driving a growing demand for regional identity, which is allied with the trend towards more local organisation of facilities and service provision. While this decentralisation is being formalised in the legislation, such as the Environment and Planning Act, it also has roots in communities themselves. Individuals and local governments increasingly prefer to tackle problems with measures that are best suited to their own situation and communities. Solutions are sought at the neighbourhood level, with an increasing desire for flexibility and room to do things in a different way that matches the local context.

### *Globalisation*

One of the reasons behind the demand for regional identity is globalisation. In the global network society there is a widening gulf between people who are able to adapt to these changes and those who are not, between the 'anywheres' (cosmopolitans) and the 'somewheres' (provincials). The latter group hardly benefit from globalisation, if at all, and so they do not see the advantages. They are more inclined to reject globalisation and cling more tightly to their regional identity, an attitude which is also fed by the uncertainties thrown up by technological and other developments. EU policies and subsidies also stimulate regionalisation by focusing on regions rather than the nation states ('Europe of the regions').

### *2.4 Demographic changes*

#### *Ageing of the population*

The Dutch population is ageing; the proportion of older people in the population is increasing and people are living longer. The fastest growing age group in the Netherlands is the over 100s.<sup>44</sup> This growing group of older people are also remaining active in the labour market for longer, partly

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<sup>41</sup> Broek, A. van den, Steenbekkers, A., Houwelingen, P. van & Putters, K. (2016). *Niet buiten de burger rekenen! Over randvoorwaarden voor burgerbetrokkenheid in het nieuwe omgevingsbestel*. The Hague: SCP

<sup>42</sup> Dijken, K. van, Engbersen, R., Oosterveld, W., Poel, M., Sterrenberg, L., Wassenberg, F. & Sprinkhuizen, A. (2017). *Vergaand veranderen, slim verschillen, duurzaam verbinden: stedelijke trends en opgaven voor 2018* e.v. The Hague: Platform31.

<sup>43</sup> Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap (2015) *Cultuur in beeld*. The Hague.

<sup>44</sup> Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (2014). *Aantal 100-plussers verdubbeld sinds 2000*. Accessed on 1 November 2017 via: [www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2014/44/aantal-100-plussers-verdubbeld-sinds-2000](http://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2014/44/aantal-100-plussers-verdubbeld-sinds-2000)

because of the higher pension age, the scrapping of the early retirement scheme and financial incentives.<sup>45</sup> This trend is expected to continue.

#### *Diversification*

For centuries globalisation and migration have enriched the Dutch population with the addition of many new cultures and nationalities. The number of Dutch citizens with a migration background has grown considerably, leading to a diversification of the population.

#### 2.5 *Vacancy rates*

Earlier in this letter of advice we pointed to demographic decline as a possible cause of the growing number of empty buildings. Below we discuss three transitions that could be a cause of specific buildings falling empty, or of rising vacancy rates in general.

#### *Secularisation*

The role played by religion and the church in Dutch society is declining. Falling church attendances, shrinking congregations and the associated drop in income are forcing parishes to amalgamate and denominations to merge.<sup>46</sup>

#### *Increasing scale of agriculture*

Agriculture is going through many changes and these changes are accompanied by uncertainties. In many agricultural sectors farmers are increasing the intensity and scale of production in a bid to remain internationally competitive,<sup>47</sup> which is leading to different uses of land and agricultural buildings. The agricultural sector also faces the challenge of becoming more sustainable as society makes increasing demands of agriculture, such as reducing emissions and improving environmental quality. There is also a growing demand for organic produce and experiencing nature,<sup>48</sup> which is in turn pushing up demand for more extensive farming to create space for organic farming and on-farm nature conservation.

#### *From industry to services*

From the 1960s to the 1990s many Dutch cities underwent a transformation from an industrial to a service economy. This transformation has had structural and land use consequences in the cities. Industrial activities have disappeared, which meant that new uses had to be found for large industrial sites.<sup>49</sup> This transition is still ongoing and industrial activities continue to be lost.

#### *Increasing scale of services*

The scale of operations in the services sector is also increasing. Activities which used to be located in the town and city centres, such as shops, many public facilities and office jobs, are moving outside the city or are being replaced by automated processes, e-commerce and ICT accessibility. This can lead to properties lying empty in the town and city centres or being converted for other uses.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Gelderblom, A. & Koning, J. de. (2016). *De arbeidsmarktpositie van ouderen*. SEOR Erasmus School of Economics. Accessed on 28 November 2017 via <http://seor.nl/inzichten/de-arbeidsmarktpositie-van-ouderen>

<sup>46</sup> Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (2012). *Een toekomst voor kerken: handreiking voor het aanpassen van kerkgebouwen in religieus gebruik*. Amersfoort: RCE

<sup>47</sup> Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (2016). *The Connecting Landscape*. The Hague

<sup>48</sup> Gelderblom, A. & Koning, J. de (2016). *De arbeidsmarktpositie van ouderen*. SEOR Erasmus School of Economics. Accessed on 28 November 2017 via <http://seor.nl/inzichten/de-arbeidsmarktpositie-van-ouderen>.

<sup>49</sup> Hoog, M. de (2009). 'Meebewegen met de dynamiek'. *Stedebouw & Ruimtelijke Ordening*, 90(1), 12–16.

<sup>50</sup> Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (2016). *Challenges for Sustainable Development*. The Hague.

## 2.6 *Increasing tourism*

Tourism is a growing industry worldwide and in the Netherlands it is expected to grow significantly more than in the surrounding countries. Predicted visitor numbers in 2025 are 16 million foreign tourists.<sup>51</sup> Much of the tourist appeal of the Netherlands is down to the country's heritage assets.

## 3. Transitions in governance and legislation

### 3.1 *From government to citizen*

The authority of government is waning, as is the pool of knowledge and resources available to government authorities to execute their tasks. Conversely, citizens and other parties in society are increasingly vocal, creative and proficient in finding and exploiting room to act, taking responsibility and assuming ownership of issues.<sup>52</sup> Concepts such as 'co-creation' and 'social design' are now common currency. In addition, digital technologies and media keep people up-to-date on all that is happening in the country. The relation between government and the people is therefore changing. A transition is underway towards a society based more on self-reliance and new forms of collectivity, such as citizens' initiatives and community self-build groups, and in which government authorities are expected to take a facilitative approach. Government authorities are also selling off more land and buildings, which are often taken over by large investment funds.

### 3.2 *Decentralisation*

The decentralisation of government has increased the number, importance and complexity of municipal government responsibilities. Their responsibilities are more numerous and more important because for ordinary people the municipal council is becoming the most important government authority for all matters in the environmental and social domains; they are more complex because social issues are becoming so complicated that they can no longer be resolved through the application of a single regulation, grant or public information campaign. The decentralisation process is still ongoing in some areas of policy. The political and administrative responsibilities for monuments and historic buildings is already fully decentralised.

### 3.3 *Ownership*

#### *From ownership to use*

Users and occupiers of the physical environment increasingly feel themselves to be the owners of the property they use, even when they do not legally own it. As stakeholders, users often have a say in decisions about the property. Ownership is therefore slowly shifting from the owner to the user, a trend that is also linked to the growth of the 'experience economy' in which people increasingly value experiences more than possessions. The next step could well be the 'meaning economy', in which experiences are valued primarily for their meaning.

#### *From institutions to citizens*

A growing number of heritage assets are owned by private citizens rather than the established institutional owners. Residential properties have always been the biggest category of historic buildings, but nowadays even religious and industrial buildings are often owned by private individuals.

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<sup>51</sup> NBTC Holland Marketing (2017). *Tourism in Perspective*. Available from: <https://www.nbtc.nl/en/home/article/tourism-in-perspective.htm>

<sup>52</sup> Hajer, M. (2011). *The Energetic Society: In search of a governance philosophy for a clean economy*. The Hague: PBL. Available from: [http://www.pbl.nl/sites/default/files/cms/publicaties/Energetic\\_society\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.pbl.nl/sites/default/files/cms/publicaties/Energetic_society_WEB.pdf)

### 3.4 Digitalisation

#### *The information society*

Digital information technologies are developing at a rapid pace, making growing amounts of data more readily available. People are becoming better informed and aware of the latest developments. For governments it is increasingly important to make good use of the possibilities offered by digital technologies so that they can forge a partnership with society at large. Digital information technologies are now an important platform for working on the physical environment. The Environment and Planning Act contains provisions on assembling information from all the disciplines involved in the physical environment and hosting it on a single digital platform.<sup>53</sup>

#### *Formal and informal knowledge streams*

As information becomes increasingly easy for people to access, the distinction between formal and informal knowledge sources is blurring. Telling the two apart is increasingly difficult and appears to be becoming less important. As a result, expert knowledge is in danger of losing its legitimacy. Experts have to prove themselves in practice and can no longer simply rely on respect for their authority.

#### *Technology in the physical environment*

Digitalisation is also leading to increasing use of digital technologies in the physical environment. Household appliances, cars and buildings are being connected to the internet and collect data streams from cameras, sensors in the road surface, smart meters, etc. The physical world is gradually being transformed into one big communication system that overlaps with the digital world. Governments face the challenge of keeping legislation in line with technological developments and making use of new possibilities.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Tweede Kamer (2015). *Omgevingsrecht; Brief regering; Contouren uitvoeringsregelgeving Omgevingswet*. Vergaderjaar 2014-2015, 33 118, nr. 18.

<sup>54</sup> Steen, M. van der, Scherpenisse, J., Hajer, M., Gerwen, O. van & Kruitwagen, S. (2014). *Learning by Doing: Government participation in an energetic society*. The Hague: PBL and NSOB. Available from: <http://www.pbl.nl/sites/default/files/cms/publicaties/pbl-2015-nsob-learning-by-doing-government-participation-in-an-energetic-society.pdf>

## Appendix 2: Responsibility and Acknowledgements

### Council for Culture

The Council for Culture (Raad voor Cultuur, RvC) is a body established by law to advise the Dutch Government and Parliament on the arts, culture and media. The Council provides solicited and unsolicited advice on cultural policy issues and applications for grant aid. The Council's advice is usually given at the request of the Minister of Education, Culture and Science. In addition, the Council also provides implementation advice on applications for designation as a professional organisation for the conservation of monuments and historic buildings, on intangible heritage (UNESCO) and on the European Heritage Label.

### Members of the Council for Culture

Marijke van Hees (voorzitter)  
 Brigitte Bloksma  
 Lennart Booij  
 Özkan Gölpinar  
 Erwin van Lambaart  
 Cees Langeveld  
 Thomas Steffens  
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 Jeroen Bartelse

### Council for the Environment and Infrastructure

The Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Raad voor de leefomgeving en infrastructuur, Rli) advises the Dutch Government and Parliament on strategic issues concerning the sustainable development of the physical environment and infrastructure. The Council is independent and offers solicited and unsolicited advice on long-term issues of strategic importance to the Netherlands. Through its integrated approach and strategic advice the Council strives to provide greater depth and breadth to the political and public debate and to improve the quality of decision-making processes.

### Members of the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure

Jan Jaap de Graeff (voorzitter)  
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 Prof Pieter Hooimeijer  
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 Jeroen Kok  
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### Composition of the Advisory Committee (RvC and Rli)

Co Verdaas, chair, Rli council member  
 Jaap 't Hart, RvC committee chair and director, Koninklijke Haagse Woningbouwvereniging 1854  
 Joks Janssen, external Rli committee member, director of Brabant Kennis and special professor of spatial planning and cultural heritage, Wageningen University & Research  
 Liesbet van Zoonen, RvC council member

### Project team

Annet Pasveer, RvC project leader  
 Tim Zwanikken, Rli project leader

Milan Rikhof, RvC member  
Katja de Vries, Rli assistant

### **Consultees**

#### *Expert meeting on physical transitions, 25 September 2017*

Erik van der Bilt, former director, Drentsch Landschap  
Hans-Lars Boetes, account manager Heritage and Spatial Planning, Cultural Heritage Agency  
Peter Breukink, director, Stichting Oude Groninger Kerken  
Maarten Fritz, director, Fritz Architects  
Boudewijn Goudswaard, director, The Missing Link  
Jasper Hugtenburg, project leader and landscape architect, H+N+S  
John Jansen, senior policy adviser, Aa en Maas Water Authority  
Hans Mommaas, director, Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL)  
Martine Uytterlinde, senior manager Solar Energy, Energy Research Centre of the Netherlands

#### *Expert meeting on socioeconomic transitions, 27 September 2017*

Arno Boon, director, BOEi  
Mickey Bosschert, director, Reliplan Real Estate International  
Antoinette Le Coultre, sector head Heritage and Spatial Planning, Stichting Cultureel Erfgoed Zeeland  
Gerben van Dijk, chair, Herbestemmingsteam  
Simon van Dommelen, director, Stichting Leegstand Oplossers Amsterdam  
Radboud Engbersen, senior project leader, Platform31  
Joep de Roo, team member, Linkeroever

#### *Expert meeting on transitions in governance and legislation, 5 October 2017*

Annette van Dijk, senior policy adviser Monuments and Archaeology, Amsterdam City Council  
Teun van den Ende, chair, platform VOER and project coordinator/secretary H-team, Board of Government Advisers  
Henk Hoogeveen, heritage adviser, Rheden Municipal Council  
Arno van den Hurk, programme manager Major Heritage Complexes, Noord-Babant Provincial Council  
Hans Jacobs, strategy and development officer, Nationaal Restauratiefonds (National Restoration Fund)  
Riemer Knoop, professor of heritage, Reinwardt Academie  
Karel Loeff, director, Heemschut heritage society  
Onno Meerstadt, director, Stadsherstel Amsterdam  
Jeanine Perryck, head Castles and Fundraising Department, Gelders Landschap & Kasteelen  
Philip Rogaar, head of Building Maintenance, Natuurmonumenten  
André van der Zande, director-general, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM)

#### *Individuals consulted*

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Jos Bazelmans, head of Archaeology, Cultural Heritage Agency  
Andries van den Broek, senior scientific officer, Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP)  
Teun van den Ende, project coordinator/secretary H-team, Board of Government Advisers

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Alexander Bersee, director of Heritage and Arts and deputy director-general, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science  
Peter Heij, director-general of Spatial Development and Water Affairs, Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment  
Duncan van den Hoek, policy officer Population Decline and Spatial Development, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations  
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Marijn van der Wagt, senior policy officer, Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment  
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*Review by the RvC sector committee, 1 December 2017*

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**Editing**

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