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Under The Pier

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Preface

Under The Pier is the title of an instrumental song, composed by the English musician Stephen Wilkinson. It starts out as a structure of ambient sounds, created by looped synthesizer samples which sound creaked, as if they are played through an old wobbly phonograph, somewhere out in the open. As the song progresses, Wilkinson adds noises of raging sea waves, cawing seagulls and crunching footsteps in the background which he lets continue for three minutes to form a repetitive yet disorderedly sounding ensemble, reminiscent of the natural patterns you encounter while walking along the seashore. After a fade-out, he ends the musical piece with a little guitar line that no longer sounds rusty but rather freshen, as though it was touched by the wet wind from the wild waters which waves have just retreated. The seagulls have disappeared, waiting for the tide to return.

Listening to Wilkinson's four minute and eight second long soundscape while closing your eyes, you might find yourself standing or walking under that high pier on the beach indeed. The Englishman created a strong mental image by weaving the recorded sounds from the pier and the music together. As a musician, it was his way to give meaning to that particular landscape. This research, which is the closure of the Heritage Studies Master's program at the Vrije Universiteit, covers the attempt to give meaning to the landscapes of two piers in the Dutch capital of Amsterdam, my city of residence for the last five years. As I have come to visit both places relatively often over time, my interest in them is partly embedded within the different elements of Wilkinson's musically shaped landscape. There is the presence of more or less tangible elements such as water, wind and seagulls, linked with an appreciation of being around nature, to which the song must own its existence. The repetition and loops holding the whole piece together without grabbing the most attention resemble the natural life cycles of which we humans are all part, often without us noticing it. Cycles in which all life grows old, a process that is exemplified and cherished by Wilkinson's way of recording: the reference to the rusty phonograph is awkwardly explicit in that regard.

All these senses of naturalism are, of course, common in landscapes where nature seems to predominate. They become peculiar when they have a place within a rapidly developing urban environment. Where Wilkinson's imagined seaside landscape is one of endless horizons, the piers in the following story provide visitors with views of skylines that have grown denser over the years and will continue to do so. At first glance, the urban development which is embodied by these skylines seems to have passed both places: deserted in their day-to-day appearance, the landscapes look as if they have been left untouched by people for years. It is, however, safe to say they have not. This discrepancy between what seems and what is has been another important driver to do this research. I wanted to find explanations as for why the landscapes of these piers look the way they do.

Under The Pier, here, refers to the metaphorical act of looking beyond the surface of those landscapes to find these explanations. I tried to distinguish the historical layers from which the landscapes are built. This is not to omit all their visible features. On the contrary: they play a most vital role. Enabling me to relate them to actions of people in the past as well as the present, it is the research itself by which the title is typified.

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1 Introduction

The two piers around which this research revolves are located along the Ij river that flows north of the historical city centre of Amsterdam. Although they sit 3 kilometres apart, they were both built in the wake of the harbour industry that arose in the area towards the end of the 19th century, as they served to dock ships and provide space for other industry related activities.

Following the upscaling of the harbour in the 1960's and the global rise of container shipping in the 1970's, the industry moved to the more spacious western side of the IJ, leaving most areas of the old harbour, including both of the piers, in desertion. Around this time, the economy of the city centre was in strong decline, which caused the municipality to turn towards the deserted riverside area for a large scale urban regeneration, referred to as the *IJ-oever* project. Originally, the project was a public-private corporation and office buildings would come to dominate the skyline. However, the large scale plan did not come through and in 1995 the municipality designated an area south of Amsterdam as office location. With the real estate developers moving away from the riverside, the *IJ-oever* project started to focus on a mixed destination and development in smaller programs and it was this year that the transformation of the riverside started to set sail.¹



Figure 1: Het Stenen Hoofd and Kop van Java and their location within the (yellow) area of the Ij-oever project. (source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

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¹ Hans Van der Made, Skype conversation with author, July 14, 2020.

The two piers gradually came to stand out within their direct surroundings because they were left vacated and practically undesigned. This has seen them obtain a curious place within the city: on the one hand recognised and cherished unique public waterfront spaces and remainders of the industrial past; on the other hand existing in relative anonymity and oblivion, only frequently used throughout the year by local residents walking their dogs or themselves.

The *IJ-oever* project is archetypical for the worldwide movement of waterfront redevelopment in cities that emerged between the 1970's to the 1990's, a trend that has been preceded by several decades during which former harbour areas fell into decay after the industry had faded.² In those days, piers have been attractive spaces for marginalized environments. On the Wilhelminapier in Rotterdam, for example, former buildings from the passenger shipping company HAL had been squatted and used for art exhibitions during the 1980's.³ All along the Hudson River in Manhattan, New York, ruined piers were notable spaces for cruising.⁴ Another exemplary case comes from the famous Graffiti Pier in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where ever since the abandonment in 1991 an environment of wild vegetation and decaying railroad structures have offered affluent canvasses for street artists and silent places for others to stroll around or go fishing.⁵

Today, all around New York, as well as in other cities in the U.S, piers have been prominent foci of transformation, turning into everything from parks and sporting centers to office spaces and theatres. On the Wilhelminapier, a complete urban district has arisen over the last two decades. Graffiti Pier has been shut down in 2018 and plans for revitalization are in the ether. The waterfront redevelopment projects in these cities aim to put the former industrial area back on the map and give them a new definition. To my perception, the period leading up this transformation runs the risk of being overlooked or simply described as years of 'neglect' or 'abandonment', in which nothing appears to have happened. With regard to this point, it is telling that heritage studies of post-industrial landscapes have been focusing mainly on preserving the material leftovers of the industry and regenerating these areas for touristic purposes.⁶

² Dirk Schubert, "Transformation Processes on Waterfronts in Seaport Cities–Causes and Trends Between Divergence and Convergence," in *Port Cities as Areas of Transition*, ed. Waltraud Kokot, Mijal Gandelsman-Trier, Kathrin Wildner, Astrid Wonneberger, (Bielefeld, Germany: [transcript] Urban Studies, 2015), 25-46.

³ Anonymous, "De Verlaten Wilhelminapier in De Jaren 70 En 80," Rijnmond (Rijnmond, May 25, 2018), https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/168780/De-verlaten-Wilhelminapier-in-de-jaren-70-en-80.

⁴ Fiona Anderson, "Cruising the Queer Ruins of New York's Abandoned Waterfront," Performance Research 20, no. 3 (April 2015): pp. 135-144, https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2015.1049047.

⁵ Joel Wolfram, "Can Graffiti Pier Become a Tourist Attraction and Still Serve the People Who Put It on the Map?," WHYY (WHYY, August 5, 2019), https://whyy.org/articles/graffiti-pier-could-be-the-philly-park-that-teaches-america-how-to-love-street-art/.

⁶ See for example: Heike Oevermann and Harald A. Mieg, *Industrial Heritage Sites in Transformation: Clash of Discourses* (London, UK: Routledge, 2017).; E. Givental et al., "The Post-Industrial Landscapes of Central Urals, Russia: Heritage Value, Tourist Potential, and Unrealized Opportunities," *Regional Research of Russia* 9, no. 2 (2019): pp. 193-203, https://doi.org/10.1134/s2079970519020035.; Carlos J. Pardo Abad, "The Post-Industrial Landscapes of Riotinto and Almadén, Spain: Scenic Value, Heritage and Sustainable Tourism," *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 12, no. 4 (2016): pp. 331-346, https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873x.2016.1187149.

That the heritage of post-industrial places may be disregarded in the wake of their transformation is shown by Joan C. Henderson's research on the heritage of Queen's Pier in Hong Kong, which was demolished in 2008 as part of a larger harbour reclamation program. The destruction was met by a strong civic resistance, fuelled by the desire to preserve the pier as the 'people's public place'. The opposition culminated in hundreds of people camping on the pier on the closure date, many of whom joined a candlelight vigil and some even went on hunger strike, before police forced them to leave. The pier lacked the legal protection of a monumental status because of 'an absence of historical significance'. Its preservation was judged too expensive and even openly argued not to fit within the Hong Kong culture, which was meant to drive on making money rather than preserving heritage. Henderson stated that "physical structures from the past, not necessarily monumental, can be repositories and powerful symbols of heritage and identity."⁷

I take Henderson's conclusion as my point of departure for this research. While most industrial heritage in cities over the world drive on the legacy of monumental buildings and other structures, the piers in this research are mainly devoid of such material leftovers. Perhaps for this reason, they lack a monumental status (just as the Queen's Pier), which suggests that their preservation has been motivated by other means. In order to find out how these motivations have been shaped throughout the years, I have set myself the task to inquire the changes (however subtle they may have been) in these empty landscapes: After all, their shifting physical appearances are the result of the decisions, and thus motivations (or the lack thereof) by people. While the storylines of both piers are held together by their similar urban context, and in particular the *Ij-oever* project, they run their own course and are therefore treated separately, shaping two distinct biographies.

⁷ Joan C. Henderson, "Conserving Hong Kong's Heritage: The Case of Queen's Pier," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 14, no. 6 (June 2015): pp. 540-554, https://doi.org/10.1080/13527250802503282.

2 Theoretical layers

In this chapter I will shape a framework of the theoretical concepts coming into play in both biographies. Starting with heritage, I discuss those aspects of the concept which I consider relevant for the two cases and deflect them towards the two main theories upon which the research question is built: How have processes of decay shaped the landscapes of two former harbour piers in Amsterdam?

I deliberately chose landscapes as the main concept to build my story on, and provided heritage with the role of reflection. My aim was never to *define* that heritage, as it was more to try and see whether I could use it as a context for the stories of these two post-industrial landscapes.

2.1 Heritage

Although the concept of heritage does not lend itself for an easy definition, a concise understanding could be provided by relating it to all those things that present-day societies inherit from past generations and assign value to as such. They do that by ways of visiting it, telling it, working in or with it, memorizing it, protecting it and so on. It is this component of value assignment which drew Laurajane Smith (2006) to argue that all heritage is actually intangible, a social construction. The 'things' we consider to be heritage are in fact materializations of these intangibilities, used by humans to legitimize culture.⁸ For example, temples do not stand on their own as tangible objects, but have a place within certain social practices or religions. Otherwise, the communities involved in these practices use such temples to establish and maintain them. Although both tangible and intangible aspects of heritage are clearly inseparable from one another, they are treated apart whenever heritage is officially identified and documented, marking out different target areas or levels of expertise.

Such identification, for better and worse, leads heritage to be divided in two distinct categories: official and unofficial heritage. The first category thus relates to those objects and practices which are recognized as heritage by their registration on certain lists, based on a given set of assumptions regarding their treatment as identified subjects. These registrations are laid out by governmental institutions (UNESCO being a prime example) in order to promote or safeguard regional, national or global values. Creating order, which is the essential purpose of listing, is necessary to validate and monitor the management, preservation, research and advertisement of this registered heritage. Every list asks for a different set of criteria. All of this makes official heritage undeniably selective. Yet, it is ample: in Amsterdam, the number of national and municipal listed monuments alone already reaches over 9000.¹⁰

⁸ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London, UK: Routlegde, 2006).

⁹ Rodney Harrison, *Understanding the Politics of Heritage* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2010).

¹⁰ Gemeente Amsterdam, "Monumenten En Archeologie," October 14, 2020, https://www.amsterdam.nl/kunst-cultuur/monumenten/.

Unofficial heritage is less easy to number and define. This heritage is of the locally organized kind, formed through the bottom-up relationship between people, objects, places and memories. It derives its status from organisations which do not transcend the local realm, and in the absence of conscious selection and categorization processes it could potentially be anything, as long as its value is recognized by the local community. When speaking of a place that such a local community wishes to conserve, it is this recognition of shared values and connections with both the place and each other which forms the basis of the collective that is to be established in order to reach its conservation goal. 12

Sociologist Arjun Appadurai argued that it is the effort needed to establish these collectives which creates local communities and produces locality. According to him, locality is 'constituted by a series of links between the sense of social immediacy, the technologies of interaction and the relativity of contexts'. The word local, then, does not refer to an inherent spatial concept, but to a mental space through which its *becomes* a spatial concept.

Harrison, drawing on Appadurai's concept of locality, states that heritage comes into play in this production of the local when particular social practices -as used by humans to link themselves to particular communities and places- are rooted in the past, which in turn gives these places more meaning in the present. He compares these social practices and their relation to places with landmark events of individual lifetimes -such as birth and death- and the way these become associated with the places where they took place. Heritage, as it centres around the present relationship between people and material things and places inherited from the past, has the potential of revealing the 'hidden narratives' of 'ordinary communities'. ¹⁴ If people have roots, than these are embedded within the landscapes which they inhabit.

2.2 Landscapes and authors

In 1979, a collection of geographical essays called 'The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes' discussed the ways in which such hidden narratives of ordinary people could be read in the physical landscapes around us. One of these essays was written by Marwyn S. Samuels. Titled 'The Biography of Landscape', he used this text to demonstrate that landscapes are products of interpretation and intervention by human individuals, and that they could therefore not simply be explained away by the force of all-encompassing processes, for example capitalism, migration or deindustrialization. With regard to the making of landscapes, such geographical, physical and social factors rather form the context within which individuals (Samuels calls them 'authors') create their living environments:

¹¹ Harrison, Understanding the Politics of Heritage.

¹² Rodney Harrison, "Heritage as Social Action," in Understanding heritage in practice, ed. Susie West, (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2010), 240-276.

¹³ Arjun Appadurai and Richard Fardon, "The Production of Locality," in *Sociology of Globalization Cultures, Economies, and Politics,* ed. Keri E. Iyall Smith, (New York, New York: Routledge, 2013), 107-116.

¹⁴ Harrison, "Heritage as social action."

"Landscapes without contexts would be like books without pages and language. They might exist in the unbound imagination of some author, but they could not be read by anyone, including the author himself. Similarly, landscapes without authors would be like books without writers. They too might exist, but only as bindings with empty pages." ¹⁵

In order to grasp the nature of these authored landscapes, Samuels makes a distinction between imagined worlds and worlds as lived-in places. Whenever an individual perceives an already given environment and reshapes it by attributing a particular meaning and content, he speaks of landscapes of impression. Geography textbooks, nationalistic literature, and poems and paintings depicting specific landscapes are obvious examples of such imaginary places. When these imaginations and ideas are in fact translated into *language*, they can form the intellectual context for the making of landscapes. ¹⁶ Landscapes of expression are, then, the ideas as they are brought into reality, the physical landscape in which we move around. ¹⁷

As Kolen and Renes (2015) make clear in their discussion of The Biography of the Landscape, authorship comes along with authority. Particularly in cities, this means that some individuals -usually the ones operating on behalf of larger institutions, such as urban planners and developers- are more easily recognized as authors of the landscape than others. According to the French philosopher Michel de Certeau, however, the most influential authors are not the ones enjoying the greater authority, but the masses on street level, whom he calls 'ordinary practitioners'. As residents, visitors and passers-by, they shape the everyday life of the city and thereby give structure and meaning to urban spaces.¹⁸

As these urban spaces over time ever receive new meanings, values and functions, they grow a landscape which is built up from many different layers. These layers of meaning are visually distinguishable when it comes to the ways in which landscapes are being used, but are rather 'hidden' with regard to their interpretation. In order to study the meanings and values attributed to urban spaces, one is dependent on related accounts, stories and artistic endeavours of these ordinary practitioners.

Hanneke Ronnes, in The Quiet Authors of an Early Modern Palatial Landscape, paid explicit attention to the transformation of a landscape without reconstruction, by studying the 18th century life of the Dutch palace Het Loo, the period in between the construction and later structural changes.

Amsterdam University Press B.V., 2015), 33-34.

¹⁵ Marwyn S. Samuels, "The Biography of Landscape - Cause and Culpability," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, ed. Donald W. Meinig, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1979), 64-65.

¹⁶ Note: often they do not. Samuels recognizes that "all impressions do not necessarily find reflection in the landscape, anymore than all ideas and wishes are realized." - Samuels, "The biography of Landscape," p.73.

Poets, artist and philosophers may explain the meaning of landscapes, but they do not necessarily tell anything about their making. However, this does not do away with the fact that extant landscapes have in them, authors who can -and should, for his argument- be identified.

¹⁷ Samuels, "The biography of Landscape."

¹⁸ Hans Renes and Jan Kolen, "Key Issues," in *Landscape Biographies - Geographical, Historical and Archaeological Perspective* on the Production and Transmission of Landscapes, ed. Jan Kolen, Hans Renes and Rita Hermans, (Amsterdam, Netherlands:

By means of the biographical approach, relying mostly on ego documents such as diaries, letters and travel accounts, she was able to reveal a landscape that has been lived in and changed throughout this century, for example through reconfigurations of the palace garden and interior. The ordinary practitioners responsible for these changes have remained rather unknown (quiet) in the numerous other studies on the famous palace, but they were the ones keeping the landscape alive and by documenting their experiences, they undeniably contributed to the palace's history. Despite the absence of building campaigns, Het Loo had been part of both physical and mental landscapes.¹⁹

Ronnes' study is linked with mine, as I too study landscapes from a period in which little was actually built. I will show that their history did, however, not came to a temporary standstill. By discussing the rather discrete changes in the landscape that did occur, I will speak up for some of the quiet authors by which these changes where brought about.

2.3 Decay

In 1903, the Austrian-Hungarian art-historian Alois Riegl (1858-1905) wrote a pamphlet called "Der Moderne Denkmaltus" (The modern cult of monuments) in which he opposes old age value with historical value. While the latter is concerned with the quality of an object as a document of a given period in history, old age value is based on an emotional attachment to transience, the appreciation of something because it looks old. In order to maintain this particular value, such objects should not be restored, since that would erase the old and weathered appearance. It would make it seem as if it has been artificially extracted from the natural cycle of origin and decay.²⁰

Leaving an object to decompose, then, is the best thing to do in order to maintain the oldage value. However, in practice, this hands-off approach usually turns out to be unattainable. Namely, an object left to decay will by the undeniable forces of nature, eventually break, tear, collapse or vanish and become unrecognizable from the way it used to look. As it has long been common belief that the recollection of memory relied upon the existence of its material container, the fading of an object supposedly went accompanied with a loss of historical value and identity. Therefore, 'saving' objects from disintegrating by restoration practices has ever been the dominant way of preserving heritage.²¹

Caitlin DeSilvey, in 2017, wrote *Curated Decay: Heritage Beyond Saving*, a book in which she experiments with approaches that seek to acknowledge the (historical) significance of a place or object without arresting the natural life-cycle. She writes: "The disintegration of structural integrity does not necessarily lead to the evacuation of meaning; processes of decay and disintegration can be culturally (as well as ecologically) productive."²²

¹⁹ Hanneke Ronnes, "The Quiet Authors of an Early Modern Palatial Landscape," in *Landscape Biographies - Geographical, Historical and Archaeological Perspective on the Production and Transmission of Landscapes,* ed. Jan Kolen, Hans Renes and Rita Hermans, (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press B.V., 2015), 205-233.

²⁰Marlite Halbertsma and Marieke Kuipers, *Het Erfgoeduniversum: Een Inleiding in De Theorie En Praktijk Van Cultureel Erfgoed* (Bussum, Netherlands: Coutinho, 2014), p. 55-63.

²¹ Halbertsma and Kuipers, Het Erfgoeduniversum.

²² Caitlin DeSilvey, Curated Decay: Heritage beyond Saving (Minneapolis, USA: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), p.5.

In imaginatively written chapters, she shows various examples of areas where anticipation for -or even acceptance of- the eventual vanishing of culturally valued objects or places leads involved local communities or individuals to set up projects which explicitly relate to the decay and the uncertainty that comes with it.

For memories to be expressed, she argues, one does not need a stable material object if those memories are believed to be generated by a continuing interaction between mind and matter. DeSilvey quotes archaeologist Siân Jones, who suggests that "we need to be more open to the processes through which things "grow, change, rejuvenate, collapse and decay, and attentive to the meanings and values that are produced along the way." ²³

The fact that it took more than a hundred years after Riegl's *Denkmaltus* for a scientist to extensively explore the hands-off approach with regard to heritage objects tells a lot about the practical complications that come with it, something which DeSilvey also encounters in her fieldwork. Leaving landscapes, buildings and structures to disintegrate at their own pace could be considered a philosophical rather than a policy-based way of looking at the world. In cities in particular, places in decay are usually subject of negative perceptions, a quick indication of which could be provided by simply looking for the term online: 'big problem', 'stop decline' and 'decrepitude' are among the first results that show up. Such cries are mainly related to urban planning and other professions related to urban development. These practices exist by the gratitude of intervention, a phenomenon diametrically opposed to decay, which thrives by the absence of interference. Another explanation could be sought in the general urge within urban areas to maintain a constant state of (economic) growth. Decay does not fit into this paradigm, since it is often interpreted as something that does the exact opposite of growing: dying.

The following research embodies an effort to think in a different direction. It explores two landscapes where intervention is lacking rather than reigning, even though it is never really absent. It plays with DeSilvey's suggestion that decay can be a culturally productive process from which new memories, values and meanings can be derived.

2.4 Methodology

I have taken Marwyn Samuels' approach to landscapes as my guideline throughout this research. This has a defining impact on its structure, as it is therefore divided up in two chapters, with each chapter covering one landscape biography. I deliberately start with the biography on Het Stenen Hoofd. This is the pier I am most familiar with and where the ideas for this research took root. I use the second biography on Kop van Java both as a mirror to my findings for Het Stenen Hoofd and to provide an alternative perception of decaying landscapes.

In order to understand the various developments within these landscapes, the biographies follow a more or less chronological line. In a way, the chronology also serves to track the process of decay, which of course runs along with time.

8

²³ DeSilvey, Curated Decay, p.9

However, the stories are structured by the different theoretical concepts which come into play within these developments. Since the stories of both landscapes run along their own lines, those structures take on different forms between the two biographies. The similarity lies in the continuing relationship between on the one hand the physical landscapes, upon which the process of decay imposes its will and wherein the expressions of several authors become visible, and on the other hand mental landscapes, under which fall both landscapes of impressions and layers of meaning. This distinction also provides the opportunity to separate tangible from intangible heritage, although I hope to make clear that they are inseparable.

Following Samuels in his theoretical concepts, I had not much of a choice other than using his methodology as well. Samuels writes about his methods of research:

"By means of discussion and interviewing as well as consulting broad archives of individuals we can probe the intentions of individuals in order to find the meanings by which they shape their environments and create landscapes of meaning."²⁴

Following this, I tried to find the names of individuals who seem to have left their mark on the landscape and attempted to arrange interviews with them. Where this was not possible I used weblogs, videos and other online sources. To track down the various changes within the landscapes, I sought information in municipal archives (both textual and visual) and newspaper articles. Finally, I visited both piers in person to find signs which illustrated the developments in the landscapes that I had found throughout my research. I documented these findings by taking photographs, some of which I used to support my story.

²⁴ Samuels, "The biography of Landscape," p.65

3 Het Stenen Hoofd

3.1 A harbour pier

Het Stenen Hoofd is located along the Westerdoksdijk, a street which name refers to its primal function as a dike, built in the early 19th century to protect the Westerdokshaven from the tides of the IJ river and its silt, brought along from waters further inland. Later that century, after the nearby construction of the Central Station, the protective function of the dike faded. A port railway line was constructed, which connected the Westerdoksdijk to the Central Station by a rotatable railway bridge. Rotating railway systems were also used further up west when the dike was provided with two piers, which received deep-sea ships as well as steamships from several well-known companies at the time, such as the Royal West India Mail Service and the Holland-America Line. Working with railway turntables, however, proved to be a complicated matter and in 1903 a new pier was constructed, attached diagonally to the dike so that normal rail lining was possible.²⁵

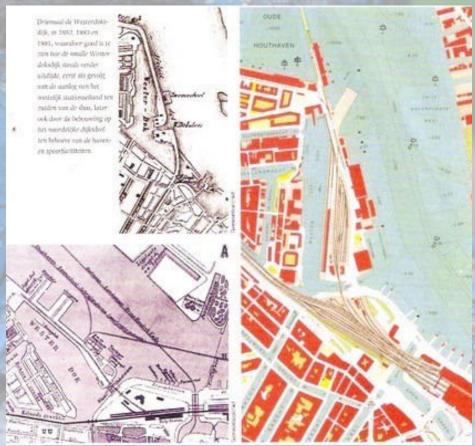


Figure 2: Historical development around Westerdoksdijk. Top left: situation from 1851. Bottom left: situation from 1882, including the first two piers. On the right: situation from 1982, showing Het Stenen Hoofd. (source: Neline Kuipers)

²⁵ G. Hoogewoud, "Het Stenen Hoofd, Steiger Van De Holland-Amerika Lijn in Amsterdam," Het Stenen Hoofd, steiger van de Holland-Amerika Lijn in Amsterdam - Vereniging Vrienden van de Amsterdamse Binnenstad, April 2015, https://www.amsterdamsebinnenstad.nl/binnenstad/269/stenen-hoofd.html.

Het Stenen Hoofd, as the pier came to be known due to its basalt stone outer walls, was originally intended to measure a width of 90 meters, but was reduced to 50 meters when the main harbor activities along the IJ river were shifted to the east of Central Station. Consequentially, the pier was only suited for smaller steamships, such as those from the Holland America Line.

The company sublet the pier for the first 25 years and had a warehouse and office building constructed on the site, foreseeing a long-term prosperity. The prospect would not be met by reality. The number of docking ships declined from the very start: the pier even stayed empty throughout the whole year of 1912. Sparse documentary recording of the company's ships docking Het Stenen Hoofd also indicate a limited use. After the contract with the Holland-America line had expired, Het Stenen Hoofd was in use for transhipment activities and as docking area for imposed cargo and passenger ships and later also school and tourist ships. ²⁶



Figure 3: Het Ste<mark>nen Hoofd several years after its completion, the railway, office building and warehouse clearly visible. (source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam)</mark>

The exploitation of the pier for seaport transhipment was officially ended in 1968, due to technical defects and economical obsolescence.²⁷ In the following years, the warehouse was kept in service and Het Stenen Hoofd was occasionally still used for docking, however rather by non-trade related ships. Towards the end of the 1970's, the pier had become desolated and a subject of demolition. However, it also pulled the attraction of cultural non-profit organisations who saw in the decaying pier a potential for (temporary) (re-) use.

²⁶ G. Hoogewoud, "Het Stenen Hoofd, steiger van de Holland-Amerika Lijn in Amsterdam."

²⁷ Document - (1976-1984) Stukken betreffende herbestemming, reconstructie, inrichting en bebouwing van het Stenen Hoofd from Archief van het Gemeentelijk Havenbedrijf, Archive: 30185, Inventory number: 103, https://archief.amsterdam/archief/30185/103. p.121.

3.2 Breeding ground for local initiatives

3.2.1 Obstructions and destructions

In december 1977, living collective De Witte Huizen was looking for housing in the city and considered the old office building (which went by the name Gruno) a suitable place to dwell. The collective asked to rent the building and offered to renovate the place themselves since they had experience in transforming old business premises into habitations. The offer was an opportunity for the municipal harbor authority to avoid the estimate costs of 400.000 guilders for renovating the Gruno building. However, the councillor did not show any sign of interest and chose to push the settlement of a financially more profitable youth hotel instead, even though the living collective had made clear to see no problem in having the hotel as their neighbour. Eventually, neither the youth hotel saw the light of day, as the head of the urban development department demanded a more lucrative project on the pier.²⁸

Another cultural initiative came from the theatre organization DOGtroep, which filed a request to use the empty Gruno building for a month-long project. (archive 30185, page 219). In this project, the building would be transformed into a dynamic environment, with different parts of the building relating to different atmospheres, together forming a labyrinth of imagination. During this month, the house would be inhabited by members of the project, but would be open to visitors two separate hours a day. The project members would continue to build on the environment, while simultaneously leave things that were built earlier fall into decay. A visitor who returns a week later would see the same world in a different phase, forming a comment on, or continuation of, what he saw earlier that week.²⁹

The DOGtroep request was declined with the brief announcement that the Gruno building would be demolished rather soon. Indeed, plans for demolition of the warehouse, the office and even the pier in its entirety were already in an advanced stage around the time. The apparent hurry to proceed with the destructions formed the stand-in-the way for both cultural initiatives and was indicated by the municipal harbor authority that wanted to transform its obsolete property into a commercially viable site. The city government were, as became clear in De Witte Huizen case, on the same page, but had no plans for the future of Het Stenen Hoofd of its own and struggled with incoming requests for its commercial exploitation, due to existing building restrictions on the site, which she was not inclined to change overnight.

These restrictions were not part of a zoning plan -as that did not exist for the site- but were integrated into a building regulation by which any potential transformation had to be tested. The law here prohibited the construction of any other type of housing on the pier than service housing and this made financially profitable building projects virtually impossible.

²⁸ Document - (1976-1984) Stukken betreffende herbestemming, reconstructie, inrichting en bebouwing van het Stenen Hoofd from Archief van het Gemeentelijk Havenbedrijf, Archive: 30185, Inventory number: 103, p.158. https://archief.amsterdam/archief/30185/103,

²⁹ Ibid., p.219.

³⁰ Ibid., p.82.

This in turn hindered the total destruction of the pier, as such building programmes were the only ones that could cover the estimated demolition costs of 6 million guilders.³¹

Following plans of urban renewal in the surrounding area, several commissions and city governmental departments together had held secret consultations in 1978, wherein was opted to change this building regulations in order to allow regular housing to be built on the pier. When organized local residents had become aware of these plans, they filed a complaint with the city council, as they did not appreciate the lack of involvement and opposed such residential development on Het Stenen Hoofd. In reaction, they pled for the pier to return to its former function as a docking area for passenger and school ships, claiming that the supposedly following influx of people would be a welcome financial-economical injection for the neighbourhood.³²



Figure 4: The far end of the pier after the unfinished excavation. It left a small lagoon, which later came to be referred to as the 'Natte Punt'. (source: Stad<mark>sarchief Amsterd</mark>am)

Eventually, both the residential development and the local citizens' initiative were obstructed by the city councillor. He argued Het Stenen Hoofd to be an unsuitable site for residential buildings, due to the secluded location (which could not provide nearby shopping facilities nor public transportation), the high noise pollution from the traffic on the Westerdoksdijk and the dust nuisance from the grain silo, sitting one hundred meters west of the pier. He also left a short mention of the damaging influence that buildings on the pier could have on the historical city profile, but found the earlier discussed arguments valid enough to withhold himself from elaborating further on that claim. The local resident's hopes for a return to the harbor function could not be met since deprecation of the pier had occurred to such extent that rehabilitation was not a realistic option.³³

³¹ Document - (1976-1984) Stukken betreffende herbestemming, reconstructie, inrichting en bebouwing van het Stenen Hoofd from Archief van het Gemeentelijk Havenbedrijf, Archive: 30185, Inventory number: 103, p. 122 https://archief.amsterdam/archief/30185/103.

³² Ibid., p.150.

³³ Ibid., p.122

By the end of 1978, both the warehouse and the Gruno building were demolished. It was also decided to excavate the far end of the pier, since the risk of collapsing into the fairway was assumed too big of a thread for the ships passing by. It proved to be such a hard nut to crack that the demolition work eventually had to stop, leaving that part stripped of its upper deck and the walls, but with the form intact and the stone posts still standing.³⁴ After the removal of the Gruno building and the warehouse, the work done had caused the most drastic change of the physical landscape.

3.2.2 A landscape growing a character

In 1980, the same group of organized local residents that filed the complaint about the secret meetings two years earlier, objected against the still ongoing development plans. They claimed that Het Stenen Hoofd seemed 'to lead its own life', referring to their lack of involvement in the consultations about possible building on Het Stenen Hoofd. Apparently, they already perceived the empty pier as a place which belonged to them and feared to have no authority regarding its future. Going into the next decade, the Stenen Hoofd did start to lead a life on its own, though it was rather by growing a character as decaying landscape. The process of decay could set a pace because the pier was left abandoned most of the time, but the landscape that had started to grow from this also suited some artistic endeavours and other temporary uses.

These years, the area around Westerdoksdijk was characterized by squatted warehouses, houseboats and caravans. In this 'free state', people created their own public spaces, which makes it plausible to assume that Het Stenen Hoofd did indeed not draw much attention as a place for locally organized entertainment and recreation.³⁶ However, such a deserted landscape within an urban environment could still render meaning, as could be read from the words of a city resident, who describes the Stenen Hoofd around that time as a beautiful piece of land: "Already back then, this was one of the few places where you could walk with your dogs without being looked at dirty because you walk your dog! To sit on the stones, watch the birds, ships, water, wind and enjoy the peace was a lovely thing to do. The former old grain silo was also an eye apple, with beautiful swans at the end of the pier."³⁷

The scenery of water, stones and birds appeared to work as temporary landscapes of expression as well. In 1981, for example, artist Hans Hamers had his Monument van de Tijd (Monument of the Time) installed at the far end of the pier. The Monument was a ship reminiscent of Noah's Ark and explicitly used its location by emphasizing the contrast between the primitive looking artwork and the power plant on the opposite site of the IJ.

³⁴ Hans Van der Made, Skype conversation with author, July 14, 2020.

³⁵ Document - (1976-1984) Stukken betreffende herbestemming, reconstructie, inrichting en bebouwing van het Stenen Hoofd from Archief van het Gemeentelijk Havenbedrijf, Archive: 30185, Inventory number: 103, p.6. https://archief.amsterdam/archief/30185/103.

³⁶ Hans Haastere, Skype conversation with author, June 22, 2020.

³⁷ G, De Oude and Bella. "Laat Stenen Hoofd hondenvrijplaats zijn". *Het Parool*, July 9, 2011. https://advance-lexis-com.vu-nl.idm.oclc.org/document/?pdmfid=1516831&crid=81cac11e-cceb-432a-910f-ac40aa78648b&pddocfullpath=%2Fshared%2Fdocument%2Fnews%2Furn%3AcontentItem%3A538N-CJ01-DYRY-N54S-00000-

This supposedly created an alienating effect which confronted the viewer with the societal problems and dangers of the time, such as the Cold War.³⁸

The vicinity of the water gave the impression that the ship had either just stranded or was ready to leave for the sea, in both cases symbolizing a dangerous and uncertain journey. The structure did service as a living museum, conserving audio-visual archive material that showed the causes of these problems and dangers. It was guarded by Sjoerd de Jong, whom Hans had accidentally met on the spot when the former had come to inhabit the ship in search for shelter. As resident-conservator, Sjoerd arranged the ship interior and grew wild vegetation. Hamers had meant to use the ship as décor for a film wherein Sjoerd would be the main character, but he never came to finish his project: the monument had to make way because it was believed to block the view for spectators of the SAIL, a quinquennial sailing ship event along the IJ river which attracted a million visitors from all over the world and of whom many would gather around the pier. The ship was eventually set on fire, presumably at the insistence of the councillor, who had on multiple occasion expressed his aversion against the monument and its scenery.³⁹



Figure 5: Monument van de Tijd on Het Stenen Hoofd in 1982. (source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

The dependence of temporary 'inhabitants' of Het Stenen Hoofd on the tolerance of the municipality with regard to their possibility to stay was also shown several years later, when the police had been ordered to take away several caravans which had been housing on Stenen Hoofd for three weeks. The municipality was afraid that a tolerance towards the caravans here would lead to more caravans settling outside official caravan places elsewhere.⁴⁰

³⁸ ShowroomViewer, "Showroom - Sjoerd de Jong," November 10, 2011, video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_bbltlgnXwk&feature=share&fbclid=lwAR3-H3SE8hq3we5RV16RqZH-xJPypgOq1tKVR2O69Q8zV8nR 3Gwl7WV3v0.

³⁹ Document - (1976-1984) Stukken betreffende herbestemming, reconstructie, inrichting en bebouwing van het Stenen Hoofd from Archief van het Gemeentelijk Havenbedrijf, Archive: 30185, Inventory number: 103, https://archief.amsterdam/archief/30185/103.

⁴⁰ Anonymous, "Politie Ontruimt Stenen Hoofd," *Leeuwarder Courant : Hoofdblad Van Friesland*, July 1, 1989, p. 3, http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010566997:mpeg21:p003.

The episodes of Monument van de Tijd and the caravans provide insight in the dynamic of the no man's land that Het Stenen Hoofd was becoming. One's abandonment (the municipality and the harbor authority) of the landscape gave way to the appearance of others (Hans, Sjoerd and the caravan dwellers), which caused a clash of authority over its design. While the abandoning party had not managed to come up with a workable solution, the ground of the decaying pier had shown its fertility to the socio-cultural expressions of the 'new' occupants. Uncertainty about what could grow from that soil -and perhaps the incapacity to deal with that uncertainty- led the municipality to prioritize order over chaos. Apparently, not only the local community feared a loss of control over the future of Het Stenen Hoofd.



Figure 6: Het Stenen Hoofd in 1989, temporarily inhabited. (source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

3.2.3 The authorship of Stichting Stenen Hoofd

On the 16th of May, 1988, three local resident put their hand writing on a document confirming the establishment of the foundation Stichting Stenen Hoofd. They had found common ground in the wish to save the pier from the looming high-rise of the then still public-private *IJ-oever* project and wanted to use the place for recreation and small-scale events for the neighbourhood. The municipality agreed on the request on the condition that the responsibility of the management and eventual risks were the Stichting's to take. By means of a covenant, the Stenen Hoofd would eventually be leased to the Stichting by the municipality.⁴¹

During the next decade, the Stichting started to claim their authorship on the landscape: Tjerk Ruimschotel, involved in the Stichting around the time, writes about this: "One of the possible permanent uses for the Stenen Hoofd was, we thought at that time, a catering destination. Partly to generate some income for the management of the public space and partly to have someone inhabiting the area itself: eyes-on-the-street, but mainly because the place would gain extra quality if you could do eat and drink something there."

⁴² Tjerk Ruimschotel, personal conversation via email by author, July 27, 2020.

⁴¹ Hans Haastere, Skype conversation with author, June 22, 2020.

With the help of two local restaurant owners, the Stichting attempted to obtain a permit for a small-scale catering establishment. After years of negotiations with the municipality a temporary permit for the catering was granted and in 1998 and an old Romney shed and two sea containers were set up to provide a mobile kitchen. That same year, the Stichting organized a party on the pier to collect money in order to be able to organize more cultural activities in the future.⁴³

The arrival of the shed, and perhaps the donations from the party too, did help to increase the number of events during the following years. As it had been its aim from the beginning, the Stichting tried to keep with a small-scale and cultural character for the activities. There were, for example, the annually recurring neighbourhood party *Hemel op het Hoofd* and a month-long lasting theatre performance. Furthermore, some artists made and exhibited their work there, like Hans Hamers had done two decades earlier.⁴⁴ On the other hand, the arrival of a bungee jump crane on the pier was objected, because such an expensive and supralocal attraction would not fit with the character that the Stichting wanted to uphold.⁴⁵



Figure 7: The landscape of Het Stenen Hoofd in 2001, more than two decades into its post-industrial era. Recognizable are the lagoon, the Romney shed, parked cars and growing vegetation (source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

⁴³ Anonymous, "Partijtje Op Rafelig Randje Van De Stad," *Het Parool*, May 22, 1998, https://advance-lexis-com.vu-nl.idm.oclc.org/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:48MV-V5D0-0151-012B-00000-00&context=1516831.

⁴⁴ Neline Kuipers, personal conversation via email by author, August 14, 2020.

⁴⁵ Anonymous, "Bungee Jumpers Leuren Om Plekje," *Het Parool*, October 13, 1998, https://advance-lexis-com.vu-nl.idm.oclc.org/api/document?collection=nwes&id=urn:contentItem:48MV-V9W0-0151-03FW-00000-00&context=1516831.

The pier was not mainly preserved in order to host events, as becomes clear from the words of Neline Kuipers, who was involved with work of the Stichting during the 1990's: "For me, Het Stenen Hoofd was above all a unique place in the neighbourhood that evoked memories of times gone by, and a place that was worth taking action for, so that it could retain its untidy character and openness amidst the advancing urbanization and the on-going traffic across the Westerdoksdijk. After all, it was the only place along the IJ where you could feel the wind around your head and sit and watch the ships."⁴⁶

The lease contract between the Stichting and the municipality ended in October, 2003. That year, the municipality anticipated on the upcoming *Ij-oever* transformation around the Westerdoksdijk by making plans to use the pier for the storage of building material. The Stichting, however, strongly objected against this idea and had gathered no less than three thousand signatures in support. After a consultation between the two parties, the municipality decided to move the building site somewhere else, so that the pier could still be used for events and recreation.⁴⁷

Eventually, the lease between the Stichting and the municipality was extended until 2010, meaning that the pier would officially remain private terrain. To mark this, the municipality closed off the place with a patchwork of fences. The Romney shed kept its place, at least until 2009.⁴⁸

3.3 A flowering landscape

3.3.1 The ecologically productive factor of decay

Around the turn of the 20th century, an important development on national level with regard to the physical landscape of the Stenen Hoofd had place. The *Flora- en fauna wet* took effect, a law which managed the protection of rare animal and plant species within the country. This list included the rustyback (Asplenium ceterach), a fern species which had steadily started to grow in the basalt stone outer walls of the pier over the previous decades. The presence of the fern was brought to attention by Ton Denters, a botanist who had inventoried Het Stenen Hoofd and became aware of its special floristic significance. The outer walls proved to be fertile areas for many types of fern species, the grounds close to the lagoon saw bushes spring, while two trees had been growing along both quays. The rest of the pier had been covered with wild grasses and other plants. Most of them were associated with the industry from the past: seeds from foreign plants had unintentionally come along with the transhipment of goods and sprouted on the spot.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Neline Kuipers, personal conversation via email by author, August 14, 2020.

⁴⁷ Dogge, "Plage krijgt nog wat speelruimte," Het Parool, 2003, https://advance-lexis-com.vu-

nl.idm.oclc.org/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:48MV-V9W0-0151-03FW-00000-00&context=1516831.

⁴⁸ See Appendix

⁴⁹ Ton Denters, "Het Stenen Hoofd - Hét Domein van een Unieke Urbane Flora," in *Stadsflora van de Lage Landen*, ed. Ton Denters, (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Fontaine Uitgevers, 2020), 15, 17.



Figure 8: Asplenium ceterach growing from the outer walls. (source: Ton Denters)

Ton's involvement should not be overlooked in the preservation of Het Stenen Hoofd. The pier became a flora-excursion area of national notoriety, which generated wide support. The inclusion of the fern on the list for the *Flora- en fauna wet* forbade every form of damage done to the plant and thus the destruction or removal of the wall. In 2016, the flora on Het Stenen Hoofd has been examined closely again and the next year a rare type of spurge (Euphorbia Seguieriana) was provided with lawful protection.⁵⁰

The botanical heritage would define the character of the pier in more official documents as time passed by. ⁵¹ In 2014, for example, Stenen Hoofd was included in the Hoofdgroenstructuur, part of the Structuurvisie Amsterdam 2040, a legally non-binding document which sets out the general spatial planning aims and motives for the Amsterdam metropolitan area. Within this vision, the Hoofdgroenstructuur served to point out the green areas in town which were assumed to be of great value, together creating a main 'structure' of areas stimulating living environment, air quality, recreation, biodiversity and so on. Stenen Hoofd became part of the structure because of the presence of the fern species. Its designation prescribes a conservation as a unique cultural-, nature-historical or landscape-architectural monument. ⁵²

The inclusion in the document did not secure legal protection, but rather served to raise awareness and offered conservation guidelines. Stenen Hoofd was never listed as an official heritage object. In 2006, the harbor authority asked the Bureau Monumenten en Archeologie for advice on the monumental status of the pier with regard to the possible demolition of the Natte Punt: The Bureau then stated:

⁵⁰ Ton Denters, personal conversation via email by author, August 24, 2020.

⁵¹ Ton Denters uses the term botanical heritage to describe species that have for a long time directly been connected with certain historical urban biotopes and objects.

⁵² Gemeente Amsterdam on Structuurvisie Amsterdam 2040, Economisch sterk en duurzaam, Gemeente Amsterdam. Amsterdam: Gemeente Amsterdam, 17 February.

"Stenen Hoofd derives its value from the fact that it is an undeniable part of the 20th century large-scale, whimsical structure that characterizes the Western Port area. In addition, this body is especially remarkable because of the slight angle under which it enters the IJ, and the diagonally cut far end. These values are naturally of cultural-historical significance for Amsterdam, but they are no reason to value the separate body of Stenen Hoofd as a monument." ⁵³

Essentially, this advice provided the harbor authority a license -on the grounds of cultural-historical value- to break down the far end of the pier. The material heritage was not considered valuable enough for conservation. The excavation of the lagoon, as a relevant matter of fact, did not take place. Reasons for this had a predominantly financial character, although the rusty backbone of both the pier itself and the Stichting as its loyal caretaker would be unfairly left unnoticed here. Whatever the sum of explanations might be, the landscape of the pier proved to be strong enough to resist any unnatural damage. By its robustness, the pier could be seen as managing its own protection.⁵⁴

3.3.2 The value in temporality

If I were to declare the firmness as important factor in the preservation of Het Stenen Hoofd, that characterization should not be limited to its physical landscape. While consulting engineers were measuring the state of the construction and botanists were discovering the pier as a reservoir for unique types of vegetation -and had some of those ending up on protective lists-, more people with other interests had appeared to give their meaning to the landscape. The socio-cultural layer that grew from this had soon become durable enough for the city to recognize.

Back in 2003, after the municipality had promised to keep Het Stenen Hoofd open for events, the numbers of such sorts started to raise. According to the vision of the Stichting, most of them kept a small, neighbourhood-oriented character. However, the pier also started to host some outdoor events which attracted people from beyond the surrounding area. Amsterdam Plage, for example, was an initiative which turned particular locations in the city into a urban beach during summer time, an idea picked up in Paris and put into practice in various other Dutch cities around the time. The pier, already a well-nigh beach landscape in itself, served as the ideal location for the accompanying set up of shacks, terraces and sand floors. It would host the Plage to positive return for a couple of years. 55

⁵³ Gemeente Amsterdam on Strategienota Het Stenen Hoofd, *Podium aan het IJ*, Gemeente Amsterdam. Amsterdam: Gemeente Amsterdam, 2008. (10 December 2008)

so main caretaker of the pier, The Stichting had always wanted to leave the far end of the pier untouched. In 2013, the governance and management of the pier went to Stadsdeel West, which was the new centralized municipality body taking care of the wider urban area. Talks on the demolition resurfaced, but the money made available by the city for the execution was not enough, which had Stadsdeel West, on their turn, leaving the issue. Otherwise, recent building-technical inventories on the pier had shown no reasons to assume a natural collapse within the next fifteen years at least, which diminished the necessity for demolition. On top of that, the fact that the excavation from three decades ago was cancelled while on the way did not prospect an task easily done per se.

⁵⁵ Hans Haastere, Skype conversation with author, June 22, 2020.



Figure 9: Neighbourhood related activity during the Pluk de Nacht festival. (source: Pluk de Nacht)

The temporary urban beach fashion on the pier seemed to dry out in the years afterwards, but only took on other forms instead. In 2003, local residents had organized another summer event with the open-air alternative film festival Pluk de Nacht (Pick the Night). It was run completely by volunteers, set up in a similar cost-effective way as the urban beaches and kept free entrance. The festival grew a popularity which extended far beyond the neighbourhood and even the city. Fe However, despite the metropolitan status that the festival came to acquire, it maintained its low-key character and the program on Stenen Hoofd (which has stayed the main location throughout the years) has come to include several neighbourhood-related activities. By these ways, Pluk de Nacht has remained a annually recurring visitor of the pier ever since the first edition, obtaining a special position within the otherwise ever-changing cultural program of the Stichting.

This program took on some more definition and limitation when the zoning plan of 2013 had come to mark the area as public space and the municipality had taken up the management of the pier, claiming the Stichting as its partner. A yearly maximum of 40 activity days and 45 exhibition days was set, and the municipality pushed her will to reserve room for a horeca establishment. The Stichting, not eager to welcome a permanent feature of such kind to the landscape, negotiated a season-limitation and the role of main designator of the new function. Ever since, it has made sure to select according to her decade-old vision. The applicant should take the neighbourhood into account, for example by keeping affordable prices. Furthermore, it will only hold the spot for a maximum couple of years and has to agree with dismantling the place after the summer each year.

⁵⁶ Already a few years after the first edition, the festival travelled to other places in the city. From 2011 the organization started with multi-day editions in other cities in the country as well.

⁵⁷ Hans Haastere, Skype conversation with author, June 22, 2020.

Eric Vermathen, chairman of the Stichting for the last decade, explains: "We don't want any party that commercially claims the place. Every time we want to return to the pier as it is, so you can look at it and think about what you can do with it. You can dream about it, but it is what it is." ⁵⁸

His comment essentially describes perhaps the most important layer of meaning embedded within the landscape of het Stenen Hoofd. Its emptiness constitutes the basis for maintaining a vibrant urban space for the 'ordinary practitioners': on the one hand by providing space for the mind to wonder and dream, on the other by providing three dimensional space for many different types of uses and users. Every time the landscape of the pier is allowed to return to its empty state, and thus left to decay, enables DeSilvey's cultural production to continue. It forms a fertile soil for Appadurai's *locality* to emerge through. When these are considered the basic ingredients for local or unofficial heritage to be cooked from, what is served on the plate comes close to a living kind of heritage which owes its preservation to the continuous and ever-changing interaction between people and the object.



Figure 10: Elephant path leading towards a temporarily placed artwork. Visible in the background is a platform for rowing practice, likewise placed on a temporary basis. (source: author)

3.3.3 Municipal impressions

The municipality, on their turn, seemed less tenacious to preserve Het Stenen Hoofd 'as it is'. As I mentioned before, Het Stenen Hoofd was never rewarded an official protective status on any ground, but an even stronger indication was given by a policy document that was set up within the wider context of the *IJ-oever* development project.

⁵⁸ Eric Vermathen, Skype conversation with author, June 12, 2020.

This project would finish around 2012 and the aim of the document was to provide a development plan for Het Stenen Hoofd, so that it would make the deadline in a definitive form.

A designer team of several professionals came up with 5 different models, from which it eventually advised the *minimum-model*, "approaching the current character of Het Stenen Hoofd (rawness, roughness) best". ⁵⁹ The terms 'raw' and 'rough' seemed to reflect an explicit recognition for the visual elements of decay on the pier, but turned out be rather hollow in the light of the model's explanation, which suggested the laying of a new pavement or green floor. The design team did however recognise the socio-cultural layer in the landscape:

"Het Stenen Hoofd already has an urban significance because of the small-scale cultural events that have been organized there in recent years, such as "Pluk de Nacht". Het Stenen Hoofd has also served as a city beach for several years. The atmosphere in both cases are small-scale, approachable, non-commercial and a little alternative. This type of event will continue to work at Stenen Hoofd in the future. The Kop van Java is three times the size of Het Stenen Hoofd, and is therefore more fitted to large-scale, commercial events". 60

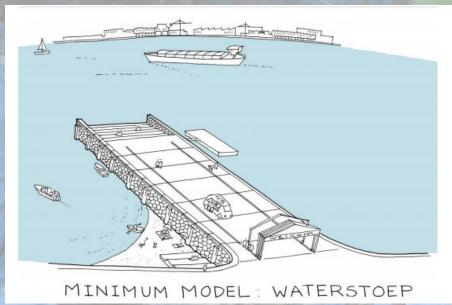


Figure 11: Landscape of impression: visual interpretation of the minimum model by the governmental design team. The outer walls are preserved, the rest of the pier is altered to a point of incognition. (source: Strategienota)

Here, the comparison with the Kop van Java is interesting. On the one hand, it suggests a direct relation between the size of the pier and the type of events which it is suited to. On the other hand, the small-scale and non-commercial characteristics on Het Stenen Hoofd seem legitimized by the nearby alternative for events with a metropolitan character. It is a reminder that, despite its predominantly local realm, the landscape of the pier was playing a part within a much wider context of urban development along the river. To the approach concerning the Kop van Java, I will, of course, return in the next chapter.

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⁵⁹ Gemeente Amsterdam on Strategienota Het Stenen Hoofd, *Podium aan het IJ*, Gemeente Amsterdam. Amsterdam: Gemeente Amsterdam, 2008. (10 December 2008), p.28.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p.24.

Eventually, the minimum model was translated into in the zoning plan of 2013. Het Stenen Hoofd was designated as "a public recreation area, where the location is kept as empty as possible and layouts are kept to a minimum." In contrast to the vision of the model, the original floor including most of its vegetation was kept intact. It leaves little doubt that the failure to proceed with the demolition of the Natte Punt had a significant role in that decision. Het Stenen Hoofd, to the satisfaction of the Stichting and many local residents (and perhaps the designer team as well) maintained its raw character. However, due to its officially acquired status of public area, the physical landscape of the pier did take on some definition. This will be the main subject of the next and final paragraph.

3.4 Managing decay in a public area

As for the maintenance of the Natte Punt, the municipality eventually added some boundary-defining dimension to the landscape of the pier by placing a fence work with warnings on top of the half excavated quays. The lagoon and the small beach were left accessible. They have mainly been used by dogs and their human companions. Other visitors of the pier, their number having risen exponentially on hot sunny days, move to the quays. The most courageous ones amongst them gladly take the three meter deep jump into the IJ-river water. Although swimming is officially prohibited, the water department of the police - stationed a few hundred meters away from the pier- have usually tolerated it.



Figure 12: Friction over authority on display at the Natte Punt. Here, swimming is no longer tolerated. (source: author)

⁶¹ Gemeente Amsterdam on Stadsdeel West, *Bestemmingsplan Spaarndammers en Zeehelden*, Gemeente Amsterdam. Amsterdam: Gemeente Amsterdam, 2012. (20 June 2020)

The rising number of visitors has been taking specifically much lift over the last decade, after the building projects around Westerdoksdijk had all been finished and the municipality had, by the law of urban planning, defined Het Stenen Hoofd as public space. Another factor which caused more people to discover the pier was the temporary ferry connection with the northern river side, arriving across the southern quay for several years. 62 Typically, the area from which the ferry originally arrived -and to where it would go back afterwards- was a building site for a high-rise tower, one kilometre further away. The locomotive of the *Ij-oever* project might had been disappearing in the distance, but it still left behind a foggy smoke coming from its pipe. Het Stenen Hoofd, where that train had halted too short to do much work, was now -because it was left undeveloped- a place where 'problems' from elsewhere could be solved.

On their turn, the Stichting have tried to keep guiding things in the right direction on the crowding pier, attempting to provide clashes between the growing number of local residents who use the pier to walk their dogs and other users who come to recreate. The first group is encouraged to clean up after themselves, while organizers of temporary events are prevented from occupying the whole pier, so that the local residents can still visit. Correspondingly to the management of the catering establishments, the Stichting does not at any time want one party to claim the pier. 63

3.4.1 The (quiet) authorship of Adélaïde Dupré de Pomarède

With the pier officially becoming a public area, the municipality wanted to get rid of the old and uninviting patchwork of fences. ⁶⁴The Stichting showed a clear desire to preserve the character of the old barrier under the new circumstances: "We wanted a fence through which you can look, but at the same time one which indicates: 'behind there, it's not the same as here'. But we don't want a fence that closes off the pier after 8 p.m., for example. And it should not tear your clothes when you decide to climb over it."65

Eric asked French landscape architect Adélaïde Dupré de Pomarède to come up with a design for the new fence. She managed to translate the ideas of the Stichting in the artwork and combined them with her own impressions of the landscape.

The whole barrier is set up from flat posts standing apart but at close distance from each other, creating a long row of vertical frames that allows only a fragmented view of the area on the other side. Adélaïde has chosen for the rusty-looking Corten Steel as material for the posts: "This idea looks very well with something that was, but also something that continues to be. The reusable material makes a bridge between the past and the new time."66

⁶² Eric Vermathen, Skype conversation with author, June 12, 2020.

⁶⁴ Eric told me that the municipality had proposed to mark the new barrier with a row of tree trunks, which would be a minimum of investment and yet enough to prevent cars from entering the pier. The Stichting did not like this idea, because it would not keep the characteristic separation of the place intact.

⁶⁵ Eric Vermathen, Skype conversation with author, June 12, 2020.

⁶⁶ Adelaide du Pomarède, Skype conversation with author, June 19 2020.



Figure 13: The sharply pointed pillars of the old fence, aptly expressing the message on the bottom of the blue canvas, reading: private terrain, enter on own risk. (source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

She created three entrances, each one marked by larger pillars which take their shape from the pier and are accentuated by a multitude of small, rectangular holes, similar to the spontaneous art on the old pillars in the lagune.

By nightfall, warm light shines through these holes. Everything about the design resembles an intentional modesty. "My goal was not for it to be seen, my goal was integration. It's just there, it doesn't change something. It doesn't force your attention."⁶⁷

Nevertheless, she thinks that the fence has helped to shape the landscape: "The definition is better. Before, my perception was that of *something in between*. It's *something* now. It has an identity. "68

The subtle way in which she has provided the pier with that identity speaks for an appreciation of its ever decaying state and the desire to keep it that way: "I would like to see this place not as empty space, because for the city what's empty has to be full. And I would like that this place can be and stay full of poetry. When you have a place with nothing, it's full of creativity and ideas. I think it's very important in a city to have place like that, where it's full of space. Not only three dimensional, but also space for the mind. You want something that don't stay, every time come back to the nothing."

Adélaïde resembles to great extent the approach of the Stichting with regard to the meaning of the landscape and how it is best preserved. Emptiness should be the basis, but only when it is in anticipation of the next landscape to give expression to. If 'nothing' would actually ever happen, a place such as Het Stenen Hoofd, located within an urban environment bound to intervention and designation, would run the risk of being stopped in its process of decay and thus losing the basis for a landscape consisting of ever-changing layers of meaning.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Adelaide du Pomarède, Skype conversation with author, June 19 2020.

This process of decay had helped Adélaïde shaping her landscape of expression. It was in her intention –'to continue to be', the material she used –the weathered look of the reusable Corten steel- and her design, which turned the fence into a composition of individual components, through which spontaneous vegetation had all space to continue growing.



Figure 14: Giving way to decay. By letting the poles stand as individual components, Adélaïde left space for both existing and new vegetation. (source: author)

3.4.2 Towards the future

Having finally grown in character as an official public area, the pier has entered a new era in its existence. An existence which should not necessarily taken for granted.

Over the last years, Het Stenen Hoofd has been subject of plans to build a bridge to the northern riverside, a project that was originally intended to be carried out on the Kop van Java. The involved parties (the municipality, the harbor authorities and even the national government) could not settle on an agreement and asked an independent commission to look into the case and draw up a definitive advice. Eventually, in this advice, Het Stenen Hoofd has been dismissed as suitable location, due to a lack of space. The definitive decision still has to be made, but it seems that the scenario is off the table.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Michiel Couzy, "3 bruggen, een voetgangerstunnel en nieuwe ponten: zo moet Amsterdam groei opvangen," Het Parool, June 26, 2020, https://www.parool.nl/amsterdam/3-bruggen-een-voetgangerstunnel-en-nieuwe-ponten-zo-moet-amsterdam-groei-

 $opvangen^b1e8f0aa/?utm_source=link\&utm_medium=social\&utm_campaign=shared_earned\&fbclid=lwAR0xMpLmU6zN_8 \\ YWI1PIfLIEIJmxKYLEMIU0qfst2NmVhz1gYtnNv7OpTdw.$



Figure 15: Landscape of impression: a bridge design by developer's corporation XOOMlab. (source: XOOMlab)

Despite the positive outcome for the pier's existence, the episode suggests that the place is not much more than a toy when the greater forces within urban development circles are playing their game. "If developers are the army, then our defense is not a bunker, but a bow and arrow", described Eric, who did gather hundreds of signatures against the bridge with the Stichting. "If we have a certain power, then we have to organize it ourselves by mobilizing people." It is something which the foundation seems to be more concerned with in recent times. The website has been updated after several years of inactivity, posts on the online Facebook-community have been growing in number and this year, the intention is to roll out a survey in the neighbourhood in order to find out what people want to see happen on Het Stenen Hoofd, whether they like to organize something themselves or perhaps become involved in The Stichting.

This, of course, all happens under the assumption that the pier will continue to exist as is in the future: not only in the absence of urban development projects, but in the absence of natural collapse as well. According to the most recent building-technical report, stemming from 2011, the construction was guaranteed to last for at least fifteen more years. With the end of that period approaching now, it seems to be a matter of waiting for a new inventory. Meanwhile, life on the pier goes on as usual and signals of a collapse have yet to appear in the landscape.

⁷¹ Eric Vermathen, Skype conversation with author, June 12, 2020.

⁷² Gemeente Amsterdam from Projectbureau Zuidelijke IJ-oevers. Onderzoek en advisering Stenen Hoofd te Amsterdam. Witteveen+Bos. ASD1236-1. Amsterdam: Projectbureau Zuidelijke IJ-oever, March 2010. (20 June 2020)

3.5 Concluding remarks

Nevertheless, they will appear, at some point in the future. And when they do, the debate over a demolition (partly or completely) will resurface: it is the inevitable way of things to go for a place that is left to decay. It seems unlikely now that anything else than the thread of a natural collapse will cause the landscape of the pier to drastically change, especially after the scenario of a bridge to the northern riverside has been put off the table. all, a place which construction is not sure to remain intact for much longer than a decade is not the most attractive for developers.

The process of decay could, thus, be argued to have been defining for the landscape throughout the entire post-industrial existence of Het Stenen Hoofd. Already from the end of the 1970's, the pier drew the attention from 'ordinary practitioners', whose initiatives in their contexts resonated with the physical landscape: open, undefined and therefore full of space to fill the head with ideas. Authors 'from above' have been dreaming up landscapes of impressions too, but their permanent designs have not come to expression on Het Stenen Hoofd. Some plausible reasons for this, such as the lack of will or resources to invest may not directly seem to have a strong relation to decay, but it is tempting to assume that the pier was, by its physical state, at least to some extent responsible for its own preservation.

From the ordinary practitioners grew a group of local residents who gave voice to their connection with the place from the moment that plans for demolition had grown in seriousness. Some of them organized in the Stichting Stenen Hoofd, a voluntary foundation that has ever since their establishment in 1988 been driven by the wish to keep the pier as it is.

As the Stichting has been the main caretaker of Het Stenen Hoofd, at least up until it became an official public area, its landscape grown to their ideal. In physical sense, this meant an area which drives on temporality, covered with spontaneous vegetation, among which are some unique sorts that even provided the pier with some lawful protection. These surroundings proved to be fertile for a cultural landscape, which seems to have been another significant factor in the preservation of the pier. To turn the words of Adélaïde Dupré de Pomarède, with her fence one of the quiet authors in the landscape, into my research vocabulary: if 'nothing' happens on the pier, all productive that is left from the decaying landscape is the ecological factor, and that is, in the environment of a city, usually not enough for preservation.

4 Kop van Java

4.1 A harbour pier

Kop van Java is situated at the far end of the Java island, a peninsula in the IJ river, east of the Central Station. The island origins from 1890 and was initially built as breakwater, protecting ships docked at the Oostelijke Handelskade, a quay where the first activities of the newly constructed harbor took place. Other breakwater islands were built thereafter in order to reinforce the protection from the stormy waves of the river and increase the docking space. When the harbor grew in size and importance, the breakwater was widened on both the northern and southern side and connected to the Oostelijke Handelskade by a dam. The island east of the dam came to be known as KNSM island (after the shipping company that housed there), the island west of the dam was named Java island. Java island became the central place for colonial shipping, in particular to the Dutch East-Indies: the island and its quays consciously took their names from the colonized area in South-East Asia. The company Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland (S.M.N.) had the biggest share in the shipping and settled on the island in 1910.⁷³



⁷³ Michael van der Vlis, "Begin," Stadsdorp Java eiland, accessed October 12, 2020, http://www.stadsdorpjava-eiland.nl/javaeiland/h/1473/0/1794/Geschiedenis-in-vogelvlucht/Begin.

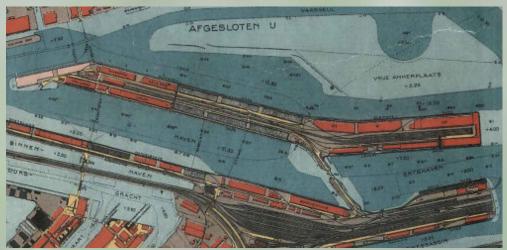


Figure 17: The Java-island in 1922, with the clear-cut Kop van Java on the western end. (source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

The Kop van Java was built as an extension to the island, presumably both to tame the river flow and to create more docking space. It was built at a 45 degree angle on the end of the Java island, following the original form of the breakwater, which followed the fairway along the Oostelijke Handelskade but made a curve to the south on the far west end, in order to keep the river wide enough. Two small warehouses were set up at the beginning of the pier, the rest remained unbuilt.



Figure 18: Kop van Java in 1925. (source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

After World War II, the industry on Java island gradually faded. The global decolonisation caused shipping towards Indonesia (the former Dutch East-Indies) to decline and passenger transport over water became obsolete due to the rise of aviation. S.M.N. eventually left the island in 1968.

After the departure of the shipping companies, timber merchant Jonker-Schuyer came to own most of the Java island. Meanwhile, following the decline of the harbor activities, the surrounding breakwater islands were undergoing a transformation to residential area. Java island was the last in line here, partly due to the long lasting acquisition process, which was succinctly written up in story by Michael Van Der Vlis, city councillor around the time:

"When the municipality came to talk about the acquisition of those sites, the returning timber merchant rubbed his hands, thinking he could make a profit from the municipal wish to purchase the island. But the municipality was more clever and said: "We are not in a hurry, and if you need our cooperation somewhere, you can count on our heartfelt opposition." So it took a while, but eventually Jonker-Schuyer went through the corner."⁷⁴

Although the municipality had reclaimed possession of the Java island, it would not be developed until 1995. In the decade prior to that, some buildings on the island were squatted. One of them was Einde van de Wereld, an empty shed from the municipal harbor authority which was cleaned up and turned into a restaurant. Its name was a figurative speech for the experience of its location: a desolated place at the far northern end of town. "To get there.. you had to cycle to the End of the World!" The restaurant, completely run by volunteering members of the squatters organisation, served free meals every wednesdayand fridaynight and grew a great reputation among skippers, boat dwellers, squatters and other people living close by. Overall, Einde van de Wereld grew into an vibrant meeting place: mostly for them, but also for people living elsewhere in the city or even the country. "There is space for relaxation, discussion, mutual contacts, self-organization, it is a breeding ground for inspiration. It is a place with history, where now still former harbor workers come to share their memories... a place with history for the hundreds of volunteers who have given the restaurant its character along the years and helped shaping its future."⁷⁶

The Kop barely -if at all- seems to have a share in this heritage of the island. After the deconstruction of a remaining large shed, the pier was closed off.⁷⁷ Alice Roegholt, who was (and still is) part of the Einde van de Wereld community and who had for a decade spend her life in and around the island as squatter, described that the pier stayed empty throughout the years. 78 If not even the inhabitants on the island at the time hung out at the Kop van Java, it seems unlikely that other people did and therefore leaves me with the somewhat frightening suggestion that, for more than ten years, the landscape was practically devoid of human activities.

⁷⁴ Michael van der Vlis, "Stadswijk Java-Eiland," Stadsdorp Java eiland, December 24, 2014, http://www.stadsdorpjavaeiland.nl/javaeiland/h/1473/0/1823/Geschiedenis-in-vogelvlucht/Stadswijk-Java-Eiland.

⁷⁵ Daan Thomas, "Voordat het Einde van de Wereld," 30 Jaar Einde van de Wereld, October 2014, 4-5.

⁷⁶ Daan Thomas, "1994," 30 Jaar Einde van de Wereld, October 2014, 11-12.

⁷⁸ Alice Roegholt, personal conversation via email by author, July 24, 2020.

4.2 A bridge too far

Meanwhile, plans to develop the IJ riverside were taking shape. An old plan to connect both sides of the river by a bridge, was dusted off and reviewed. Anticipating the upcoming transformation of the Java island into a residential area, a bridge connecting the island to the Oostelijke Handelskade (which would eventually be completed in 2001) was already a shooin. Half of the work done, one would assume, but reality would prove to be more complex.⁷⁹

In a civil-technical study on the feasibility of a pedestrian and cycling bridge spanning the main fairway of the river, the Kop was destined to serve as the run-up area. The report included a section on urban planning preconditions regarding the construction. Here, the Kop was written to become "a park with trees, completed with a restaurant on the far west end, accessible by a boulevard running along the northern quay. The park has to offer an unobstructed view over the river." 80

Although limited to these few words, this was one of the first separate and detailed development plans for the pier. A park, or any other designation leaving an open space, was a logical idea since a run-up for the bridge would effectively cancel out all other building ideas. The passage also shows the temptation to commercially exploit the appealing riverfront location of the pier. Born was the Kop van Java as an urban attraction, though it was only in the mind: a landscape of impression.

Namely, building a bridge over the main fairway to the northern riverside was not as simple as drawing a line on the map. Public support had not exactly been overwhelming and the municipal harbor authority had strong objections against the plan. Pillars of the bridge would increase the risk of collision and the height of the bridge would obstruct the masts of sailing ships. Bridge constructions with moveable parts would either be (economically) inefficient or dangerous for the shipping as well as the pedestrians and cyclists. A follow-up study of different types of bridges without pillars and maintaining a minimum required height of 32 meters were made, but the municipality eventually abandoned the whole idea of the bridge and chose for the cheaper, safer and less complex alternative of a ferry connection between both sides of the river. The Kop was not part of this connection and retreated from the blown-up stage of riverside redevelopment, back into its role of desolated and barren physical remainder of industrial times. But the pier would soon reappear on stage.

⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Document - (1991-1996) Onderzoek naar de mogelijkheid voor een (fiets)brug tussen de kop van het Java-eiland en Amsterdam-Noord from Archief van het Stadsdeel Zeeburg, Archive: 30669, Inventory number: 4557, https://archief.amsterdam/archief/30669/4557.

⁸⁰ Document - (1991-1996) Onderzoek naar de mogelijkheid voor een (fiets)brug tussen de kop van het Java-eiland en Amsterdam-Noord from Archief van het Stadsdeel Zeeburg, Archive: 30669, Inventory number: 4557, p.32. https://archief.amsterdam/archief/30669/4557.

⁸¹ Document - (1991-1996) Onderzoek naar de mogelijkheid voor een (fiets)brug tussen de kop van het Java-eiland en Amsterdam-Noord from Archief van het Stadsdeel Zeeburg, Archive: 30669, Inventory number: 4557, https://archief.amsterdam/archief/30669/4557.



Figure 19: Kop van Java as building site, in 1997. (source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

Around 1996, construction work on the Java island had started. The Kop, then, was a rugged place, according to a resident who would come to live in the neighbourhood and would occasionally walk his dog on the pier around the time. "It was like the rest of the island, a wilderness of sand heaps and rubbish of building material."82

4.3 Transcending the local realm

4.3.1 Landscapes of impression

While the rest of the island would go on to be transformed as planned, the Kop remained empty. This was not by any means the idea of Sjoerd Soeters, the main architect of the new residential area. His design of the island included an 8 story-high flat apartment on the Kop van Java, topped with little towers of another eight layers. It separated the pier from the rest of the island by a canal. This idea was hushed up by the city, due to the strong visual barrier that would be created.

An alternative in the form of a park with large open arches could count on some support, but crashed because of the price tag.⁸³

Consequently, in the zoning plan of 1997 it was considered that the interpretation of the pier could still be left open for further elaboration in the future. Only a few general preconditions about maximum building height and percentages were included. Furthermore, a suggestion was made to realize a couple of berths for commercial and river cruise shipping. Overall, it was stated that "given the special market potential, an optimal result can be achieved for the so-called 'Kop' of the Java island."

⁸² Bert Kommerij, "Arnoud," 2015, video, https://soundcloud.com/bert-kommerij/arnoud-ten-haaft?fbclid=IwAR3-3KXaqkO2GVkJx4aoRMXG BkljvkF94y2ZGJ6vg9m75KiuRfnmphplRI.

⁸³ Meet the Locals, "Ton Schaap stedenbouwkundige Java eiland," May 12, 2015, video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOLFQbd4Mgl&t=1079s.

⁸⁴ Gemeente Amsterdam from Dienst Ruimtelijke Ordening Amsterdam, *Bestemmingsplan Java- Eiland*, Dienst Ruimtelijke Ordening Amsterdam. Amsterdam: Dienst Ruimtelijke Ordening Amsterdam, February 1997. (20 June 2020)

It appeared that the ultimate design for the Kop was still a bridge too far. While anticipating a plan that could meet the outstanding market potential, the pier served as its own blank canvas. Its empty three dimensional space provided the space in the mind to dream up new landscapes of impression. And it would not only be the minds of architects and urban planners: citizens were invited to dream as well.

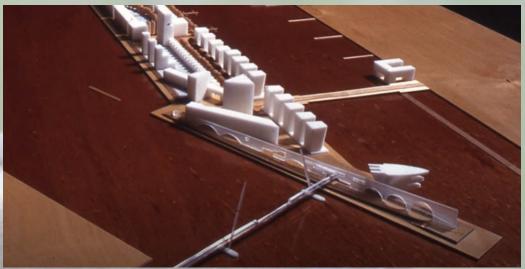


Figure 20: Landscape of the open arches, designed by urban planner Ton Schaap, who had been involved in Soeter's plan for the Java island. (source: Meet the Locals)

During the public consultation for the outline of the zoning plan, several residents expressed their concerns about an eventual transformation of the pier and the weight of their voice in the process. They were not left in the dark: in November, 2000, the municipality, together with the Arcam (Architectural Centre Amsterdam) set out an open inventory for design ideas with regard to the Kop.

Interestingly enough, by then, its own perspective towards the use of the pier had changed in comparison to the notions of the 1997 zoning plan. The preface of the publication 100 ideas Kop Java read: "One thing is certain: the municipality does not want housing or offices here, but something that benefits the whole of Amsterdam."

Whether this was an heart-felt change of approach or more of an encouragement in the direction of its citizens to take the pencil only remains food for thought, but it would turn out to be an eloquent statement.

The invitation was widely accepted and around 100 designs were eventually gathered in the publication, which could be considered to be an extensive collection of landscape impressions. It resulted in such a great variety of ideas that the eventual decision of the municipality seemed inevitable.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ I refrained from discussing individual designs in this biography, as they did not provide me with new insights regarding the research question. Instead, I included several design in the Appendix to give an indication of the variety in ideas.

⁸⁵ Bert Kommerij, "100 Ideëen Kop Java," Over de Kop., July 25, 2015, https://overdekop.wordpress.com/2012/10/07/100-ideeen-kop-java.

The inventory and publication was followed by two public debates and a judgement by the jury. During these gatherings, the dominant opinion turned out to be one that did not involve any design at all: the Kop van Java had best to be kept empty, its development 'an organic process, in which space has to be provided to nature to do its work'.⁸⁷ The jury could not resolve the matter and the book would end up on the big pile of unrealized plans. Kop van Java was split into two parts: the long strip and the triangular area in the south-eastern corner. This corner would be reserved for a hotel. For the strip, a ten-year moratorium was introduced: no plans would be developed until 2010.⁸⁸

Another personal anecdote from Michael van der Vlis might provide a useful insight with regard to the decision to leave The Kop undeveloped. He writes: "The then responsible councillor Duco Stadig confided to me: "I am not sorry about that. I once had a very romantic experience in that place. As long as nothing is built I can cherish it. I am glad to leave the building to my successors". 89

Here, the deserted pier not only created the suitable environment for Stadig's romantic experience to take place, but it also served as the container of that memory. That personal layer of meaning in the landscape would be no longer be traceable when it would be built over. Leaving the Kop empty would enable memories of the past to be preserved, while it provided new ones to be made. Following this line of thought, landscapes in decay could be thought of as both inexhaustible sources and unlimited containers of memories.

4.3.2 From local to metropolitan

On the Kop van Java, however, the process of decay had been stopped when the transformation project on the island was being finalized by constructing the bridge between the Java island and the Oostelijke Handelskade and the pier had started to become a public area. By the 29th of September, 2001, when the bridge was officially opened by Duco Stadig, the ruinous landscape of the previous years had been smoothened by asphalt and Stelcon plates. These plates enclosed an elongated grass strip that stretched out towards the far end of the pier, where several benches and waste bins had been placed. Across the whole of the area no less than twenty symmetrically placed light posts towered ten metres high over the landscape. The rigid and minimalistic lay-out lacked all the creativity from the 100 ideas, it was devoid of any of the allure the municipality was longing for, and it did certainly not seem to invite any natural environment to grow. This was the epitome of the impasse on which the city and its inhabitants had settled.

⁸⁷ Mijntje Klipp, "Laat de kop van Java-eiland nog even 'onbestemd," *Het Parool*, April 13, 2000, https://advance-lexis-com.vu-nl.idm.oclc.org/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:48MV-XXSO-0151-01XS-00000-00&context=1516831.

⁸⁸ Lex Boon, "Ook over 40 Jaar Is De Kop Van Java 'De Mooiste Plek Ter Wereld'," *Het Parool*, January 2, 2018, https://www.parool.nl/nieuws/ook-over-40-jaar-is-de-kop-van-java-de-mooiste-plek-ter-wereld~b32c300b/.

⁸⁹ Michael van der Vlis, "Javakop," Stadsdorp Java eiland, December 27, 2014, http://www.stadsdorpjava-eiland.nl/javaeiland/h/1473/0/1824/Geschiedenis-in-vogelvlucht/Javakop.

The austere plain came to lent itself well for temporary outdoor events and it is tempting to assume that this landscape was explicitly designed for it. Indeed, the team of professionals working on the *minimum model* for Het Stenen Hoofd originally had in mind a similarly flattened floor to support organized recreational activities. The Kop van Java could not escape the fate that would spare its neighboring pier three kilometres away. After all, by its size, it seemed deemed to host the larger, commercial events, to which a rough and raw landscape would supposedly be a hindrance rather than an enrichment.

Already by the end of 2001, the municipality had set out a policy in order to regulate the amount, type and scope of events. The document read that the character of events could be anything between neighbourhood-oriented and city-transcending. And so it occurred. Among the first events was the locally organized Open Haven Podium: a mini festival including music, theatre, art, sports, a neighbourhood lunch and a children's scheme. This wide variety within the program served to show the cultural climate of the transformed islands in the area in a broad fashion. By its tag/label/name, the Open Podium not only created the space for all these different acts, but it also aimed to emphasize the open character of the place and the forthcoming appeal to leave it like that. Boat trips from and to the Kop were meant to stress the nautical side of the area. The festival would be organized every next august for the following five years.



Figure 21: Complete occupation of the Kop van Java during festival times. The cranes in the background represent the rapidly urbanizing surroundings. (source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

Apart from the annually recurring Open Haven Podium, the events would draw their public from far beyond the area. There were festivals, musical concerts from nationally as well as internationally renowned artists, an appearance of the royal family, a temporary European Union-related off-grid city and the quinquennial SAIL event, to name a few examples. 92 Most of these events occupied the whole pier and worked with an entrance fee, which meant that the Kop was then closed off and forbidden terrain for all of those who did not pay.

⁹⁰ Document - (2001-2005) Totstandkoming en evaluatie van het evenementenbeleid op de kop van het Java-eiland from Archief van het Stadsdeel Zeeburg, Archive : 30669, Inventory number: 30669, https://archief.amsterdam/archief/30669/3220.

⁹¹ Anonymous, "Minifestival kop van Java-eiland," Het Parool. August 18, 2001, https://advance-lexis-com.vu-nl.idm.oclc.org/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:48KV-16V0-0151-02C6-00000-00&context=1516831.)

⁹² Document - (2001-2005) Totstandkoming en evaluatie van het evenementenbeleid op de kop van het Java-eiland from Archief van het Stadsdeel Zeeburg, Archive : 30669, Inventory number: 30669, https://archief.amsterdam/archief/30669/3220.

This is a striking difference with Het Stenen Hoofd, where the Stichting exclusively accepts events which do not occupy the whole area and maintain free entrance, exactly for the reason to keep the pier accessible for everybody at all times. It speaks for the distinction between a mere metropolitan character of the one, and the rather local character of the other. Moreover, albeit perhaps related, it speaks for the fact that there was no such organized local community on Kop van Java: at least not one which had acquired itself a role of similar impact within the cultural programming on the pier. Whether the fate of its large size, its hyper-attractive location or its rapidly urbanized surroundings: Kop van Java always seemed destined to transcend the local realm.

This is all by no means to say that there was a lack of local involvement with the pier. On the contrary: the Open Haven Podium was only one example of residents in the area trying to give meaning to the Kop van Java as a public space. Plenty of other cases will follow throughout the next paragraphs.

4.4 Landscape of expression

4.4.1 Heritage in stone

While the festival come-and-go dynamic exemplified the temporary state in which the Kop van Java have found itself, some man had come to occupy a permanent place in the landscape. And he was not denied entrance at any time.

It was a shipper on the look-out, shaped from granite by the Dutch sculptor Pieter Starreveld. Back in 1950, the S.M.N. company had asked Starreveld to create a monument in honour to its shippers who never returned after World War II. It was established at the far eastern end of the pier, next to the main building of the company. When S.M.N. left the island in 1969, the building was demolished and the statue moved with the company to their new territory, further up west. Nineteen years later, the municipality had come to take care of the statue and had it relocated elsewhere in the city. The monument got lost, but not to everybody.

Bep Ganzeman, a former worker of S.M.N., had ever stood objected towards the moving around with the statue. When he got hold of the transformation plans on the island, which turned out not to specify any definite designs for the Kop, he started to raise his voice to get the statue back to its original place. The statue had literally come to stand out of its own sight: after Bep had made his intentions publicly known, he started to receive messages of sympathisers who wrote that they had no idea where the statue actually stood. ⁹⁴
Bep started a committee and received support of relatives, war veteran groups, clubs of former company workers and many others. Among the supporters of the project was Alice Roegholt, who had previously raised her concerns about lost monuments and memorials in the old harbor area and thereby awakened Bep's curiosity.

⁹³ See Appendix

⁹⁴ Alice Roegholt and Ton Heijdra,"Fragment OVT," 2000, soundtrack,
https://www.vpro.nl/programmas/ovt/speel~POMS_VPRO_210423~fragment-ovt-19-maart-2000-uur-2-6-5-min-de-amsterdamse-haven-in-de-tweede-wereldoorlog~.html

"During the previous period of urban development, many places on the island which had an important meaning in the past have gone lost. This is on them." She wrote the wonderfully titled book *In het zicht van de verwoeste haven*, about world war memorials of the former 'destroyed' harbor area. "It is an interesting history. People who have come to live here (on the island, ed.) can learn something about it, so it does not just exist as a monument, but within a certain historical and cultural context."

The efforts of Bep and Alice led to consultations with the municipality. Duco Stadig was aware of the seriousness of the case and designated the Kop van Java as the place for relocation: its prominence being the ultimate tribute to the lost ones who were to be remembered. The statue was inaugurated on the 4th of May, 2003, the national WO II-memorial day. Every next year that date, a memorial ceremony around the statue has been held.



Figure 22: The landscape of Kop van Java in 2006, more than two decades into its post-industrial era. Recognizable are the statue, the grass strip surrounded by lampposts and benches, and in the far right background the bridge. (source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

Interestingly, an information panel which was added at the base of the pedestal, including the names of the shippers who never came home, reads that the monument had 'returned to its historical place'. This was only true to a certain extent, as it was not replaced on its original location, but at the far western end of the pier. However, Alice Roegholt could not think of a better place for the statue: "Joop Hoorn (as the man is called in sailor circles) stands up there in all weathers with his sou'wester, cut from Labrador granite -the hardest granite in the world - and looks out to the sea for possible survivors from the war." ⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Alice Roegholt and Ton Heijdra, "Fragment OVT," 2000, soundtrack, https://www.vpro.nl/programmas/ovt/speel~POMS_VPRO_210423~fragment-ovt-19-maart-2000-uur-2-6-5-min-de-amsterdamse-haven-in-de-tweede-wereldoorlog~.html.

⁹⁶ Alice Roegholt, personal conversation via email by author, August 5, 2020.

Kop van Java now wore a visible layer of meaning, one which was related to its nautical history. In a landscape which by its blank design portrayed a permanent anticipation to a more glorious future, there was space created to look back. And given these empty -and therefore usually serene- surroundings in which the statue had found itself, there was arguably no better place indeed to commemorate the death.

4.4.2 Shifting landscapes and a secret commission

In the same year as the statue was established, the pier witnessed another light transformation: a skate-, basketball- and football court came to shape the physical landscape. The local youth turned out to have no outdoor facilities close by. The municipality had no other place to turn to. The asphalt floor of the eastern part of the Kop suited perfectly. It costed them close to nothing: in terms of money, but also in terms of space. The north-eastern half of the pier was not the area where the events occurred and residents walked their dogs, and it was -additionally advantageous- the furthest away from the memorial statue.

The playground would almost make it to ten years. Curiously enough, it was deconstructed to make way for a temporary school. The lack of facilities for youth in the transformed harbor area had appeared to be a matter on a broader level as well. A first emergency school at the south eastern end of the pier was replaced in 2011 by a larger second, which ended up in the more spacious north-eastern area. As a consequence of the arrival of the school, a children's playground was installed on the triangular spot that was still reserved for a hotel.⁹⁷



Figure 23: The first playground on the Kop van Java. (source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

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⁹⁷ See Appendix

Elsewhere on the kop, the construction of the pier showed signs of severe decay, which led to several parts of the quays of the Kop being temporarily fenced off. Presumably, they were placed to prevent the happening of situations like the ones along the southern quay, during the first half of the 2010's. This side had turned into a parking area for touring buses and taxis, picking up and dropping off tourists travelling with the river-cruise ships, which had secured their docking space with the years. The fast-driven and heavy-weighted vehicles caused Stelcon plates to break and sink down. Repairs had been carried out and further investigation was done to signal other weak spots in the floor, all of which caused the influx of more temporary fence work. Considering the quickening damage to the floor and the dangerous situations that occurred as taxi- and bus drivers and people and their dogs came to run in each other's ways, the municipality eventually decided to put an end to the coming, going and staying of the cars and improvised a blockade of concrete blocks to keep them out.⁹⁸



Figure 24: This little docking platform has been fenced off since 2008. Visible in the background are Hotel Jakarta and the bridge. (source: author)

The shifting around in the landscape of the Kop van Java signalled its in-between status. According to Ton Schaap, it became "a place to solve problems that could not be solved elsewhere". 99 A characterization that is reminiscent of the ferry docking episode on Het Stenen Hoofd, but on the Kop van Java it had a much bigger impact on the physical landscape.

⁹⁸ Bert Kommerij, "Touringcars," Over de Kop, July 25, 2015, https://overdekop.wordpress.com/2011/04/20/touringcars/.

⁹⁹ Meet the Locals, "Ton Schaap stedenbouwkundige Java eiland," May 12, 2015, video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOLFQbd4Mgl&t=1079s.



Figure 25: Cause and effect, respectively on the back- and foreground. (source: Bert Kommerij)

The shifting landscape of the pier and the problems which had to be solved signalled that the city had still not come up with its ultimate plan. Back in 2007, with the end of the tenyear moratorium approaching, pressure to make work of a definite design had started to rebuild. In contrast to the design contest around the turn of the century, the new debate would not be held in public. On the contrary: a special commission, which was headed by former Arcam director Maarten Kloos, took care of the case in full secrecy. For another set period of ten years, starting in 2008, this small group of experts would operate as the sole receiving channel for all design proposals for the pier. Once a year, they would judge the incoming initiatives and write an advice to the spatial planning councillor, meanwhile refraining themselves from any kind of public discussion in the process. The idea was to come out only when 'a special interpretation of the highest level of international allure' had presented itself. 100

The upcoming ten years of brewing on ideas had meant another decade during which the Kop was destined to remain empty in order to wait for -as it was written in the document accompanying the commission announcement- "a currently unimaginable match between function and location, for the most beautiful project in the world." Île de la Cité in Paris and Punta Della Dogana in Venice were heard as places of inspiration. Was the ultimate design of the Kop, around the time of the contest, supposed to benefit the whole of Amsterdam, it was now destined to serve a global public. The bar could hardly be set any higher. While the commission was waiting for the best project in the world to appear, several residents of the island set up their own projects on the Kop van Java.

https://www.parool.nl/nieuws/ook-over-40-jaar-is-de-kop-van-java-de-mooiste-plek-ter-wereld~b32c300b/.

¹⁰⁰ Lex Boon, "Ook over 40 Jaar Is De Kop Van Java 'De Mooiste Plek Ter Wereld'," *Het Parool*, January 2, 2018, https://www.parool.nl/nieuws/ook-over-40-jaar-is-de-kop-van-java-de-mooiste-plek-ter-wereld~b32c300b/. ¹⁰¹ Lex Boon, "Ook over 40 Jaa<mark>r Is De Kop Van Java 'De M</mark>ooiste Plek Ter Wereld'," *Het Parool*, January 2, 2018,

4.5 Impressions and expressions

4.5.1 The legacy of ordinary practitioners

One of these residents is Bert Kommerij, who came to live on the island around the start of the century. A relationship with the Kop van Java was established soon thereafter, as he and his partner took the proximity of an empty pier as a motivation to have a dog. Walking his pet around, he started to meet a lot of fellow residents, most of them similarly accompanied by hairy quadrupeds. These people were by far the most frequent visitors of the Kop and it should not be called a wonder that such regular meetings would evolve into the organization of multiple residential groups, offline as well as online. Some were explicitly concerned with the preservation of the pier as an empty area. In 2011, Bert himself started the weblog Over de Kop, which was part of a wider initiative, aiming to strengthen the relation between the residents and the pier. "My interest was awakened. I asked myself: what is this weird piece of land? What is the meaning of it? What will become of it?"102 The blog came to serve as a container for all kinds of information, news and ideas he could found, in order to provide himself with some response to his own marvels. He surfed the world wide web for pictures, asked people he met on the Kop what they would want to see on the pier, joined consultations and held interviews with involved urban planners and architects. 103 The corresponding social media account helped to create more awareness among the local community and was also used to announce activities on the pier.

In 2015, he used the weblog to document the process around the next shift in the landscape of the pier. By this year, construction of the long awaited hotel had started in the triangular area south-east to the Kop, meaning that a new place had to be found for the football court which had occupied the spot the previous years. The eastern part of the pier now had to be reconfigured according to the needs of the hotel, the adult residents, the youth, and the temporary school, which place on the Kop was in that same year announced to be tolerated for another five years. The municipality had come up with a design model themselves and invited the residents on the island to think along and draw up their own ideas. Eventually, the 'ordinary practitioners' claimed their authorship on the landscape: a carefully elaborated plan by Jessica Denkelaar, member of one of the local communities, was favored by 89% of the almost 300 residents who voted for a new design and got realized.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Bert Kommerij, interview by author, Amsterdam, June 15, 2020.

¹⁰³ Bert also held an interview with Maarten Kloos, the video footage of which was taken off the internet due to the secrecy of his commission.

¹⁰⁴ Bert Kommerij, "Nieuwe V<mark>ersie Denkelaar Variant," Over de Kop., July 20, 2015, https://overdekop.wordpress.com/2015/05/23/nieuwe-versie-denkelaar-variant.</mark>



Figure 26: Landscape of impression: the plan by Jessica Denkelaar. (source: Bert Kommerij)

The new lay-out included a playground for dogs, who were no longer allowed to run around freely on the pier. However, dog-dug pits, feces and filthy trash cans indicated a chronical lack of maintenance around the lawns. Jip van Leeuwen, one of the people Bert had come to known through his regular dog walks, told me how some residents had felt the urge to clean up the mess themselves, but stopped doing that after some time: "If you keep tidying up here on the Kop and it's a waste pit again...", he sighed. "The municipality does not set the example. In the maintenance they don't set an example, in cleaning up the mess they don't set an example." Jip noticed how the only other public area on the island get treated significantly better, yet he recognises the negligent ways of the municipality as a problem on the island as a whole: "I always say, the Java-island is the waste pit of the policy makers". 106



Figure 27: Kop van Java, the wastepit: residents taking matters in their own hands by cleaning the grass strip, picture Bert Kommerij)

¹⁰⁵ Jip Van Leeuwen, interview by author, Amsterdam, July 12, 2020.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

Despite all this, Jip insisted on staying positive and has always remained an active community member on the island. He had been part of the Over de Kop project in the beginning, but had left the initiative of the weblog to Bert and went on to organize a community of elderly people on the island. Still, he kept a particular interest for the pier. An interest that came to expression when he, together with former S.M.N. worker Hans Bosch, created a group of people who would take care of the memorial ceremony around the Joop Hoorn statue and documented its history. One of the group members would take her writing talent to keep bundled reports of all the ceremonies on the Kop. Jip says about this initiative: "The Kop with the statue belongs to the history of the island. We try to push the history of the island to the foreground, so that the heritage stays alive."

One message that could be taken from his words, is the assumption that history is not the same thing as heritage: it is a part of it. Bringing the history under the attention of the public (the foreground) is the process in which the heritage is made or preserved. That is what this group was doing: preserving their heritage. Another suggestion is that this particular heritage of the Kop is strongly linked to the island's harbor history: it does not exist on its own. The fact that both the statue -as the tangible part of this heritage- and the pier it stands on sometimes do in fact seem stand on their own, isolated from the island, might for a part explain the need felt by Jip to make work of its conservation. The shipper has found himself in a place where the heritage he stood for was balancing on the verge of oblivion.

The arrival of the hotel seemed to result in some cohesion within the otherwise fragmented landscape of the Kop van Java. It came to expression within Jessica's spatial design, but it was also signalled on a social level. Bert himself, widely acknowledged for his active involvement with the Kop van Java, had been asked to be the community's representative in the jury that judged over the last three design proposals for the hotel. When the winning Hotel Jakarta (both by its name and the tropical interior referring to the Dutch-East Indian connection) was opened in 2017, he came to work as a host in the lobby. There, he could maintain regular contact with his fellow island residents, as the café behind the reception on the ground floor served to receive people from the neighbourhood. He also came to meet the river cruise tourists: "They all ended up here. All of a sudden I had access to these people with whom you never came to speak before. There had been these different worlds on the Kop: the river cruises, the dog community, the school with the parents and children and the hotel under construction. And these worlds did not come close to each other. It is fascinating. They did not need each other anyway, they rather walked in each other's path." ¹⁰⁸

Now, there seemed to be more space for interaction. Bert has tried to establish a link between the hotel and the school. During annual restorations on the Kop, a ship anchor was found. As the discovery lacked the serious interest from the archaeological field, no further investigation was done and Bert got the artefact a place at the entrance of the hotel, where it lies as a museum piece devoid of any information. He has asked the children of the school to come up with a story, so that the object will not end up a museum piece devoid of any information. "If there is no history, you can still make it up," he said. 109

¹⁰⁷ Jip Van Leeuwen, interview by author, Amsterdam, July 12, 2020.

¹⁰⁸ Bert Kommerij, interview by author, Amsterdam, June 15, 2020.

¹⁰⁹ Bert Kommerij, interview by author, Amsterdam, June 15, 2020.



Figure 28: On hold for heritage making? The ship anchor at the entrance of Hotel Jakarta.

4.5.2 Towards the future

Around the time of the hotel construction, Kop van Java again became the main subject of the bridge-to-north discussion. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, this was a concern of higher order: had the secret commission headed by Maarten Kloos come up with a masterplan after all, then it would have had to rest its case. But the reappearing debate provided the commission with a momentum: a bridge would mean that there would be hardly any space left to build on the Kop: it was better left unbuilt. By the end of 2017, this turned out to be the final advice of the commission to the responsible councillor. Kop van Java was supposed to be "green and publicly accessible, without turning it into an area for events." The new landscape of impression was "a high quality city park, like Battery Park in New York and Millennium Park in Chicago."

Before a new design competition could be set up, the verdict on the bridge had to be awaited. That came in the beginning of 2020, when the independent commission declared the fairway north to the Kop to be too small for a bridge of the necessary proportions. Instead, a connection between the pier and the northern side of the IJ is intended to be realized by means of a ferry service.

"Everyone is enthusiastic about it", says Jip about the plans for the near future. "I hope they keep it simple, and easy. Easily accessible and recreation possibilities. More couches. It is lovely to watch the ships pass by. A few trees and better lightning, that's all that is needed.

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¹¹⁰ Boon, "Ook over 40 Jaar Is De Kop Van Java 'De Mooiste Plek Ter Wereld'," *Het Parool*, January 2, 2018, https://www.parool.nl/nieuws/ook-over-40-jaar-is-de-kop-van-java-de-mooiste-plek-ter-wereld~b32c300b/.

¹¹¹ Jip Van Leeuwen, interview by author, Amsterdam, July 12, 2020.

Bert takes in a pro-active position with regard to the future on the Kop van Java. Next year, when the temporary contract with the school expires and the pier is supposed to become empty, he would like to raise a voice about the design of the pier, together with the neighbourhood and the hotel. "...before the municipality comes and decides what they're going to do with it." ¹¹²

4.6 Concluding remarks

If decay has been an influence in the landscape of the Kop van Java, it seems to be a matter of neglect rather than purpose. For the bigger part of the last two decades of the 20th century, the former breakwater Java-island was a raw edge of the city: a climate in which squatters found their habitat. Kop van Java was not part of that habitat: it seemed to have remained a landscape devoid of human activities. Reasons for this could be sought in the remoteness and inaccessibility of the surrounding area, which then had not yet been transformed into a residential neighbourhood and thus lacked the presence of a population from which locality could have sprung. The large size of the pier might have also played a role: ever since the beginning of the 1990's, Kop van Java was nominated to host a big project.

The opening of the bridge connecting the island with the main land marked the beginning of the pier as a public space. Despite endeavours of both experts and ordinary practitioners, the ultimate design for the Kop had not been found, so the landscape was cleaned up in cheap fashion, saving the money and effort for later. On hold for the most beautiful project in the world, expressions in the landscape mostly grew out of urgency: parking lots, playgrounds and schools found their place on the Kop as time passed by. Other than on Het Stenen Hoofd, the temporality of these landscape expressions was bound by the anticipation for something permanent to come in the future.

An urgence of different category has been the statue, commemorating war victims of the shipping company which had inhabited the island during industrial times. This rare element of material heritage hints to a connection between the pier and (a part of) the local community. This connection otherwise came to light through various ways of involvement with the landscape of the Kop, sometimes ignited by the negligent ways in which the municipality approached the area. The lack of maintenance left the pier to decay, although the ways in which it 'shaped' the landscape (by fencework, collapsing floors and dirty lawns) hardly could have been in line with what the local community wanted. Judging from the discussed expressions in the landscape, it seems that the community's wishes were only heard if there was a significant degree of necessity in play: an economical attitude that fits the fate of the Kop van Java: destined to become a place of global allure.

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 $^{^{\}rm 112}$ Bert Kommerij, interview by author, Amsterdam, June 15, 2020.

5 Conclusion and reflection

In this research I have inquired the post-industrial era of two public areas in Amsterdam. Both piers have their origins in the early 20th century, when the city was growing a harbour around the Ij river. Their story as part of the harbour industry (which left several decades later) remains largely untold in the landscape of today, as buildings from that time are demolished and the floors of both piers are either overgrown or removed. What *is* visible are two waterfront areas which on the first eye look as if they have been left untouched ever since the harbour activities had moved elsewhere. This research constituted the look on the next eye.

The seeming lack of intervention, still uncommon in heritage preservation practice today, touches upon the process of decay. I sought to find out how that process has shaped the landscapes of these places over the last couple of decades. Inspired by Samuel's article 'The Biography of Landscapes', I took the term landscape as an umbrella to cover their physical shapes as well as the memories and ideas which connect(ed) people to them throughout the years. Many of these ideas have remained mere impressions, dreams that were never actually realized. Some others did came to expression in the physical reality, offering tangible remainders of a community and how it has dealt with a place which they claimed as theirs. Relying on both first-hand stories of involved individuals and archival sources, I gathered as much information as possible within the limits of the research to mold two separate biographies from those multiple landscapes. I experimented with the possibility to turn them into heritage subjects, based on the theories of Laurajane Smith (intangible heritage), Rodney Harrison (unofficial heritage) and Arjan Appadurai (locality).

In order to put the role of decay in the landscape of Het Stenen Hoofd in some perspective, I will compare its story with that of the Kop van Java. Rounding off the concluding remarks, I will then reflect upon the parts where I have drawn the link with heritage. I end the chapter with a short discussion on the methods of my research.

5.1 Het Stenen Hoofd and Kop van Java

Between the two piers, decay has been the most obvious factor within the physical landscape of Het Stenen Hoofd. After the demolition of the Gruno building, the warehouse and the far end, the pier has been left empty and vegetation could grow spontaneously. The municipality, lawful owner of the pier, left the maintenance of the pier in the hands of the Stichting after transformation plans had not come through. This organisation of volunteers has always driven on the wish to keep Het Stenen Hoofd in that permanent state of decay: leaving the pier empty and undesigned would create the circumstances in which local culture would flourish best. Even when the place officially became public area in 2013, it remained more or less unaltered. A fence now gives Het Stenen Hoofd some more definition, but only by the way in which its design emphasized the already present elements of decay.

Fence work has also shaped the landscape of the Kop van Java. Here, however, it has been placed as a precaution measure rather than an artistic decoration. It is remarkable, in contrast to Het Stenen Hoofd, how I hardly mentioned the role of vegetation in the story of the Kop. There was no space in this study for a detailed discussion of required environmental conditions for plant growth, but it seems safe to say that the laying of a new floor has had negative consequences for the growth potential of multiple -let alone unique- species.

On the Kop van Java, decay seems to have a different dimension. It has not deliberately been used as a landscape feature, as an environment that sparks local cultural activities and the impressions of individuals. Instead, it describes a state of negligence in which the pier fell after the municipality postponed the decision for a definite design. Left waiting for what would happen to 'their' pier, residents of the Java island have taken initiatives to engage with the Kop van Java. It does not feel justified to count this as DeSilvey's culturally productive factor, as she explicitly related decay to the natural decomposition of structures and all its accompanying processes, and this hardly comes into play in the story of the Kop. What the involvement of the local people does show, is how a lack of top-down intervention in the landscape can create space for ideas to grow from the bottom-up.

Perhaps the following sentence from the Strategienota 2008 on Het Stenen Hoofd captures the essential difference between the two piers best: "Stenen Hoofd could be seen as the symphatique, artistic sister of the Kop van Java. A place where growth has passed by."

Did growth not pass by Kop van Java, then? The most clever answer to this question might be that growth did pass by Kop van Java, but it never really passed by. It has always lingered in the air above, the anticipation for a big project. The public design contest, the plain and effortless composition of the temporary landscape, the desire for metropolitan attraction, the secret commission and the reserved spot for the hotel: all of it left little space for local people to bring their ideas to expression. Leaning on Samuels' analogy between landscapes and authors and books and writers, I am inclined to say that in comparison to the 'artistic' hand that is visible in the landscape of Het Stenen Hoofd, the landscape of the Kop van Java could be described as unwritten. Now the Kloos commission has given its verdict and the bridge to the northern riverside has been called off, it looks as if the pages of its book will not stay empty much longer.

5.2 Heritage and two vacated piers

The distinction Rodney Harrison made between official heritage and unofficial heritage has been vital to support this research. Characteristic of this distinction are the share of the local community in its preservation and whether or not it is recognized by (and therefore dependent on) official bodies from above. Official heritage did not play a role in either location (or it must have been Denter's botanical heritage on Het Stenen Hoofd), so the challenge was to look for elements that demonstrated a relationship between the local community and the pier as it had been inherited from the industrial era. In that case, the pier itself often formed the (only) tangible part of the heritage. An exception to this was Joop Hoorn, on the Kop van Java, who became the bearer of a specific memory of the past on the Java island and the pier in particular.

While the Labrador granite skipper is firmly in place, the preservation of the intangible heritage it represents does not seem a certainty within the otherwise largely deserted place where the view is almost exclusively focused on the future. Smaller examples on the Kop in which a relationship with the nautical history was sought were the Open Haven Podium and Hotel Jakarta.

If heritage does exist as a mere social action, and both Rodney Harrison and Laurajane Smith pointed that way, then there seems to be a case to make for both piers. The Stichting Stenen Hoofd partly grew out of the explicit desire to preserve the empty pier for the local community. The continuous commitment and activity of this foundation can be seen as a continuous production of locality, which must have been at least partly responsible for the fact that the pier has remained almost untouched by the municipality over the past decades. The inspiration provided by the natural transience of the landscape had come to expression soon after the disappearance of the industry, for example in the projects of the DOG troop ad Hans Hamers, and later became a crucial element in the management by the Stichting. I need little effort to consider the fence of Adélaïde Dupré de Pomarède as the tangible bearer of the intangible heritage that has been shaped by the decades of association of a local community with a particular place.

On the Kop van Java, a local community for example grew out of the fascination of Bert Krommerij, who is practically writing a landscape biography with his Over De Kop project. Yet it seems inevitable to conclude that the production of locality was less strong than on Het Stenen Hoofd. The squatters at the end of the last century seemed to have had nothing of the past with the pier and it was only from 2001 that the opportunity arose for a new group of local residents to build layers of meaning on the Kop. There has been no foundation established to date, and considering the general orientation of the municipality on the Kop van Java, I think it is unlikely that such an organization could have achieved the same as the Foundation on Het Stenen Hoofd.

Yet, Het Stenen Hoofd was not free from the forces of metropolitanism either. The housing construction under the flag of the *lj-oever* project resulted in an increase in users and visitors, the Pluk de Nacht far outgrew its locally grown popularity and in 2013 the pier was officially designated as a public site. It shows that unofficial heritage in its dependency on locality can be fragile in when it has a place in an environment which transcends the local realm.

5.3 Reflection on methods

Using Samuel's methodology to investigate the changes in the landscapes of both piers sometimes felt like solving a puzzle. The variety and fragmentation of source material provided me with different leads each time over and I had to use those leads to get to new sources. Many pieces of the puzzle were missing. As it has become clear in both chapters, I was for some periods of time forced to restrict myself to careful assumptions, simply because the information needed to provide more was lacking.

Regardless of the scope of the research, accepting this is an inherent to the use of this method: it is evident that solving the puzzle cannot be the main goal. What I tried to do instead was drawing a rough sketch of developments and accentuate them by specific events and personal stories

The strength of this method in relation to my perspective on heritage therefore lies in the emphasis on the personal stories of those involved. It was these stories that brought the landscapes of both piers to life, precisely because their heritage is otherwise undefined and unwritten. That being said, I could argue that I have myself made heritage by telling these stories. The methodology (in combination with Samuel's landscape theory) allows to explain certain elements in ordinary landscapes, which would otherwise be overlooked.

Finally, I would like to point out that I am somewhat disappointed by the contribution of my visits to the piers. The opportunity to go and experience both places myself had been a determinant factor in my choice for them as case study areas, but I did not succeed in finding a suitable method that could provide me with useful information obtained from visitors on the site. This has been a significant reason to draw the concept of heritage back to a role in the background of my research, as a more prominent part would in my opinion have required a better knowledge of the meanings that today's users give to the piers. However, my visits have not been totally useless with regard to my study, as I found a way to support my story by photographs I took on the piers. Still, in case this has not been the last scientific research I undertook, I will try to use on-site observations more to their rich potential in the future.

A final word

Even though I have to act as if it were, this does not feel like the end. The stories I have been writing on will continue. The landscapes of Het Stenen Hoofd and Kop van Java will keep on changing, be it by the forces of nature, the interventions of human beings or a combination of the two. Some elements will make way for others. Layers of meaning will fade and appear. New authors will leave their marks.

I recall the last minute of Stephen Wilkinson's Under The Pier, which clearness stands out from the rest of the track's weariness and chaos which so vividly resemble the natural cycles of life that he must have encountered when visiting the pier. Natural life cycles which often go by unnoticed. In line with Wilkinson's musical piece, I have provided some clarity in the otherwise obscure and unrecognised history of these two rather 'ordinary' places. I refreshed history and wrapped it up in a readable story: within the context of this research, I have been tempted to compare that to the act of making heritage.

In any case, the tide will return. Here, that means that both piers continue to build on their own history. They do that not only by having their physical landscape reshaped (like tides reshape the coastline) but also by producing a constant wave of new stories and memories, which will pile up in disorder until the next person decides to clean up, perhaps again in the form of a new landscape biography. Just because Under The Pier ends, does not mean the story ends. I am only leaving it at this point.

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Appendix

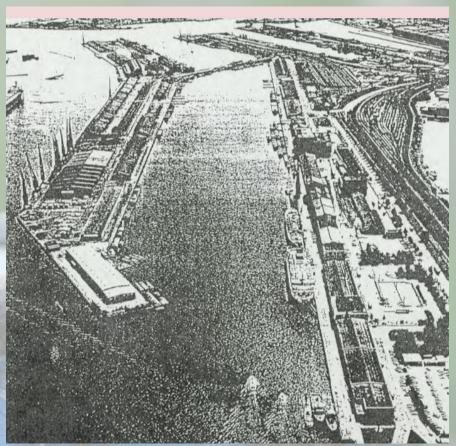
Supporting photographs and images

Note 24:



Het Stenen Hoofd in May 2009, with the Romney shed still in place. Visible in the background, along the Westerdoksdijk, the mushrooming buildings from the Ij-oever project. (source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

Note 52:



Kop van Java on an air photograph from 1987, showing a large shed still present. (source: Archive of Amsterdam)

Note 61:



Riet in de wind

Riet in de wind

Het voorstel bestaat uit een reeks losse veelhoekige vlakken van glanzend gepolijst staal gemonteerd op 30-40m lange transparante staven. De vlakken vormen samen het woord 'Amsterdam'. De staven symboliseren de scheepsmasten. De letters zijn in het materiaal uitgespaard. Elk kwartier roteren deze elementen op de trillingen van de kerkklokken in de stad. Dit perpetuum mobile wordt geplaatst in een bassin van 20x10 meter met perspex randen, Deze ode aan de stad is vanuit de verte als sterren te zien.

T. VAN GOETHEM, B. VENDRIG EN E. REITH Sunset boulevard

Maak een archipel van eilanden in het water met op elk een eiland een paleisje voor de jetset. Dit is waar de prins gaat wonen!

> A. HOMAN EN S. DE MAAT Paleis

Het nieuwe Koninklijk Paleis met een woonpaleis, werkpaleis en paleistui-

ICOON

H. BEKKER, L. EELMAN, G. FRANKFURTHER, D. VAN LEEUWEN,

Zaagmolen VOC

De Stichting Zaagmolen VOC Amsterdam wil hier de zaagmolen van de VOC herbouwen.

In 2002 is het vierhonderd jaar dat de VOC werd opgericht. Met enige voortvarendheid kan het project dan klaar zijn. De Kop Java voldoet aan de volgende voorwaarden: onbelemmerde windvang, gelegen nabij de oorspronkelijke locatie (t.w. Cz. Peterstraat hoek Coehoornstraat), aan open vaarwater (belangrijk i.v.m. aan te leggen vlothaven voor boomstammen), goede zichtbaarheid vanaf Uoevers.

Berg, boom + schommel

Een ijzer, graniet en betonconstructie moet de berg verwezenlijken. De dâkke boom moet over het water worden vervoesd en geplant op het midden van het eiland. Zaagmolen VOC





Berg, boom + schommel

id en zal in een groot deel van west Nederland als oriëntatiepunt houwen zijn. De Naald bevat bovengronds functies als dienstj, kantoren, hotel, appartementen, observatie/ restaurants en scatie. Ondergronds bevat de Naald functies als winkels/ parkeren, kantoren, isolatie en onderzoek.

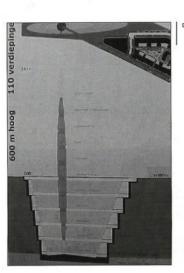
Uitkijktoren met brug

unse variant van de Eiffeltoren. Deze slanke stalen uitbijktoren xombineerd met een brug voor fietsers en voetgangers naar nug en lift zijn voor Amsterdammers vrij toegankelijk.

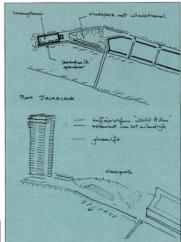
it een brug met roltrap technisch moeilijk uitvoerbaar zijn dan is I een kabelbaan een optie.

Uitzichtplatform

word op het Silogebouw op de westelijke punt van de Kop een ouw met koffieplatform, restaurant en glazen buitenlift. In het en stadspark met uitzichtheuvel als entree tot het 'eilandenrijk'.



De Naald



1 1

3.7

DMARK

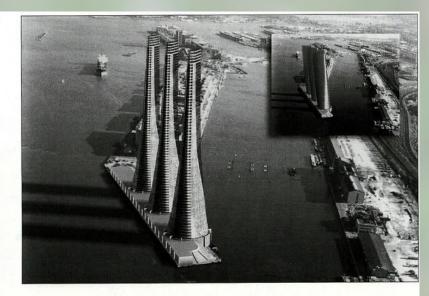
Draaibare

Draaibare torens

at drie 210m hoge woontorens die meedraaien met de wind-De liefst tijdelijke bewoners hebben elke dag een ander uitzicht. erdammers kijken telkens tegen een andere kant van de gebouwen Luchtfoto: AeroCamera, Michel Hofmeester

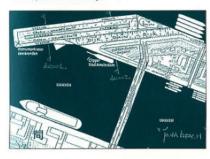
discontinue progressie

appelijke veranderingen gaan zo snel, dat projecten ter discussie ordat ze gerealiseerd zijn. Dit is de uitdaging voor de ontwikkeling nieuwe strategie. Het lineaire proces van denken naar doen t in een circulair proces van denken én doen. Bouwen wordt een nid en dynamisch proces. Een bouwwerk wordt als een stad: in verandering. Nieuwe functies in zich opnemend, oude afstotend, mistisch collectioneur van zijn geschiedenis. De Kop van Java is tie waar nieuwe initiatieven volwassen kunnen worden, een kweeker culturele, multimediale en infrastructurele initiatieven.



Kop in de wind

De openbare ruimte schrijft het gebruik te vaak eenduidig voor. Hiermee kan op deze plek worden gebroken. Op deze plek kan de wind centraal staan, een plaats om de drukte van de stad achter je te laten. Hier moet leegte worden gecreëerd waar de gebruiker zelf een functie aan kan geven. De inrichting van de strook wordt bestemd voor sport, ontspanning, vermaak, parkeren en voorzieningen.



Kop in de wind



Java-beach

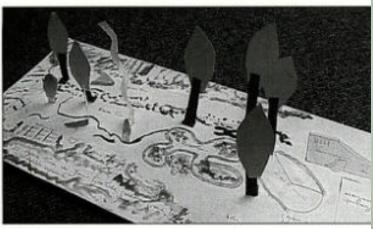
RECREATIE

Parkje

Het parkconcept bestaat uit een beeldentuin, rozentuin, expositieruimte en een kinderspeelplaats. Op de westelijke kop is half drijvend in het water een ovaalvormig glazen restaurant met groot terras geprojecteerd. Een brede wandelpromenade (Ramblas) verbindt de verschillende onderdelen van het park. Het gebied is zonder auto's, zonder winkels en zonder reclame. Het watergebruik aan de zuidzijde bestaat uit roeibotenverhuur en een viertal drijvende tuinen van Jasper Grootveld.

Gordel van smaragd

Vegetatie en verdere inrichting verwijzen naar het echte Java-eiland. De naam van de 'smaragdgroene' gordel op het Java-schiereiland is Ujung Kulon. Dit wordt de nieuwe naam voor de kop van Java. De naam van het uiterste westpuntje van het Javaschiereiland is (Kaap) Cangkuang. Een loopbruggetje verbindt deze kaap met het aan te leggen 'Eijland' Panaitan. Dit is een muziektempel, waar de Gamalan en andere Aziatische open-luchtvoorstellingen plaatsvinden.







Note 68:



Eastern end of the Java-island. Visible in the top of the image are the Kop van Java and the Joop Hoorn statue (in front of the grass strip. (source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

Note 97a:



The eastern part of Kop van Java, in January 2009. Visible on the right, on the hotel-reserved spot, the first emergency school. (source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

Note 97b:



The eastern end of Kop van Java in October 2010. The second emergency school, which still stands at the time of writing in the background, the children's playground on the foreground, the hotel-reserved-spot. (source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam)