In approaching the urban analysis of the project area, I set out to determine the defining urban characteristics of Amsterdam West, how these arose, and how they will be affected by development plans for the future.

Following visitation and analysis of the project area, I noticed three distinct zones:
1. a northern industrial zone (with the residential Spaarndammerbuurt)
2. a dividing green zone
3. a southern residential area (with the industrial food market).

This report presents a brief past, present and future analysis of these three zones within the assigned project area. This urban character consists of spatial structures which have come to and will in future define the area. Statistical and intangible aspects will also be discussed to provide a more well-rounded image of the areas.

Research Question: What are the defining urban characteristics of the project area? How did they arise? What are their prospects?

In Plan Kalff the first expansions of the western harbour since the 17th century was planned. Gradually functions unnecessary in the east were moved to the sea-oriented western harbour. Since the 1960 the western harbours have repeatedly expanded while the eastern harbours have been gradually re-purposed for residential and other non-industrial uses.

The current division of industry and housing shows a clear industrial presence to the north and west of the project area. This reflects the movement of harbour activity westwards and decision to combine industry with business. Accordingly, the makeup of this region shifts from purely industrial to commercial businesses as proximity to Sloterdijk station increases.

These businesses are located in large buildings of an overtly industrial character consisting predominantly of metal sheds in the harbour area and shiny high rise buildings towards Sloterdijk train station. Especially the harbour front suffers from a ghost town like atmosphere: the large spaces between seemingly uninhabited buildings lower the perceived safety of the area.

There is low job availability and high unemployment in the southern residential districts. Half the neighbourhoods have around 10% unemployment versus the Amsterdam average of 7.5%. Furthermore, the statistics for jobs per 1000 inhabitants in West are under half the average for Amsterdam - 297 versus 601 - and the districts in the project area tend to be considerably below even that low average. However, the project area neighbours can boast a far above average percentage of single proprietorship businesses - 65% of businesses versus 52% on average in Amsterdam - which are more numerous yet of a significantly smaller scale than the limited number of large conglomerates in the north.

The focus will instead be on housing development gradually starting in 2020 but comprising 34% of housing development phase 3 of the plan for Amsterdam. Some of this housing will be realized in relation to the Olympic bid which will focus on the harbour area of the project area. Resultantly, the harbour will be moved further westwards. The mixed use initiatives and Olympic developments will, no doubt, radically change the character of what is currently an industrial ghost town largely disconnected from the rest of the city.

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**Legend**
- residential
- industry
- office building
- market
- shopping street
- station

**Industries**
- above average
- far above average
- average for area
- below average
- average for area
- far below average
- no stats available

**Jobs per 1000 inhabitants**

**% sole proprietors**
Spacial development

Historical analysis of Amsterdam

Urban Analysis Amsterdam-West RMIT Graduation Studio 2012-2013

1850

1878 -1983

P1 REPORT

N Bellinga, T Pater, I Kuijlaars

B Maat, E Odijk, N Bellinga

B Maat, E Odijk, N Bellinga

B van Vlist

B van Vlist

1938

1941

1966

Present-2020

2020 - 2030

2030 +

present - 2020

2020 - 2030

2030 +

actualized
greening

actualized
devolution

Legend

green zone

trevaart

A10

train tracks

road access

bike access

bufferzone between industry and housing

INDUSTRY

RESIDENTIAL

haarlemmertrekvaart

railway development

future development of green

GREEN AREA

PAST

The green zone has remained eerily undeveloped throughout Amsterdam’s history. This limited development is notable within the diagrams on the far left. It resulted from the construction of the Haarlemmertrekvaart (completed in 1632) and the development of the railway infrastructure (in 1839).

Due to the flooding of the Haarlemmermeer the only connection between Haarlem and Amsterdam became the Spaarndammerdijk, a dangerous and inefficient route. Therefore in 1631 construction began on a canal between the two cities. To save expenses it was constructed to be as direct a link as possible, hence its straightness. The first railway connection in 1839 followed the straight line of the Haarlemmertrekvaart within the project area and further connected Haarlem and Amsterdam while later expansions of the railway line connected Amsterdam to other nearby cities.

Harbour related construction expanded initially westwards with the harbour and later south towards the railway line. There was no dense build-up between the earlier and later Zaandam connections until after the construction of Sloterdijk station in 1956 (see railway development related growth diagrams). In the AUP expansion plan for Amsterdam, royally approved in 1939, it was decided that green zones would separate different functions. To this day these two infrastructures effectively cut off that segment of land from the surrounding area forming the barrier between living and industry as made official in the AUP.

PRESENT

Currently the Green Zone in the project area is the last part of the Brettenzone between Haarlem and Amsterdam as it enters the city. It is also the only green area in the city to extend so far towards the city centre. In the AUP it was decided to use this area for recreational purposes. Programmatically the left half of this area is occupied by garden plots heavily populated by sheds (Volksbuinen) and a petting zoo. The right half is divided between the Westergasfabriek and the Westerpark. The Westergasfabriek has been transformed through its current cultural programme.

The Green Zone definitely offers a pleasant and lucious experience within the city, but its otherwise and limited connectivity – from the residential zone only a few bridges cross over the Haarlemmertrekvaart and from the north even fewer cross-railway links are made - to the surrounding area reinforce a landscape resulting from isolation: a barrier between housing and industry.

FUTURE

Although this barrier approach may formerly have been merited - protecting housing from heavy industry - with the mixed use rezoning, this validity comes into question. In line with the future plan for Amsterdam to bring back green further into the city, this area - already exemplar in its greenness - will be further greened. Hopefully this additional greening will not intensify the area’s history as a barrier.

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2. Le Poste, F. pa.2
3. Etoenru pa.1
9. Heleinders, P. (2012), 1

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Ingeborg Kuijlaars - RMIT Graduation Studio 2012-2013
PROJECT AREA - URBAN ANALYSIS

overlay current road structure over historic bog structure

expansion of amsterdam in development plans

LEGEND
- not following the structure
- historic bog structure
- approximately following the structure
- following the structure

population density

% social housing

% housing stock < 60m²

LEGEND
- far above average
- above average
- average for area
- west amsterdam
- below average
- far below average
- no stats available
- rising/falling trend

satisfaction with neighbourhood

experienced safety

images around the project area

LEGEND
- city center
- 19th century belt
- 1920's - 40's belt
- pre AUP landust
- pre AUP bos en fommer
- AUP
- newer buildings
- jordaan

PAST
The city’s successes in trade and industry resulted in overcrowding and terrible living conditions in the current city centre.¹ The plans to build the Northsea Channel was predicted to improve industry further and cause further population densification an already overcrowded city. In 1867 Jacobus van Niftrik suggested an expansion plan for the city to solve the need for new housing: the low density of this plan and disregard for existing structures made it too expensive to execute.² In 1877 Jan Kaff, director of public works, submitted a new plan which followed the historic bog structure of the surrounding area and was therefore affordable enough to implement.³ This compliance with the existing structure in combination with a series of different development plans over the last two centuries, has resulted in a diverse urban fabric chronicling the change of preference from closed to open city blocks in keeping with the desire for light, air and space.⁴

PRESENT
In spite of the different development plans, there are a lot of commonalities in the housing stock; such as a high percentage of social housing.⁵ The percentage of social housing tends to be around 55% in this area, above the 48.6 average for Amsterdam.⁶ This affordability in combination with a small housing stock makes the residential zone of the project area the most densely populated part of Amsterdam, especially so in the 19th century expansion areas under plan Kaff.⁷ It may initially appear to be a negative characteristic for a neighbourhood to have a large stock of small and cheap housing. However, this might be exactly what Amsterdam West has to offer the general city: a stepping stone.

Currently this residential area has a very high percentage of new city dwellers at 39.2% meaning that a lot of people new to Amsterdam have settled in that area: that is almost ten percent higher than Amsterdam’s 29.7% average.⁸ Perhaps therefore it is detrimental to the neighbourhood that the housing stock is increasing in size. Oddly enough, while the value of houses is steadily decreasing in most of the neighbourhoods, the percentage of social housing is also decreasing.⁹

Furthermore, despite the stereotype of danger attributed to social housing neighbourhoods, neighbourhood satisfaction and experienced safety in the area are on par with that of Amsterdam as a whole.¹⁰ In these two aspects, the distinction between the west and east of the project area becomes apparent with notably higher scores in the eastern districts closest to the city centre.

FUTURE
6% of Amsterdam’s future housing stock is planned within the existing structure of district west.¹¹ Although below the approximately 10% growth expected in the other districts, this densification a real challenge considering the already high population density.

Despite the statistical poverty, density and other difficulties within the area, one experiences it as a series of friendly and diverse neighbourhoods with impressive playground and park facilities. The quality of the green spaces was both surprising and abundant perhaps in terms of the prevalence of unexpected pockets.

¹ Gemeente Amsterdam (2011). ¹²
² Stadsarchief Amsterdam. pa.2-4
³ Konijn, J. (2011)
⁴ Stadsarchief Amsterdam. pa.5
⁵ Gemeente Amsterdam (2011), 15
⁶ Gemeente Amsterdam (2011), 15
⁷ Maat, B. and E. Odijk. (2012) 2
⁸ Gemeente Amsterdam (2011), 15
⁹ Gemeente Amsterdam (2011), 15
¹⁰ Gemeente Amsterdam (2011), 15
¹² Gemeente Amsterdam (2011). 15
PROJECT AREA - URBAN ANALYSIS

CONCLUSION

The assigned project area counts three unique zones which, although interrelated in their histories and development, currently lead quite separate lives.

INDUSTRY

- **Past**: industrial area developed with the harbour toward the east due to construction of the north sea channel
- **Present**: area with large businesses, eerily empty otherwise
- **Future**: change to mixed use will radically change the area in preparation for the Olympics in 2028

GREEN ZONE

- **Past**: Haarlemmerdijk and railway development kept area cut-off from surrounding areas preventing its inhabitation
- **Present**: luscious green area with gardens and cultural program still with limited connectivity to surrounding areas
- **Future**: further greening

RESIDENTIAL

- **Past**: area plans developed on historical bog structure
- **Present**: plans have given each district a distinctive character characterized by small and affordable housing stock overall surprisingly pleasant neighbourhood
- **Future**: intensify use of existing housing stock potentially at odds with the above average population density

BUILDING CHOICE

These three regions within the project area seem to have the Haarlemmerpoort as their locus. Given the resulting situation complexity, I selected to research the Haarlemmerpoort for the remainder of the analysis process. The following sections document the analysis and value assessments of the Haarlemmerpoort’s context, architecture as well as structure and construction.

3 distinct zones meet at the haarlemmerpoort

view with haarlemmerpoort to west

complex situation around haarlemmerpoort
HISTORY - THE CITY CONTEXT

To protect the city of Amsterdam earth banks and trenches were built around the city. In 1385 these earth banks were reinforced into actual walls. The Haarlemmerpoort was one of the three gates in this initial wall. It defended the western entrance into the city on the route between Amsterdam and Haarlem.1

As Amsterdam prospered and expanded, the defence works and the Haarlemmerpoort moved with it, each time in a different iteration. In 1613, due to the 3rd expansion of the city, the ramparts moved over a kilometre to the west.2 Between 1615 and 1618 the 4th Haarlemmerpoort, designed by Hendrick de Keyser,3 Over a decade later, in 1632, the Haarlemmertrekvaart was completed which provided a more direct and comfortable connection to Haarlem than the Spaarndammerdijk before it.4

In the 19th Century the creation of the Stelling van Amsterdam (Defence Line of Amsterdam) rendered the city’s wall defences unnecessary.5 The walls and most of the accompanying gates were gradually levelled.6 New guardhouses were built next to the bridges crossing the Singelgracht into the city.7 Their function was to collect duties on goods entering the city.8

The area around this gate was thoroughly equipped for the functions of trade and transport.9 It took a long time before the city expanded to fill the area around the new gate.10 This also occurred in the eastern part of the city after the 4th phase of expansion.

In 1937 the old gate was demolished due to dilapidation, the previous year a chimney had already collapsed during a storm.11 Its defensive function was no longer needed and this also made it unsuitable for the heavier traffic of the day.12 Although there was no need for a new gate, the decision was made to replace de Keyser’s Haarlemmerpoort with a ceremonial gate in honour of the crowning of Willem the Second.13 In 1938 the municipal government gave the go ahead for the construction of a representative building which would stress Amsterdam’s position as capital of the Kingdom.14

The new gate, designed by Bastiaan de Greef, was completed in 1840 and offers direct access into the city.15 It was called the Willemspoort in honour of the new king although colloquially it is still called the Haarlemmerpoort.16

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1 Le Poole, F. pa.1
2 Le Poole, F. pa.1
3 Amsterdam.nl pa.1
4 Le Poole, F. pa.2
5 Abrahamse, J E, M Kosian, and E Schmitz (2010). 34
6 Amsterdam.nl pa.2
7 Amsterdam.nl pa.2
8 Amsterdam.nl pa.2
9 Le Poole, F. pa.3
10 Bureau Monumenten en Archeologie pa.3
11 Pas, T. pa.2
12 Le Poole, F. pa.3
13 Abrahamse, J E, M Kosian, and E Schmitz (2010). 34
14 Abrahamse, J E, M Kosian, and E Schmitz (2010). 34
15 Le Poole, F. pa.3
16 Abrahamse, J E, M Kosian, and E Schmitz (2010). 34
The fourth Haarlemmerpoort was built as part of the defensive works of the city. Its entrance formed a direct link to the Haarlemmerrekvaart across the canal completed in 1632. The square was primarily in use for trade and travel which was reflected in the businesses around the square such as workshops and a blacksmith. Over 200 years later, in 1837, de Keyser’s gate was demolished. It had become functionally outdated and dilapidated. It was replaced in 1840 by the fifth and current Haarlemmerpoort. In 1842, Station Amsterdam Willemspoort was completed directly opposite the new gate. Willemspoort station was the terminus of the first railway line to be constructed in the Netherlands. This railway connected Haarlem and Amsterdam. In 1866 the collection of duties, which was the primary function of the Haarlemmerpoort, was suspended. The police station based in the other wing remained. A firestation was put in the vacant wing in 1877. In 1878 Station Willemspoort was closed and the railroad extended towards the current location of Amsterdam Central station. The year before, in 1877 a new bridge was built to cross the Singelgracht, perhaps due to the firestation now housed in the Haarlemmerpoort. The bridge was placed south of the gate causing it to loose its function as entrance to the city.

Towards the end of the 20th century plans existed to destroy the Haarlemmerpoort and replace it with a purpose built building for the police station and fire brigade. Several demolition plans later, it was decided in 1900 to definitely keep the Haarlemmerpoort and a firestation was built to the north of the gate. Since 1920 the gate has partially served as housing. Following the squatting of the remaining building in 1978, a renovation was completed in 1985 to transform the entire building for residential use. Post-war plans to improve the living quality of Amsterdam and making it car accessible included the construction of a 6 lane ring-road around the city. This necessitated the demolition of the Haarlemmerhouttuinen which was completed in 1971. The plan furthermore necessitated the moving of the Haarlemmerpoort. Its new location was to become opposite the opening of the Haarlemmerdijk. This move proved too expensive; part of the reason why the ring-road was never built. The square has always been an interchange of transportation: from carts to cars. Formerly a lot of garages and a petrol station were based in the square, of which only an oil retailed remains. The square is a slave to cars. The area is currently under redevelopment to reclaim the square for pedestrian use by reducing car activity. Work is also under way to reestablish the visual link through the gate with a water feature and dock behind the gate.
The square was designed according to renaissance principles which state that a harmonious layout of space will beneficially influence its users. Therefore, in the design of the square, symmetry was aspired to in spite of the diagonal position of the city's defences.

The orientation of the Haarlemmerpoort towards Willemspoort Station on the opposite bank in its original situation, probably accounts for the slight angle of the building in relation to the rectilinear nature of the square on the other side of the road.

Currently, the Haarlemmerpoort is at the centre of a very complicated situation. It terminates the Haarlemmerbuurt, but its original routing to Haarlem was cut off with the relocation of the bridge behind it. This route now dead-ends in the Singelgracht with the furthest most point of the Breitzenzone just out of reach. The first harbour expansion is to the north of the Haarlemmerplein on the other side of the railway viaduct.

Housing blocks by Hertzberger have replaced most of the destroyed Haarlemmer Houttuinen. These houses are disliked by surrounding residents, perhaps mostly out nostalgia for what was, despite the previously poor housing conditions. The last empty plot was filled in 2010 with housing by Dick van Gameren (the store and hospitality space are still vacant). The square has, as such, been completed with a wide variety of functions, much like the Haarlemmerdijk, the street leading up to the Haarlemmerplein.

Noticeable in the square are the movie theatre “de Rode Bioscoop," S.W. Hettema (the oil retailer with an old fashioned ESSO sign outside), a hairdresser, vintage clothing store, several cafés, the old fire-station (out of use since 2005), and an ABN Amro in a relatively new building on the corner of the Haarlemmerdijk.

Analysing the current situation, it is readily apparent that the square surrounded and crossed by the numerous and busy traffic arteries. These, in many cases, wide roads work to isolate the Haarlemmerpoort. The municipality’s future plans are set to remove traffic on the north and south of the square. This will improve the connection to and through the Haarlemmerpoort by decreasing the bisection of the square.

The Haarlemmerpoort is located across an albeit wide canal from the tip of the Breitzenzone: the Westerpark with the Westergasfabriek and its cultural program just out of reach. Currently the only plans for the square are the replacement of some struggling trees.

The Haarlemmerpoort marks the transition between the abundance of the Centre and scarcity of the Western districts in terms of monumental value and multi-functional programme. The Haarlemmerplein itself is starting to show signs of a regression with the mere two new shops added by the block by Dick van Gameren. Furthermore, in the building block located north of the Haarlemmerpoort, most of the buildings are purely residential.

The sightline through the Haarlemmerpoort to the west recalls the historical origins of the link between Amsterdam and Haarlem. Plans exist to place a water element on the square and a dock behind the Haarlemmerpoort in order to emphasize this sightline and to reintegrate the gate, at least visually, back into its square.

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1 Gofferjé, P. J. (2002) pa.4
2 Gofferjé, P. J. (2002) pa.4
3 Konijn, J. (2011)
4 Brandweer.Amsterdam.nl pa.1
VALUE ASSESSMENT

From the analysis of the Haarlemmerpoort's context I came to the conclusion that some of its most negative aspects relate to the object’s situation within its environment and the routing which surrounds it. A five lane road cuts the Haarlemmerpoort off from its square. Although the former route through the Haarlemmerpoort across the Singelgracht was lost over a hundred years ago, the resultant isolation of the gate still weighs in at a negative value.

The object of visually completes the square despite this physical disconnection. However any other building could probably adequately fill that space. Its historic function as a trade and transport square is not uncommon of most squares worldwide. The gate is furthermore situated closely to the green of the Westerpark and the Brettenzone, but currently (except for some trees) the square and gate only have a visual link to this spot of nature within the city.

The positive values are physical in nature. Since the fourth Haarlemmerpoort was built at the start of the 1st large expansion of the city, it was built before the Haarlemmerbuurt or any of the surrounding area was filled in. As such, it can be said to define the logic of the neighbourhood. The building is one of the few free-standing objects within the area, and the only one on the square. This generous positioning gives the gate a landmark status reinforced by its position next to a traffic interchange. The sightline down the Haarlemmerdijk to the Haarlemmerpoort and through it towards the west recalls the city’s link with Haarlem which was important in its formative years.

- haarlemmerpoort cut off from square
- very traffic heavy situation
- lost physical route through gate and across the singelgracht
- completes the square
- historic trade square
- proximity to green
- defines primary logic of neighbourhood since the fourth haarlemmerpoort was built before the rest of the haarlemmerbuurt
- landmark in its surroundings
- sightline through haarlemmerpoort retains this historic link between amsterdam to haarlem
HAARLEMMERPOORT - ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The final two gates tell the story of a changing city, styles, architectural practice and times in general. A comparison of the architects that designed the two gates will be followed by a comparison of the gates themselves.

HENDRICK DE KEYSER
De Keyser, architect of the fourth Haarlemmerpoort, had been trained as a sculptor under Cornelis Bloemaert.1 His skills as a sculptor are prominently showcased to his architecture.2 He became the city architect of Amsterdam in 1595, and in that capacity was the most important architect in the country.3 His monograph was the first ever to be written about a Dutch architect.4

His legacy was the Amsterdam skyline. Before his appointment only two towers graced the city: the old church and now demolished city hall.5 In order to project an image of power and wealth on the city, de Keyser added nine exquisite towers (most of which are still standing).6 Most of his projects were constructed in the heart of the city, the then expanse of the city. The Haarlemmerpoort was his most western project in terms of location.

His work is best understood in a tradition of re-establishing classicism.7 He trained briefly under Inigo Jones in London.8 Although de Keyser’s work marked the height of the Dutch Renaissance, he started to transform the prevalent neo-renaissance style with the addition of classical elements.9 Jacob van Campen continued de Keyser’s work and became known as the founder of pure Dutch Classicism.10 Some projects were posthumously completed by his son Pieter de Keyser.11

BASTIAAN DE GREEF
De Greef was groomed to be an architect by his father, Jan de Greef, who became city architect for Amsterdam in 1820.12 De Greef built the Haarlemmerpoort only 20 years after that (at the age of 22) while working as C. Alewijn’s architectural assistant.13 Although the project was officially credited to Alewijn (who actually died a year before its completion), most architectural historians agree that the project was more probably designed by de Greef.14

He became city architect in 1856 as the first director of the new department of public works.15 This work encapsulated a broad range of programs including public buildings and infrastructural work.16 As head of the department de Greef perceived his self more of a manager than an architect and as such granted a lot of designerly freedom to his colleagues.17 He frequently collaborated with Willem Springer, who shared his managerial attitude and avoidance of the lime light.18 De Greef’s influence on the many projects he worked on, is therefore unknown. The schools as well as the AWA Housing Blocks are all of his design.19

Projects by Hendrick de Keyser
1565-1621

Projects by Basiaan de Greef
1818-1899

1 Vereniging Hendrick de Keyser. Pa.2
2 Weessies, R. Pa.1
3 Priester, S. 2008, Pa.3
5 Priester, S. 2008, Pa.2
6 Priester, S. 2008, Pa.2
7 Weessies, R. Pa.1
8 Weessies, R. Pa.3,4
9 Weessies, R. Pa.3,4
10 Priester, S. 2008, Pa.6
11 Weessies, R. Pa.6
12 Weessies, R. Pa.5
13 Priester, S. 2010, Pa.2,3
14 Priester, S. 2010, Pa.4
15 Priester, S. 2010, Pa.4
16 Priester, S. 2010, Pa.9,11
17 Priester, S. 2010, Pa.7
18 Priester, S. 2010, Pa.7
19 Priester, S. 2010, Pa.2
The Gates

The styles of the gates reflect the prevalent style of the time. The skill of their execution is measured by the experience of the project architect. The Haarlemmerpoort was one of de Keyser’s later works, and very much cherished. The current Haarlemmerpoort was by all accounts de Greef’s first project. Comparisons between the two gates shortly after the completion of the later almost unanimously favoured de Keyser’s design. An anonymous source wrote the following about De Greef’s gate in 1944:

“If you got by rail to Amsterdam, your eye will discern a crude building which appears to have been thrown there coincidentally, - that is the Willemspoort. Previously there stood there a masterpiece of historic architecture, the Haarlemmerpoort, a gate rich in historic memories, honourable in its old and beautiful construction.”

Whereas de Keyser’s Haarlemmerpoort was designed as part of the city’s defences, de Greef’s Willemspoort was designed predominantly as a triumphal arch in honour of Willem II’s inauguration.

The very different functions of the gates - defensive and ceremonial respectively - are expressed in their radically different forms. De Keyser’s defensive gate was incorporated into a wall, had a tower and denied direct routing into the city. De Greef’s ceremonial gate was free-standing, had no tower, and enabled direct access into the city in keeping with its welcoming function. Since the gate was ceremonial rather than defensive in function, the Corinthian rather than the Doric order was employed. Whereas the Doric order represents strength and masculinity, the Corinthian order is generally regarded as the most ornamental of the orders.

The curve in the route of de Keyser’s gate worked to prevent attacking forces from shooting directly through the closed gate and into the city. This curve made the path dark and dangerous; in the 19th century traffic controllers were assigned to prevent collisions between wagons passing into and out of the city. Part of the reason that de Keyser’s gate was torn down, in addition to its dilapidated state, was its unsuitability for the increasingly heavy flow of traffic entering and leaving the city.
The Haarlemmerpoort was designed in the tradition of triumphal arches. As such it is symmetrical and adopts a neo-classical style. It was designed to impress and assert Amsterdam's role as the nation's capital. It is admittedly less successful on this account than for instance the Brandenburger Tor in Berlin or the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. Perhaps its lack of visual strength results from the addition to a ceremonial function of a practical purpose - the collection of duties - which gives it a squat appearance in contrast to the soaring heights of the other triumphal arches.

The Haarlemmerpoort is composed of two wings with a semi-circular form on either side of a central colonnade. The left (south western) wing housed the customs house for the collection of duties and the right (north eastern) wing housed the police office. A plaque within the colonnade commemorates the opening and inauguration of Willem the Second.

A hierarchical routing within the building is reinforced by the straight line through the colonnade which formed a direct connection along the Haarlemmerdijk, across the square, through the gate and on towards the station and Haarlem. Currently, with the relocation of the bridge to the south and wide traffic artery to the west, water to the west, the gate is predominantly cut off on an island within the city. Although physically cut off, the Haarlemmerpoort enjoys strong visual connection to the surrounding area. It is truly an object in the landscape approachable from all sides and as such without a front.

In addition to a clear symmetry and rhythm in the plans and the elevations, the neoclassical style is clearly visible in the facade. The frieze does not however wrap around the entire architrave as is common in neoclassical buildings. Furthermore, a mistake during construction means that the capitals meet the architrave in a manner uncompliant with classical rules.

Due to its sandstone construction with some plastering, the building stands out from the darker brick buildings on the same square. The reason for this materiality will be discussed in the building technology analysis.

On the 26th of May 1978 the right wing of the Haarlemmerpoort was squatted. This act put the state of the gate on the political agenda and resulted in 1984 in the restoration of the facade and renovation of the building's interior. With the reconstruction the attic has become inhabited, necessitating the placement of additional windows. While the symmetrical order of the neo-classical building was maintained for the facade alterations, it was disregarded with the placement of internal walls which squeezed 16 HAT units and a one free sector rental unit into the existing structure.

This renovation and restauration project was undertaken by Hubers en De Boer. They were selected by the residents (in consultation with government parties) since Maarten de Boer lived in a squat near Nieuwmarkt. It was his second project, the ramifications of their limited experience which will be discussed in the building technological analysis.
THE BUILDING AS A SYMBOL

Throughout the decades the Haarlemmerpoort has undergone a change in its symbolic function. Whereas initially the gate was used to celebrate royal events and was decorated accordingly, as is illustrated in the various beeldbank images. Furthermore, the gate’s very construction resulted from the need for a way to mark Willem II’s inauguration.

Perhaps due to the unwonted levelling of the Haarlemmer Houttuinen, the residents (old and new) want to preserve what is left of their perceived heritage. This urge has translated itself into an activist tendency within the Haarlemmerbuurt, for which the Haarlemmerpoort serves as a banner-toting focal point.

Building Dimensions

Royal Celebrations

- 1840 - Willem II’s inauguration
- 1898 - Wilhelmina’s inauguration
- 1922 - Willem III’s silver jubilee
- 1923 - Closure of fire station
- 2003 - Closure of fire station
- Now - Activism on Twitter page
VALUE ASSESSMENT

The Haarlemmerpoort was built in the prevalent neoclassical style of the time, giving this an indifferent value. Although this building constitutes C. Alewijn’s last project and B. de Greef’s first project, neither of these architects are particularly renowned in the Netherlands. In fact, C. Alewijn has almost been entirely forgotten.

The building gets a positive value for its historic origins as the last city gate to be constructed in Amsterdam, and also the only gate to be constructed without a defensive function. It is interesting to note as well, that unlike other triumphal arches which are purely ceremonial, the Haarlemmerpoort’s form has been adapted for a functional use as well.

Its highest values are in the point of Amsterdam’s history it relates and its current function as a rallying point for the neighbourhood.
The Haarlemmerpoort has masonry load-bearing walls made out of sandstone. These walls are largely plastered externally emphasising the building’s light colour which makes it stand out from the buildings which surround it. The other buildings on the square, including recent interventions like the block by Dick van Gameren, are all brick buildings (at least externally).

The Dutch building industry at the time primarily dealt with brick due to the country’s reserve of clay. Conversely, the country’s limited natural stone output results from a lack of reserves of these materials. Therefore, the expense of importing sandstone must have made the construction of the Haarlemmerpoort quite precious to the city of Amsterdam. The willingness to put in such an expense can be rationalized due to the ceremonial function of the building - to welcome and impress foreign guests while asserting Amsterdam’s role as capital of the country - and its construction in honour of Willem II’s inauguration.

The timber beams which span between the load-bearing walls are from the original 1840 building. As such, they span the shortest distances between walls at the time. The attic boasts an impressive timber structure to support the slanted roof above the colonnade which is also authentic. This roof as well as the glass lantern inserted in the 1985 renovation, are not visible from the square.

The primary roof water drainpipes are located internally at the far corners of the building. Heating channels and internal pipes as well as further roof drainage are located near where the fireplaces used to be - located along the internal load-bearing walls. These fireplaces were probably placed centrally for the rooms in the original situation.

It can be concluded from the section drawings from the 1985 renovation that the Haarlemmerpoort is supported by the traditional type of timber pile foundations which have been used in Amsterdam for hundreds of years. This consists of 685 12m long timber poles placed below water level. Placing the timber underwater prevents oxygen access and the resultant rotting of the foundation piles. These poles are placed in pairs which are connected by pile caps. These pairs are spaced approximately 800mm apart below the position of the load-bearing walls and are connected by timber planks kept in place by another timber member. Above this foundation bricks were probably laid due to the typical stepping of such foundations. Closer to ground-level the bricks make way for the masonry blocks which form the visible walls of the building. Besides the pile number, the description of the foundation is based on common practice in Amsterdam, but the building’s foundations may deviate from this norm.

In 2009 an investigation into the condition of the foundations revealed them to be in serious need of repair and the inhabitants were told by Ymere to move out without any assurance of a possibility for return. A second opinion revealed numerous calculation areas: there was no subsidence, the foundations were over-dimensional for the carried loads, they were in good condition and all but a small part would hold well for another 25 years. What exactly is wrong with these small parts and where they are located is unknown.
In the 1970's the Haarlemmerpoort was in a sorry state: propped up with steel cables holding a building together which was literally rotting away. In 1978, the right wing of the Haarlemmerpoort was squatted. The action was carefully timed to coincide with a passing cyclist demonstration thereby putting the state of the building on the political agenda. The squatters took up residence in the wing and undertook restoration and updating works: they replaced the missing floors, put in sewer work and electricity. In addition to the right wing they also took over the attic. The left wing was already occupied by residences.

In the 1980's, the government of Amsterdam bought around 200 squats. In cooperation with the monument care and the department of city renewal and housing, an architect was selected by the residents for the necessary restoration and renovation. They selected a young architecture firm Hubers en De Boer partly because of Maarten de Boer's experience living in a squat on the Nieuwe Markt. The Haarlemmerpoort was only their second assignment.

The restoration of the Haarlemmerpoort lasted between 1983 and 1985. The extra openings in the facade were triple glazed with soundproof glazing. The openings in the front and back facade took incredible effort to create considering the 1.1m thick walls in the attic. Moving the stairs was the most significant alteration of the existing building. During the renovation the existing interiors were quite extensively stripped and thereby the existing atmosphere was lost. The beam construction, roof structure and stone columns are some of the few internal elements remaining from the Haarlemmerpoort in 1840.

Following this restoration further maintenance works followed:
- 1986: completion of restoration
- 1988: placement of stud walls
- 1989: external painting (not of portico ceiling)
- 2000: woodwork window frames
- 2001: rotting wood dealt with in some (but not all) places.

**MATERIALS**
- **Sandstone**: Solid masonry load bearing walls
- **Plaster**: Plaster over the masonry walls both internally (plasterboard and plaster on reinforcement bars) and externally directly on the walls
- **Timber**: The existing timber beams, floor boards and roof decking of the slanted roof were utilized. Most of this timber, besides that in the attic level, is covered with insulation and plaster. The decorative coffered ceiling is also made out of wood painted over in a colour to match the plaster on the building.
- **Titanium Zinc**: The sloped roof is made out of titanium zinc.
- **Anhydrite**: Internal floors are made of anhydrite for an amorphous finish.
- **Steel**: The inserted stairs to the attic housing units and the roof terrace are made of steel and consist of steel grate steps.

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13. van Hulst, R. J. (2012). pa.1
Currently the building suffers overdue maintenance, cracking walls, moisture problems, mould growth between the external walls and the added insulation as well as insufficient ventilation.¹

The cause of the cracks in the walls is unknown and requires a complete analysis of the facades, given the ok on the state of the foundations the cracks probably have another cause. Sandstone, the load-bearing wall material, is porous by nature. Freezing of the absorbed water in winter may have caused the cracking. Perhaps lateral settlement of the structure following the extensive internal restructuring may have done the damage. But the exact cause of the cracks is unknown.

The overdue maintenance has quite simply resulted from insufficient and infrequent maintenance, although Ymere assures the general public that it has always acknowledges and attempted to resolve the inhabitants’ problems.²

A lack of paintwork on the window frames has resulted in their overt rotting. Some, but not all, of these rotten frames were replaced during maintenance in 2001. Aging in general is also causing the Haarlemmerpoort to look worse for wear, for instance with the peeling paint under the colonnade. The building is also tormented by highly uninspired tagging which has often been covered with patchy mismatching paint.

Details of the renovation are shown on the left and on the previous page. The existing structure and floor beams were used. Insulation was added for both thermal and sound purposes (between internal floors). The mould growth between the insulation and external wall has probably resulted from a missing damp proof membrane on the warm side of the load-bearing structure. The detailing of the slanted roof will also soon cause problems. The titanium zinc has not been placed on timber slats with a ventilation cavity below them. Therefore condensation forming behind the zinc will almost definitely have cause some rotting of the insulation material. It is in such details that the architects show their inexperience with detrimental effects to the building and its inhabitants.

Ymere, the building’s owner, acknowledges that maintenance is highly necessary; a conclusion they based on six investigations into the living conditions of the building.³

However, the necessary maintenance would cost 6 million euros, money Ymere simply does not have.⁴

Even if they were able to afford renovations, Ymere claims that improving the building to meet current building regulations for housing would violate the building’s monumental character; as such they cannot guarantee the current inhabitants a home after the renovations.⁵ Income from rent would not be able to return the investment made for the renovation, and such a change of function - to hospitality businesses or stores - would also be necessary to afford the long over due maintenance work.⁶ Furthermore, a change of function from housing would lower the technical standards needed.⁷

Ymere are now refusing to do all but minimum maintenance before this major renovation.⁸ Despite the overdue maintenance work, the inhabitants see no need to leave their treasured homes.

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1 Ymere. (2011). pa.3-4
2 Ymere. (2011) pa.3-4
3 Straathof, M (2008) pa.3
4 Straathof, M (2008) pa.3
5 Scholten, D (2012) pa.1f
6 Straathof, M (2008) pa.5
7 Straathof, M (2008) pa.5
8 Huurdersvereniging Centrum. pa.1
In 1972 the crawling space under the ground floor was assigned for use as a bomb shelter. This space was approximately 1.40 meters high. Since the renovation it can be assessed from a hatch in the stairwell, but how it was accessed before that is unknown. Given the limited number of drawings, a lot of uncertainties remain concerning the original and even existing condition. For instance, in the pre-renovation drawings there are no fireplaces depicted on the second floor, however some sort of flue must have been on that floor for the fireplaces on the floors below to be operational. Furthermore, no roof plan exists before the 1985 works. The renovation drawings show the chimneys as located near the short facades, yet given the centrally located fireplaces in the 1980’s this seems unlikely. These chimneys are therefore possibly new.
THE TRANSFORMATIONS

Alterations to the facade are limited in both number and visual apparentness. The primary alterations are the insertion of four additional windows on both of the long facades. The new second floor windows copy the locations and dimensions of the existing second floor windows on the short facades. The four panel windows on the short facades have however been replaced for two panel operable windows. These retain the same overall dimension (the opening does not appear to have been augmented) and better match the division of the ground and first floor windows.

The windows above the cornice on the long facades are entirely new. Their location retains the symmetrical design of the building; they are positioned above the cornice directly between the columns of the colonnade below. Their general existence is furthermore disguised through the use of narrow window frames that approximately match the building’s colouring.

The added windows to the attic, both the three per short elevation and the glass lantern, are barely visible from street level and cannot be seen from the Haarlemmerplein at all. The rooflights - 10 in total - are not visible in the elevations at all (see plans on previous page for their location). These were presumably needed to increase the amount of light entering the attic rooms to an inhabitable standard.

To continue briefly the chimney discussion, they are illustrated in one of the sections as of the same height as the 1m tall roof top balcony balustrades. Although these are therefore not visible in the facade drawings, they are visible from the street. These kinds of inconsistencies in the drawings made reflect the inexperience of the project architects and now lead to a lot of uncertainties as to what is original and what reflects the current state of the building.
From a building technological point of view, the Haarlemmerpoort is quite a simple building. Its foundations are of the sort traditional to Amsterdam and their good condition gives them an indifferent value. Detrimental to the value of the building however is the seriously overdue maintenance. This negligence is further exacerbated by some uninformed detailing decisions made during the renovation. Due in large part probably to the architect’s inexperience, they forgot to place a damp proof membrane on the warm side of the external walls, as a result of which mould is forming between these external walls and the applied insulation. In slanted roof detail the omission of a ventilation cavity has probably resulted in the as yet invisible rotting of the insulation package.

A positive value of the gate is without a doubt its load-bearing sandstone structure. This material in combination with plastering make the building stand out as a landmark in its location. More importantly, most buildings in the Netherlands were constructed out of brick for centuries. Natural stone constructions are uncommon since the Netherlands does not have its own reserves and therefore has to import such materials at considerable expense. Given the 330mm thick walls of the gate it is definitely constructed out of solid sandstone as opposed to brick with a sandstone veneer. This structural material therefore makes the building quite unique in Amsterdam as well as the Netherlands.
HAARLEMMERPOORT

reasons for the building choice

- complexity of situation
- links to city and green
- historic significance
- symbolic rallying point
- load bearing sandstone

opportunities (interpretation of value assessment)

- utilizing the square
- bringing in the green
- beacon
- posterboard
- heavy / light
- heavy / heavier

BUILDING CHOICE FINAL

I have chosen to continue working on the Haarlemmerpoort in Amsterdam as my graduation project. Following a contextual, architectural, and building technology analysis of the building it became even more appealing to me.

In terms of its context, the complexity of its situation still intrigues me: its border location between central Amsterdam and the western districts, its proximity to many different neighbourhood types (green, residential, former industrial, actual industrial, former harbour, etc.), its location on a traffic heavy square near a wide canal, etc. all came to appeal to me. I am intrigued by the possibilities the square has to offer the building and the neighbourhoods around it.

Specifically also the gate’s borderline location between the city centre and green of the Westerpark intrigued me in line with Amsterdam’s future plan to bring green further into the city. Part of this plan includes the further greening of the Bretzenzone of which the Westerpark is the easternmost tip. But could it include the greening of the Haarlemmerplein across the Singelgracht?

I was also intrigued by the transformation through time of its symbolic function from one of royal celebration to a rallying point for raising social awareness and focusing opposition against government imposed decisions. Given this change, I will aim to transform the gate into a beacon for the area. Since the gate is located at a multi-neighbourhood intersection, perhaps it could take on a part in uniting the surrounding area by becoming a beacon for the collection and distribution of information and action.

I was also charmed by the relative rarity of the load-bearing sandstone walls within the context of Amsterdam as well as the entirety of the Netherlands. Given this fact I would like to emphasize the load-bearing walls in whatever design device. This could be accomplished through contrast with a visually lighter construction type or emphasis with a visually heavier form above. What shape this transformation will take is at this stage rather entirely undecided.

DESIGN POSITION

The projects by several contemporary architects reflect my general attitude towards heritage development in the 21st century. Although I highly value history and the historic artefacts and objects which remain from the past, I do not believe in preservation for the sake of preservation. The value of most aged buildings is not in their age value but in the story they tell.

As such I hope to undertake quite a radical redesign for the Haarlemmerpoort. In my mind’s eye I see a tower. Given that the Haarlemmerpoort falls within the city centre conservation area (beschermd stadsgezicht) boundaries the opportunities to construct such a tower are possibly zero. However I still hope to accentuate the gate’s qualities as a landmark for the area: in both physical and symbolic terms.

inspirational reference projects

- bookstore selexys dominica
  - marx + girod architects
  - maastricht, netherlands
- caixa forum
  - herzog & de meuron
  - barcelona, spain
- menen townhall
  - no.a architecten
  - menen, belgium
- m museum
  - stéphane beel
  - leuven, belgium


