

Permanent temporality: a mirror of urban change

Tracing urban and social transformations through a migrant hotel

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Abstract

The Lloyd Hotel in Amsterdam played an important role in the early 20th century as a migrant hotel for Eastern Europeans on their journey to South America. The hotel is build by the Koninklijke Hollandsche Lloyd and aligned with needs of the Eastern Port area, which was developing into a major centre for global trade and migration. The hotel offered a fully equipped and controlled environment for Europeans migrating overseas, with among others medical, administrative and sleep accomodation amenities. Using both archival and literature research, this thesis explores how the hotel's foundation and function relates to the spatial and social development of the Eastern Port Area in the 20th century. A comparison with Antwerp's Red Star Line complex highlights the unique characteristics of Amsterdam's centralized model. The Lloyd Hotel mirrors the urban development, the migration flow and the changing port infrastructure in the 20th century.

Keywords

Lloyd Hotel; Port of Amsterdam; Eastern Port area; Koninklijke Hollandsche Lloyd; mass migration

1. Introduction

The Eastern Port area in Amsterdam became the most significant port area in the Netherlands due to improved accessibility after the opening of the North Sea Canal in 1876 (De Baar, 2001). Initially, cattle were mainly transported, but later this expanded to include both cargo and passenger transportation.

Several shipping companies established themselves with their warehouses, office buildings and staff housing in the Eastern Port area. These companies operated to locations all

over the world, including Australia, Asia and Africa (Ons Amsterdam, 2013). Among them was the Koninklijke Hollandsche Lloyd (KHL), founded in 1908, which operated the South America line (Gemeente Amsterdam, n.d.).

The KHL opened the Lloyd Hotel in 1921, serving as a migrant hotel mainly for Eastern Europeans emigrating to South America because of anti-Semitism (Gemeente Amsterdam, n.d.). They stayed here for a few days before their journey to South America and got thorough health checks.

Designed by Evert Breman in an eclectic style, the Lloyd Hotel has been recognized as a national monument for over two decades (Gemeente Amsterdam, n.d.). Besides a migrant hotel, the hotel has had other functions in the years following the bankruptcy of the KHL in the 1930s, including serving as a refugee shelter, a (juvenile) prison and ateliers for artists (Heijdra, 1987). Throughout its history, the Lloyd Hotel has always been a space for temporary residence and this began with the migrant hotel in the early development phase of the Eastern Port area. This leads to the research question:

How does the foundation and original function of the Lloyd Hotel relate to the spatial and social development plans of the Eastern Port area in the 20th century?

This thesis will utilize both a literature review and archival research. The literature review will establish the theoretical framework, clarifying key concepts such as the Eastern Port Area. Additionally, the historical context will be told by the findings from the literature review. Archival research will provide deeper insight into the historical role of the Lloyd Hotel as a migrant hotel.

The first chapter will provide context on the Dutch shipping industry and how Amsterdam rose to become one of the largest and most important ports globally. It will also discuss the foundation and heyday of the Eastern Port area. The second chapter will then focus on the establishment of the Lloyd Hotel by the Koninklijke Hollandsche Lloyd within this port district. Following this, the interior of the hotel will be closely examined. The last chapter will turn to the Red Star Line in Antwerp, another shipping company in Europe. After this, a comparison can be made between the situations in Amsterdam and Antwerp.

Much has been written mainly about the later functions the Lloyd Hotel had, such as refugee shelter for Jews and a prison. There's also a lot of information available on the Koninklijke Hollandsche Lloyd and its overseas ventures towards South America. Particularly about the time and situation on board and also about the various financial situations the shipping company experienced due to world wars, overambition and competitors. However, literature specifically on the Lloyd Hotel as a migrant hotel in the early 20th century is scarce and therefore this thesis will focus on the establishment and operation of the migrant hotel in the newly developed Eastern Port area in Amsterdam.

2. The development of the Dutch shipping industry

This chapter begins by exploring the growth of the shipping industry in the Netherlands and how Amsterdam emerged as one of Europe's most significant ports. It will then shift focus to the construction and development of the Eastern Port Area.

2.1 The port of Amsterdam

Several developments led to the rise of the shipping industry in the Netherlands, with Amsterdam eventually becoming one of its most important ports. This started when the Netherlands underwent a revolution in transportation in the sixteenth century. This was caused by three main factors: the concentration of trade in port cities like Amsterdam, the growth of shipbuilding fueled by sawmilling innovations, and the extension of the barge system. The immigration of wealthy

merchants and craftsmen following the fall of Antwerp in 1585 hastened the movement of trade to Amsterdam (Den Heijer, 2015).

The Dutch shipping network spread throughout Europe and eventually to other continents by the end of the sixteenth century. This expansion was made possible by investments from wealthy companies and immigrants. Despite the growing competition from France and England, the Netherlands was able to hold its position as the shipping leader in the seventeenth century. British blockades and neglected infrastructure in Dutch waters caused the Dutch shipping industry to suffer during the Batavian-French era. By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the Netherlands had regained its dominant position in international shipping thanks to investments in the fleet and maritime infrastructure after 1813. Improvements to inland waterways and the Rhine in the 1860s increased shipping even more (Den Heijer, 2015).

Transportation underwent significant changes in the second half of the nineteenth century with the arrival of steam navigation. The North Sea Canal's construction enhanced port accessibility, among several other advantages.

Because shipping was more expensive and there was less competition during World War I, the shipping industry grew. By the 1920s, the fleet was among the most advanced in the world thanks to the investments made by numerous Dutch shipping companies in new vessels following the war. However, the shipping industry faced difficulties as a result of the 1930s economic crisis. In response, BENAS was created by the government to assist these shipping firms and preserve the nation's fleet (Den Heijer, 2015).

2.2 The Eastern Port area

The growth of the Eastern Port area is linked to the history of Amsterdam's port as a whole. This starts with the construction of the North Sea Canal in 1876. A significant intervention that prevented the IJ from silting up and allowed Amsterdam to, once again, have a direct line to the North Sea (Wilhelmus, n.d.). The city was able to sustain its position as a major trading centre thanks to the new economic activity the canal brought. As a result, businesses established themselves along the canal. IJmuiden and other regional ports started to thrive (Wilhelmus, n.d.).

The Eastern trading quay constructed in 1877 can be considered as the intervention that marked the beginning of the Eastern Port Area (De Baar, 2001). This two-kilometer section has trading offices, warehouses, and cranes, opening up new space for maritime trade (Lubbers, 2005). Even though the sea passage had been west of the IJ since the construction of the North Sea Canal, the east side was wider and therefore provided more room for growth, (De Baar, 2001).

In the decades that followed, the Eastern Port area started to undergo a real transformation. Larger ships and a need for deeper and more expansive harbours resulted from the switch from sail to steam around 1900 (Heijdra, 1987). In order to meet the increasing demands of international shipping, a number of artificial islands were constructed between 1880 and 1910, including Java Island, KNSM Island, Borneo Island, and Sporenburg (Hoppenbrouwer & Louw, 2005). As a result, the Eastern Port area grew with each new addition over these 30 years.

The build of the Central Station in 1889 was a minor setback to the development of the port of Amsterdam. The city is cut off from the old harbours at the Open Harbour Front by the station and its parallel railway lines. It became more difficult for ships to dock and unload their cargo (Lubbers, 2005).

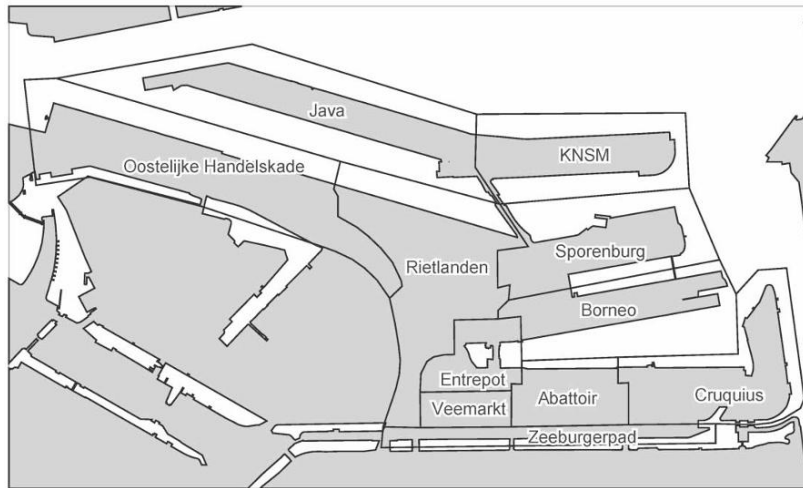


Figure 1: Map of the Eastern Port Area (Hoppenbrouwer & Louw, 2005)

The first extension was Java Island, which was built as a breakwater for the Eastern trading quay in 1892 and turned into a docking area by 1896 (Ons Amsterdam, 2013). From here, routes to the Dutch Indies were established by the Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland (SMN). The Koninklijke Hollandsche Lloyd (KHL) concentrated on South America, while the Koninklijke Nederlandsche Stoomboot-Maatschappij (KNSM) catered to Central America and the Levant and the Hollandsche Stoomboot Maatschappij (HSM) maintained links with England (Lubbers, 2005).

The port flourished as a center of global trade in its prime. Between ships and railroads, goods like cattle and coffee were transported. With its coal depots and marshalling yards, Sporenburg, finished in 1874, was essential in supporting the supply chain between the hinterland and the port (Ons Amsterdam, 2013).

However, the harbor's wealth was not immune to failures. Port activity was seriously impacted by the Great Depression of 1929, the growth of aviation, and the disruptions of World War II. With the establishment of Westhaven and Coenhaven in the 1930s, new port development moved westward, gradually making the Eastern Port Area less relevant (Wilhelmus, n.d.).

As a result, in the latter half of the 20th century, the Eastern Port Area found a new purpose. A thriving urban district was the goal of the first redevelopment plans that appeared in 1980 (Hoppenbrouwer & Louw, 2005). Alongside the area's historic structure, modern residential neighbourhoods replaced the former warehouses and industrial sites. The district's maritime past is told by street names such as Levantkade and Surinamekade on Java and KNSM Islands.

3. The Lloyd Hotel

This chapter will begin with the founding of the Koninklijke Hollandsche Lloyd (KHL) in the Eastern Port area. It will then cover the construction of the Lloyd Hotel by KHL, followed by an overview of the hotel's layout.

3.1 The Lloyd complex

In 1876 the North Sea Canal opened, this improved accessibility to the port of Amsterdam and the distance to the North Sea was reduced to only 30 kilometers (De Baar, 2011). This development allowed the South America line to depart from the Eastern trading quay, the east side of the Amsterdam harbor, starting in 1899. Supporting this overseas line, the shipping company the Koninklijke Hollandsche Lloyd was founded in 1908.

Initially, the KHL transported only livestock, but after the outbreak of the foot-and-mouth epidemic, they also began carrying passengers in 1910. As the company expanded for several years, the KHL purchased two acres of land on the Eastern trading quay in 1915 to build two large

warehouses -Brazil and Argentina-, office buildings, staff housing and a coffee house (Minca & Ong, 2014).

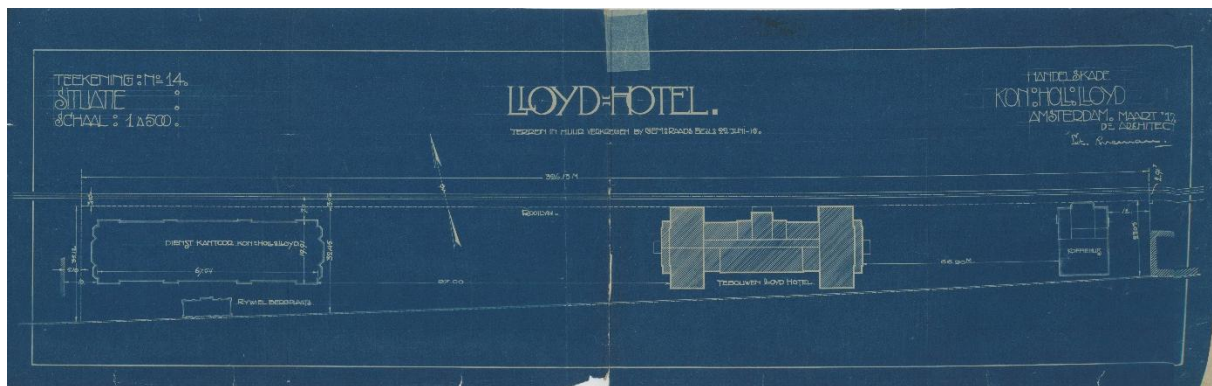


Figure 2: Map of Lloyd complex with the Lloyd Hotel, the coffee house and the office building (Gemeente Amsterdam Archief; 24527; 10200300, 1917)

In 1918, the shipping company made the decision to also build a migrant hotel at the Lloyd complex: the Lloyd Hotel. This was an accommodation for mainly Jews and farmers from Eastern Europe whom, due to Anti-Semitism and crop failures, wanted to leave Europe and travel to South America via Amsterdam (Gemeente Amsterdam, n.d.). In South America they hoped to find free land and relative religious freedom (Van der Wilt, 2023). The European migrants had easy access to the Lloyd Hotel through the marshalling yards on the already developed Sporenburg island.

The journey to Buenos Aires, for example, took about three weeks and passengers could buy tickets for first, second or third class accommodations. The separation between these classes was very sharp (JoodsAmsterdam, 2016). Migrants stayed 2 to 5 days in the migrant hotel before their departure and underwent medical checks at the adjacent decontamination building to prevent any outbreaks on board (JoodsAmsterdam, 2016).

Although the Lloyd Hotel was intended to leave freely, in reality did this not always prove to be the case. An environment was created so that the migrants did not have to leave the hotel, for example, by providing facilities such as a recreational hall, several shops, a currency-exchange office and a foreign administration office. In addition, they were allowed to walk on the quay, but only under the supervision of an employee of the hotel (Minca & Ong, 2014).

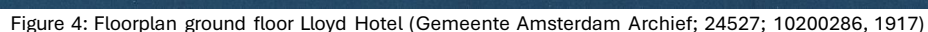
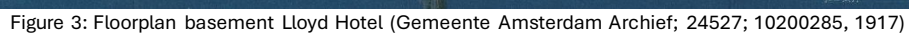
3.2 Layout of the hotel

The KHL appointed Evert Breman to design the migrant hotel. Breman was a known name in Amsterdam, for example, he also designed the World Exhibition for the Hotel and Travel Industry in 1895, several residential buildings, multiple theaters and his role as city architect of Amsterdam (Lubbers, 2005). The Lloyd Hotel was designed in an eclectic style with influences of the Amsterdam School.

The KHL initially budgeted 325,000 guilders for the construction, that was already a considerable amount at that time. But they were confident that the hotel's opening would bring them significant prestige and that the investment would be earned back over several profitable years. However, the actual construction costs rose to 2.3 million guilders, nearly eight times the original estimation (Lubbers, 2005).

The design for the Lloyd Hotel also included a decontamination building. This was the first room where the Eastern Europeans arriving by train had to enter in queue. Medical examinations were conducted and everyone's clothes were disinfected in ovens (Ons Amsterdam, 2013). This decontamination building was connected to the hotel by corridors, where all the sick entered through one corridor and the healthy through another to prevent further contamination (Minca & Ong, 2014).

The ground floor houses the welcome hall including a waiting hall, several toilets, the dining hall with associated cooking and rinsing kitchen and also the recreation hall. In addition, the office is also located here. Then on the mezzanine of the ground floor are the first floor of the residence of the steward and spare rooms for the staff.



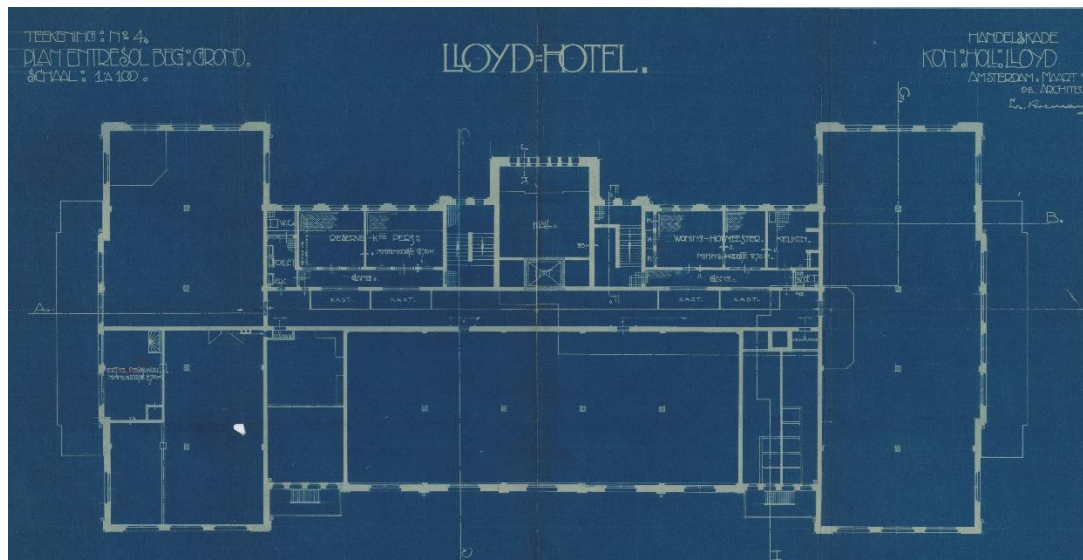


Figure 5: Floorplan ground floor mezzanine Lloyd Hotel (Gemeente Amsterdam Archief; 24527; 10200287, 1917)

Continuing to the first floor, here are the women's dormitory and separate bedrooms for families situated. This level also contains maternity rooms, a pharmacy and two separate men's and women's wards with additional toilets and bathrooms. Also located here is the second floor of the steward's residence. The mezzanine contains several rooms for the staff and also a conversation room for the staff.

On the second and also the last floor of the Lloyd Hotel are the dormitories for men as well as more separate bedrooms for families, both with associated toilets and bathrooms. This floor also contains the last rooms for the staff.

Throughout the hotel, there is a clear separation at the dormitories, with separate large sleeping areas for men and women and separate individual family rooms. Facilities such as toilets, showers, wards, and washrooms were similarly separated by gender. Another thing to note is that there are bathrooms with a bathtub and toilet on the dormitory floors, but they are scarce. In fact, on the second floor, there are only four bathrooms for both the men's two large dormitories and also the fourteen separate family rooms combined. Nonetheless, there are also separate toilets, as well as rooms with only sinks indicated on the floor plan as toilets.

Additionally, special rooms for the Jewish population were designed as shown on the floor plan, for example, the room "handbabage Jews" in the basement and the "Jews stay" on the first floor.

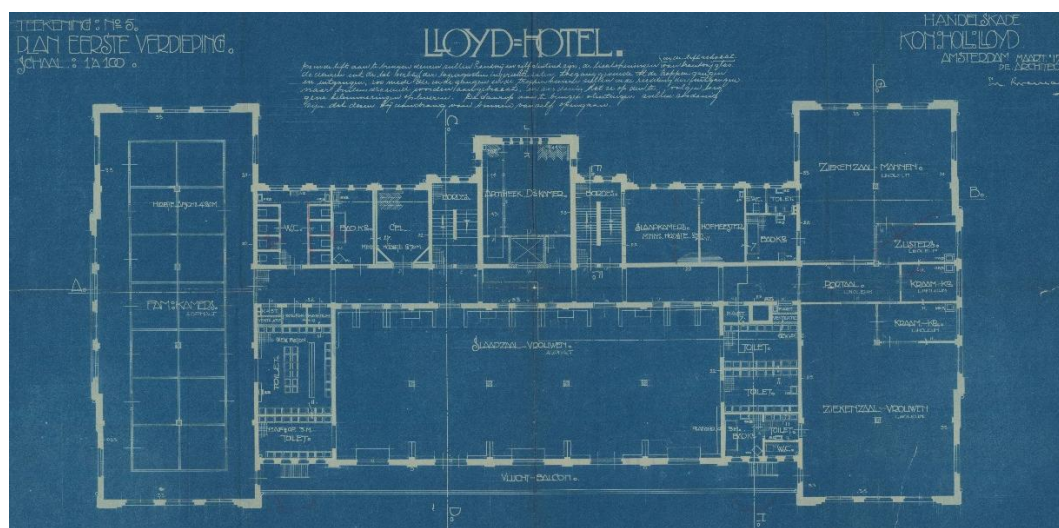


Figure 6: Floorplan first floor Lloyd Hotel ((Gemeente Amsterdam Archief; 24527; 10200288, 1917)

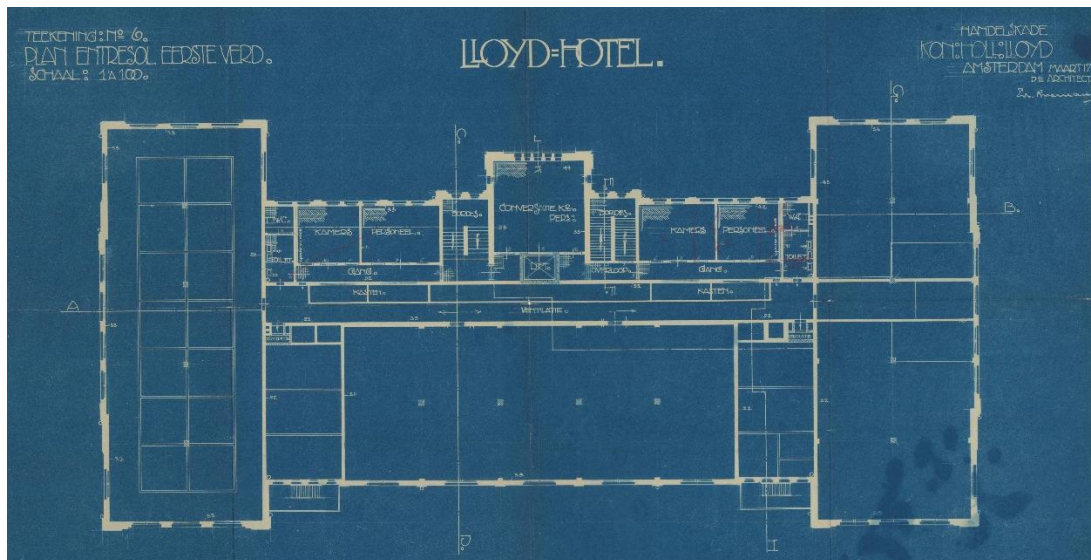


Figure 7: Floorplan first floor mezzanine Lloyd Hotel (Gemeente Amsterdam Archief; 24527; 10200289, 1917)

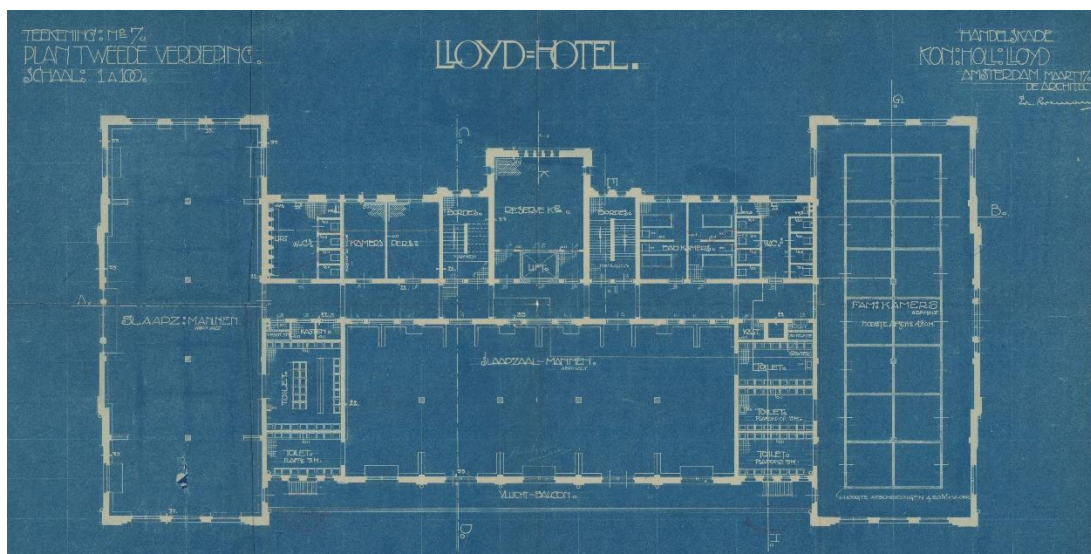


Figure 8: Floorplan second floor Lloyd Hotel ((Gemeente Amsterdam Archief; 24527; 10200290, 1917)

3.3 Closure of the Lloyd hotel

After staying at the Lloyd Hotel, the conditions on the ships to South America were poor. This is because the KHL prioritized carrying as many passengers as possible at a time, as a result they were cramped and poorly maintained. Nevertheless, the KHL still made too little profit and declared bankruptcy in the 1930s (JoodsAmsterdam, 2016). The economic crisis of the early 1930s, combined with the immigration quotas introduced by the United States, became fatal to the shipping company.

By 1935 they had to close the hotel and no longer transported passengers, though some ships were still carrying livestock and cargo in cooperation with the former competitor, the Koninklijke Nederlandsche Stoomboot-Maatschappij. After this, the Municipality of Amsterdam took over de Lloyd Hotel and was repurposed again for the first time in 1938, as a refugee shelter for German Jews (Gemeente Amsterdam, n.d). Those following years it had multiple reuses, during World War II the Germans used it to detain Jews, it was a (juvenile) prison, housed art studios and eventually became a hotel (Heijdra, 1987)

4. The Red Star Line, Antwerp

This final chapter will explore the history, facilities, and operational methods of another major European shipping company: the Red Star Line in Antwerp. It will then compare the situation of the Royal Dutch Lloyd in Amsterdam with that of the Red Star Line (RSL) in Antwerp.

4.1 Port of Antwerp

Antwerp became one of the most significant ports in Europe in the 19th century (Beelaert, 2010). Mainly Europeans from central, southern and eastern regions sailed from the port of Antwerp to New York and Philadelphia in the United States or Canada the Red Star Line (Rodríguez García et al., 2012). It was based at the Rijnkaai in Antwerp in 1973 and had good accessibility due to the Iron Rhine, a prominent railroad line running through Germany.

European companies in were often driven by profit and therefore tried to carry as many passengers as possible (Feys, 2017), the RSL ended up carrying between 29,500 and at it's peak 61,000 people annually (Beelaert, 2010). Due to the large numbers of passengers, the rooms were often overcrowded and there were no decent sanitary facilities available (Nauman et al., 2022). During both the medical checks and also on the ship, there was always a separation between men, women and families.

Before their departure, passengers underwent a medical examination to prevent an epidemic outbreak on the ship, this was mandatory in Antwerp from 1850 by Royal Decree. Not much later, the United States also implemented the Quarantine Act, requiring countries to check their passengers before departure (Beelaert, 2010). Initially at the Red Star Line, this took place outdoors in harsh conditions. Therefore, in 1893 they petitioned the municipality for a building where the medical examination could take place indoors.

4.2 The Red Star Line complex

The Red Star Line complex originally consisted of three buildings: the main building, the corner building and the shed. The corner building was the first to be built in 1894, when the laws regarding medical checks became stricter (Red Star Line Museum, n.d.).

Indeed, this was first done outdoors behind a tarpaulin, but an indoors facility was required for this (Beelaert, 2010). Also, from this point on, shipping companies had to pay for the return journey if migrants were refused entry on medical grounds (Beelaert, 2010). This was enough motive to improve the facilities and built the small shed at the Rijnkaai, it also served as a warehouse for shipping supplies (Beelaert, 2010). From this point on, medical checkups were done indoors, but the conditions remained poor. The seperated rooms for men and women were insufficient, the lighting and heating were poor, and the condition of the walls and ground of the building were dilapidated (Beelaert, 2010). In 1912 a larger shed was added, it was probably only used for lugagge storage and not for passenger processing.

In 1922 the complex was expanded again with the main building. The growing number of passengers no longer fitted the corner building, so the new main building took over the function of medical checks and administration. Also situated in this building were separate sanitary facilities for men and women, decontamination ovens for clothing and luggage, two waiting rooms and even a barber shop (Red Star Line Museum, n.d.). From this point on, the corner building was used as a reception hall.

Several buildings were present at the Red Star Line complex for administration, medical checks and disinfection of luggage and clothing. However, it lacked sleeping facilities. Because of this, the migrants had to find a place in one of the lodging houses scattered throughout the city. These lodging houses made a lot of profit as they allowed as many migrants as possible per night. Often more than the law allowed, yet the Antwerp authorities hardly performed any checks (Beelaert, 2010).

Many of these places in the city were owned by the RSL. At one point there were plans to build a large migrant hotel where hundreds of passengers could stay per night, however, these plans never went through (Beelaert, 2010). Partly because of the lack of enforcement by the local authorities, the Red Star Line was not forced enough to improve its facilities.

4.3 Closure of the Red Star Line

After World War I, migration to the United States dwindled considerably with the introduction of immigration quotas. Indeed, this caused a reduction of two-thirds between 1921 and 1924. This forced the RSL to close its doors in 1934. The economic crisis resulting from the war also contributed to this (Gijssels, 2020).

Residents near the port of Antwerp welcomed the closure of the RSL as they complained about the presence of the large numbers of migrants. Due to the poor regulation and inadequate facilities, migrants spent more time outside, where local residents claimed they posed a risk to public order and health (Nauman et al., 2022).

The buildings of the shipping company continued to serve port functions in the following years, but it is now a museum about the era of the mass migration flow (Gijssels, 2020). In 2001, the Flemish government declared part of the Red Star Line complex as a protected historical monument. The remaining building received the same status in 2007 (Red Star Line Museum, n.d.).

4.4 Comparison of the Koninklijke Hollandsche Lloyd and the Red Star Line

The migration routes from Amsterdam to South America and from Antwerp to the United States has many similarities. Both the Koninklijke Hollandsche Lloyd and the Red Star Line began operating from a major port in Europe in the 19th century. The port of Amsterdam was easily accessible for migrants by train through the marshalling yards at Sporenburg, and the port of Antwerp was also easily accessible by train via the Iron Rhine railway line. The number of emigrating Europeans increased significantly in the following years and in the years between 1900 and 1922 the shipping companies both began to expand their complex with several buildings, including a building for medical checks. In doing so, both shipping companies kept a strict separation of men and women during these checkups and sanitation facilities.

Profit was a clear motive for both the KHL and the RSL. The ships were overcrowded and the facilities on board were poor. The latter was already an issue on land as well, the sanitary facilities were poorly maintained and the medical procedures took place outdoors and were not very comprehensive. The KHL did improve these conditions with the construction of the decontamination building, where medical checks could take place indoors. The sick were separated from the healthy passengers by several corridors and there were disinfection ovens for clothing and luggage. In contrast, the RSL did the minimum necessary. Due to new laws they built the corner building for indoor medical checks, but the facilities remained poorly organized and were not well maintained.

The main difference between the Koninklijke Hollandsche Lloyd and the Red Star Line were the accommodations for overnight stays. The KHL had built the Lloyd hotel as a migrant hotel in the Eastern Port Area, where hundreds of passengers could stay 2 to 5 nights before their departure. This hotel contained all the amenities that a passenger needed, because of this the shipping company could keep all passengers well under medical and administrative control. This hotel was built only a few years after the founding of the KHL though, prior to that the migrants had to find a place to stay in the city.

The latter was always the case in Antwerp. In fact, they had buildings for administration, medical checks and disinfection of clothes and luggage, but not one centralized solution where all the migrants could stay overnight before departure. The migrants had to look for a place in one of the lodging houses scattered throughout the city and these were always overcrowded. At one

point, the shipping company made a plan to build a large migrant hotel, but these plans were never realized due to lack of initiative on the part of the government and the shipping company itself. For the passengers, this was obviously not a pleasant situation, but also the inhabitants of Antwerp were not happy about it since the wandering migrants caused a lot of nuisance.

Both the KHL and the RSL had to cease their shipping function in the 1930s due to the economic crisis and immigration quotas introduced by the United States. Today, the Lloyd Hotel in Amsterdam and the Red Star Line buildings in Antwerp still stand and are preserved as historical monuments.

5. Conclusion

This thesis examined how the establishment and original function of the Lloyd Hotel related to the spatial and social development plans of the Eastern Port Area in the 20th century. By utilizing both a literature review and archival research, it became clear that the Lloyd Hotel cannot be separated from the broader context of Amsterdam as a growing port city and the transformations the city was going through.

The Koninklijke Hollandsche Lloyd responded to the increasing flow of migrants to South America by establishing the Lloyd Hotel. The hotel served as more than just a place to stay; it was a logistical centre that combined administrative, medical, and sleeping accommodations services, providing a controlled space for the migrants seeking a better life. It dealt with the practical needs of the shipping industry as well as societal concerns like social regulation, public health, and hygiene.

At the same time, the Lloyd Hotel represents the Eastern Port area's spatial transformation from a maritime and industrial centre to a residential area packed with culture and history. The hotel has had multiple reuses, as a migrant hotel, refugee shelter, prison, artists' studio, and finally a cultural hotel. This illustrates how the building's use has always changed to meet the city's evolving needs while maintaining its historic character.

The comparison with the Red Star Line complex in Antwerp shows that although both cities played an important role in European migration, Amsterdam stood out for offering a fully equipped migrant hotel. In contrast to Antwerp's scattered and less regulated system, this approach not only improved Amsterdam's position as a global port but also demonstrated a more integrated model of care and control.

To conclude, the Lloyd Hotel acts as a mirror of urban and social change in Amsterdam. It brought together the city's various needs, including societal change, economic ambitions, and temporary residence. It stands as a historical monument to this day, serving as a reminder of the impact of migration on a big city like Amsterdam.

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