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Your Ref: CLT/HER/WHC/8419/NL/MA/MR

Dear Mrs. Rössler, dear Mechtild,

On 20 November 2015, I received your letter with the above reference, enclosing the Technical Review by the Advisory Body ICOMOS regarding construction plans within the World Heritage property "Defence Line of Amsterdam" (DLA). I would like to thank you also on behalf of the Province of Noord-Holland (the site owner responsible for the preservation of the DLA) for the review and the recommendations expressed in it. I do so The Province of Noord-Holland and the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands intend making every possible effort to comply with the recommendations.

This letter is to inform you about the three plans referred to. I will first give a substantive response to the recommendation regarding the construction of a residential building in Edam, together with the information requested. I will then deal with the review of the train depot, describing what decisions have now been taken, the reasons for the choice of location, what further steps are planned, what mitigating measures will be taken, etc. I will then describe the procedure that will be followed in further decision-making on the choice of the route for a road linking the A8 and A9 motorways. This includes visualisation of the route in the landscape and the effects on the essential attributes in this part of the DLA, as well as studies that will be carried out as a basis for the final decision to be taken in mid-2018/2019. The final part of this letter is to inform you about the survey of the state of maintenance of the attributes of the DLA.

Construction of a residential building at No. 14 Zeevangszeedijk in Edam

Originally, there was a traditional farmhouse (a "stolpboerderij") at No. 14 Zeevangszeedijk in Edam. This was demolished before 2008. On 22 July 2008, the municipality issued a Certificate of No Objection for the new replacement building on this plot (within the framework of the Art. 19(1) exemption procedure under the Spatial Planning Act). On 15 November 2010, a building permit was

granted for construction of a residential building with an annex on the plot. The site is within the “red contour” of the urban area; here, infill of existing strip patterns of building is permitted, provided that this is appropriate within the landscape and the existing building intensity.

The new zoning plan (“Oorgat and surroundings”) was then adopted by the municipal council on 19 January 2012. The abovementioned building permit is integrated into the zoning plan.

Formal presentations of views (*zienswijzen*) were submitted against the building permit, and an objection and appeal were submitted. The public also made known their views on the zoning plan, and here too formal presentations of views and an appeal were submitted. During this procedure, detailed attention was paid to the attributes of the Defence Line of Amsterdam, and it was decided that issuing the building permit and zoning plan had been justified. Both the building permit and the zoning plan have since become irrevocable.

By means of a decree issued on 23 March 2015, a (new) environmental permit was issued for altering and decreasing the size of the residential building and annex at No. 14 Zeevangsseedijk in Edam. The application was entirely consistent with the above-mentioned established zoning plan. An objection and appeal were submitted against this decree also. These were rejected on 13 August 2015.

Building has not yet started, but all the procedures are nevertheless irrevocable.

The enclosed drawings show the location of the plot relative to the small town of Edam and the Fort at Edam (*‘location’*), as well as a map (*‘situation’*), and a construction drawing (*‘drawing’*) of the proposed buildings. The buildings therefore replace buildings within the existing ribbon development in the small town of Edam. Buildings have been constructed at this location (within the ribbon development) since as far back as the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Construction of a train depot

Discussions took place at administrative level on 15 December 2015 and 13 January 2016 with the aim of deciding on a final site for the train depot. Preservation of the OUV of the Defence Line of Amsterdam World Heritage Site was an important consideration in the choice of location, in addition to maintaining the accessibility of the urban region, nature conservation, and quality of life. The *Technical Review A8-A9 link road, train depot and construction of residential building* by ICOMOS (November 2015) was therefore an important basis for decision-making.

Based on these administrative discussions, the Minister of Infrastructure and the Environment – in consultation with the Provincial Executive of Noord-Holland, the executives of the five municipalities in the region, and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science – decided on 1 February 2016 that the train depot should be constructed at the proposed location along the N203 provincial road. Given the numerous interests in the region (World Heritage, accessibility, nature, and quality of life) the N203 is the optimum location.

On the instructions of the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, ProRail (the administrator of the rail infrastructure) will work out the details of the preferred N203 variant. The guidelines



regarding the visual effects which ICOMOS has set out in its recommendations will serve as the basic principle underlying further elaboration of the design. This will involve taking account of the high visibility of the rolling stock, the preference for a depot of short or medium length, and the use of visual separation structures (dikes, belts of trees). The amended design for the N203 depot will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for information at the end of 2017.

Work on the Amsterdam-Alkmaar railway infrastructure will start in 2021, including the N203 depot, and will be ready for use at the end of 2024.

### A8-A9 Link Road

#### *Planning, advice, and decision-making procedure*

The existing road connection between the A8 and A9 is insufficient. There is very frequent congestion, “short-cut traffic”, and noise nuisance. There is also only moderate air quality. Consideration is being given in the planning study for the A8-A9 Link Road to seven alternatives. These are possible road routes through the area, both existing and new, to deal with the problems that have been identified. The planning area is one with a great deal of economic activity, but also with an open landscape and cultural heritage features. The Defence Line of Amsterdam UNESCO World Heritage Site is also located partly within the area.

In the Netherlands the procedure that applies to reach an effective, balanced decision, involves a “Planning Study EIA” (environmental impact assessment). This study method ensures objective assessment of the impact on all the interests in the region (economy, traffic, health, nature and landscape, cultural heritage, etc.) The independent national “EIR Committee” (*Commissie voor de mer*) checks the study as regards all these interests. The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) that we sent you previously was also carried out within the Planning Study EIA. The HIA is therefore part of the process of deciding between the seven planning alternatives.

In its response to the state of conservation report that was sent previously – and which is based on the results of the HIA – ICOMOS indicates in a general sense that it requires proper substantiation and a better understanding of the visual effects of developments that have taken place in the area since inscription on the World Heritage List, and more specifically a visualisation of the proposed solutions for the A8-A9 Link Road.

The Planning Study EIA has now been completed. Based on the results of the planning study, the cooperating parties (the municipalities of Velsen, Uitgeest, Beverwijk, Heemskerk and Zaanstad, the Amsterdam Urban Region, and the Province of Noord-Holland – together making up the A8-A9 Link Road steering committee) consider two alternatives to be promising, namely Alternatives 2 and 5. Further study is necessary before a choice can be made between those two alternatives. The Provincial Executive of Noord-Holland (GS) agrees. GS has published the reports and there will be an information evening at which residents and stakeholders will have the opportunity to ask questions.

The most promising alternatives are Alternatives 2 and 5. Alternative 2 involves the least impact on the open landscape and the lowest investment costs. Alternative 2 runs via the existing route, but will be entirely adapted, with through traffic and local traffic being separated. Alternative 5 is considered promising because it combines an effective solution (as regards both accessibility and quality of life) with relatively low investment costs. Alternative 5 links the existing A8 via a new route

with the existing junction at Heemskerk. The new route crosses the ribbon village of Assendelft and the line dike of the DLA (see the figure).



These alternatives are now being studied further so that a good choice can be made between them. Further elaboration will take account of the possible spatial integration, the societal pros and cons, and the feasibility of the projects. The visual effects on the OUV of the Defence Line of Amsterdam will be considered during the same phase. For this purpose, spatial integration proposals will be drawn up and consideration will be given to possible mitigating measures. All of this will be visualised in such a way that one can form a clear picture of the integration into the landscape. This design thus forms the basis for the further decision-making procedure. The study and the design will be carried out/drawn up by the Province of Noord-Holland and its partners, and coordinated with the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands. The results and visualisations will be sent to you for consultation at the end of 2016. The advice of ICOMOS on reaching a balanced decision on the alternatives will form part of the ultimate choice of a preferred alternative, i.e. the route that is most satisfactory as regards all the interests in the area.

After selection of a preferred alternative in the spring of 2017, there will then be an opportunity for stakeholders and others involved to present their views on the decision taken. Residents and stakeholders will be informed via the website and other social media. There will also be information evenings in the area. After the public consultation procedure, a final choice will be made by the Provincial Executive of Noord-Holland and the plan elaboration phase will then commence (in 2018). During that phase, the design will be finalised and the final planning procedures will be carried out. This design will then be reviewed by the EIR Committee. The final design will also be submitted to you (in mid-2019) in advance of final adoption.



State of maintenance of the attributes of the Defence Line of Amsterdam

Important attributes in this part of the Defence Line of Amsterdam are Fort Den Ham, Fort Veldhuis, two secondary batteries, and an inundation culvert.

I am attaching the inspection reports from *Bouwadvies Groot Holland*, the monument surveillant organisation in Noord-Holland, on Fort Den Ham and the secondary batteries at Fort Den Ham and Fort Veldhuis. These reports were drawn up in 2013 and 2012, respectively. Fort Den Ham was found to be in good condition as regards its construction and in reasonable condition as regards maintenance. However, a number of suggestions are made for improving the maintenance of the fort. No structural report is yet available for Fort Veldhuis, but it is expected to appear shortly. The fort at Krommeniedijk, which is situated just outside the planning area will already be restored and re-zoned this present year. Plans are currently being drawn up.

There is also an inundation culvert in the planning area for the A8-A9 Link Road and the train depot. No structural report is yet available on this structure, but a recent onsite inspection showed that it was in good condition.

I hope this has provided you adequate information.

Yours sincerely,

Lionel Veer,  
Ambassador

Permanent Delegate of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to UNESCO

Cc : ICOMOS

Attachments:

OV Zeevangsdijk 14 – location

OV Zeevangsdijk 14 – drawing

OV Zeevangsdijk 14 – situation

Inspectie 2012

Inspectie 2013

