

NATIONALLY PROTECTED TOWNSCAPE

RADIO KOOTWIJK

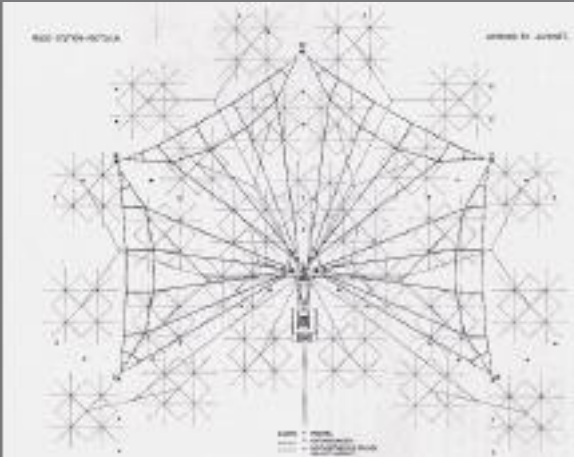
Besides monuments and iconic buildings, Apeldoorn also has protected city and townscapes and other valuable historic cultural areas. Whilst the properties are generally excellently conserved architecture from the past, the focus of the city- and townscapes is more on well-conserved examples of historic developments that can be seen in the districts, centres and settlements. Radio Kootwijk is one such unique example, that deserves protection on a national level.



Image of the woodcut
"Hallo Bandoeng", here
in the Haque, 1928

In total there are more than 400 protected city- and townscapes in the Netherlands, with a history reaching back to before 1850. A national inventory was also made of urban design from the period 1850-1940 for the Dutch Monument Inventory Project. Which resulted in the designation of Radio Kootwijk as protected townscape.

This brochure outlines why the former transmitter village has been put on the national list of protected townscapes and its buildings on the national or local heritage lists.



Antenna terrain



Old en new water towers

History

At the start of the twentieth century, the Netherlands was a trading nation with extensive overseas territories. Its interests were served by a quick connection to the colonies, especially the Dutch Antilles. Direct communication took place by way of electric telegrams, which required cable connections. Prior to this, the Netherlands was dependent on England and Germany. When the First World War broke out the disadvantages of this independence increased. In 1918, the government decided to realise their own international communication network, independent of the neighbouring countries. After much political debate it was decided to build a long wave transmission station enabling permanent contact with the Dutch East Indies using radio telegraphs.

Radio transmission station and transmitter town

To establish the radio transmitting station they looked for an uninhabited, remote terrain so there would be minimum interference to the transmission traffic from the environment. The 450 hectare terrain was bought by the Dutch Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management (under which the PTT fell) from the Dutch National Forestry Commission. A narrow gauge railway was constructed from Assel on the Amersfoort-Apeldoorn route to Radio Kootwijk to provide access and so they could transport, inter alia, heavy antenna materials to the site.

Architect Julius Maria Luthmann (1890-1973) worked for the Dutch Government Building Agency. He was commis-

sioned to build the transmitter building, the water tower, a building where unmarried staff could reside and a block of six workers' residences for families on the Turfbergweg. We can assume he was also responsible for the central axis facing the highest point of Hoog Buurlo. The town encircles this hill.

About 150 labourers from Amsterdam levelled the terrain under the management of what is now known as the Dutch ARCADIS. The antenna terrain was constructed as a circular plain with a diameter of approximately 1200 metres, a ring of five 212 metre high masts around a central mast at the foot of the transmitter building.

The radio transmission centre was officially put into operation in May 1923, initially for Morse telegraph traffic. The developments in radio technology advanced rapidly. After a few years it became apparent that the long wave connections were outdated and too expensive. They switched to a short wave frequency for a higher signalling rate, better connections, lower energy consumption and smaller equipment. Radio telephony was in sight. The C, D and E buildings were erected to this end. The first telephone connection was established in 1928.

The station initially operated under the name Radio Assel, but also became known under the name Radio Hoog Buurlo. 'Kootwijk Radio' was the international call sign for radio traffic. The first conversations, which invariably concluded with the Dutch national anthem Wilhelmus, were free as it was still in an experimental phase. Subsequently, people had to pay considerable amounts for a phone call to family members overseas. The PTT tried to interest the public in overseas phone calls through advertising. Cheap family phone calls, only on Saturdays



Old picture of building A with building B and antennas

with 30% discount off the normal rates cost f 21 in those days for a three minute call to Java, for example. In those days the average weekly salary was f 25.

As of 1962 the transmitter station provided long-distance connections for the maritime industry from the Netherlands under the call sign "Scheveningen Radio" and was part of the state enterprise for Post, Telegraphs and Telephony of the Netherlands.

The terrain has belonged to the municipality of Apeldoorn since 1967 due to a boundary change.

Staff and residents

Staff recruitment began during the construction of the transmitter station. Some of the staff had to be reached and available day and night so should preferably live near the station. At the end of the twenties, about 200 people lived in Radio Kootwijk, a mixed and close-knit community in this isolated enclave of the Veluwe. The community spirit was thus very high. Many activities were organised for the community and always with an acknowledged request for support from the employer the PTT, also with regards to transport. There was in fact no regular bus connection with Apeldoorn. They arranged a school bus and market bus, a church bus on Sunday mornings and a football bus on Saturday afternoons. Children growing up there experienced wonderful childhoods in the middle of the countryside. The village had its own fire department, waste collection service, electricity and water facilities. Water was drawn from the pump houses by the water tower.

A new owner

The last manager of the transmitter station, Martin Nieuwenhuizen, finally closed the doors in 1998. He was able to rescue a number of the transmitters from the demolition and house them in museums. KPN, as PTT is currently called, no longer wanted the building. National and local authorities considered the building and village to be so unique that the remaining buildings were put on local and national heritage lists. After the transmitters were no longer being actively used, there were plans for Radio Kootwijk to be taken into use by Delta Radio that planned a new construction of a long wave transmitter with a very high output for broadcasting music to countries including England. There was a great deal of resistance to these plans due to the health risks and pollution of the landscape. A Kootwijk (residents') platform, established in opposition, successfully opposed the arrival of the transmitter. This resulted in the Dutch state, in partnership with the Municipality of Gelderland, buying the complex (back) from KPN. Over the ensuing years they intensively looked for a new (private) owner who could give the building complex on Radio Kootwijk a new function which would respect the cultural heritage and high natural value of the area. A solution was finally found at the end of 2009 from the public arena. The KPN buildings and corresponding terrain went back to the hands of the Dutch State Forest Commission, who could then implement the redevelopment of the total area.

New function

The redevelopment by the Dutch State Forest Commission was focused on creating a good balance between the corporate, cultural and public uses of the buildings and



Radioweg site office, 1920



The globe was donated by the transmitter station staff on its 10 year anniversary



In the summer, building E's cooling pool was cleaned by the village inhabitants and provided with fresh water so serve as a swimming pool. The antenna coupling house was then used as a pool house

corresponding countryside. The core values of calm, space and darkness thereby formed the framework. The cultural history, the location where the buildings were situated and the setting in the middle of the Veluwe, with its great ecological value were central elements.

Radio Kootwijk is a place of connecting, experiencing culture and nature, of the present, past and the future. It is an intriguing environment that inspires new ideas. The buildings, drift sand and heathlands reinforce each other. It is the space that touches you. This combination makes Radio Kootwijk an exceptional place; a place that will be conserved for generations to come in an economically responsible way. This makes the redevelopment an embodiment of the modernisation by the heritage conservation; not restoring it so it can remain vacant but for economic and historic culturally responsible reuse. The plans were implemented by the Dutch Forestry Commission in close collaboration with the Municipality of Apeldoorn, the Province of Gelderland and the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands. That partnership resulted in a joint financial foundation and in the joint establishment of a new and now approved land-use and aesthetic quality plan. In these plans, the historic cultural, architectural and natural values are not only considered as individual elements but also for their mutual coherence.

The first buildings

The first buildings to accommodate the Amsterdam ground workers are erected on the Veluws' sand. The workers were housed in wooden barracks, complete with dormitories, dining hall, central kitchen and sick-bay. Furthermore, a site office, blacksmith, horse stables,

windmill and a number of warehouses for storing materials were constructed.

Building A

The exceptional and unique result of the main building, called building A, is derived from the interplay between necessity and the sources of inspiration. The building could, for example, not be built in wood because of the fire hazard of overheating due to radiation from the transmitters. Thus they chose concrete, which was a little known building material at the time. The building's design was inspired by the transmission station in Naun Germany, a design by Herman Muthesius.

Architect Luthmanns' interest in Egyptian architecture explains the building's appearance as a sort of sphinx. As well as characteristics typical of German Expressionism, the building had unmistakable elements of the Amsterdam School style. In this popular building style from the twenties, various artists often collaborated in decorating the buildings. Above the entrance door you can see a relief depicting a mask with an open mouth through which radio waves exit, flanked by two female figures listening, a European and an Eastern women, symbolising the connection between the East and West. The rear is adorned by a large arched window topped with an eagle.

The eagle symbolises the freedom of the radio waves in the air, the flight of sound. Both reliefs are designs by Hendrik van den Eijnde, sculptor, furniture designer, graphic artist and illustrator.



Old picture of the open terrain



Old picture of the Turfbergweg block

Buildings B to G

In 1920 construction started on a stone site office with residences above, also called the engineers' building or building F, that was meant to replace the hut in the barracks village. The Home for Unmarried Civil Servants, later Hotel Radio Kootwijk, was constructed a year later in Amsterdam School and chalet-style (wood combined with bricks). The buildings B, C, D and E were established for the shortwave transmitters, the latter three had a cooling pond and antenna masts much like building A. It was from these buildings, from 1926, that the Netherlands sent telegrams to East Indies and other parts of the world.

In the thirties, the Dutch State Urban Planning added a few more residences, including three other engineers' residences, spacious villas for the higher-ranked personnel and four residences on the Radioweg. The buildings are on the local heritage list in part due to their narrative value in the importance of the Radio Kootwijk complex as a whole.

The garage at the foot of the water tower was constructed by commission of the German occupier during the Second World War. The building served for storing and maintaining the motor vehicles. The workshop, building G, also stems from this period.

The map on the back of this brochure shows the positions of the various buildings in relation to each other. Building B has since been demolished. The other buildings have partly been given new uses and will be restored.

Water tower and 50 kV station

When building a radio station, it is not just water that is vital, for drinking water facilities and cooling pools, but electricity as well. For pumping and storing the water, two pump houses and a water tower were erected, with a light beacon on top for air traffic. This beacon is no longer in use. A 50 kW station was built half way along the railway tracks to provide electricity.

Radio Kootwijk, as a 450 hectare complex, is situated in a very characteristic part of the Veluwe. The varied forestry can be seen from the roof of building A, or rather, from the water tower. In clear weather the heathlands of Gerritsfles are visible and in the distance the white sands of the largest active sand drifts in Western Europe: the Kootwijkerzand. The characteristic Hoog Buurloos heathland lies directly around the building. Typical mosses and grass species grow on the barren sandy heathland. Roe deer, red deer and wild boar are permanent residents of the area. The bird and insect species and reptiles are also typical in this part of the Veluwe.

The open heathland surrounding the transmitter building has a history of human interference. Old images clearly show what the open terrain in the transmitter village looked like at the time of construction. It was leveled to make way for the construction work. Due to the heath plants with Canadian bird cherry and pines at the hedge of the terrain, the drift sand had to be restrained. The Dutch Forestry Commission has since reopened the terrain to show the original character of the transmission



circle. The barren sandy heath ground is the perfect environment for exceptional flora and fauna. On the open grounds at the corner of the Turfbergweg and the Radioweg, a few small monuments remind us of the small town's history.

A face was depicted on a boulder by the sculptor Titus Leeser as a symbol of the voice of Radio Kootwijk which sounded across the globes, the inscription underneath reads: Hello Bandoeng! 1928 28.2 1938. This is the date on which Queen Emma brought about the first telephone connection with the Dutch East Indies with the legendary words: "Hello Bandoeng Hello Bandoeng! Can you hear me?".



Old picture of the female figures above the entrance

Issue
Municipality of Apeldoorn

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Text
Municipality of Apeldoorn

Image material
CODA R. Jungschläger Village Council Radio Kootwijk, Municipality of Apeldoorn

Design
Municipality of Apeldoorn

Print
Felua-groep, Apeldoorn

Print run
3.000 copies

More information
www.staatsbosbeheer.nl/radiokootwijk www.hierradiokootwijk.nl
www.radiokootwijk.nl www.radiokootwijk.com

November 2012