

NETHERLANDS

Schokland and Surroundings

Brief description

Schokland was a peninsula that by the 15th century had become an island. Occupied and then abandoned as the sea encroached, it had to be evacuated in 1859. But following the draining of the Zuider Zee, it has, since the 1940s, formed part of the land reclaimed from the sea. Schokland has vestiges of human habitation going back to prehistoric times. It symbolizes the heroic, age-old struggle of the people of the Netherlands against the encroachment of the waters.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription

1995

Agency responsible for site management

- Netherlands Department for Conservation (Rijksdienst voor de Monumentenzorg-RDMZ) (since 1st November 2006: Netherlands Department for Archaeology, Cultural Landscape and Monuments – RACM (Rijksdienst voor Archeologie, Cultuurlandschap en Monumenten)), in contact with the Province of Flevoland, the Municipality of Noordoostpolder, Stichting Het Flevo-landschap the Flevolandscape Association, and the National service for Archaeological Heritage (Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek-ROB, (since 1st November 2006: Netherlands Department for Archaeology, Cultural landscape and Monuments – RACM)
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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria

C (iii) (v)

Justification provided by the State Party

Criterion (iii): The island of Schokland is the last cultural-historical and physical reminder of a typical micro-society in and on the coasts of the former Zuider Zee. Reminders of these societies have

either completely disappeared or are no longer recognizable as a result of the Zuider Zee works, in which a marine inlet with a connection to the open sea became a fresh water lake known as the IJsselmeer. Also expansion as a result of the reclamation of new land within the IJsselmeer has made these micro-societies disappear. Archaeologically, such reminders are no longer traceable due to, for instance, the construction of new housing estates.

Criterion (v): Schokland and surroundings is an outstanding example of the prehistoric and historic occupation of a typical wetland, especially in relation to the reclamation and occupation of peat areas. It is precisely because of these occupation and reclamation activities that large areas of land were lost. The formation of the Zuider Zee itself can also be considered as a result of these historic activities. Schokland is the last vestige of a once much greater area of occupation. The history of this greater area is eminently represented in this small area with its settlements, cemeteries, large number of terps, dykes and parcelling systems. Ongoing agricultural mechanization and the dehydration of deeper levels form a constant threat to the quality of the cultural and organic remains.

Criterion (vi): Schokland bears testament to a natural disaster of unprecedented dimensions which took place in the wet heartland of the Netherlands in the Late Middle Ages. Reclamation and agricultural activities and the associated dehydration made the large peat area in the middle of the Netherlands more vulnerable to erosion. Erosion was caused by a number of peat rivers and especially by the Waddenzee in the north. As a result of this erosion, a very large area of land was lost. This land could only recently be reclaimed, and then only in part. This new reclamation was carried out at the great cost of effort and expense.

Schokland not only reminds us of the historic reclamation activities but also of the grim battle against the rising water that seemed lost in 1859 when the island was finally evacuated. This battle was eventually won when new land around the island was reclaimed by the Zuider Zee works when the island became surrounded by a new cultural landscape. In this respect Schokland should be looked upon as a concrete symbol of, on the one hand, the general struggle of man against the elements and, on the other hand, the characteristic Dutch battle against water.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

Qualities: the struggle of the people of the Netherlands against water has endured more than a thousand years, and still continues today: without constant vigilance more than half the present area of the country would be entirely submerged or subject to periodical inundation. Schokland forms part of a large peat island that gradually decreased in size between AD 1000 and the mid 19th century as a result of the gradual encroachment of the Zuyder Zee, until it had to be evacuated in 1859.

As a result of the colossal reclamation programme that began in the early years of the 20th century, Schokland and the settlement mounds and other human interventions that surround it stand above the flat lands of the reclaimed Noordoostpolder as mute testimony to the skill and fortitude of the Dutch people in the face of this never-ceasing natural threat.

Recommendation: that this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria iii and v:

Schokland and its surroundings preserve the last surviving evidence of a prehistoric and early historic society that had adapted to the precarious life of wetland settlements under the constant threat of temporary or permanent incursions by the sea. It lies within the agricultural landscape created as a result of the reclamation of the former Zuyder Zee, part of the never-ceasing struggle of the people of the Netherlands against water and one of the greatest and most visionary human achievements of the twentieth century.

Committee Decision

Bureau (July 1995): the Bureau decided to refer the nomination back to the State Party in order to allow the State Party to resolve the situation regarding the potential recreation area. In the event of a satisfactory solution being proposed by 1 October 1995, the Bureau recommended that this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii) and (v).

Session (1995): the Committee decided to inscribe this site on the basis of criteria (iii) and (v), considering that Schokland and its surroundings preserve the last surviving evidence of a prehistoric and early historic society that had adapted to the precarious life of wetland settlements under the constant threat of temporary or permanent incursions by the sea. Schokland is included in the agricultural landscape created by the reclamation of

the former Zuyder Zee, part of the never-ceasing struggle of the people of the Netherlands against water, and one of the greatest and most visionary human achievements of the twentieth century.

- Statement of Significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- No change required

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: no buffer zone has been defined but none is needed as existing protective legislation is adequate

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

3. Protection**Legislative and Administrative Arrangements**

- National:
 - 1988 Monuments Act (Monumentenwet)
 - Housing Act (Woningwet) (2003) (for establishing criteria for building aesthetics)
 - Forestry Act (Boswet) (1961) (for the conservation of forests and timberland)
 - Flora and Fauna Act (Flora - Faunawet) (1998)
 - Space/Space for Development Document (Nota Ruimte. Ruimte voor Ontwikkeling) (2004)

Province of Flevoland:

- Regional plan for nature and landscape (Gebiedsplan voor natuur en landschap) (2002)
- Landscape Bye-Law (Landschapsverordening) (2002) (states that it is forbidden to place captions or advertising boards outside the built-up area of a town/city)
- Surrounds Plan (Omgevingsplan) (2000)
- Earth Removal Bye-Law (1997) (includes conditions regarding earth removals)

Municipality of Noordoostpolder:

- 2003 Landscape Policy Plan (Landschapsbeleidsplan)
- Rural Area Zoning Plan (Bestemmingsplan landelijk gebied) (1978) (the land within the site is primarily for agricultural purposes).

Zuiderzeeland District Water Board:

- Water Level Decrees 'Schokland and surroundings' (Peilbesluiten 'Schokland en omgeving') (2002 and 2003)

- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

Actions taken/proposed:

- The development of a strategy for conserving two areas, marked on the Flevoland Archaeological Monument Map (Archeologische Monumentenkaart (AMK) Flevoland) as areas of extremely high archaeological value (20F-002; 21A-008)
- The necessity of altering the protection of the archaeological treasures at the terps in Middelbuurt and Zuidpunt protected as a monument is being investigated
- The necessity of supplementary legal protection of archaeological structures in the possession of the Flevolandscape Association will also be investigated
- The State Property Services IJsselmeerpolders, the Northern Netherlands Agricultural and Horticultural Organisation (NLTO) and the Province of Flevoland will formulate a plan on the 'Agricultural Development Plan' (project: 'formulating a communication plan for archaeological values in the agricultural area/Agricultural Development Plan Schokland')
- National, regional and local levels of action. No timeframe provided

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Rural landscape

Management/Administrative Body

- Steering group set up on 01 / 01 / 1998. Legally constituted: on 22 December 2004, the 'Regional Partners' (the administration of the Municipality of Noordoostpolder, the administration of the Flevolandscape Association, the administration of the Northern Agricultural and Horticultural Organisation Flevoland, the administration of the Zuiderzeeland District Water Board, the administration of the Province of Flevoland, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Ministry of Finance and State Property Services IJsselmeerpolders) signed the *Regional document Schokland and Surroundings, 2004-2006*, with administrative agreements to preserve, protect, and promote the site. The Regional document takes 2015 as its time horizon
- No site manager but none needed
- Management under protective legislation; management under contractual agreement between the State Party and a third party; consensual management; management by the steering group

- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: local. Also: Municipality of Noordoostpolder (local), Flevolandscape Association (regional), Zuiderzeeland District Water Board
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

5. Management Plan

- Management plan is being implemented
- Implementation commenced: December 2004
- Aim: (from Regional Document (Gebiedsdocument)) 2004-2006:
 - Providing insight into how a sustainable perspective for the long term can be achieved
 - Formulating guidelines for managing the site so the essential values of the World Heritage remain preserved
 - Formulating a programme of measures and projects aimed at preserving and developing the site and its constituent parts
 - Intensifying public attention to and interest in the site
- The Flevolandscape Association (Stichting Het Flevo-Landschap) is also developing management plans:
 - Management Plan Nature and Landscape Schokland (Beheerplan Natuur en Landschap Schokland), July 2004
 - The formulation of a maintenance programme has been commissioned for the 'church ruin', the historical 'hearth plate' and 'well' (Zuiderterp)
 - Agricultural development plan
- Effective

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- Municipality of Noordoostpolder; Flevolandscape Association; Province of Flevoland; Central Government (Ministries of Agriculture, Nature Management and Food Quality (LNV) and Education, Culture and Science (OCW)); occasional public or private sponsors
- Public or private sponsors: donation by the National Postcode Lottery for restoring monuments on the southern point of Schokland and creating the hydrological buffer zone; donation (January 2004) by the National Postcode Lottery to the Flevolandscape Association for purchasing land to help prevent subsidence of the island and for restoration

work to the greenery; purchase of agricultural parcels by the Flevolandscape Association

- No funding drawn in through World Heritage Fund
- Insufficient: the Flevolandscape Association has commissioned a financial-economic investigation to gain insight into the future developments in Schokland

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 2

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Good: conservation, management
- Average: promotion, interpretation, education, visitor management
- Staff resources are adequate
- Help from volunteers who give guided tours

8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- Management of archaeological heritage: provincial archaeologist from the Province of Flevoland; National Service for Archaeological Heritage (ROB)
- No training on site management

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: not provided but visitor numbers are increasing
- Visitor facilities:
 - Schokland Museum, Middelbuurt (since 1987, dedicated to the geology, archaeology and history of the island. Rebuilt and refurbished in 1996)
 - 19th-century church on the Middelbuurt terp (used for concerts)
 - Parking facilities; museum restaurant; information panels; 3 educational/recreational routes; footpaths
 - ‘Stone Garden’ visitors centre Schokland (reorganised, reopened in 2000: geology)
 - Training for ‘Schokland guides’ (training of 16 guides)
- Visitor facilities are adequate
- There is no tourism/visitor management plan for the site

10. Scientific Studies

- There is an agreed research framework/strategy for the site
- Studies related to the value of the site; Monitoring exercises
- -Archaeological Monument Map Flevoland (Archeologische Monumentenkaart Flevoland, 1997), shows all known archaeological sites rated as such. The map was recently reviewed. Schokland is shown with the five archaeological sites protected or soon to be protected by Central Government. The map can be consulted at www.archis.nl
- -Cultuurhistorische@atlas Flevoland (2002), a digital atlas on CD, showing the major archaeological, landscape and urban development structure, indicating the presence of cultural heritage and its value
- -Studies focus on the geological structure and hydrological condition of the soil on the former island of Schokland for the purpose of creating and managing the ‘hydrological zone’
- Studies used for management of the site and its conservation

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem not used on publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, local authorities. Inadequate: businesses
- There is no education strategy for the site
- Need for awareness raising amongst the residents/farmers more in the management and conservation of the site
- The Schokland Fair is held biannually, in November; Open Monument Day (September); Open Museum Day
- Website available <http://www.schokland.nl/> (IVN Consulentenschap Flevoland) <http://www.natuurlijk-schokland.nl/werelder.htm>, (website of ‘Natuurlijk Schokland’)
- Local participation: No special steps have been taken (to date). A communication plan is being prepared

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- Creation of a 'hydrological zone'
- Restorations carried out:
 - Church ruin (Ens church, Zuidpunt) (2002-2003)
 - Reburial on 7 May 2003 in an ossuary built during the most recent restoration of the church ruin at the southern point of Schokland of the remains of early inhabitants, exhumed in 1940 at the Ens church ruin
 - 19th-century well, Zuidert terp (2003)
 - Foundation of early beacon, Zuidpunt (2003)
 - Construction of a refuge hut at Zuidpunt, in the form of early homes on Schokland
 - Lighthouse keeper's house, situated at Noordpunt
 - Construction of the 'Misthoorn', situated at Noordpunt
 - Old Harbour, Oud-Emmeloord (a fishing harbour, reconstructed in 1983, restored in 2004/2005)
 - Shell paths have been laid and information panels installed for tourists
- Present state of conservation: good

Threats and Risks to site

- Agricultural/forestry regimes; other: land subsidence/level of the groundwater
- Emergency measures: creation of a hydrological zone as discussed above

13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme: In 2003-2004, archaeological monitoring was carried out within the framework of the creation of the hydrological zone (published, 2005)
- Key indicators: parameters for this monitoring (the Province of Flevoland commissioned the design of a measurement network, six-monthly measurements in 2003, three-monthly measurements in 2004):
 - Investigating the quality of archaeological materials and the soil environment of the archaeological sites
 - Land subsidence on and around the island
 - Natural values of the areas
 - Groundwater and surface water levels, to conserve the archaeological heritage
 - Archaeological values in the recently created hydrological zone
- The Flevolandscape Association has commissioned a maintenance programme for the monuments Church Ruin, Hearth Plate and Well
The Municipality of Noordoostpolder has commissioned a maintenance plan for the buildings at Middelbuurt (museum)

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, management
- Weaknesses of management: possible further unexpected subsidence of the former island; developments towards possible intensification of agriculture, which can result in damage to the archaeological heritage