

3. European Maintenance Initiatives

3.1 Introduction

This section of the report examines three European initiatives which either take or help to support a systematic approach to the maintenance of listed/historic buildings. It also describes the statutory context in which these initiatives operate.

3.2 Methodology

The initiatives studied were chosen because they represent good examples of attempts to support preventative maintenance in three different statutory and cultural contexts. The three initiatives chosen were:

- Monumentenwacht in the Netherlands;
- Raadvad Bygningssyn, Denmark;
- The Risk Map of Cultural Heritage, Italy.

The information was gathered through interviews with individuals from government and non-governmental organisations that are connected with each of the three initiatives. The web sites from each of the initiatives was also examined.

3.3 Monumentenwacht, Holland.

3.3.1 The initiative

Founded in 1973 by two individuals and with the support of the Ministry of Culture, Monumentenwacht¹ is now a key part of the Dutch building conservation world. Listed building owners subscribe to the service and pay a subsidised hourly rate for an inspection and subsequent prioritised maintenance plan. The subsidy comes from mixture of grant paid from both national and local government sources.

The basic service is:

- independent of the conservation authorities;
- an annual inspection of the external envelope, roof void and the interior. For some buildings, such as smaller dwelling houses, the inspection may occur less frequently, for example between 18 and 24 months. 'First aid repairs' to items of a critical nature encountered during the inspection;
- a prioritised maintenance plan and advice to the owner/subscriber. The presentation of the prioritised report to the owner in person is a frequent occurrence and the inspectors are expected to discuss and provide verbal advice and information on the

¹ Website: <http://www.monumentenwacht.nl/>

maintenance of their building. This will include advice on other sources of assistance and advice.

The service does not provide works specifications nor will it provide a recommendation for a contractor to do the work.

Inspectors have a technical or crafts background, and experience in conservation work. They are also required to develop high level communication skills. Training and continuing professional development in all aspects of the work are provided at frequent intervals.

Monumentenwacht is a federal structure which includes 11 independent provincial charitable foundations with a central national federation office providing administrative, technical and training support. The central federation office also campaigns at a national level for increased attention for maintenance. In particular it considers that part of its mission is to support and encourage listed building owners to maintain their properties. Currently there are over 15,000 subscribers to the Monumentenwacht scheme. This represents about 20 per cent of all the nationally listed buildings in the Netherlands. There are 52 teams (two inspectors per team) across the whole federation.

Typical current charges for subscribing owners are an annual membership charge €50 (£35). In addition subscribers pay €40 (£28) per 2 person team per hour for the inspection and the report.

In 2002 an average team of (2) inspectors (including all overheads) incurred costs of € 112,000 (£78,400). Of this sum, €52,000 (£36,400) comes from the subscribers (Annual fee + the hourly charges for inspection and reporting) and € 60,000 (£42,000) from local government subsidy. These costs do not take into account the use of vehicles which are provided to Monumentenwacht by a charitable trust.

3.3.2 Statutory context

Duty of Care

There is no specific duty of care to maintain a listed building enshrined in Dutch conservation legislation, although Dutch local authorities have a duty to intervene if any building is not receiving a specified level of maintenance. However if an owner of a listed building receives financial support (subsidy, tax breaks etc. see later section) for care of the building a legal obligation comes into force requiring them to maintain the building. The regulations also insist on the provision of a 10 year maintenance plan for owners in receipt of state finance, tax breaks and/or loans. The most widely accepted maintenance plans are those provided for owners subscribing to Monumentenwacht. As Monumentenwacht are a non-profit-making organisation they charge no VAT and thus they have an automatic cost advantage over other potential maintenance plan providers. The VAT situation in the Netherlands is that maintenance and repair works to any building above 15 years of age is reduced from the standard rate of 19 per cent to 6 per cent.

Co-operation

The Dutch building conservation context is characterised by a high degree of co-operation between various key state and non-governmental organisations. One of the interviewees, from the State Department for Conservation suggested that this is a critical part of the success of Dutch conservation policy. Other interviewees implied that most of the key players in the conservation spheres are known to each other and have frequent contact. Interviewees suggested that this reflected the high importance that is given to consensus and cooperation in Dutch culture and politics. Monumentenwacht are proud of their independence from the state and from contractors and specifiers, and yet they are highly subsidised and integrated into the

building conservation context. For example, Monumentenwacht has a strategic partnership agreement for co-operation with the State Department for Conservation.

3.3.3 Subsidy, tax breaks and loans

Administration

As mentioned previously, it is worth noting that the owner/manager of any listed building must demonstrate that they have a long term plan for maintenance before any subsidy or loan is made available for either repairs or for maintenance. The regulations do theoretically differentiate between repairs and maintenance, although it is not clear from the interviews that we carried out how this operates in practice.

There is a complex system of subsidy, low interest loans and income tax breaks for owners of nationally listed buildings. Since 1985 the responsibility for the payment of all subsidies has resided within an independent not-for-profit organisation, the Nationaal Restauratiefonds (NRF). The Ministries of Culture and Finance wanted this responsibility to reside with an independent body for two reasons: first, because it was felt that this would help ensure the sanctity of the funds and second, because it was felt that an independent institution would operate more efficiently than a governmental one. The NRF provide an e-mail/internet/telephone advisory service for any listed building owner to obtain advice and guidance on finance issues.

By 2005 the system for attaining loans, tax breaks and subsidy will be handled through a joint office run by the NRF, the building conservation section of the Ministry of Finance and the State Department for Conservation. The hope is that this will enable owners to minimise the effort they have to make in order to make an application for a loan/subsidy/tax break.

Rates and structure of subsidy

Subsidies and financial support for repair and maintenance are set at a variety of rates. For example, for agreed repairs to windmills a 60 per cent subsidy can be claimed and for churches a 70 per cent subsidy of agreed repair costs is available. Currently there are different rates of subsidy for maintenance. For example, churches currently receive a 50 per cent subsidy of their maintenance costs. In the future (2005-6) the rates of support for repair and maintenance will be harmonised, so that, for example, for churches the rate will be set at 65 per cent of the costs for both repairs and for maintenance.

The situation is different for home owners. They can receive a subsidy of up to 50 per cent of their repair costs. All home owners pay a property tax relative to the value of their property. For listed building owners, maintenance costs can be deducted from this tax. They are also able to claim a subsidy on their maintenance of up to 50 per cent. However the payment of a direct subsidy for maintenance lowers the tax deduction available, the larger the proportion of maintenance subsidy they receive, the smaller the tax reduction available and vice versa.

Since the inception of the NRF in 1985 there has been a policy shift away from direct subsidies for those owners liable to income tax. In the system which operates currently owners are eligible for a reduced lump sum subsidy (30 per cent of agreed maintenance and repair costs). The remaining 20 per cent of the state subsidy is made available to the owner by the NRF in the form of a low interest loan (currently 0.7 per cent, per annum).

Implications for central government funding commitment

The finance for the revolving loan fund is provided by central government as annual lump sum payments into the fund. The interest and repayments have generated sufficient additional funding over the last 18 years to provide twice the amount of finance as if the same funding had been allocated directly in the form of direct grant subsidy.

In 2005-6 the direct subsidy will be removed altogether for tax-paying owners and the subsidy system will become almost entirely based on low interest loans and/or tax deductions. Non-tax-paying foundations, such as building trusts, churches etc. will still be entitled to grant aid.

Recent research by the NRF and the State Department suggests that the system not only provides significant additional funding but that when wider benefits are included (additional income tax generated from additional conservation works, additional jobs in the contracting sector etc.) a high proportion of the public funds provided for conservation return to the state. Figures quoted to us suggest that in the first year alone 75 per cent of the money invested returns to the state.

The spokesman from the NRF commented that the case for the financial advantages of maintenance was most important for the Ministry of Finance and that the Ministry had been convinced that increasing investment from them for maintenance activity was resulting in a reduced claim on tax breaks for major repairs. Ultimately the intention is that the result of the initial investment will be to raise the level of the rate of support for maintenance above the rate of support for repair.

3.3.4 Information and advice

Together with all their other partners Monumentenwacht puts a great deal of emphasis on the importance of information, assistance and guidance which is an integral part of the Dutch conservation network. Monumentenwacht provide verbal advice and regular information documentation regarding maintenance issues to all their subscribers.

3.3.5 Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of Monumentenwacht

During the course of several interviews, we asked interviewees if they could provide evidence about the effectiveness of the Monumentenwacht service. None of the interviewees were able to substantiate their claims about the service with hard evidence. Lack of data is a key factor here. Despite the existence of Monumentenwacht for nearly 30 years, it is only in the last three years that serious attempts have been made to collect and collate the information contained in the individual building's reports. Such data can be used to give a national picture of the effect of the service on the condition of those buildings which have been part of the scheme. Although it was possible to extrapolate improvements in the condition of individual buildings from a series of inspection reports, this had not been systematically developed to provide a broader picture of the condition of groups of listed buildings.

Despite the lack of evidence about the specific impact of Monumentenwacht, a series of sample condition surveys have been undertaken by the Department for Conservation over the last decade to gather evidence regarding the effectiveness of national maintenance policy. The evidence from these was that building stock condition is improving. Those interviewed for this research were unanimous in the opinion that the condition of Dutch listed buildings had considerably improved in the last three decades and that this was attributable to Monumentenwacht and to the broader pro maintenance conservation policy. Currently an ex-Director of Monumentenwacht has been seconded to the Department for Conservation to develop and run a joint database of condition of all the Monumentenwacht subscribers' buildings.

3.4 Raadvad Bygningssyn, Denmark²

3.4.1 Statutory context and public sources of finance for maintenance

There is a duty of care in Danish law and listed building owners are obliged to maintain a listed building. There is no power of compulsory purchase and the primary penalties are fines for non-compliance. There are tax breaks and listed building owners are able to deduct all their maintenance costs from income tax. Subsidies are available but are primarily focused on repairs.

3.4.2 The Raadvad Bygningssyn initiative

3.4.2.1 Origins of the service

Raadvad Bygningssyn (RB) was launched in 1999. Following extensive communications with Monumentenwacht in the Netherlands at the outset, the Raadvad Bygningssyn scheme was closely modeled on the Monumentenwacht service. Unlike Monumentenwacht, subsidy from the Danish Ministry of Housing and Building and the Ministry of the Environment only represents a small part of its income, the majority of which is provided by the scheme's commercial activity.

The maintenance inspection service was initially established through grant aid from public and charitable sources which provided a 6 month training course for a group of 12 crafts people. This concentrated on inspection techniques, conservation principles, material science and verbal and written reporting. The first vehicle was purchased with public funds. There has been no revenue support for the service directly and as such the service has had to be self-supporting since its inception.

The inspection service was developed and supported within the auspices of the Danish traditional crafts training centre – Raadvad, which was established in 1987. In addition to the sources of finance described above, the centre is also financially supported by the Copenhagen School of Polytechnic, the Danish Crafts Council and most recently through sponsorship from a variety of commercial organisations. Currently the centre carries out a wide range of activities. These activities include:

- providing training courses in traditional crafts for contractors and for consultants;
- carrying out research activity on building materials, techniques and methods;
- providing information and databases for the exchange of conservation information (including a list of recommended suppliers); and
- producing traditional building materials, lime, paints, timber products etc.

3.4.2.2 Operation of the service

There is an established system of annual inspections and reporting on maintenance priorities for publicly owned listed buildings and publicly owned churches in Denmark. The original intention of the service was to provide a similar service for individual listed building owners. The service has more recently developed into providing maintenance inspection services and a range of other services to non-listed buildings, in particular those built before 1960.

² Website: <http://www.raadvad.dk/>

Six inspectors with two vans between them, undertake maintenance inspections at a variety of intervals. As with the Dutch service, the vehicle contains both an office and a workshop and each vehicle is staffed by three inspectors with a conservation crafts background. They undertake the inspections and provide prioritised maintenance reports to subscribing building owners. The service currently has 250 subscribers.

The centre is currently in a state of flux as some of the commercial sponsors wish to separate-off some of the more successful services into a series of private companies. Negotiations are on-going at the present.

The current costs of the service (for a typical 3 bedroomed dwelling house) are an initial subscription and inspection cost of €1000 (£700). This inspection is more complex and more time consuming than subsequent inspections. The rate per hour for subsequent inspections and report production is €100 (£70) per hour per team (two inspectors). The time spent on inspections is typically about 7 hours. The cost of subsequent re-inspections and reports is therefore approximately €700 (£490). As the service is a commercial off-shoot, the full Danish rate of VAT (25 per cent) applies to the costs of the inspection.

The inspection service is considered by the manager of Raadvad to be a complementary extension of the services already provided by the centre. The centre was already well established and has a high profile among the Danish conservation sector and among the general public. They receive 300 'hits' a day on their information web pages and they have only promoted the maintenance inspection service through their existing website and mailing.

The manager suggested that they had to struggle to find clientele for the service as it was originally conceived: a subscription based 12 monthly inspection service akin to Monumentenwacht. They have also had to encourage the use of the inspection service by offering a variety of supporting services, many of which were drawn from services already offered by the centre. These include:

- a free call advice line and free e-mail based consultancy service for subscribers regarding specific maintenance and repair enquiries, beyond those identified by the inspection. This aspect of their service is supported by detailed internet-based technical advice and documentation (which was already in existence before the inspection service);
- an internet based national register of appropriate contractors and consultants for conservation works. Inclusion on the database is dependent on the verification by the centre of three recent independent references which are required to be updated annually for the particular service to remain on the database. This register fulfilled a need that inspection service subscribers felt was lacking;
- a maintenance and repair consultancy advice and one-off inspection service (i.e. the client does not become a subscriber). This part of the service is, therefore, no different from any other consultancy advice, except the client has extra support in the form of the extensive information facilities provided by the centre.

The development of this range of services were considered vital to encourage listed building owners to join the subscription inspection service. Until recently, the majority of the service's income came from the individual inspections and advice, suggesting that the individual owners did not see the value in a frequent re-inspection provided by the service. A substantial proportion of the clients for the annual subscription inspection service have been charitable trusts representing the 'common-hold' interests of apartment dwellers. In Denmark it is common for such organisations to produce annual maintenance plans and this has proved to be a lucrative market for Raadvad Bygningssyn.

3.5 The Risk Map of Cultural Heritage, Italy³

3.5.1 Origins of the initiative

In the mid 1990s the Central Institute for Conservation in Rome (a central government body) established a national Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data base of information on the current and past state of protected structures (buildings, conservation areas and landscapes). This is now developed into a nationally complete catalogue of state owned protected structures and is known as the Risk Map of Cultural Heritage ('The Risk Map'). The intention behind the development of the Risk Map is to provide both local authorities, with direct responsibility for the management of the protection of structures, and the central state administration with a unified database which supports and monitors policy implementation and policy development.

3.5.2 Operation of the initiative

Risk assessment database

The central focus of the Risk Map is a database that produces an index of the vulnerability to which the listed structures are subject. There are three categories of vulnerability⁴ defined for the purposes of the Risk Map these are:

- static or structural risks (earth quake , flooding);
- environmental risks (air pollution etc.);and
- risks caused by human factors (theft, tourist pressure etc.).

These vulnerability factors are used to produce indicators of risk which are then used to reprioritise policy and financial support at a national and local level. This assessment and the resulting information is held by central government and is accessible to both regional and local government.

Regional adaptations: Lombardia planned maintenance system

A number of regional governments have developed their own initiatives, making use of the Risk Map data and methodological approach, to reflect local concerns and interests. In Lombardia. The focus of development has been to continue with the cataloging required for the development of the centralised risk map and, at the same time, use the risk map to develop the region's interest in what it called 'planned conservation'. This is considered, by the region, to be a significant departure in Italian attitudes toward conservation, as it represents a shift away from the traditional method of intervention which takes place once damage has already occurred and attempts to refocus conservation intervention on planned preventative maintenance.

The opportunity to put this approach into practice at a regional level developed with a regulation known as the Merloni Law. This states that any building in receipt of public funds (i.e. state and local government buildings) must have a strategic 10 year plan for maintenance in place before either capital or revenue funding is released.

³ Website for the consultants which developed the risk map (English version):

<http://www.uni.net/aec/riskmap/english.htm>

⁴ Nb Lack of maintenance is not a consideration in terms of vulnerability of the Risk Map at national level (see later)

The region has started to make use of the Merloni Law to devise maintenance plans for their own building stock using a series of standardised ICT based maintenance planning techniques. They became aware that the use of the standardised system was inappropriate for protected buildings and, together with a number of industrial and academic partners, the regional government established a computerised condition survey and maintenance planning package for all publicly owned listed buildings.

This package enables a standardised format to be modified for individual listed buildings, to record the current condition and project a range of future maintenance interventions into a 10 year maintenance and conservation plan. The process of producing 10 year maintenance plans for all the region's publicly owned listed buildings is nearly complete. The information regarding their current condition, their potential future vulnerability and each 10 year maintenance plan has been added to the region's local Risk Map.

Possible policy implication of the Lombardia system

The provision of such information has already had an effect in terms of policy direction in the following ways:

- the regional government is lobbying for the inclusion of the risk of a failure to maintain to be added to the national Risk Map and therefore to produce a national picture of the condition of a range of listed buildings and refocus conservation interests toward maintenance rather than repair as a conservation strategy;
- the regional government has decided that any private listed building owner applying for regional funds for repair and maintenance works, will be required to produce a 10 year plan in a format suitable for inclusion on the regional Risk Map and to provide annual monitoring reports on the progress of the maintenance plan;
- the regional government is supporting the development of a range of planned conservation training courses at a professional and operative level in co-operation with Milan Polytechnic;
- the regional government has began an information campaign aimed at all owners of listed buildings (public sector and private sector) encouraging and supporting a planned approach to maintenance;
- the regional government has encouraged business opportunities in providing and supporting preventative maintenance activity. There have been discussions with Monumentenwachts in the Netherlands and in Belgium.

The intention of the regional government is that the Risk Map will become a repository of condition data, a tool for policy makers to understand the potential vulnerability of listed buildings and a means to monitor the implementation of policies and practice aimed at planned preventative maintenance.

3.6 Conclusions

3.6.1 Introduction

This section considers the factors which contribute to the success of the three European maintenance initiatives presented.

3.6.2 National policies that are supportive of maintenance

In the Dutch case, the state's involvement in financing conservation, in particular through a system of fiscal incentives means that the state has a long term financial interest in reducing the level of tax breaks for repairs to listed buildings: it is in the states own interest to reduce this need by encouraging maintenance in order to reduce the amount of subsidy provided. Equally if the state is financing repair subsidy there is a 'best value' reason for it to ensure that the investment made is secured into the future via maintenance activity.

In the Netherlands, the state's support and validation of the Monumentenwacht initiative sends a clear message to listed building owners about the high importance of maintenance.

The enshrining of a duty of care in statute and the provision of state financial support for maintenance are key factors which have encouraged the success of the Danish initiative Raadvad Bygningssyn.

3.6.3 High degree of cooperation and coordination between government, heritage organisations and non-government organisations

Cooperation between government, non-governmental organisations and the heritage sector is clearly a key feature which underpins the success of the maintenance initiative and the promotion of preventative maintenance in general in the Netherlands. This is reflected in the amount of multi-partner working and in the integration of policies at different levels.

3.6.4 Nationally coordinated database and monitoring system for building vulnerability and condition

Although maintenance has not been a significant part of the philosophical or practical approach to conservation in Italy, the national Risk Map data base has been a key factor in being able to provide evidence which supports the case for maintenance. Moreover, there is clearly enormous potential for such a national data base to play a key role in a nationally coordinated maintenance strategy, both in terms of identifying suitable frequencies for inspections and other forms of maintenance and in monitoring the effectiveness of such strategies and adapting them accordingly.

3.6.5 Comprehensive maintenance services providing inspections, maintenance advice and other ancilliary support.

The 'one-stop-shop' approach of the Dutch and Danish initiatives provides owners with a range of maintenance advice related services which are comprehensive, and convenient to use and access. Support in terms of advice and complementary services also plays an important role in encouraging listed building owners to maintain their properties.

In Denmark, the setting up of a new service within an existing and trusted organisation has provided a range of services that support the core inspection and maintenance planning service and provide a more rounded and integrated approach.