



*The English Reformed
Church at the Begijnhof,
Amsterdam*

Fundraising campaign

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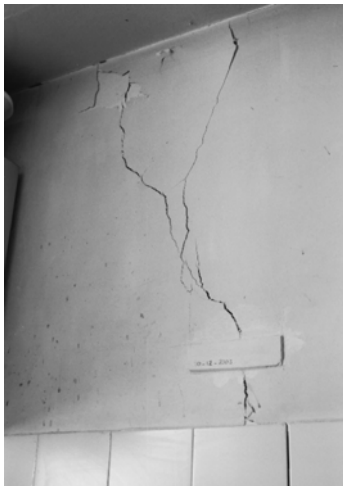
Introduction

The English Church at the Begijnhof is a unique and precious building whose future is threatened unless funds can be found to stop it falling down.

The church stands in the Begijnhof in central Amsterdam, one of the most beautiful courtyards in Northern Europe. The Begijnhof is among the most important tourist sites in Amsterdam and is visited by many thousands of people every year.

The church is one of Amsterdam's oldest buildings, dating back to the late 14th century, and its tower is the oldest in the city still in its original form. The church houses the longest established English speaking congregation outside the UK, which has worshipped in the same church since 1607. It is also a famous centre for chamber music in The Netherlands with superb acoustics, thanks to the original wooden roof of the 15th century nave.

A professional survey has revealed that cracks in the walls [*seen right and below*], which began to appear last year, result from the crumbling of the foundations. Moreover, the interior of the building needs significant renovation. Without immediate action, the building will either fall down or, on a directive from the Building Safety Board, will have to be shored up, both inside and out, which would drastically limit its use. The building work, however, can only commence once it is clear that the funds are likely to be raised.



Total costs are around €1.1 million. The National Fund for Monuments in the Netherlands (the 'Monumentenzorg') and the Municipality of Amsterdam (the 'Municipality') have indicated that they will provide grants of approximately €0.6 million, so the fundraising appeal is for the balance of €0.5 million. The church hopes to have pledges to cover this amount by 1st September 2004 so that building contracts can then be signed.

The English Church



The Begijnhof is known to the city as the apple in the eye of Amsterdam. In the middle of this tranquil courtyard stands the church whose origins date back to the 14th century when it was established as the chapel for the Lay Sisterhood of the Beguines. As with other city churches, in 1578 the keys were surrendered to the Municipality.

In 1607, the church was re-opened for worship when the Municipality presented it to the English speaking Protestants living in the city. Since then, services in English have continued practically without interruption to the present day.

The dissenting English Protestants in the early days of the English Church included a number, who, within a few years of their arrival in Amsterdam, left to form a separate congregation in Leiden and to sail via Delfshaven and Plymouth (in England) on the ‘Mayflower’ to the New World in 1620. These Pilgrim Fathers are remembered in stained glass and memorials both within and outside the church.



THE TRIBUTE TO THE PILGRIM FATHERS, ERECTED TO THE RIGHT OF THE MAIN DOOR OF THE CHURCH IN 1927 BY A GROUP OF CLERGY FROM THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA.

In 1817, ownership of the building was formally passed to the congregation, by then known as the English Reformed Church (“ERC”), which holds a regular Sunday morning service as well as other services and activities in the church. The ERC is affiliated with the Church of Scotland and the Netherlands Reformed Church and currently has 320 members from 30 nationalities. The church can

seat 385 and attracts congregations of over 250 on a regular basis. The church is also in frequent use for weddings and funeral services.

In addition to the ERC, every Sunday *Diensten met Belangstellenden* (a non-denominational worship community) holds well-attended services in Dutch. During the week, a long established Dutch 'Midday Break Service' (*Middag Pauzedienst*) has a strong following, both in the church itself and via its radio broadcasts.

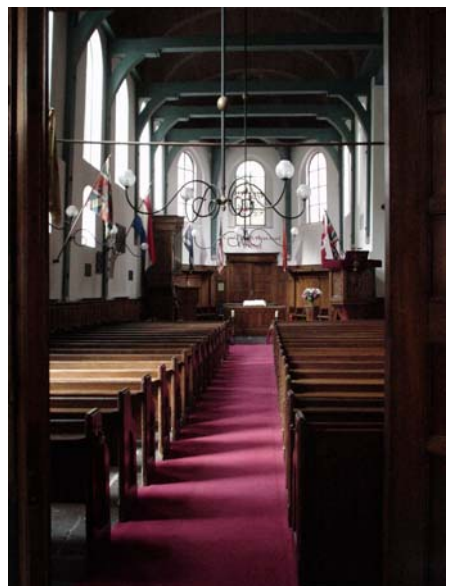
Since the late 1970s, the church has provided Amsterdam with an important platform for the performance of chamber music of all periods and styles with over 70 concerts a year. In particular, the church has provided an opportunity for many young artists to launch their careers. The Academy of the Begijnhof, founded by a former church organist, is now one of Amsterdam's premier baroque orchestras.

The musical life of the church has been greatly augmented by the construction in 1999/2000 of a remarkable new organ based on the design of the 1754 Müller original. The cost of €400,000 was raised through a vigorous fundraising campaign amongst the congregation and charitable and corporate donors in The Netherlands and overseas. The Monumentenzorg contributed €31,000 to the appeal.

The church is visited by as many as 1,000 tourists a week during the summer.



THE PILGRIM FATHERS' WINDOW



Why the English Church is falling down

The building consists of three parts. The oldest is the tower, which was part of the structure consecrated in 1419 and to which the present nave was attached in 1492. This was built in brick to replace a wooden structure, which had burnt down.

The church proved too small to house the growing congregation and in 1665 the nave was extended on the southern side.

Each part of the church has its own separate foundations, in Amsterdam traditionally made of wooden poles driven into the damp soil and sand on which the city is built. Twenty-five years ago, as part of a major rebuilding project, the foundations of the 1665 nave extension were renewed. However, in recent months significant cracks have appeared in the walls of the tower and the nave. A survey by a professional engineer has revealed that the 15th century foundations of both the nave and the tower need urgent attention or the building will collapse.



In addition to the problems with the foundations, the partial collapse of the roof of the southern nave extension and significant rainwater leakage into the church in 2003 required emergency repairs to the roof and gutters of the nave extension and the tower to prevent further disastrous deterioration. These 'Phase 1' repairs were completed in Autumn 2003.

The Restoration Costs

A summary of the total costs of €1,060,000 are set out below:

Estimated costs €'000

Phase 1

Completed work to nave extension and tower (including BTW and funding costs)	400
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Phase 2

Foundations	260
Internal repairs & maintenance	130
Professional fees	66
Contingencies	<u>40</u>
	496
BTW (19%)	94
Financing costs*	<u>70</u>
Phase 2 total	660

Grand total (Phases 1&2)	<u>1,060</u>
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*Financing costs relate to the period of up to six years between completion of work and the receipt of grants. These financing costs also attract grants.

Phase 1 Costs

The essential works carried out in the Autumn 2003 to the nave extension and to the tower to make the building weathertight cost €400,000, including professional fees, BTW and associated financing costs. Grants amounting to approximately €250,000 are anticipated in respect of this work and the congregation aims to raise €150,000 to cover the balance as its contribution to the fundraising campaign.

Phase 2 costs

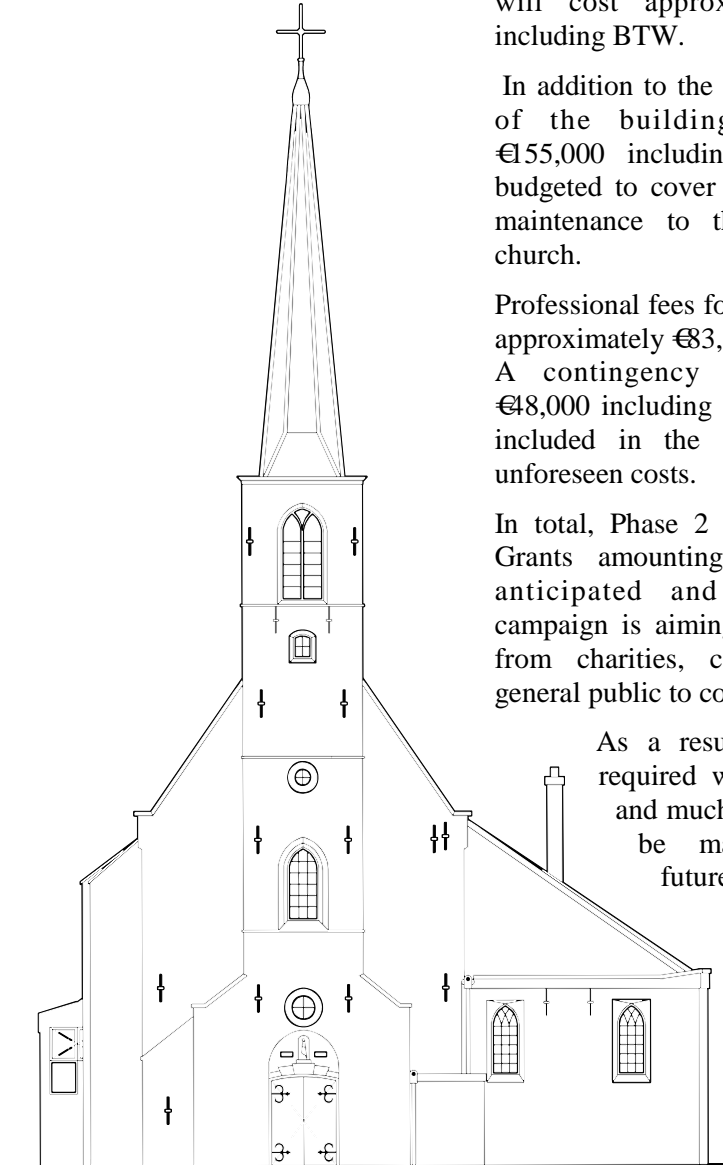
The work on the foundations, which we hope to commence in Autumn 2004, will involve drilling under the load bearing walls and inserting piles as supports. It is estimated that this work will cost approximately €310,000 including BTW.

In addition to the work to the exterior of the building, approximately €155,000 including BTW has been budgeted to cover essential repair and maintenance to the interior of the church.

Professional fees for Phase 2 amount to approximately €3,000 including BTW. A contingency of approximately €48,000 including BTW has also been included in the estimates to cover unforeseen costs.

In total, Phase 2 will cost €660,000. Grants amounting to €310,000 are anticipated and the fundraising campaign is aiming to raise €350,000 from charities, companies and the general public to cover the balance.

As a result of this urgently required work, this venerable and much loved building will be maintained for the future use and enjoyment of the people of Amsterdam and visitors to this beautiful city.



The Fundraising Organisation

The *Stichting tot Behoud van de Engelse Kerk op het Begijnhof* (Foundation for the preservation of the English Church at the Begijnhof) was notarised in February 2004. The Foundation has a single executive board, a board of patrons and three sub-committees. The names of the patrons and board members are set out in the Appendix. The Foundation's honorary notary is Mr A. A. van Berge.

The Foundation has been legally incorporated and has established a bank account at ABN AMRO Bank. Application will be made to the Ministry of Finance to grant the Foundation exemption from gift tax for the fundraising period, an exemption granted only to organisations serving a national purpose.

The Fundraising Plan

In addition to the generous grants, which are anticipated from both the Monumentenzorg and the Municipality, the fundraising campaign intends to raise the necessary funds in the following ways:

1. The Congregation and individual donors

Through personal donations, sponsored fund raising events and sales of work, the congregation is aiming to raise €150,000 from current and former members, people who have been married in the church and other interested individuals in the Netherlands and overseas. €27,000 has already been pledged from these sources.

Tax efficient ways for individual donations have been set up for Dutch, United Kingdom and United States tax payers. Details of these arrangements can be obtained from the campaign's Treasurer, Paul Ogden.

2. Charitable foundations and corporate donors

The foundation will be approaching a selected list of charitable foundations in The Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States with the aim of raising substantial sums.

In addition, the campaign will approach companies in The Netherlands and the United Kingdom to whom the Anglo-Dutch link and the importance of the English language are particularly relevant.

A total of €350,000 is targeted from these sources.

3. Special events

The campaign is also considering holding a number of fundraising events, including a gala evening and a series of subscription concerts to be held in the church.

The fundraising campaign will be formally launched in April 2004. The campaign will extend its grateful thanks to individuals, foundations and companies for their donations and, where appropriate, donations will be recognised by inclusion on a commemorative plaque to be erected in the church.

APPENDIX

Stichting tot behoud van de Engelse Kerk op het Begijnhof

Keizersgracht 579c, 1017 DR Amsterdam

Patrons

Jonkheer drs. R W F van Tets, Adviseur raad van bestuur ABN AMRO

H E Sir Colin Budd KCMG, British Ambassador to the Netherlands

Mr M J Cohen, Burgemeester Amsterdam

Prof. W G Quist, oud Rijksbouwmeester

Ds Nico ter Linden

Board members

James Lawrie (Chairman)

Paul Ogden (Treasurer)

Sjoukje Gerritse (Secretary)

Rev John Cowie

Jolmer Gerritse

Thijs Polstra

Bank Account ABN AMRO 45.07.99.239

Kamer van Koophandel 34203115

