

National Shoah Museum for the Netherlands

A Dutch National Shoah Museum will be realized on Amsterdam's Plantage Middenlaan in two historic buildings. The Hollandsche Schouwburg – once a renowned city theatre – and the former Hervormde Kweekschool directly across the street – earlier a Teacher Training College – will soon tell the comprehensive story of the persecution, deportation and murder of more than three-quarters of the Netherlands' Jews (the Shoah). The first phase in this realization can now be launched thanks to generous funding from the Dutch vfonds.

Museums and memorial centres specifically depicting the history of the Shoah have been established all over the world in recent decades, except in the Netherlands. The different parts of the story of the Jewish persecution are presented at a variety of locations there: missing is a historical overview. An integrated history in a National Shoah Museum belongs in Amsterdam, in *Mokum*, the city where 80,000 Jews were once more than eleven percent of the population.

Around 600 Jewish children were rescued during the Second World War via the former Teacher Training College, which served as the first part of an escape route. Because the school is now empty and the City of Amsterdam is convinced of the importance of a National Shoah Museum, they are giving us the unique opportunity to make use of this location.

Having access to this space is the first step in the realization of the National Shoah Museum. The ground floor will be adjusted for exhibitions, small presentations, films and events to give the museum a presence on the map. At this early stage we have chosen for a presentation that is rough around the edges: to save on costs and work as quickly as possible. This first stage will also be used for acquiring the needed resources to implement a more elaborate plan. The generous contribution of 1 million euros from the Dutch vfonds allows us to realize this first stage.

In the second phase, the Training College and the Hollandsche Schouwburg will be refurbished and converted into a museum. Via a permanent exhibition, visitors will be informed about the lives of Jews in Dutch society on the eve of the German occupation, who these individuals were and how they co-existed with their non-Jewish neighbours. The exhibition will also depict the years of occupation and persecution when the Jewish community was decimated, the silent decades of denial in the Netherlands, the coming to terms with this great loss and the consequences for the country as a whole. What took place in the Netherlands will also be portrayed within a broader European context.

The National Shoah Museum is an initiative of the Jewish Historical Museum, which together with the JHM Children's Museum, the Portuguese Synagogue and the Hollandsche Schouwburg currently comprise Amsterdam's Jewish Cultural Quarter.

Note to the press:

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