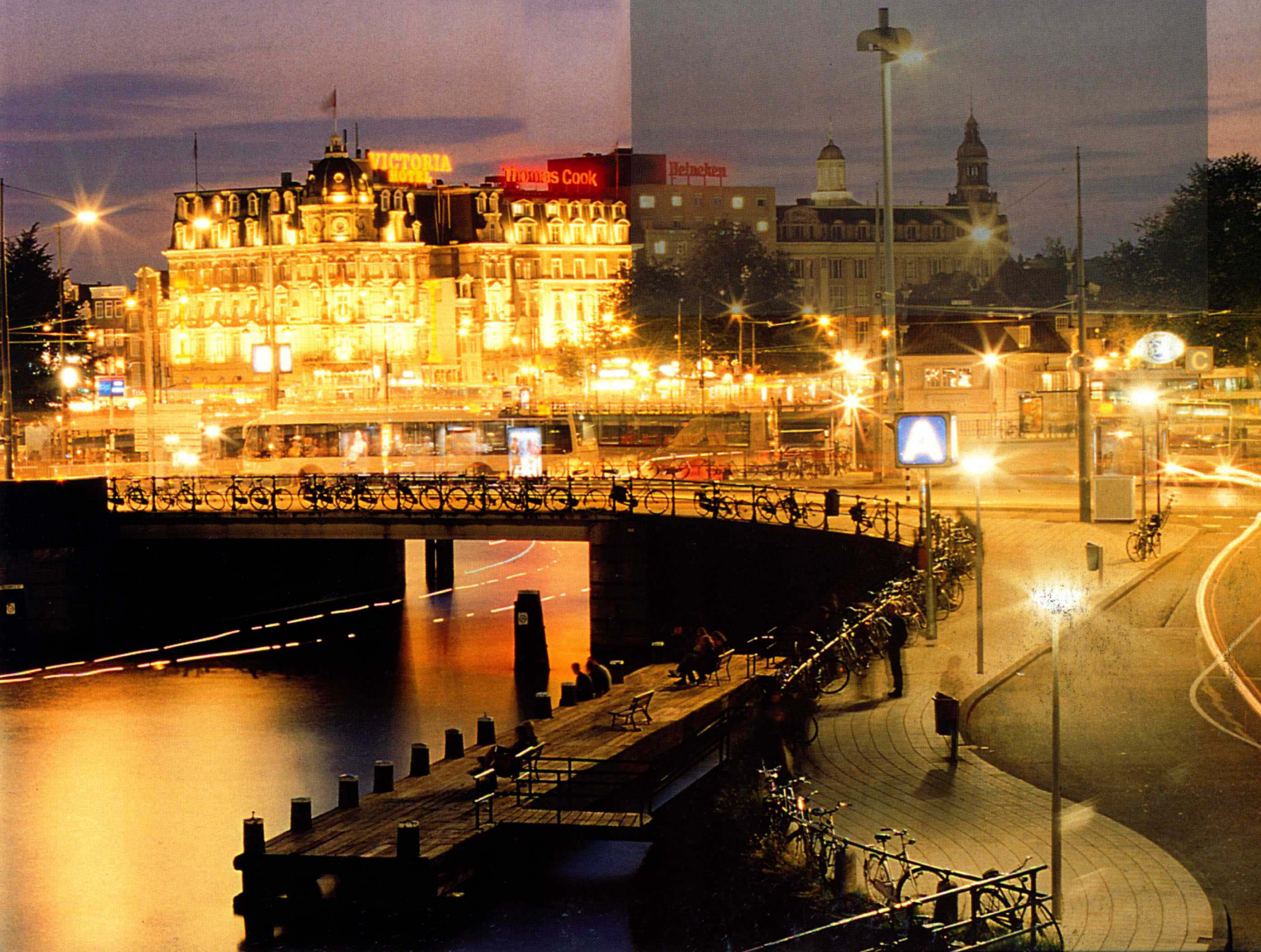


# LOFTS OF AMSTERDAM

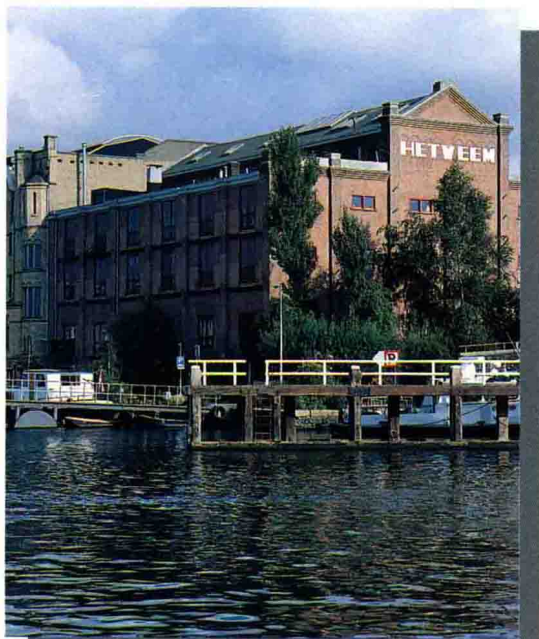




# LOFTS OF AMSTERDAM







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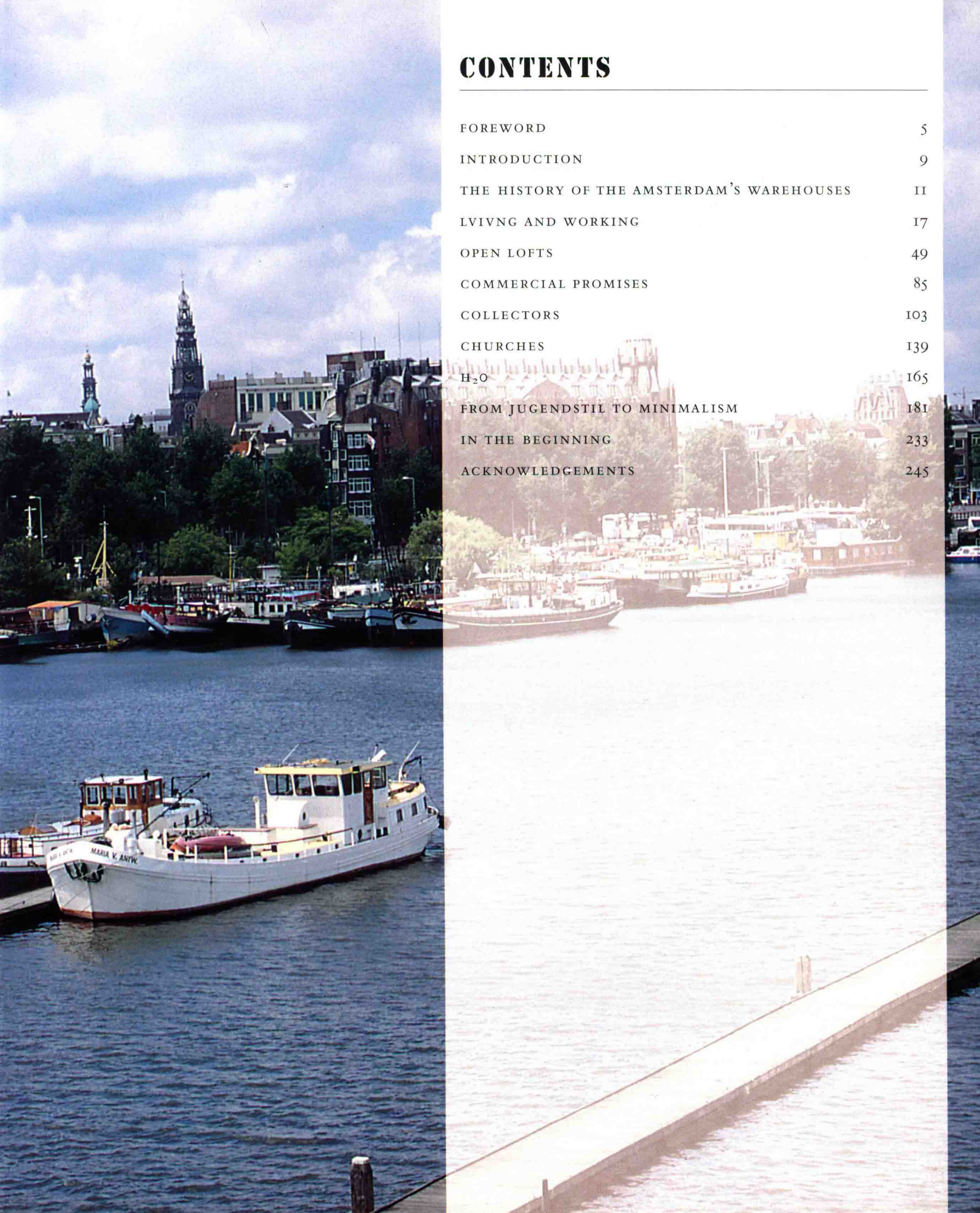
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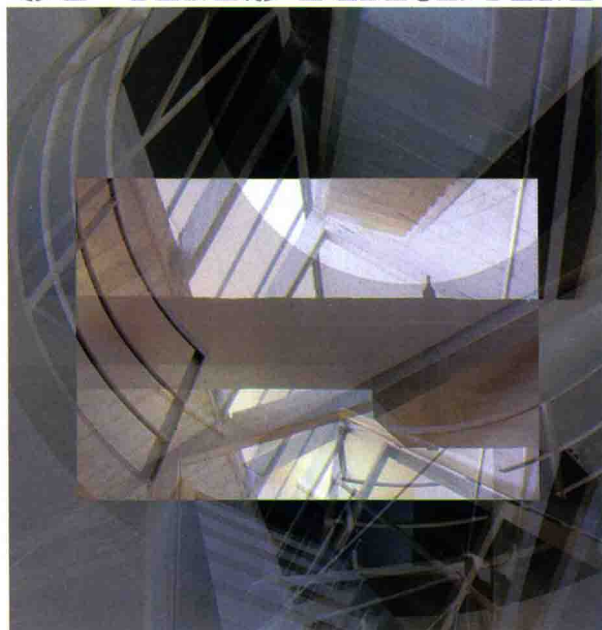
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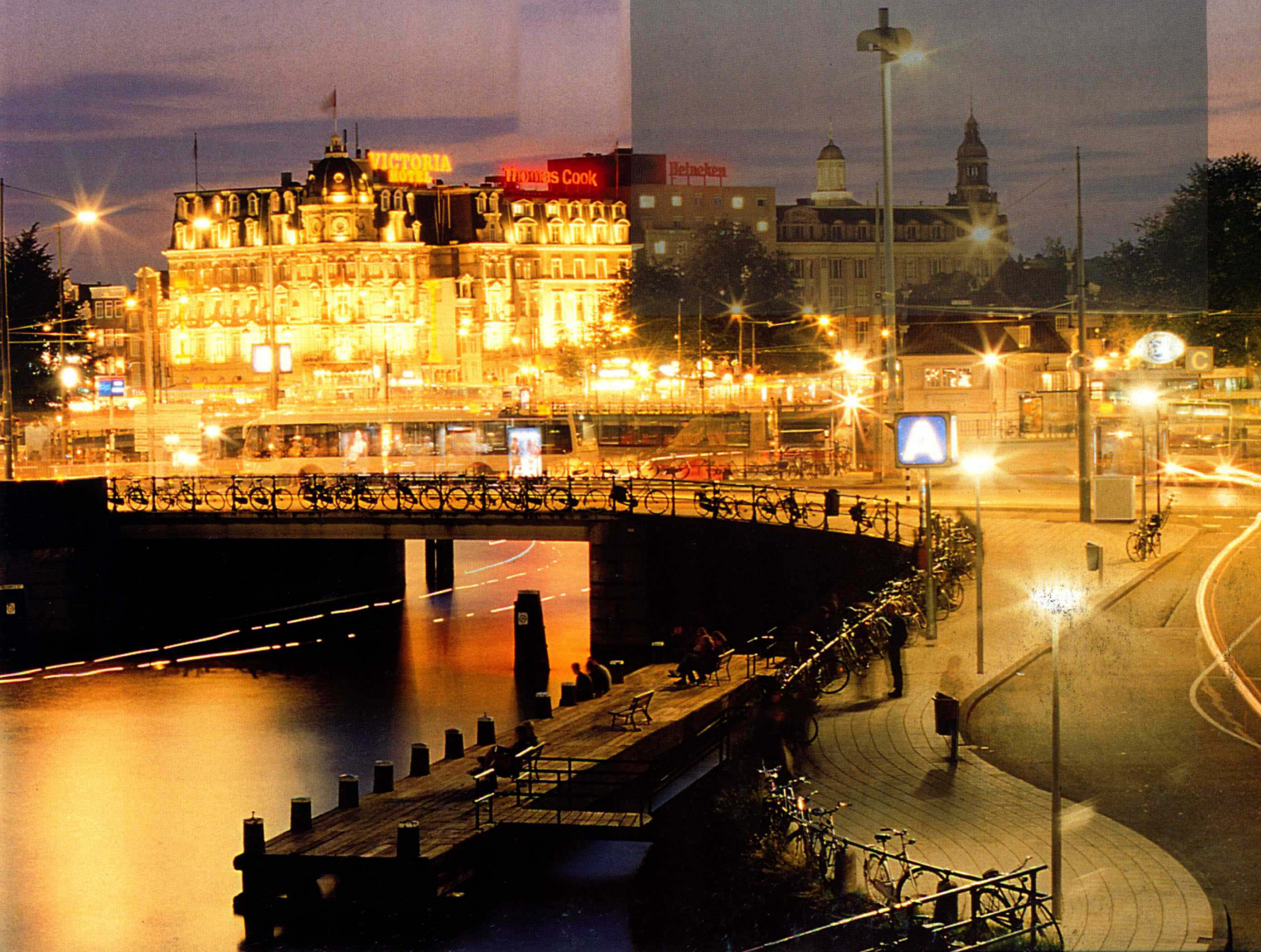




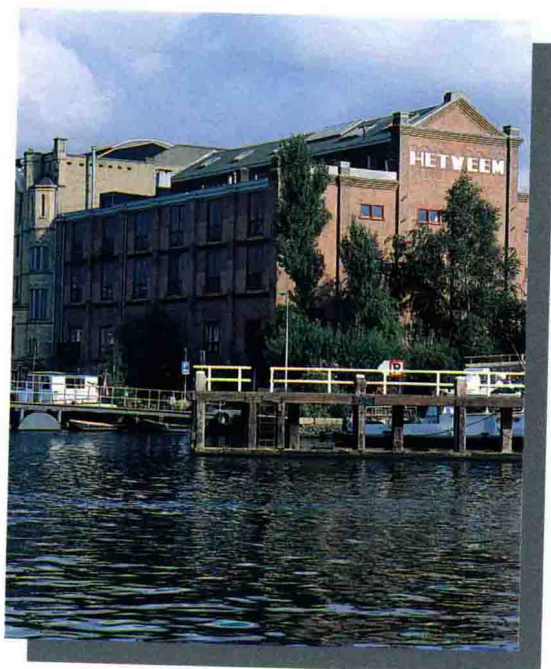




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## FOREWORD

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*Lofts of Amsterdam* is a marvellous book illustrating in word and image the possibility of reusing as homes warehouses and other buildings not intended for habitation. Whereas in many other European cities warehouses and other industrial buildings have for a long time remained empty after their original function was discontinued, in Amsterdam they have been used creatively as places in which to live and work, partly as a result of the great shortage of housing several decades ago. But it was not only at the lower end of the housing market that these unusual living spaces proved attractive. Their unpredictable interior subdivisions and dimensions meant they provided solutions for a whole range of prospective occupiers.

The reuse of these buildings displays respect for the history and for the scale and rhythm of the city. It is in accordance with the policies of the city's and the country's administration, which is oriented towards sustainability. That which is of value and use must be preserved. One cannot treat the past carefully enough.

What is so pleasing in this book is that it offers a broad view of the many possibilities, in the various price ranges, of refurbishing a warehouse.

Loft-like dwellings have come into being in expensive and less expensive buildings at several places in old Amsterdam. The text and the pictures of interiors show an infectious multiformity of lifestyles. These lofts thereby make an entirely individual contribution to a multiform city.



MR S. PATIJN  
Mayor







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## INTRODUCTION

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*Lofts of Amsterdam* is a richly illustrated book providing a survey of fifty marvellous lofts in the Dutch capital. More and more people are looking for a personal way of living, for a place that fully fits their lifestyle, a location where they feel completely at home. A loft is a good example of a highly individual form of living.

The original English meaning of the word – a storeroom under the roof – no longer sufficiently covers its use. Loft-dwellers find their perfect homes not only in former warehouses but just as well in schools, churches, hospitals, stations and canteens. They often have hidden qualities. The most distinctive elements emerge when the soul of the building is revealed.

The wealth of a loft is often found in its decor and atmosphere.

Designing a loft is a challenge. Large areas, concrete columns, rough materials and thick walls demand an inventive approach. Lofts are in demand not only as homes – companies also like them for their offices or showrooms. In the Netherlands, Amsterdam steals the show when it comes to the number of lofts. After all, nowhere else will you find between 600 and 700 surviving warehouses.

*Lofts of Amsterdam* is a book in which you will discover the charm of a view of living in which freedom and non-conformity dominate.









# THE HISTORY OF AMSTERDAM'S WAREHOUSES

Since so many of the stones of Amsterdam are overloaded with history, it is a delight to cast our minds back to the past. In addition, warehouses have defined the face of the city for centuries. There is no other city in Europe with such a large number of industrial monuments. The reason for this is that in the seventeenth century Amsterdam was the world's staple: almost all the goods traded throughout the world were stored in Amsterdam warehouses.

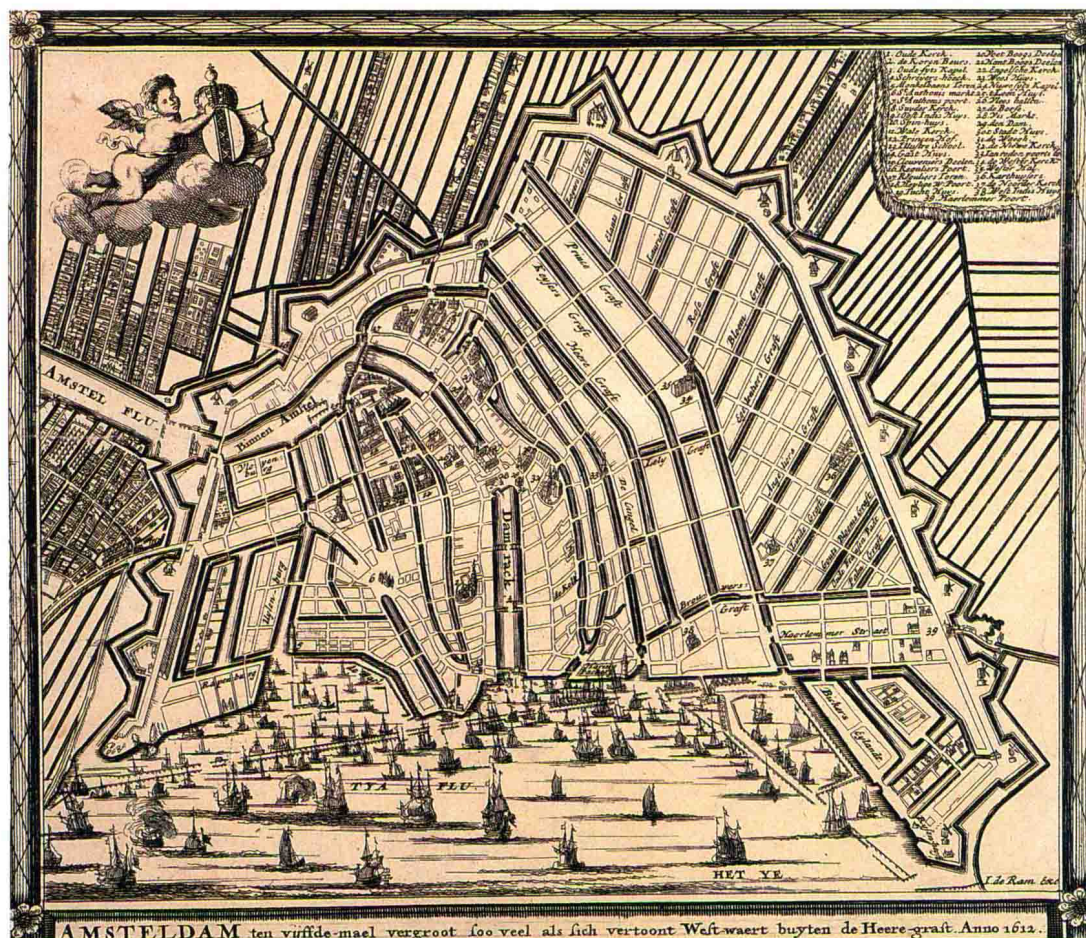
The old thirteenth-century core was formed by the buildings round Dam, Damrak, Warmoesstraat and Nieuwendijk. Warmoesstraat was the most important, where many wealthy merchants lived in stone houses. Their warehouses lay at the waterside behind the houses, so that the ships in the Damrak could easily unload. The fact that rich people lived in these merchants' houses with their warehouses attached, is expressed in the average rentable

value of the houses in the Warmoesstraat.

On the east side it was 74 pounds, and on the west, the water-side, 133 pounds. At the Damrak the average rent was 102 pounds. These were the 'most expensive' streets in Amsterdam in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Most of the residents here were traders and merchants. Until about 1600 the goods were kept in the storage lofts at the top of the merchants' houses. As trade grew, the need for storage space increased.

At the start of the sixteenth century, warehouses and merchants' homes were built in great numbers along the broad defensive canals. They opened onto the quayside along the canals and not onto a street, as the older houses in Warmoesstraat and Nieuwendijk had. In this new scheme of things the canal acted as an inland port and the street in front of the merchants' houses and warehouses as a quay on





'Amsteldam ten vijfde mael vergroot soo veel als sich ver-toont westwaerts buyten de Heeregracht'  
Amsterdam 1612, engraving 160 x 180 mm.



Nieuwe Teertuinen 19 to 15 (r. to l.) Looking towards bridge no. 321 ('Sloterdijkbrug') and the start of Sloterdijkstraat. Left is the 'de Roosos' tar company with a hoist to lift the barrels of tar out of the barges on the canal (the last windlass in Amsterdam). Photo Olie Jansz, Jacob (1834-1905)





1st November 1896. 'Nieuwe vaart. Panorama looking north-west from the De Gooyer corn mill, Funenkade 5. Foreground: Dageraadbrug (bridge no. 353) in front of Sarphatistraat. Left: land at the rear of the Hoogte Kadijk. Right: Oostenburgergracht - Witteburgergracht - Kattenburgergracht (r. to l.). Photo Olie Jansz. Jacob (1834-1905)

which the goods could be unloaded and stored, to be easily transported on by ship or wagon. This is in contrast to the old warehouses on the Damrak where there was no quay, and which had become poorly accessible to horse and cart as a result of the increasing density of building. Amsterdam played an important transit role, with many goods being transported on after a short or long term of storage. The more efficiently this took place the less it cost. That the new arrangement worked well at the two moat quaysides was apparent from the fact that in the second half of the sixteenth century a continuous quay was also constructed along the west side of the Damrak. After this the warehouses were much more accessible, and this area developed into the most important trading centre in the Nieuwe Zijde. The shifting of the front façades of the houses to the side nearest the quay was a confirmation of the new situation.

The distinction between living and working did not exist in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when in most cases they were integrated or ran side by side. Just as in the Middle Ages the merchant did his office work in his front building, lived behind and above, and had his storage space in the loft, in the late sixteenth

century too there were numerous merchants who used part of their house for business purposes. This is because, however much the late sixteenth-century residents of the canal houses wished to live 'in a good area', they never lost their commercial attitude. The storage of goods remained an important matter. The considerable length of the quay had to be made useful. After all, the cost of its construction, paid for by those who lived there, had to be recovered.

Like merchants' houses, the warehouses are narrow, deep and high. Their average depth is easily thirty metres, which was also the depth of most of the merchants' houses along the main canals. But there is one difference: the merchants' houses consist of a front and a rear building separated by a courtyard, whereas warehouses comprised a single building extending over the entire depth. Warehouses are easily recognised by their vertical row of loft windows with shutters. These windows often had a round arch, but there are also warehouses with rectangular windows. Most warehouses have a fluted gable, and these were still being built well into the eighteenth century. There is little difference between the seventeenth and eighteenth-century warehouses. The Amsterdam warehouse was

being built for centuries with few changes. This often makes them hard to date. All the warehouses in Amsterdam have hoist-beams, often with splendid hoisting equipment. It was soon discovered that these hoist-beams were useful for getting household goods inside too.

There are several types of warehouse: single, double, consisting of two identical buildings, terraced warehouses, rhythmical rows of alternating wide and narrow warehouses, grain and arms warehouses and storehouses. The most common is the ordinary single warehouse with the same width as a normal merchant's house, which is five to eight metres. We often find them in rows, as terraced warehouses. In Amsterdam, one also finds double warehouses with a width of fifteen metres. This type often has two identical fluted gables, but they also exist with a single trapezium-shaped gable. The large warehouse complexes, or storehouses, were owned by the city or such huge companies as the VOC [East-India Company]. The biggest warehouse was the Oost-Indisch Zeemagazijn [East-India Maritime Storehouse] built in 1661. This huge building was two hundred and fifteen metres wide. It collapsed in 1822 as a result of poor maintenance.

The nineteenth and twentieth-century ware-