



THE DUTCH CONNECTION

Museum of Aspirations and Achievement

An investigation into options and strategies pertaining to the establishment of a Dutch heritage museum / cultural centre in Foxton

Prepared for *The Dutch Connection Museum Trust* and the *New Zealand - Netherlands Foundation*

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Prepared by: Blair Wakefield Exhibitions
Author: Luit Bieringa
Contact Details: Luit@BWX.co.nz
PO Box 6150, Te Aro, Wellington

SUMMARY

The Brief

The purpose of the Feasibility Study is to scope whether or not the *The Dutch Connection Museum Trust* should proceed with the development of a substantive brief and business plan for a Dutch heritage or museum centre

Focus of the Study thus far

In the absence of a clearly defined concept for the *Dutch Connection* at the *beginning* of the Study, the investigation has concentrated on interviewing a large cross-section of the Dutch immigrant population, first generation and their descendants, in order to ascertain the views of THE constituency and determine the extent of a mandate for the establishment of a Dutch heritage or museum centre, as well as the likely support for its envisaged activities.

In addition to talking to and with that community of interest, the preliminary notion has been discussed with and tested on a number of non-Dutch New Zealanders, while also taking cognisance of views expressed during earlier research by the Trust itself, e.g. Dr Rodney Wilson's comments (23/8/06).

Core findings

There is a general impetus for the creation of the *Dutch Connection* from the Dutch community as well as the broader constituency and the local authority responsible for the Foxton location, the Horowhenua District Council.

The bulk of interview respondents were NOT in favour of an exclusively museum oriented institution with an artefact collection base and this viewpoint has been reflected in the changed concept underpinning the *Dutch Connection* concept.

The enthusiasm of the Trust and its own expertise should ensure that all the issues associated with the cost of establishing and operating the desired facility are addressed in a professional and astute manner.

There are a number of research elements that have not been addressed in the Study and it is up to the Project Development Team to pursue those. Of particular importance is that relating to visitor traffic in the Horowhenua area the projected demographic changes as well as traffic patterns along State Highway One. This area of research can be carried out with the assistance of the Horowhenua District Council, with whom the Dutch Connection Trust should have the closest of relations.

Location

Decisions as to the location of the Dutch Connection were made some time prior to the start of this Study and with the exception of option 1.5 (section 8.2), a virtual facility, site considerations have been confined to identified options in Foxton.

Conclusion

There exists a sound case for the establishment of the *Dutch Connection* in terms of constituency sentiment, local body infrastructural support and perceived support from a number of other agencies (e.g. Embassy, *New Zealand-Netherlands Foundation*)

All of the options outlined are deemed to be feasible, **provided all the caveats are noted**, if the differing degrees of difficulty pertaining to each option are recognised and provided the final concept is subjected to further scrutiny before the project is embarked upon.

The Feasibility Study has not had the opportunity to run a financial ruler over the concept, which is still in the process of “refinement”. As such no firm YES or NO can be given to the project in terms of its financial viability or sustainability. The Study does however suggest an important number of preconditions to any go-ahead and it is up to the Trust to determine how much it wishes to research and test the level of capital and operational costs before commencing its full -blown fundraising campaign.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The *Dutch Connection Trust* decide which, if any, of the stated options it wishes to consider and that it develop the desired concept proposal to a stage whereby it can be accepted as the basis for the Project Development Team’s development of a full working brief for a *Dutch Connection* facility.
2. The *Dutch Connection Trust* determine the financial viability of the concept and create a 5 year exhibitions and activities programme consisting of permanent and temporary installations and events commensurate with its goals.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Objectives

The purpose of the Feasibility Study is to define, scope and assess the nature of the viability of establishing a museum or centre reflecting the contribution and achievements of Dutch migrants to New Zealand and in the process:

“Share our proud story of being Nederlanders in New Zealand - so that we can create a deeper understanding of the many common bonds between Nederlanders and New Zealanders “
(Initial Business Plan - July 2006)

1.2 Qualifications

Luit H. Bieringa is a past Director of the Manawatu Art Gallery and National Art Gallery (1971-90) and has since 1990 been a private fine arts and museum consultant. MA Hons. (Art History), MA Hons.(German) Member, ICOM, International Council of Museums.
Arrived in New Zealand on the Zuiderkruis in 1956

1.3 Acknowledgements

The Study was commissioned by the *Dutch Connection Museum Trust* with funding from the *New Zealand-Netherlands Foundation*.

During the initial phase of the Study invaluable advice and assistance was provided by the Trust's Chair, Arjan van der Boon, who has been a driving force behind the concept for a heritage centre, as well as other Trust members.

Invaluable assistance was also provided by the individual interviewees and staff at the Royal Netherlands Embassy.
Their comments and suggestions have been incorporated in the Study's recommendations and suggestions.

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2. Background

2.1 *The Dutch Heritage Museum Trust*

The Trust was incorporated in October 2005 with the following aims and objectives:

- to collect and display articles and artefacts of Dutch historic, contemporary and cultural value, including such from the previous colonies
- make space available for contemporary Dutch and of Dutch descent artists to display their products and demonstrate their arts
- set up and update an accurate record, be it written or electronic of all items in possession on loan, or on temporary display
- to provide curatorial care and management of the above
- to have displays and information open for the public at set times
- to avail, displays and information for research purposes at other times then when open for the public and when requested at such times as are suitable and agreed
- to provide electronic contact through internet and screen with appropriate museums in the Netherlands and Europe
- to provide protection for the articles in our care, document them properly and to provide access to our collection for visitors

(Certificate of Incorporation , 18 October 2005)

In its discussion document of July 2006 (*Initial Business Plan*) the Dutch Museum Executive Team substantially expanded the original (Oct. 2005) aims and objectives in its Mission Statement, thus expanding the notion of a static collections-based institution to a more dynamic model able to reflect and recount the past as well as address the present and the future. (sections 3, 4 and 5)

In 2007, to reflect the changes in mission and objectives, the *Dutch Heritage Museum Trust* renamed itself as *The Dutch Connection - Museum Trust*.

In order to achieve those goals the Dutch Connection Trust have identified the need for a “home” in which to realise those objectives.

Whether those objectives can be realised in the form of a museum, a more informal centre or through activities, without a physical “home”, depends very much on the eventual concept decided upon after consideration of this Study, as well as a cost evaluation based on a facilities brief.

2.2 Location

Having decided upon the need of a physical structure (“home”) the Executive Team set about finding the ideal or, at the very least, the most feasible location for such an institution.

Initial explorations included options in the metropolitan centres (Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch). After an evaluation of possible options (including Waitakere City, Rotorua and Tirau) and extensive consultations with representative organisations in the Dutch community it was decided to pursue the Foxton option. Discussions were held with the various interested and influential parties in Foxton (Horowhenua District Council, Foxton Community Board, the Foxton Business Association and Windmill Trust representatives).

All Foxton parties expressed enthusiasm for the preliminary concept and the District Council articulated its enthusiasm with the publication of a submission to the Trust in November of last year - *Expression of Interest*, with accompanying letters and endorsements by the Mayor and Labour and National members of Parliament.

The submission addresses the following issues pertinent to the realisation of a physical structure and context/ environment within which a Museum/ Centre (*Dutch Connection*) could be articulated.

- Our strategic alignment
- The Foxton experience
- Alternative sites available
- HDC’s support
- Why Foxton is the right place
- Our commercial proposition
- Endorsements

Based on comments and responses from the various organisations in the Dutch community, the Dutch Museum Trust made a location decision in favour of Foxton (with Tirau being a strong 2nd choice)

(Decision Making Matrix: Dutch Museum Location)

(Research Proposal to Find the Most Suitable Location for the Dutch Museum Project)

(see also Appendix A)

Since then the HDC has approved preliminary capital funding of \$100,000 in its 2008 budget allocations for the *Dutch Connection*. (July 2007 decision)

2.3 Foxton as a museum town

Much has been made of the presence of a number of museum-type attractions in Foxton. The Horowhenua District Council's *Expression of Interest* (Nov. 2006) refers to the Trolley Bus, History, Courthouse, Audio-Visual Technology and Flax-stripping museums. Similarly, *The Dutch Connection*-Museum Trust presentation document, *Destination Foxton*, (June 2007) refers to this diversity by stating : " Add to Foxton's make-over as a museum / tourist town".

Apart from *de Molen*, which functions extremely well as a destination for visitors, all the other musea listed are either not operational; seldom open to the public and largely dysfunctional. Without some substantial heritage investment, in what are primarily private and non-professional operations, it would be an extremely tenuous claim to state that Foxton is or even could be a museum-rich town.

It is acknowledged however that the existence of a vibrant *Dutch Connection* may encourage the development of other heritage type facilities or ventures.

2.4 The New Zealand-Netherlands Foundation

The Foundation, which is financing the Feasibility Study for the Trust, was set up in 1990 to foster and promote the benefits of the link between New Zealand and the Netherlands.

Some of its objectives are synonymous with those underpinning the Trust's and include:

- To recognise and acknowledge the contribution Dutch settlers have made to NZ, and promote a wider understanding of this
- To develop cultural and educational exchanges between the Netherlands and New Zealand
- To facilitate and commission research into the contribution both past and present that Dutch New Zealanders have made
- To financially support worthwhile efforts in pursuit of the above objectives

2.5 Staged development

The Trust have indicated that there may be a need to look at a staged development depending on the available resources and community backing of the project. Most of the options outlined in 8. can accommodate such an approach and any facilities brief should take cognisance of such a scenario.

2.6 Concept development and constituency

Both the *New Zealand - Netherlands Foundation* and the consultant have stressed the need to develop a concept that, as broadly as possible, enables the objectives of the Trust and those ideas expressed by the wider constituency to be achieved.

To this end the consultant has engaged as many individual migrants and their descendants in the interview process. A deliberate effort has been made to seek input other than that already sourced by the Trust in its preliminary research through the various Dutch Societies.

2.7 Collections

At the early stages of discussion about the project there was the intention to gather museum type collection items to underpin the strictly museum oriented notion. This was clearly articulated in the earlier *Certificate of Incorporation*, with references to artefacts, their storage, collecting and care. However both the lack of a substantial and identifiable collection as well as a clear shift in thinking about the *Dutch Connection* concept have led to the Trust's demotion of that dimension in terms of priority.

2.8 Identification of initial sources of financial and other assistance

The feasibility study will address this in cooperation with the Trust and provide suggestions as to the most likely, successful strategies **once** the concept and consequent desired scale/ scope of the project have been articulated.

2.9 Summary

The major shift that has occurred in the Trust's thinking on a Dutch heritage centre is that from an object based concept to an active multi-purpose display and activity centre. Such a concept shift has a number of significant implications in terms of the brief that needs to accommodate that thinking. In addition the determination as to the Foxton site, due to a large extent for sound economic reasons, will also impact on the manner in which the centre's programmes and promotions will need to be

fashioned in order to attract both the known audiences as well as the broader target audiences. I.e. those who may never venture to Foxton, except for very special events.

Once all the issues and relevant information in this report have been discussed, it is incumbent on the Trust to confirm the concept, goals and objectives it addressed in its recent workshop with the consultant and, with the New Zealand-Netherlands Foundation, as mentor and ally, progress a working brief for the actual facility and the requisite funding of it.

3. A Dutch Connection Constituency

3.1 Dutch Societies

A large number of the Dutch migrant community, particularly the first generation migrants, remain in contact with each other through membership of the many Dutch Clubs or NZ Netherlands Societies, all members of their Federation.

The Federation, through its National Council publishes *De Schakel*, the main communications vehicle for that community. In addition there is also a *Friendly Support Network*, mainly operational in the North Island, which supports the needs of the older (70-90 years) migrants, who in many cases have lost a spouse, their ability to speak English and require community support.

While in some areas membership of the Societies has declined as the older members pass away, efforts are being made to attract younger (2nd or 3rd generation) offspring and more recent migrants.

It is the experiences of the older (50s) migrants which will provide the background to the Dutch migration experience and achievements and will inform the stories that a *Dutch Connection* will and should relate.

3.2 The wider constituency / the invisible migrant

It has been estimated that some 4% of the population is of Dutch descent (c. 130,000), a fact not widely known or acknowledged by NZ historians or indeed the Statistics Department.

Many of the migrants have never been associated with their compatriots in a formal sense through the Societies set up in the 50s. As such these Dutch New Zealanders have been the invisible migrants, even though some of them have become well-known within the New Zealand community through their exploits and achievements.

The interviews conducted by the consultant includes some of those invisible ones from the earlier migration wave as well as more recent arrivals (80s & 90s). It is those more recent arrivals, who have a vastly different set of needs in terms of ethnic recognition or cross-country relationships. These stakeholders have a quite specific set of expectations regarding a *Dutch Connection* enterprise, both as to its resourcing, performance and goals.

Some of those differences are articulated in the responses received.

(see Appendix B)

3.3 Summary

New Zealand is essentially a nation of migrants, including the first nation people, Maori. Its potential constituency or rather target audience is all New Zealanders, and the programmes contemplated should be cognisant of that if the institution wishes to remain viable and relevant in the long term.

To this end it may be worthwhile also to involve local iwi in some of the activities of the planned centre, since ongoing migration issues are of critical importance to tangata whenua.

4. Stakeholders and Critical Success Factors

4.1 Stakeholder expectations

Stakeholder responses (Appendix B) suggest that an enhanced range of **activities**, beyond those initially outlined in the Heritage Museum brochure, should be programmed for a *Dutch Connection* institution, including:

- changing exhibitions relating to the migration theme and cultural, scientific, educational exchanges between the Netherlands and New Zealand
- research facilities with a particular emphasis on collecting oral histories and digital stories recording the various migration experiences
- exchanges with other ethnic migrant groups within New Zealand. Sharing the experience
- coordination of programmes with other similar groups/ institutions
- fostering suitable education programmes and research

With regard to **resources** and **sustainability** stakeholders expressed a number of concerns and comments:

- establish workable budgets
- don't expect a huge uptake, of an ongoing nature, from the Dutch community
- seek long-term partners/ sponsors to underpin ongoing operational costs
- create a strong strategic plan for revenue earning
- research availability of expert volunteer staffing resources

With regard to **services and systems** the following were mentioned:

- open daily to encourage impulse and tourist visits as well as maximising demographic reach
- a website is essential
- a strong presence of signage and billboards along highway one is essential
- work closely with the HDC and Foxton Community Board who may have the necessary extra resources. Become an essential part of their existence
- utilise services such as Te Papa's National Services as well as expertise in institutions such as Massey University and Te Manawa, both close neighbours.

4.2 Success factors

The *Museum Services in Waitakere City* report by Heritage Works (July 2006) contains a very useful set of critical success factors for museum type institutions and the version below is an adaptation of that.

A museum authority needs to have a clearly defined mission and purpose, to which all its activities are aligned. Certain key elements are common to all successful operations.

Critical success factors	Comments
A clear vision, mission and statement of purpose - likely to be aligned to or cognisant of Horowhenua DC strategic priorities *	To guide all policies and activities
Clearly identified target audiences for the services, based on sound demographic data	In this case both the migrant community and their descendants, the general NZ community as well as the tourist sector, whether Dutch or in general. Certain exhibitions (temporary) and activities will have their own specific target audiences
A core collection , which can grow in response to a specific collection strategy informed by programme needs (not a priority, but suggest strong reference and oral history collection)	As a basis for developing exhibitions, education programmes, community events, interpretative strategies within and beyond a specific building, and for supporting heritage research and educational projects
Suitably qualified staff , who are adequately resourced , effectively managed and community oriented	The number and qualifications would depend on the model and scope of the museum (service)
Publicly accessible site/s including physical access for visitors with special needs	Within reach of car and coach parking, with loading dock facilities and close to other location facilities
Regular user-friendly opening hours	Designed to fit with the perceived

identified through local and national research	and researched routines of locals and the travelling public in particular. Open as many days as possible, especially holidays and with special activities in mind
Engaging and relevant displays, exhibitions and related activities	Attracting the interests of a range of target audiences with repeat visits in mind
A web presence	To reach potential visitors and promote the institution's existence and programmes to as wide an audience as possible
Operational base for staff	Ensure that any building brief ensures the best possible working conditions for salaried and volunteer staff with easy access to all relevant facilities
Adequate operating revenue	To cover salaries, regular operational and programme costs
Adequate capital budget	To cover capital development and costs/ depreciation of major equipment
An effective governance structure , which is responsive to stakeholders' needs	To set the policies and overall direction
An effective management structure	To implement the policies and action plan

4.3 The Horowhenua District Council as stakeholder

Apart from the fact that the HDC is likely to assist the Dutch Connection with real estate and some capital funding, local councils have legal requirements with regard to community welfare under the Local Government Act 2002, i.e. to promote “*the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being*” of their communities.

As such, any endeavour such as the *Dutch Connection*, if firmly committed to local well-being, whether economic or cultural, and community involvement, will be able to strike up a profitable partnership with the local authorities. In addition facilities within any new centre should be able to be utilised for local community purposes and provide both an additional income stream as well as engendering political goodwill.

4.4 Summary

As broad a range of activities within a balanced programme should ensure the goodwill of not only the specific target audience but also the wider community, whether local, national or international.

However such an ambitious approach needs to be underpinned by a strong strategic plan to ensure financial stability and sustainability with the support of long-term partners and sponsors.

This, in turn needs to be complemented by professional services and systems.

5. A Dutch Connection Facility

5.1 Requirements

Should a new or refurbished facility turn out to be the preferred option then requirements for a suitable building include the following:

- A purpose -built facility with different spaces that enable a range of exhibitions to be installed, activities to be staged and educational programmes to be carried out. Some activities may be more suited to outside sites and the siting of any structure will need to take such, adjacent or other, activities into consideration
- A world-class facility which encompasses the latest sustainable energy techniques and exemplifies the architectural, new technology and eco - friendly attitudes of the two countries, ie. consider a joint architectural practice approach
- Space for library/ research and oral archives storage / replay
- Suitable areas for gatherings, presentations, entertainment (café) and merchandising activities (commercial revenue stream opportunities)
- Recognition of the activities of *de Molen* and surrounding context
- Suitable areas for workshop activities, cleaning services, public toilets, loading dock and disabled facilities
- Suitable security and environmental systems to protect displays and (temporary / loan) collections and equipment

'Museums are ideal buildings to which to apply principles of resource efficiency, energy conservation, sustainability and minimal environmental impact '.

5.2 Site considerations

Depending on the activities and programmes the *Dutch Connection* wishes to undertake, the sites currently under consideration (see 6.) offer a sufficient range to guarantee flexibility of planning.

The sites would permit a building footprint which could accommodate a one storey building – a cheaper option- with connections to both *de Molen*, adjacent river land and the main street of Foxton, provided the Council site/s are chosen.

As a public facility, its site also has the same requirements such as easy access, car and coach parking, as well as proximity to complementary facilities such as a library, visitor information centre, restaurants, cafes and hotels.

All of these criteria are met by the sites on offer in Foxton.

5.3 Capital costs, operational costs, revenue

Capital costs

Most of the prerequisites for this section are well documented and it would be useful to consult the Waitakere Study, including all the tables. (pp. 29-33)

A more recent study for the Kapiti Coast District Council (2006) tends to confirm the range of costs per square metre, i.e. 1,750 m² = \$400.000 (land) + \$ 5,600.000 (building) . Building costs c. \$3,200 per m².

Costs per m² will of course vary considerably depending on the nature of the building fabric, air conditioning, local building costs and the choice of a one storey as opposed to a two storey structure.

Given the indicated support offered on the planning and resource consent front by the HDC there may be some considerable savings in this area also.

The Tauranga Art Gallery which is a refurbished building , the former BNZ, totals some 1,270 m². Precise costs of the refurbishment project are not known, but it appears to be in the vicinity of M\$ 8 (i.e. c. \$6,300 m²) The project brief for that building is attached (Appendix C) and gives a fairly indicative outline of the sort of facilities and spaces the *Dutch Connection* might wish to consider.

Extensions to Aratoi (Masterton) cost approximately M\$3. Size details are not available but a brief is attached as Appendix E.

Operational costs will depend to a large extent on the scale of the building, its programme and design.

Size/scale: the size and design of the building will affect the running costs, but as a general principle this should not exceed 20% of the total operating expenditure budgeted.

Programmes: a well considered mix of static and changing displays as well as related activities, planned in such a way that each component is costed and as far as possible sponsored or project funded. These should not exceed 30% of the institution's budget. In fact the target for programmes should be that they are a self-funding exercise, i.e. all programmes and exhibitions, apart from the long term static display, should be staged only if fully funded from outside sources.

As an institution which, unlike most local body museums / galleries, is NOT funded by local body rates, the *Dutch Connection* should be run as a business.

It should be borne in mind with regard to the above that most museums and galleries are funded up to 92% by their local bodies (52-92%), a proportion that the *Dutch Connection* will need to find through its own efforts.

Staff: With the exception of a visionary and energetic Director the *Dutch Connection* needs to be staffed at as minimal a level as possible and engage the relevant personnel as and when the programme requires it. Obviously a core staffing level will have to be in place, if only to service the building and its facilities. Again staffing levels are determined to a large extent by the design of the building and the nature and extent of the programmes. If a substantial emphasis is placed on volunteer staff it will be necessary to ensure the adequate training and selection of those volunteers.

Revenue sources

There are a number of examples of commercially viable heritage centres, which, unlike most museums are not funded by the public purse. These are rare however, e.g the *International Antarctic Centre* at Christchurch International Airport. Most institutions which have a successful revenue earning dimension generate a proportion of their revenue from:

- door charges
- special events charges, i.e. performances, screenings, corporate evenings etc.
- venue hire
- donations at the door
- grants from central or local government for special projects, whether capital or programme related

- service provision, e.g. research assistance and use of facilities (e.g. oral archives)
- membership dues and Friends' fundraising activities
- project funding and sponsorship for specific activities and displays
- concessions for café and shop or merchandise and café operations managed by the institution itself or through a lease arrangement

(a sample merchandising plan for a specific exhibition planned in 1998 is listed in the bibliography / references, see Feuchs, D.)

5.4 Summary

Regardless of the successful acquisition of a suitable site, favourable or charitable lease arrangements and rating status, as well as successful fundraising for a *Dutch Connection* facility, the most critical consideration is the ongoing operational cost burden. Unlike most public musea and galleries which are tax payer or rates funded, there is no commitment from the local authority (HDC) to operational funding support. The *Dutch Connection* will therefore find itself in a difficult and perhaps unique situation as a heritage organisation that will have to model itself on more commercial models. There are successful examples for that but it will take considerable entrepreneurial input to achieve a sustainable operation.

Project and programme funding will be available from a range of organisations specifically set up to assist cultural institutions. These include various government agencies such as *Creative New Zealand* (cultural) *MORST* (scientific research), educational foundations and similar. The Netherlands also has a number of agencies which facilitate projects, cultural exchanges etc. (e.g. the *Mondriaan Foundation* and *SICA*, Stichting Internationale Culturele Activiteiten) It will be essential that a *Dutch Connection* organisation becomes acquainted with these important project funding sources to underpin its long-term strategies.

6. Site Options in Foxton

6.2 Council land and *de Molen*

There are still a number of unresolved issues or non-decisions vis-à-vis the available sites next to *de Molen* building. These concern the precise location of a number of HDC owned lots, the issue of eventual ownership or lease terms and the future of surrounding privately owned sites next to the river loop.

So far the Council's very strong support for the project would indicate that they will look favourably at any proposals made by the *Dutch Connection*. However further elucidation is needed as far as the queries raised by the consultant. (see Appendix A)

6.2 Old BNZ building

This privately owned building diagonally across the road from the primary site is for sale at approx. \$400,000+. The building itself has the potential to be a readymade structure for a range of activities on the ground level with office and research spaces on the first floor. Given its current usage and alterations effected over the years it would still require some considerable capital expenditure to bring it up to the standards required for a public building.

The land surrounding the property (part of the purchase price) is expansive and has the potential to be developed for contemporary extensions of some scale.

6.3 The Windmill Hotel

The Trust and consultant have been approached by the owner of the old *Windmill Hotel*, directly across the road from the main Council site/s but also on the main street.

The hotel itself is not worth reconstructing or refurbishing , given the many alterations (mainly of a shoddy nature) it has undergone. The site however is a substantial one (some 2,478 m2) and adjacent to the planned new public swimming pool site and abutting at the rear to playing fields.

The current asking price is \$ 595,000 and there are suggestions that the HDC may be keen to acquire this property for its public use.

6.4 Summary

Given the goodwill of the HDC the most likely scenario for the *Dutch Connection* will be the construction of an addition to *de Molen* or a freestanding and brand new building on adjacent land.

The *Windmill Hotel* site, if purchased by HDC, may well present the same unencumbered opportunity, without being too far removed from *de Molen*.

The BNZ option would be appealing if the project was to be considered as a staged one. It would be more manageable as a modest concept, be a

reasonably flexible site and on a comfortable human scale, with some considerable character as a building.

7. Governance for the *Dutch Connection*

7.1 Current and future governance

The *Dutch Connection* powerpoint presentation in Christchurch on the project in October 2006 outlined the preferred governance model for the project and eventual management of the institution. An excerpt from that presentation is contained in Appendix D

At this point of the Trust's existence the foremost objective is to effect the creation of the *Dutch Connection*. This is the short-term focus of the existing Trust/ Board. Once this has been achieved its role may very well need to be redefined in terms of the longer-term objectives it sets itself. Some members of the Board of Advisors may very well become members of the *Dutch Connection Trust Board* with a different set of responsibilities or duties , e.g. ongoing sponsorship activities etc.

An invaluable guide to the nature and operation of an appropriate governance structure is the Creative New Zealand *Getting on Board; a governance resource guide for arts organisations (2nd edition)*.

8. Options and Issues

8.1 Options

- an addition to *de Molen*
- stand alone, architect designed, facility on site/s next to *de Molen*
- stand alone facility in a refurbished building
- new , architect designed facility on the *Windmill Hotel* site across the road from *de Molen*
- virtual museum located anywhere, with web site and programming/
research staff

8.2 Issues associated with options identified

The five options identified above all present different challenges and proffer a range of answers to the specific goals as outlined by the Trust for a *Dutch Connection* concept.

1.1 An addition to *de Molen*

Given the iconic presence of a working “museum”, *de Molen* presents a number of “easy” options in that it is up and running; has a ready-made brand; has a basic merchandising strategy and a close relationship, in terms of its lease, with the HDC.

An addition, joined or free standing, of a more traditional type than that which might be envisaged for a new facility has been suggested by a number of stakeholders (Christchurch interviewees – a Friesian farm building!).

An alliance, governance-wise with the existing *Molen Trust* would also facilitate the joint use of volunteer staff across the joint facilities.

The major disadvantage to some observers would be the more traditional branding perception associated with a Dutch windmill at the expense of a more contemporary statement.

1.2 A new, architect designed, building adjacent to *de Molen*

The land identified is, or may be, available for a substantial one or two storied building. Many of the interviewees expressed the desire to see the establishment of a “landmark” and architect designed

facility articulating the best of contemporary design, sustainability and eco-friendly notions, i.e. using the combined knowledge and skills of the New Zealand / Dutch equation.

This ideal approach will of course tax the fundraising resources of the Trust and associated parties, but will ensure that any new branding and promotion is indicative of the innovation and achievement ideals behind the Trust's approach in the first place.

1.3 A refurbished BNZ building

The purchase and refurbishment of the old BNZ building perhaps presents one of the easier options in terms of both costs and the prospect of a modest start with an option for later development with a new addition.

While the site is slightly removed from *de Molen* it does have the advantage of being highly visible and on the main pedestrian route. To build a conceptual link to the other site would not be too difficult. Purchase of the building and site does mean that the Trust could always sell the asset at some future date, if and when there was a need to do so.

The disadvantage would be the cost of refurbishment and at this stage unknown need for strengthening requirements, given the fabric of the building.

1.4 A new facility on the *Windmill Hotel* site

The *Windmill Hotel* site is substantial and in a good location, being directly opposite the public land occupied by the Council buildings and *de Molen*. The planned new public swimming pool will be on the adjacent, southern side, and there are indications that the HDC may be interested in acquiring the hotel site for public use.

The site would be suitable for the building of a new structure, once the old hotel is demolished. The hotel itself would be impractical as a basis for conversion to a *Dutch Connection* facility.

1.5 A virtual *Dutch Connection*

A number of stakeholders have raised the notion of a virtual museum / *Dutch Connection*, putting the emphasis on an

organisation that operates without a bricks and mortar presence. While it would, as an organisation, address the same issues and stage the same activities that preoccupy the Trust, it would do so from a flexible location/ base by either providing an information and research base and facilitating events at a variety of existing venues, whether galleries, musea, universities or community halls, i.e. tapping into someone else's infrastructure!

Such an approach, backed by an effective website, would channel scarce resources into the **activity** side of the organisation as opposed to the absorption of financial resources by the **structure**. In addition this more flexible approach allows programmers the freedom to locate specific events etc. in a range of locations throughout the country, thus satisfying the perceived needs of the wider constituency.

Such a non-facility notion would of course not appeal as readily to some sponsors as a building statement might do.

9. Conclusion

There is a strong desire on the part of the many Dutch constituencies to realise some heritage facility, whether by way of a building or some alternative concept, through which they can “*share our proud story of being Nederlanders in New Zealand -so that we can create a deeper understanding of the many common bonds between Nederlanders and New Zealanders*”.

While there is some considerable, and perhaps typically Dutch **scepticism**, vis-à-vis the prospect of achieving the goal of building a centre in Foxton, there is nevertheless a great deal of **goodwill** towards and **admiration** of the movers and shakers behind the concept, which bodes well for future constituency support for the project.

So there exists a sound case for the establishment of such an institution in terms of constituency sentiment, local body infrastructural support and perceived support from a number of other agencies (e.g. Embassy , *New Zealand -Netherlands Foundation*)

The decision as to site (Foxton) has already been taken and it is now up to the Trust’s Project Development Team to evaluate and assess the suitability, as well as availability of the sites proffered in Foxton.

Decisions as to the precise role and function of the *Dutch Connection*, and their scale, will determine the final cost of any facility planned. Those decisions will need to include:

- physical specifications (the Brief)
- spacial requirements (the Brief)
- evaluated site options and
- operational cost implications

which, in turn, will require an evaluation of funding options.

In the opinion of the consultant all of the options studied are viable, with differing degrees of difficulty, provided all the consequential and attendant issues are considered with care and in a business-like manner.

It is recommended that:

The *Dutch Connection Trust* decide which, if any, of the stated options it wishes to consider and that it develop the desired concept proposal to a stage whereby it can be accepted as the basis for the Project Development Team’s development of a full working brief for a *Dutch Connection* facility.

As per other projects of a similar type the development of the concept proposal would entail a refinement and further scrutiny of:

- the preferred governance structure
- policies including goals and objectives
- exhibition and activity programmes / concepts
- preliminary architectural brief
- revised business plans, including a revenue earning dimension
- capital and operational cost evaluations

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