

An aerial, black and white photograph of a dense urban street in a Dutch city, likely Dordrecht. The street is lined with multi-story buildings featuring traditional gabled roofs and numerous windows. On the left side, a large church with a prominent steeple is visible. The street is narrow, and a few people and a car can be seen on the ground level. A dark horizontal bar is superimposed over the middle of the image, containing the text "Vermeer's house revisited" in a white serif font.

Vermeer's house revisited

This paper is a postscript to *Johannes Vermeer and his Neighbours* (H.G. Slager 2017). The house codes used are the same as in the article. Archival records are from the Delft archives unless stated otherwise.

H.G. Slager, May 2018

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#### *Cover image*

The Oude Langendijk and the Molenpoort alley in Delft.  
Photo G.Th. Delemarre, 1962. Beeldbank cultureel erfgoed 68.559.

## Introduction

Out of two corner houses of the Molenpoort alley where Johannes Vermeer could have lived, J.M. Montias in his seminal book *Vermeer and his Milieu, a Web of Social History* (1989) arrived at the house on the eastern corner, historically named Serpent (OLD-E1). The two possibilities find their origin in three records pertaining to Vermeer mentioning “*Oude Langendijk corner of the Molenpoort*”. Montias (and A.J.J.M. van Peer before him) had based his choice on the reconstruction Serpent was bought in 1641 by Jan Geensz Thins, a direct cousin of Maria Thins. He was persuaded Maria Thins inhabited her cousin’s house and took in Vermeer prior to 1660 after marrying her daughter Catharina in 1653; Vermeer would have lived there until his sudden demise in 1675. The house on the western corner (OLD-W1), in the old days named Trapmolen, was dismissed as it was owned by the unrelated Machtelt van Beest and thought too small for the rooms listed in Vermeer’s inventory.

For decades the scenario has been repeated in the literature but no additional archival research was performed, or at least not published, perhaps because it seemed all the dots had been connected. The article *Johannes Vermeer and his Neighbours* (from here on ‘main article’) however demonstrates Jan Geensz Thins did not buy Serpent but a house two doors further east (OLD-E3), annulling Montias’s foundation. Serpent was legally owned by Pieter van der Dussen but in practice, like Trapmolen and other houses in the Papist corner, was bought for the Jesuit mission to use and rent out.

Because of these corrected facts a new assessment of Vermeer’s house is in order. The relevance for ‘reopening the case’ lies not only in the accurate knowledge of an artist’s living condition, but also in the study of how&where an artist painted, in Vermeer’s case an ongoing debate. Vermeer’s paintings too have been used in an attempt to reconstruct his house and studio. This paper however focusses on archival data only.

Unfortunately no direct evidence like a rental contract<sup>1</sup> has surfaced (yet) and so the assessment of Vermeer’s house has to be based on other clues. This paper presents all available clues in detail and will show it is highly likely Maria Thins/Vermeer lived in Trapmolen, the western corner house. The arguments held against it, namely an unrelated owner and its smaller size prove unfounded: neither candidate house was owned by family and the rooms in the inventory do fit Trapmolen if one thinks small, not big. Moreover, an opposite argument can be found in several aspects of the inventory that do not fit Serpent. Additionally, the assumption of a lifelong shared household of Vermeer and Maria Thins may also be challenged. For a period of time probably the case<sup>2</sup> but rather unimaginable for Vermeer’s entire married life considering his steadily growing family and certain facts concerning Maria Thins’ stay in Delft. And so in the main article a new preliminary scenario was formulated:

*“Maria Thins rents OLD-W1 and takes in Vermeer after he married Catharina (be it already in 1653 or any year up to 1660). With the growing number of children she moves out after ca.1663 to her house Fonteijn. Her landlord Machtelt van Beest may have suggested her this house belonging to her brother-in-law and business partner Pieter Lievensz de Bock. After Vermeer’s demise and the debt situation of Catharina the ladies Rozendael step in around 1680: they rent OLD-E1 and take in Maria Thins and perhaps Catharina with the children too. Maria Thins in any one period may have lived in her niece Maria Camerling’s house OLD-E2 as well. She dies in 1680 out of OLD-E1 and Catharina moves to Breda in 1684.”*

This new scenario was based on several clues that will be reiterated, supplemented with more clues and renewed analysis of published archival documents. Upon conclusion of this paper the first part remains the same but the events after Vermeer’s demise are (can be) interpreted differently.

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<sup>1</sup> Trapmolen was bought prior to 1648 by Machtelt van Beest (1611-1687). Serpent was bought prior to 1656 by Mr. Pieter Cornelisz van der Dussen (1591-1661) or (less likely) his son Pieter (1624-1694). Both houses are known to have been rented out by the Jesuits in 1686.

<sup>2</sup> J.M. Montias 1989, *Vermeer and his milieu, a Web of Social History*, doc 305 and p160. The notion of a shared household is based on a single archival record, specifically a deposition in 1666 on Willem Bolnes’ domestic violence in 1663.

## The corner houses of the Molenpoort alley

The only surviving image of Serpent<sup>3</sup> is in Bleijswijck's Kaart Figuratief 1678 as the house was demolished in steps in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century to build the St. Joseph church, followed by the Maria van Jesse church now occupying the entire eastern side of the Molenpoort alley. The last section of the house -on the quay side- was demolished in- or just after 1834.

Trampolen on the other hand still exists (Oude Langendijk 25) and possibly quite similar in form and -layout to how it was in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is a listed monument and dated as possibly 17<sup>th</sup> century with an 18<sup>th</sup> century gable<sup>4</sup>. An in-depth architectural survey was never performed but in the 1990-ies a dozen 17<sup>th</sup> century blue&white Delft tiles were rescued from the -now closed- cellar.

The Molenpoort alley nowadays is called Jozefstraat v/h Molenpoort (v/h is an abbreviation of 'voorheen' meaning previously).

## The primary records

It is prudent to recapitulate the primary records mentioning addresses of Vermeer and his in-laws as they show the assessment of Vermeer's house is not straightforward.

	<u>Event</u>	<u>Address</u>
1653	marriage Vermeer	Marktveld
1660	burial child of Vermeer*	Oude Langendijk
1667	Maria Thins draws up a testament	Oude Langendijk
16nn	Maria Thins buys the house Fonteijn**	St. Annenbogert
1675	burial Vermeer	Oude Langendijk
1676	inventory Vermeer's estate	Oude Langendijk corner Molenpoort
1676	burial Willem Bolnes	Oude Langendijk corner Molenpoort
1678	Maria Thins lives with her cousins Roozendael	Bagijnhof
1679	Maria Thins sells the house Fonteijn	St. Annenbogert
1680	burial Maria Thins	Oude Langendijk corner Molenpoort
1684	Catharina Bolnes leaves Delft	Breda
1686	the cousins Roozendael rent Serpent	Serpent
1688	burial Catharina Bolnes	Blauwe Hant on Verwersdijk

\*Dito 1664 and 1669 \*\* Purchase date unknown

To these addresses we can add Tanneken Everpoel's deposition she in 1663 had lived at the house of Maria Thins *and* Vermeer so they appear to have shared a house around this time (note 2). The deposition describes the violence of Willem Bolnes leading to his incarceration in 1664, but does not mention a street or house name. But as it includes two other witnesses (Willem de Coorde and Gerrit Cornelisz) who can be placed at the Oude Langendijk near the Molenpoort, we can be fairly sure Tanneken's statement concerned a house in the area. No other records simultaneously mentioning Vermeer and Maria Thins in conjunction with an address or a shared house are known.

It is clear the primary records cannot reveal in which corner house Vermeer had lived; the contents of the acts unfortunately hold no clues either. In addition, the set allows for more scenarios than the single chronology proposed by Montias, regardless of the question which corner house Vermeer inhabited. For example Maria Thins and/or Vermeer at some stage may have taken up residence in Jan Geensz Thins' house (OLD-E3) or Maria Camerling's house (OLD-E2), another relative of Maria Thins. Even a house on the Oude Langendijk away from the Molenpoort would be a possibility at some stage. The burial records may seem precise but it

<sup>3</sup> For tentative drawings of Serpent see: A. Warffemius, *Jan Vermeers huis: een poging tot reconstructie*, Delfia Batavorum 2001, p60-78 and K.Kaldenbach/H.J. Zantkuijl at kalden.home.xs4all.nl. The drawings are based on Bleijswijck's Kaart Figuratief 1678. The floorplan by Zantkuijl is also shown on a plaque on the Maria van Jesse church.

<sup>4</sup> Monumenten.nl. No.12148.

should be noted they may only give an administrative address<sup>5</sup> so they do not prove Maria Thins/Willem Bolnes lived at the Molenpoort prior to their demise. In fact, what is known suggests otherwise: the violent Willem had been incarcerated and was *persona non grata* and the elderly Maria Thins had moved house, possibly more than once (see clue no.3 and 4).

The clearest record is the 1676 inventory that tells us Vermeer -in the latter part of his life- had lived in *a* corner house of the Molenpoort alley, which is the focus of this paper.

### **New assessment of Vermeer's house**

In determining which corner house Vermeer inhabited the primary records with addresses prove unrevealing and direct evidence is lacking. And so the only option left is to study indirect clues; fortunately there are quite a few available.

The remainder of the paper presents the self-explanatory clues in two sections: I-General clues and II-Clues from Vermeer's inventory with reference to figures and data. It will be shown Trapmolen is the far better candidate; of all clues not a single one points directly- or favourably to Serpent.

### **The reciprocal question**

If Maria Thins/Vermeer never lived in Serpent, then who did ? After Pieter van der Dussen there were no new private owners and the house silently remained in the hands of the church for centuries. Search efforts (i.e. in Vermeer's lifetime) for inhabitants or any other type of information on the house have been unsuccessful so far; the only recorded fact remains the ladies Roozendael in 1686 rented the house from the Jesuits, which is eleven years after Vermeer's demise.

Perhaps the lack of information on Serpent in the 17<sup>th</sup> century can be explained by its strategic position with respect to the covert Jesuit church (OLD-E4/5). In Bleijswijck's Kaart Figuratief the entire length of the house lacked windows and a single door provided access, via a courtyard, to the back of the church, thus forming a barrier for the occasional raid initiated by the protestant city officials. Attendants to the forbidden mass or other church activities likely kept a low profile and rather than the church front door used (locked) gates on the Burgwal and Molenpoort. It would seem unwise to accommodate families with children in such a strategic house that would be more suitable for more disciplined lay nuns or perhaps as a board&lodging facility for schoolgirls (OLD-E6/7, the catholic school for girls). Such a transient- and alternating population may be the reason for the apparent void in the Delft city archives.

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<sup>5</sup> The address where the deceased had actually lived was not always recorded by the church (financial) administration. The person may have had his/her final sickbed at relatives, or lived outside Delft but was buried in the family grave etc. For example Catharina Bolnes lived in Breda but in 1688 the burial address was her daughter's (house Blauwe hant on the Verwersdijk).

## I. General clues pointing to Trappmolen

1. In 1663 the eye witnesses of Willem Bolnes' violent behaviour at the house of Maria Thins and her daughter had seen it not just once but several times, a typical scenario for close/direct neighbours. Two of the three<sup>6</sup> witnesses lived or worked right next- or close to Trappmolen.
2. It makes little sense Maria Thins would rent a large house like Serpent for an initial party of just three- or four persons<sup>7</sup>. Previously an inn, it likely contained many rooms supported by the fact it had no less than seven fireplaces in 1638, comparable to the closeby inn named Paternoster with eight fireplaces. The rent in 1686 was more than four times that for Trappmolen illustrative of the difference in size. Seemingly contradictory the property tax in 1632 and 1686 for Trappmolen was a little higher than for Serpent, but it was levied on the five houses comprising the Molenpoort and not just Trappmolen (see clue no.6).
3. In October 1678 Maria Thins, about 85 years old, no longer lived at the Molenpoort but with her cousins Aleydis- and Cornelia Roozendael in the Bagijnhof<sup>8</sup> and –although not proven- probably remained there until her demise in December 1680. In January 1680 at least she still was “*staying at the ladies Roozendael here in Delft*”<sup>9</sup>. The ladies are known to be renting Serpent in 1686 but it is unknown when exactly their rent started. In case they were already renting it in 1680, the above statement could be interpreted as Maria Thins died from this house. But then the statement is a contradiction if Maria Thins herself had been renting the house previously for decades. Therefore, most likely the Roozendaels only started to rent Serpent after Maria Thins had died and her burial record stating “*corner of the Molenpoort*” was the administrative address of her sole surviving daughter Catharina. To reduce costs, Catharina may have moved in with the Roozendaels after her mother's death but there is no way of telling. In- or just prior to 1684 she relocated to Breda for reasons unknown.
4. Maria Thins bought a garden and house named Fonteijn<sup>10</sup> in the St.Annenbogert from Pieter Lievensz de Bock. Out of all people in Delft, he proves brother-in-law/business partner of Machtelt van Beest, the owner of Trappmolen and other houses around the Molenpoort. Machtelt was one of the richest citizens in Delft<sup>11</sup> and would likely not have lived in the modest Trappmolen herself as argued in the main article (p8), now confirmed by re-reading the relevant notary act<sup>12</sup>. She may have suggested Fonteijn to Maria Thins when the house in the Molenpoort became too crowded. The purchase date unfortunately remains unknown because the sales deed (*waarbrief*) has been lost but Maria Thins sold it in December 1679, twelve months before she died.
5. The rooms mentioned in Vermeer's inventory of 1676 fit with the modest size<sup>13</sup> and layout of the house currently standing on the Oude Langendijk 25. From the inventory just three fireplaces can be

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<sup>6</sup> Main article, p6. Apart from the general indication ‘Burgwal’ at her wedding in 1675, it is unknown where the third witness Tanneken Everpoel lived. She may have been a (part-time) maid in the Thin/Vermeer household. Considering the nature of the Papist corner, an enclave with many single elderly lay nuns (klopjes), a church, a school and lodgings for schoolgirls it is conceivable local maids had multiple employers.

<sup>7</sup> Maria Thins, her sister Cornelia, her daughter Catharina and perhaps her son Willem.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid 2, p232 and doc 394 (Nb.the address is not reiterated in the summary transcription of the act).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid 2. Doc 401, 24-01-1680 (Nb. This quote is not in the English version but in the Dutch version *Vermeer en zijn milieu*, 1993).

<sup>10</sup> The purchase date remains unknown but a recent find indirectly reveals Maria Thins sold Fonteijn on 09-12-1679 as this date is mentioned as the “*jongste waarbrief*” (penultimate sale). Oud Rechterlijk Archief Delft, Blaffert van de Waarbrieven 5H. Arch.0013, Inv.00217, fol.409-410.

<sup>11</sup> In Kohier groot familiegeld 1674 Machtelt ranked no.21 with a capital of 147,000 guilders (Nb. the list is large with 1,269 names but not complete; kindly provided by K. van der Wiel). Nationaal Archief, Archief Rekenkamer ter Auditie, 3.01.28, inv. nr 15. See also K. van der Wiel, *Delft in de Gouden Eeuw. Welvaart en armoede ten tijde van Johannes Vermeer in De Hollandse samenleving in de tijd van Vermeer* (Waanders, Zwolle 1996, p 52-67). Newly found noteworthy facts on Machtelt van Beest are that Georg(Joris)- and Aefge van de Velde, the owners of the Jesuit church (OLD-E4/5), were her cousins. Machtelt and Aefge inherit paintings (and likely assets as well) from Georg in 1652 (Montias, doc 241). Georg and the art dealer Abraham de Cooge from 1644 had been guardian over her children. Machtelt's family ties with the painters Michiel van Mierevelt and Delff have been explained in the main article.

<sup>12</sup> Montias (p178, n28) writes Machtelt van Beest in her testament of 1677 mentions “*her two houses on the Oude Langendijk, extending to the Burgwal*”. Based on this, in the main article it was concluded they were OLD-W3/4 and OLD-W5 (Swanenburg) reaching to BW-W4 on the Burgwal (and that the rest of her houses in the Molenpoort had been donated to the Jesuits). However, re-reading the act it mentions just one house on the Oude Langendijk (OLD-W5) and one house behind it (BW-W4); from the Oude Langendijk extending to the Burgwal. Therefore it is now close to certain she lived in OLD-W5 and never in Trappmolen. Not. Cornelis Bleiswijk, ONAD 1918, orig. fol.159-160v, new fol.130-131v.

<sup>13</sup> A comparison of sizes has a caveat. The size of Trappmolen is fairly certain –based on the plot size and the existing house on the Oude Langendijk 25- but the reconstructed drawing of Serpent by Zantkuijl is based only on Bleijswijk's Kaart Figuratief of 1678. The map has an unknown veracity for most of the normal residences and eg. is proven wrong in some cases regarding the number of houses in a street.

predicted; as noted Serpent had seven fireplaces, a number that in no way becomes apparent from the inventory. See also **II. Clues from Vermeer's inventory** hereafter.

Additionally other clues, not included in the main article, favour Trappmolen:

6. Montias records a settlement in 1670 between the widow Cornelia Dircks living next door (OLD-W2) to Trappmolen and Machtelt van Beest (owner of OLD-W1,3,4,5) on access to the Molenpoort but did not provide much detail. Therefore this act has been read anew<sup>14</sup>. Their conflict concerned a corridor situated between the back wall of Cornelia's house and another wall, once part of the old mill or perhaps attached in some way to the house Trappmolen itself<sup>15</sup>. The mill seems to have been situated directly behind Cornelia's house. The corridor, providing access southward to the canal, had a roof supported by beams attached to Cornelia's back wall. Cornelia had installed (or wanted to install) a door and windows in this back wall and claimed ownership of the corridor which was contested by Machtelt. The dispute was settled with a 250 guilders payment to Cornelia; in return she was prohibited to use the corridor and Machtelt obtained full legal ownership. Machtelt was allowed to (up)keep the beams but forbidden to board up the "*lichten*" (the windows). A relevant detail in the deed is that the area south of the contested corridor was addressed as "*het erf genaempt de Molenpoort*" (the courtyard named Molenpoort) revealing the term Molenpoort was not just the alley but included the buildings and terrain west of it, thus a complex of sorts. This is also evident in the property tax of 1686 where five buildings in the Molenpoort were taxed as one<sup>16</sup> and in two tax records of c1733 where the same five are mentioned (Figure 2). In this definition of Molenpoort the description "*Oude Langendijk corner of the Molenpoort*" therefore sooner points to Trappmolen than Serpent. Or in other words, it appears Serpent never was associated with the term Molenpoort.
7. Montias (1989, doc 346) notes that Vermeer, together with master carpenter Aert de Swart<sup>17</sup> is witness on 18-01-1674 to a debt acknowledgement act between a Cornelia Leenderts Kroesers and her half-brother Maerten Dircksz van der Kleij. De Swart lived on the Burgwal below the Trappmolen (BW-W3) and Cornelia Kroesers died in 1681 in the Molenpoort<sup>18</sup>. Being a *klopje* she likely lived in one of the smaller houses in the Molenpoort and she may have asked Vermeer and De Swart to witness simply because they were convenient neighbours. In the Molenpoort, part of the catholic enclave, involving close neighbours in legal issues certainly was not unique<sup>19</sup>.
8. In January 1663 a stone carver Wouter Jansz Bijl (c1633-1665)<sup>20</sup> together with Vermeer is witness to a financial agreement between Willem Bolnes and his mother Maria Thins; the passing of the act was at her home in Delft<sup>21</sup>. Nothing can be found on this stone carver (nor is he mentioned elsewhere in Montias' research) which usually is an indication for commoners. Why Maria Thins approved a working class man to witness a strictly personal financial matter is guesswork but he may simply have been present at the master stone carver Adriaen Samuels living next door to Trappmolen, identical to the other situation in 1663 when Samuels' apprentice, the stone carver Gerrit Cornelisz, witnessed- and testified (in 1666) on Willem Bolnes' aggression. Maria Thins twice asking common stone carvers as witness is hard to put down as coincidence when the neighbour was a master stone carver.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid 2. p178, n28. 01-06-1670, Not. F. van Hurck, no.2101 (Montias erroneously records 01-01-1670). Scan kindly provided by Bas van der Wulp, Archief Delft.

<sup>15</sup> The old mill was a rosmolen, a horse driven mill. The names Trappmolen (treadmill) and Molenpoort (mill gate) likely stemmed from the presence of the mill. It is unknown when exactly the mill was demolished.

<sup>16</sup> Main article, addendum 11.

<sup>17</sup> Aart (Aelbrechtsz) de Swart (nn-1714) was catholic (four baptisms of children of Artus de Swert x Hendrina van Selder between 1679-1683 in the St.Joseph church). He married 20-05-1663 to Hendrina Jans van Selder (nn-1698).

<sup>18</sup> Buried 21-04-1681 Cornelia Kroeser b.d. "*deceased on the Oude Langendijk in the Molepoort*". Given the Holy Oil on 13-04-1681 as "*geestelijk dochter*" (lay nun). She passed away on 18-04-1681.

<sup>19</sup> Main article, notes 73 and 81: neighbours acted as witness or guardians. The same Aert de Swart was legal guardian in 1678 over Cornelia Dircks/Adriaen Samuels' daughter Catharina and a witness in Machtelt van Beest's testament of 28-06-1677. Not. Cornelis Bleiswijk, ONAD 1918, orig. fol.159-160v, new fol.130-131v.

<sup>20</sup> Orphan Chamber 19-01-1639 Jan Woutersz van Bijl registers his only son Wouter, six years of age. Buried 21-10-1665 Wouter Jansz, widower, stone carver, living in the Zusterlaan.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid 2. Doc 292, 17-01-1663.



9. Much later in 1768 Pieter Tijzman, shopkeeper in fabrics, bought Oude Langendijk 25 and was buried from the house in 1801 (Table 2). One month later the inventory was made and a comparison with Vermeer's inventory readily shows the strong similarity in the layout of the house (Table 3).

## II. Clues from Vermeer's inventory

Vermeer's inventory taken in february 1676 consisted of two lists: one with goods belonging to Vermeer and Catharina and the other with goods shared in equal parts by Catharina and her mother Maria Thins. The latter appears to stem from the inheritance of Cornelia Thins (died 1661, Gouda) who had specified in her testament the household goods were to be divided equally between her sister and her niece<sup>22</sup>.

The inventory provides the layout of the house and the function of the rooms, as in an imaginary walk through the property. Table 1 gives the abridged inventory omitting smaller items like crockery, paintings etc. so that the remaining items give a quicker idea of room size&function that can be used to reconstruct a floorplan. Obviously over the years the house may have been re-structured internally and outer walls- and windows may have changed so a degree of assumption is unavoidable to project the rooms into the present house on the Oude Langendijk 25. Therefore the floorplan of Trapmolen, based on the 1676 inventory, the 1832 Kadastrale Minuut (cadastral plan) and the current house is tentative only (Figure 3).

Several aspects of the inventory are most useful in reconstructing the floorplan:

**The front hall** The *voorhuijs* with entry at the Oude Langendijk must have been quite small. There were four bad chairs and a cabinet, but no table, no beds and no objects indicating a fire place. If not just a vestibule, Vermeer being an art dealer may have used it as a showroom. From clue no.9 we know the room functioned as a shop in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

**Fireplaces** Through the years the number of fireplaces (chimneys) in Trapmolen changed somewhat, but never reached the large number the house Serpent had. The Haardsteden ledger 1600 mentions four fireplaces for Trapmolen, but in Haardsteden 1638 only two were listed. The difference might reflect the inclusion/exclusion of the smaller houses below (Figure 1, 2) or simply a demolition. In the 1676 inventory three fireplaces can be assumed: in the cooking kitchen for obvious reasons, the great hall and the interior kitchen. The inventory lists three *schoorsteenkleeties*, coverlets for the fireplace when not in use. It was winter so the coverlets may have been stored away at the time. The fireplace in the interior kitchen is evidenced by "*a painting hanging on the mantelpiece*" and besides providing comfort, it was also used to heat food previously prepared in the cooking kitchen. As the interior kitchen had expensive quilt leather wall covering, ten paintings on the wall, a table and three chairs, it likely was the dining/reception area as was common practice for middle-class houses. It had no crockery or cooking utensils; those were all located in the cooking- and little back kitchen and some in the small room. The great hall<sup>23</sup> had a fireplace evidenced by "*three drawings in front of the mantelpiece*", nine chairs and a table and may have been used in combination with the interior kitchen. In 1664 Adriaen Samuels (OLD-W2) filed two complaints against Machtelt van Beest; one regarding a chimney anchor (likely an iron rod) of Trapmolen attached to the roof on the east side of his house and the other regarding a sandbox (*zandhock*) that was built in&against the west side of his house<sup>24</sup>. From this we learn Trapmolen must have had a chimney at its western wall. The great hall was the only room in the house with a supply of clean bedding and clothes. In 1801 two fireplaces can be assumed (Table 3) and in a ca.1858 painting of the house (Figure 4) three chimneys are visible, one in an extension of the house.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid 2. Doc 280, 28-01-1661.

<sup>23</sup> The term 'great' may just reflect the size relative to the rest of the rooms.

<sup>24</sup> Not. J.Spoors, protocol no.1678, fol. 79, 27-01-1664. The sandbox probably was for OLD-W4 (Figure 1 plot 260, Figure 2).



**Beds** Beds were situated in the interior kitchen, the cooking kitchen, the great hall, the small room and the basement. Space evidently was limited. Vermeer in 1676 had eleven children<sup>25</sup> but only five beds (*bedde*) were listed plus one bedstead (*bedstee*), an enclosed structure for adults. There were no beds on the first floor but this can be explained it was winter when the inventory was taken; in warmer months some may have slept upstairs suggested by the presence of two copper bedpans. The low number of beds can be (partially) explained by the practice that several small children slept in a pull-out drawer underneath the parents' bedstead and perhaps some of the eldest resided elsewhere at the time (eg. in a boarding school). Vermeer's oldest, Maria, had married in 1674 and would have moved out. But even when three children were absent in 1676<sup>26</sup>, eight remained and the idea the elderly Maria Thins –in the latter part of Vermeer's life- still lived in this crowded household is rather difficult to imagine. In 1667 she is recorded on the Oude Langendijk<sup>27</sup> and in this year Vermeer already had eight or nine children (including one or two that would soon die after) ranging from baby to a 14-year old. If she indeed still lived in Trapmolen it perhaps was one of the smaller houses below it (Figure 1 and 2) but she also may have stayed in her cousin Maria Camerling's house on the Oude Langendijk (OLD-E2), or in her house Fonteijn in the St.Annebogert, provided she owned it by then.

**First floor** The first floor contained relatively few items and consisted of just two rooms fitting for Trapmolen but speaking against Serpent, a former inn likely with several rooms for board & lodging. But even when there had been no lodging rooms, just two upstairs rooms conflicts with Serpent's large size: just the quay side section alone was ca.7m x 12.4m (87m<sup>2</sup> in the OAT records; early 19<sup>th</sup> century) and with its extensions –also with upper floors- it was about 30m (!) long based on Bleijswijck's Kaart Figuratief 1678. A train of thought is the inventory was selective so that Maria Thins' private quarters upstairs were left out (e.g. Montias, 1989, p155), but the document does not hint anything towards this idea. Rather it is speculation to explain a low number of upstairs rooms in a house the size of Serpent.

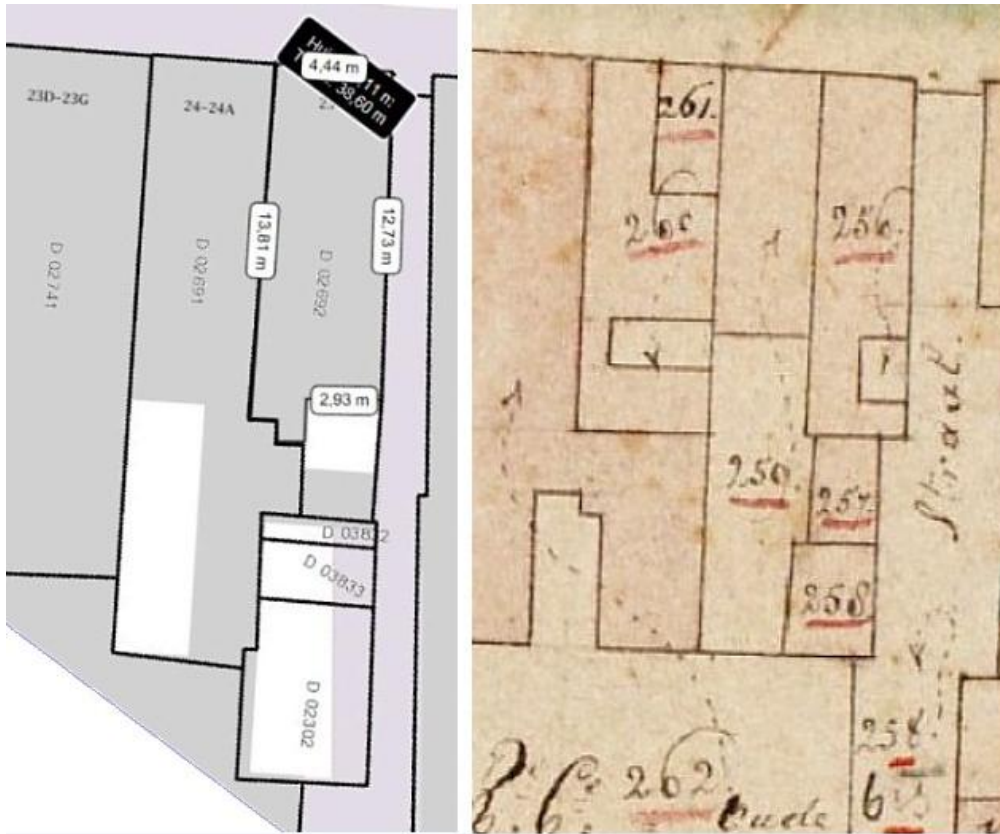
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<sup>25</sup> Approximate age of Vermeer's children in february 1676: 22 (Maria), 20 (Elizabeth), 16 (Aleydis) , 15 (Beatrix), 14 (Johannes), 12 (Gertruyd), 12 (Franciscus), 6 (Catharina), 4 (Ignatius), 3 (a child), 2 (a child).

<sup>26</sup> At Vermeer's funeral eight *minderjarige* (underaged) children were present.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid 2. Doc 313, 27-09-1667. Maria Thins files her testament. The earliest document mentioning Oude Langendijk for her.

**Figure 1:** Trapmolen on the western corner of the Molenpoort alley in a modern cadastral map (kindly provided by C. Dieke, Municipality of Delft) and in the Kadastrale Minuut map of 1832. Top is north.



Trapmolen is plot 256.

Plot 262 around 1600 was owned by the miller Jacob Jacobsz Haestrecht<sup>28</sup> just as Trapmolen and probably all the other houses in the Molenpoort.

The uncolored area where 259 is written may have been the site where the old mill once stood giving rise to the later dispute between Cornelia Dircks and Machtelt van Beest, owner of 260-262 and 256-258 in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

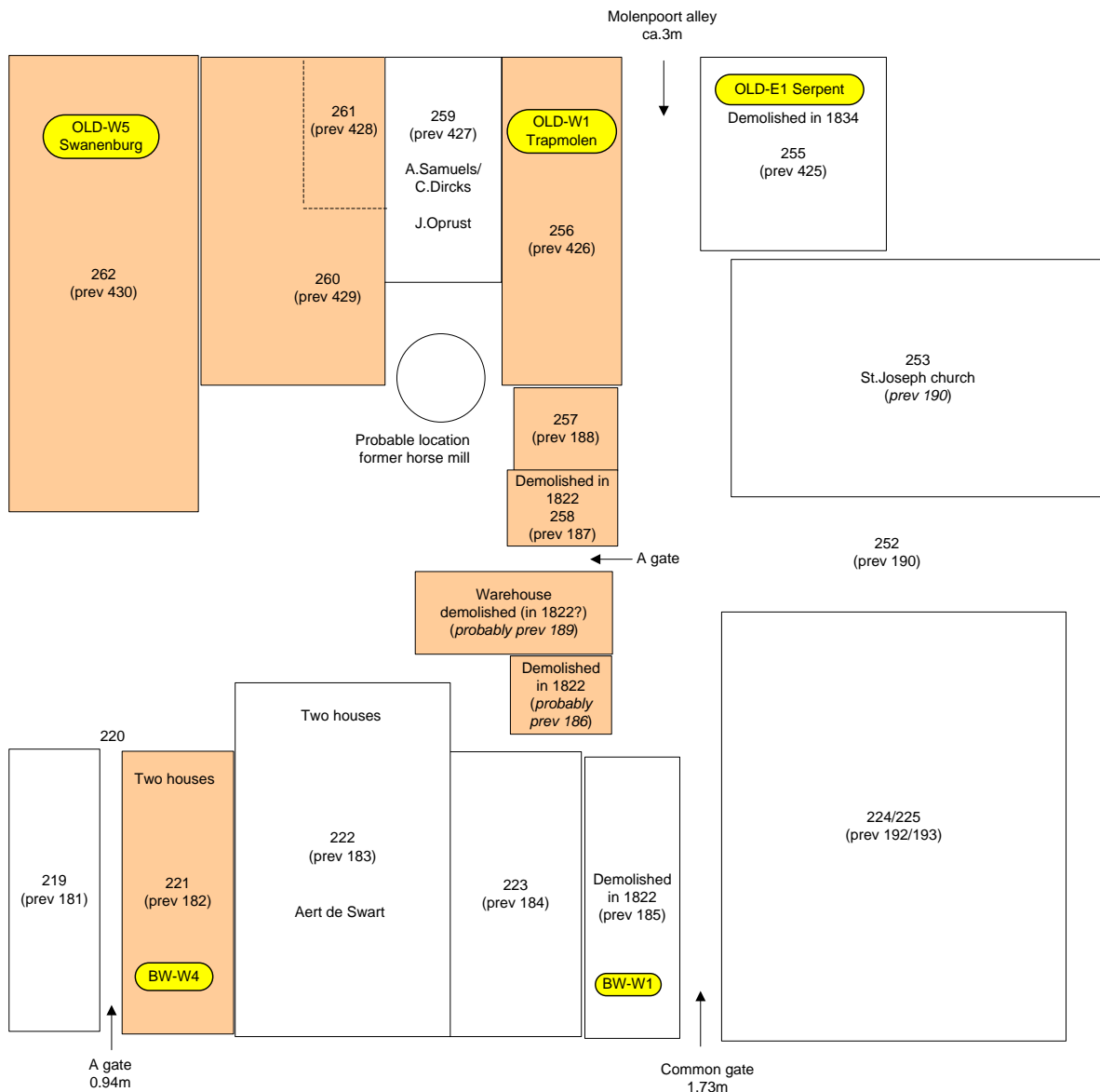
By 1858 the house on 259 was enlarged (Figure 4) possibly realized much earlier going by the property tax in 1795<sup>29</sup>.

Nb. Plot 262 (also) concerns the quay side house on the far left; note the dotted line with arrow head.

<sup>28</sup> Haardstedengeld 1600: Jacob Jacobsz Haestrecht was taxed for three fireplaces in plot 262 and for four fireplaces in plot 256. In a later Haardstedengeld (1638) plot 256 only had two fireplaces (read: chimneys). Nb. tax was imposed on person's names, not house names, in order of appearance in a street.

<sup>29</sup> Verponding 1795, Arch. 0001\_2, Inv. 00219\_1. Tax in guilders/stuivers. Plot 256 (3gl:10st), plot 257 (2gl), plot 258 (1gl:10st), plot 259 (8gl:7st). Serpent (plot 255) was taxed 7gl:10st.

**Figure 2:** The Molenpoort area in Kadastrale Minuut map 1832 (including demolished houses). Top is north.



Colored plots were owned by Machtelt van Beest and heirs. Widths to scale, depths arbitrary. The names Samuels/Dircks and De Swart have been mentioned in the text. Old plot numbers (labelled *prev*) were used prior to the 1832 cadastral registry introducing new numbers; the OAT ledger 1811-1832 provides the conversion<sup>30</sup>. The OAT lacks old numbers 185, 186 and 189 demonstrating demolition of these houses had already occurred, in fact in 1822<sup>31</sup>. The last remaining part of Serpent, in the OAT still listed as house and courtyard, obtained consent for demolition from the mayor in december 1834.

In 1733 the Molenpoort is recorded as rented out in five parts (“*verhuurt in vijf parthijen*” i.e. Trampolen, three more houses and a warehouse)<sup>32</sup> and in 1795 the five still existed<sup>33</sup>. The drawing shows them in a vertical row

<sup>30</sup> Beeldbank.cultureelerfgoed.nl. Kadastrale kaart 1811-1832: Oorspronkelijke Aanwijzende Tafel (OAT) Delft, Zuid Holland, sectie D.

<sup>31</sup> (i) Verponding 1810-1832. Arch. 0001\_2, Inv. 00234a\_1, fol.169. Plots 185, 186,187 are “*geamoveerd als bouwval*” (demolished as derelict) with consent from the mayors on 19-02-1822. Plot 185 is recorded as a catholic house for the poor. Plots 188 and 189 have no such demolition remark but 189 is absent in the OAT so must have been demolished as well. (ii) A.Warffemius *Jan Vermeers huis: een poging tot reconstructie*, Delfia Batavorum, 2001, note 2, p77: house no. 185 was demolished in 1822 as recorded in church minutes. Warffemius identified it as OLD-E1/Serpent but the descriptive text in the minutes remained in conflict with his conclusion. Serpent in fact had old number 425. Old no.185 very likely was BW-W1 going by how numbers 181-193 are arranged.

<sup>32</sup> Oud Archief Delft, Arch.0001, Inv.01775, Kohier van verpondingen over alle gebouwen in Delft en Delftshaven, fol.118. This ledger (a cleaned copy of operational ledgers) was compiled by order of the Heeren Staaten van Holland and West Friesland on 23-09-1733. It records

next to the alley. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the small plots 257/258 may have belonged to Trapmolen. In the OAT they are listed as houses with 16m<sup>2</sup> and 22m<sup>2</sup> surface area.

Yet another copy of the verponding (tax) 1732-1734 is located in the Nationaal Archief<sup>34</sup>; here the five houses of the Molenpoort are given with tenants and yearly rent:

Partij	Tenant	Rent (Gulden)
1 <sup>e</sup>	aan Dijkje Poort voor	40 <sup>/-</sup>
2 <sup>e</sup>	aan Appelen: van Lijp	26 <sup>/-</sup>
3 <sup>e</sup>	aan Kimpie teltant	16 <sup>/-</sup>
4 <sup>e</sup>	aan Johannes Kley	50 <sup>/-</sup>
5 <sup>e</sup>	aan Aris van heest	28 <sup>/-</sup>
+ 4 <sup>de</sup> and 5 <sup>de</sup> van de straat		17 <sup>/-</sup>
<b>Totaal</b>		<b>160<sup>/-</sup></b>
Huis van Jacob Oprust		100 <sup>/-</sup>

“Den huijzinge staande ten naame van Mr. Harmen Oom, verhuurt in 5 partijen als 1 aan de straat en 4 in de Moolepoort” (The houses of Mr. Herman Oom rented out in 5 parts, of which 1 on the streetside and 4 in the Moolepoort). The house on the street (256/Trapmolen) was rented for 40 guilders; house 257 and 258 were rented respectively for 26 and 16 guilders and despite the small surface area evidently houses fit to live in, probably with a first floor as well. The fourth entry is the warehouse and the fifth the house below it with 28 guilders rent.

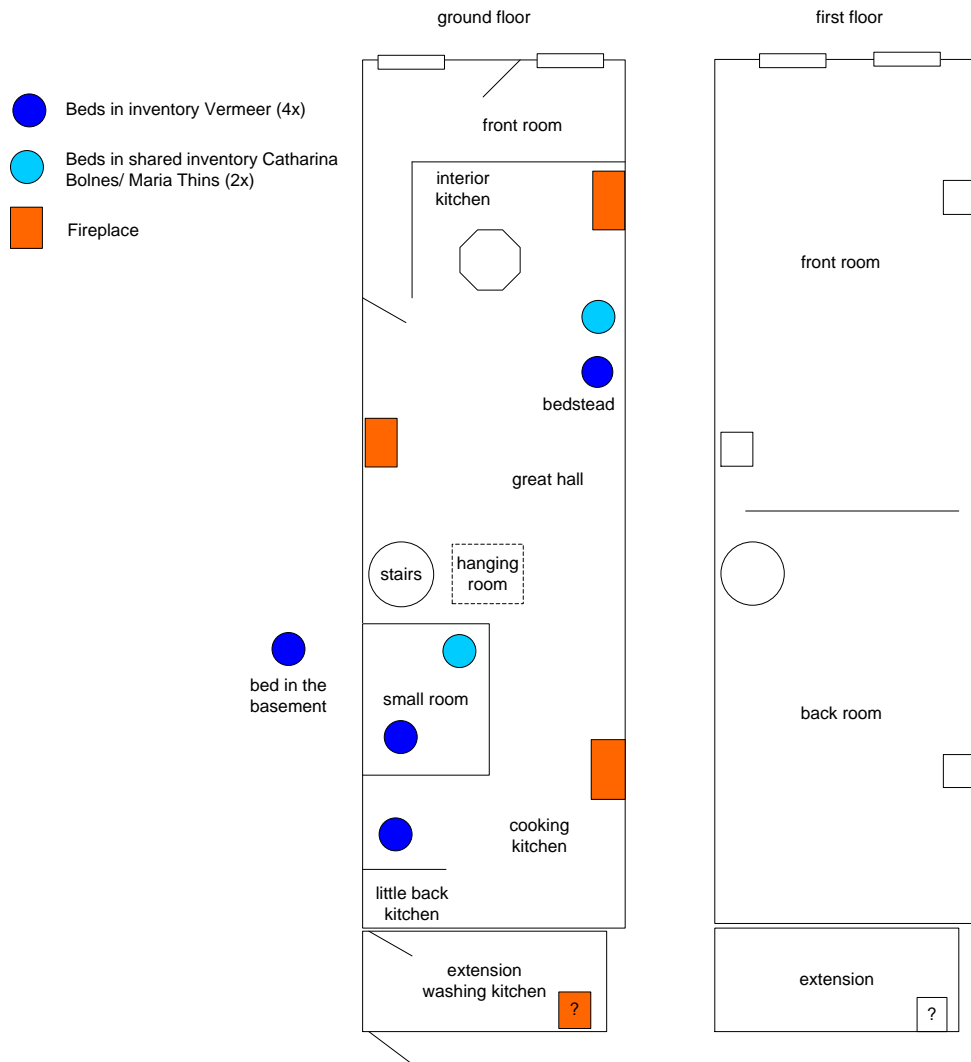
The house at the bottom of the page (plot 259/OLD-W2) was owned by Jacob Oprust; in the 17<sup>th</sup> century it was owned by the stone carver Samuels.

Mr. Harmen Oom (Oem; Machtelt van Beest's heir) as owner but in reality all five houses in the Molenpoort had been sold to Pieter Tjerk the year before. Oem in fact had died decades earlier.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid 28. No. 1775 (1<sup>e</sup> – 5<sup>e</sup>).

<sup>34</sup> Nationaal Archief, Archief van de Financie van Holland, nr. 492, fol. 145. Scan kindly provided by Kees van der Wiel.

**Figure 3:** Tentative floorplan of plot 256/Trapmolen based on rooms in Vermeer's inventory (1676). Top is north.



Nb. The plots 257/258 (Figure 1,2) are excluded from this floorplan but may have belonged to the house.

The rooms are plotted in order of appearance in the inventory, as in an imaginary walk through the house. The floorplan (without the extension) is 4.2x14m effective space but the surface area in the OAT 1811-1832 is given as 81m<sup>2</sup>; the whole plot therefore was ca.18m long and probably included a little courtyard with access to the alley.

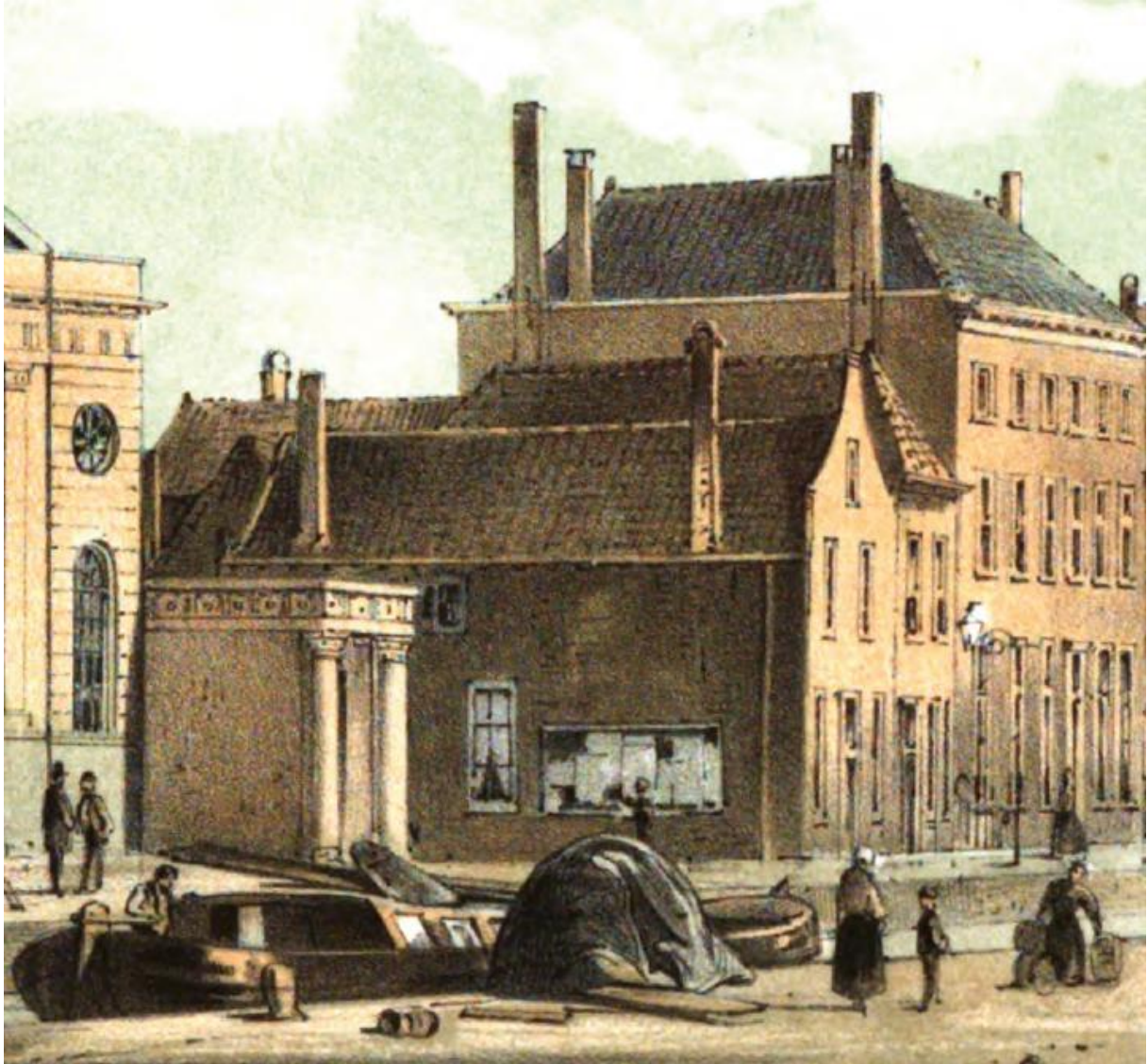
The position of the fireplaces (and the presence of an extension) is based on the painting in Figure 4 and Samuel's complaint (note 24). Beds likely were strategically placed near fireplaces. A bedstead was short as adults slept half sitting up. Stairs usually were narrow and winding to conserve space and the closeby hanging room allowed for walking underneath. The small room possibly was closed off with curtains instead of a door.

As it was a corner house there may have been windows on the long side facing the ca.3m wide alley.

The basement (unknown size and position), the corridor and attic are omitted.



**Figure 4:** Oude Langendijk 25 around 1858.



From: *Delft in eenige afbeeldingen der schoonste monumenten, hoofdgebouwen en gezigten in en nabij der Stad*. Drawing by Christiaan Bos. Publisher J.J. Van Gessel, Delft, 1858.

Trapmolen on the west side of the Molenpoort alley has two chimneys and a third one in the extension. An extension is also visible in Bleyswijck's Kaart Figuratief 1678. The front door is in the middle of the facade, also not unusual in the 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>35</sup>, but in the present day house it is located on the far right (Figure 5,6).

The adjacent house was owned by the stone carver Adriaen Samuels (nn-1665) and his wife Cornelia Dircks (nn-1678). The long extension visible here is absent in Kaart Figuratief. The next owners were Maria Hagemans, Wouter de Meester and Jacob Oprust (1720).

The 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century large building on the right was a catholic *Oude vrouwen huis* (Old Women home) in 1805 but in 1843 changed to *Oude mannen en weesjongens huis* (Old men and orphan boys home)<sup>36</sup>. Trapmolen too was thought to have been an Old Women home in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century but present research concludes it was a regular house with a shop (Table 2). The homes were run by catholic societies in Delft.

<sup>35</sup> See eg. drawings of the Delft market square by Gilles van Scheyndel (1625; the funeral of prince Maurits of Oranje), Leonard Schenk (c1730) and Iven Besoet (1765). All in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.

<sup>36</sup> *Delfia Batavorum*, 1998, p71-99. P. Van der Krogt *Anderhalve eeuw Broeders van Dongen in Delft*.

**Figure 5:** Oude Langendijk 25 front view, the Maria van Jesse church in the background. The shoe shop was the house of master stone carver Adriaen Samuels. From: Beeldbank cultureel erfgoed, no. 89.932, photo by G.J. Drukker, 1964.





**Figure 6:** Oude Langendijk 25 from above (with plot numbers 256-259 from Kadastrale Minuut 1832 inserted).  
From: Beeldbank cultureel erfgoed, no. 68.559, photo by G.Th. Delemarre, 1962.



**Table 1:** Inventory of Vermeer's estate (29-02-1676). Small items are omitted. Beds, fireplaces and attributes are highlighted. Struck-through items were wrongly transcribed by Montias (1989).

Room	Items (Montias, 1989)	Correction	Remark
Front hall ( <i>voorhuys</i> )	-A cabinet of joinery work -Four bad green chairs		Likely a small room
Great hall ( <i>grote zaal</i> )	-Three little drawings on the mantelpiece ( <i>schoorsteen</i> ) -A pair of green silk curtains with a valance in front of the bedstead -A ditto mantelpiece coverlet ( <i>schoorsteenkleetie</i> )** -A cabinet of joinery work with inlaid ebony -A whitewood pull-out table -Nine red-leather Spanish chairs		This room had a fireplace. This room was the only one in the house with stock of bedsheets (12x), pillow cases (22x) and (night)clothing.
Small room adjoining the great hall	-A bad bed with a green cover on it -A round table tray -A fire screen ( <i>viermande</i> )* -An oak table -A child's bed with a head pillow -A pair of bad green curtains -A ditto mantelpiece coverlet ( <i>schoorsteenkleetie</i> )** -Two metal-ringed chairs ( <i>beugelstoelen</i> )	Viermande is a container *	
Interior kitchen	-A painting hanging on the mantelpiece ( <i>schoorsteen</i> ) -A pair of striped curtains -About seven ells of gold-tooled leather on the wall -A bed with a head pillow -(An octagonal oak table) -A coat rack -Three chairs	Table was not listed by Montias (Engl. version)	This room had a fireplace.
Little back kitchen	-An iron grill -A chest to store peat -An iron spit with its accessories		
Cooking kitchen	-A bed with a head pillow -A striped mantelpiece coverlet ( <i>schoorsteenkleetie</i> )** -Six old chairs -A pair of striped curtains with a valance -A shovel for ashes		The cooking kitchen would have had a fireplace. There was no table.
Washing kitchen	-Two spinning wheels -A cradle		These items were all that were listed.
Corridor	-Two racks on which to dry linen -A wicker basket -A wooden sitting bench ( <i>scharrebort</i> )	Scharrebort is a cutting board	
Basement room	-A bed with a head pillow -Three bad chairs -Six tapestry-covered chairs		
The place	-Water jugs		
Little hanging room	-Diverse		Likely just a storage facility. Listed just before ascending to the first floor, it may have been near the stairs.
1 <sup>st</sup> floor			
Above back room	-A wicker basket for a baby ( <i>bakermat</i> ) -Two chairs -Two copper bedpans		
Above front room	-Two Spanish chairs -Painter's attribute -A desk		Vermeer's studio.
2 <sup>nd</sup> floor			
Attic	-Diverse		

\* Viermande: literally 'fire basket', a container with hot coals to dry clothes \*\*Schoorsteenkleetie: a contraption to cover the fireplace (-opening) when not in use (source: [gtb.inl.nl](http://gtb.inl.nl))

**Table 2: Timeline Trapmolen**

	Owner	Source		Inhabitant	Source
<1600	Jacob Jacobsz van Haestrecht, miller. On 16-03-1616 buried from Trapmolen	article	1622	Steven Rijcken On 05-08-1625 buried from Trapmolen	Notary DTB
1631	Thymen Slingelant, lawyer (nn-nn)	article	-	Unknown	
<1648	Machtelt van Beest (1611-1687)	article	16nn	Maria Thins, Catharina Bolnes, Cornelia Thins	
			16nn	(Maria Thins), Catharina Bolnes, Johannes Vermeer	
c1687	Her son-in-law Herman Oem, lawyer (nn-1705)	article	1686	Maritie Kleij (lay nun ?)	article
			1698	(possibly) Caspar Gomet <sup>^^</sup> , faience worker (nn-1703). On 26-03-1698 child buried from Oude Langendijk “on the corner of the Moolepoort”. On 12-09-1698 another child buried from Oude Langendijk	DTB
1705	Grandchildren of Machtelt van Beest (surnames Oem, Wesel)	article			
1732	Pieter Tjerk (Tiarck) van Walta (1697-1745). Seller is Wilhelmina van Wesel	1	<1735	Dirkje Proot (nn-1735). On 01-02-1735 buried from Oude Langendijk, old spinster	7 DTB
1745	His only heir Maria Jacqueline Jeanna Tiarck (1729-1802) <sup>^</sup> . Married 1750 in Leiden to Count Jean Baptiste Francois George d’Oultremont (1715-1782)	1,5		No clear information for 1735-1768*	3,4
1768	Pieter Tijzman	1,5,6	1768	Pieter Tijzman, shopkeeper in Trapmolen. On 29-09-1801 buried from Oude Langendijk. Inventory taken in october 1801 (see Table 3)	DTB 8
c1801	Leendert Teunissen (nn-nn)	1,5	1802	Anna Elisabeth Teunissen (c1780-1819) daughter of Leendert Teunissen marries in 1802 to Stefanus Vermeulen. On 17-10-1804 child buried from Oude Langendijk	DTB
<1804	Stefanus Vermeulen (c1770-1829)	2			

Nd: not determined. DTB: baptism/marriage/burial records. <sup>^</sup> In the Leiden archives her name is Maria Jacoba Johanna. She had nine children baptized in the Jesuit church in Leiden. Her father Pieter Tiarck was also catholic. <sup>^^</sup> Var. Gomet, Goumet, Gomet, Gomit etc. \*(From source no.3 and no.4) In 1749 the first catholic *Weeshuis* (orphanage) was founded on the Burgwal directly below the St.Joseph church and Johanna Gomet (1701(?)-1757), daughter of Caspar Gomet, is appointed *binnenmoeder* (caretaker) with her husband (married 1726) Jan van Engelen as *binnenvader*. In either 1753 (source 4) or 1759 (source 3) Lena Palm, together with Jan van Engelen, is appointed caretaker of the first catholic *Oude Vrouwen* (Old Women) home and according to source 4 it was run in Oude Langendijk 25 from c1750 to c1800. This is in conflict with the records for Pieter Tijzman: source 8 states he had lived in Trapmolen from the purchase until his demise. Perhaps the first Old Women home was in the buildings south of Trapmolen (eg. plots 257/258 or the warehouse; see Figure 1,2) or it was run in Trapmolen but only until 1768.

### Sources

(- article: *Johannes Vermeer and his Neighbours*, H.G. Slager, 2017).

1. Oud Rechterlijk Archief, Arch. 0013, Huizenprotocol 1648-1812 , fol 326r.
2. OAT 1811-1832 (reference in note 30).
3. Archief Delft, nummer Toegang 193 (pdf). Inventaris van het archief van het college van regenten van het R.K. weeshuis oude mannen en vrouwenhuis, armbezorgers der R.K. gemeente, (1404) 1682-1855.
4. Delfia Batavorum, 1998, p71-99. P. Van der Krogt. *Anderhalve eeuw Broeders van Dongen in Delft*.
5. Gemeentebestuur Delft, onroerend goed, Arch. 0001\_2, Inv. 00219\_1, Verponding 1795, no. 1775 (1<sup>e</sup>).
6. House purchased 14-06-1768. Oud Rechterlijk archief Delft, Blaffert van de waarbrieven, Arch.0013, Inv.00239, fol.105.
7. Nationaal Archief, Archief van de Financie van Holland, nr. 492, fol. 145 (see scan at Figure 2).
8. Inventory Pieter Tijzman, 27-10-1801. Not.Abram Petersen, Inv. 3274E, fol. 395. See also Table 3.

**Table 3:** Inventory Pieter Tijzman 1801

Pieter T(h)ijzman(s), merchant in fabrics, bought Trapmolen on 14-06-1768 for 400 guilders. He married Johanna Giesen on 27-01-1760 and was buried as widower from the Oude Langendijk on 29-09-1801; one month later the inventory was drawn up<sup>37</sup>.

In the table below the rooms in order of appearance in the inventory are listed with a selection of movables indicating the main function of the rooms. Over the years internal restructuring may have taken place and rooms may have changed in size and function, but on the whole the similarity to Vermeer's inventory is undeniable.

<b>Room</b>	<b>Items (selection)</b>
Front hall ( <i>voorhuis</i> )	shop counters, ladder, shop shelves, balances, funnels, tea cannisters, a coffee grinder (stock was listed on separate pages)
Small room ( <i>in 't kamertje</i> )	3 tables, 8 chairs, 1 cabinet
--?-- ( <i>in de laade</i> )	7 mantelpiece coverlets ( <i>schoorsteenkleeden</i> ), 6 window curtains ( <i>glasgordijnen</i> )
Interior kitchen ( <i>binnenkeuken</i> )	1 table, 5 chairs, a shovel & pliers, a blow pipe ( <i>blaaspijp</i> ), a chimney broom ( <i>asvarken</i> ), kitchen wares
Basement ( <i>kelder</i> )	mostly kitchen wares
Back section of the house ( <i>agterhuis</i> )	a blow pipe, an ashpot ( <i>aspot</i> ), a table, iron stoves, buckets, oyster buckets
<hr/> <b>1<sup>st</sup> floor</b> <hr/>	
Front room ( <i>voorkamer</i> )	2 beds, 5 chairs, tables, cabinets
Small room ( <i>in 't kamertje</i> )	3 beds, 2 chairs
(Back) room ( <i>kaarssekamer</i> )*	4 chairs, 1 candle container ( <i>kaarssebak</i> )
<hr/> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> floor</b> <hr/>	
Attic ( <i>zolder</i> )	various

\* Unfamiliar term; likely the room was used for making candles

The *voorhuis* evidently was a shop; the inventory has twenty pages listing stock (mostly fabrics and sewing materials but also coffee, tea, candy, chocolate). Possibly the room was larger than in Vermeer's time.

The *agterhuis* in Vermeer's time is assumed to have housed the kitchens but in Tijzman's inventory no evidence for cooking or eating is found. It appears to have been near the water source because of the various buckets. It had a blow pipe (as did the interior kitchen) and an ashpot indicating the presence of a fireplace (likely fueled by coal at this time).

What the *laade* was, other than some kind of storage facility, is unknown (a chest, a built-in drawer, etc). The number of mantelpiece coverlets and curtains suggest it was stock for the shop. No other items were listed.

<sup>37</sup> Inventory Pieter Tijsmans 27-10-1801. Not. Abram Petersen, Inv. 3274E, fol. 395. "A house and courtyard on the Oude Langendijk, to the east the Molenpoort, to the west Jacob Oprust". Oprust had bought OLD-W2 in 1720 (Oud Rechterlijk Archief, Blaffert van de waarbrieven, Arch.0013, Inv. 00224, fol.289v).

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