TIME BASED INTERVENTIONS

	DAYS	WEEKS	MONTHS	YEARS
LIVING				
WORKING				
RECREATION				
SERVICE				
CULTURE				
SOCIAL				
COMMERCE				

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TIME BASED INTERVENTIONS

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SEPTEMBER 20th 2012

CONTENTS

1	FOREWORD	05
2	INTRODUCTION	06
3	EUROPE IN CRISIS	08
4	FROM BLUEPRINT TO IMPROVISATION	15
5	TIME BASED INTERVENTIONS	23
6	LEARNING FROM TEMPORARY GRONINGEN	29
7	OPEN LAB EBBINGE	31
8	SUIKERUNIE TERRAIN	45
9	EUROPEAN REFERENCES	59
10	CONCLUSIONS	86
11	TEMP.	89
12	COLOPHON	91

The economic crisis and the stagnation of the housing market are currently forcing municipalities to deal with area development in a different way. In this context, a major appeal is made upon the creativity of the planners, policy makers, and administrators.

In Groningen, this is no cause for pessimism, as we have an abundance of creativity here in the youngest city in the Netherlands. It is not without reason that we are known as the City of Talent, accommodating knowledge institutions that are constantly seeking new forms of collaboration in order to develop and capitalize on the talent available.

Sharing knowledge and experience with others is a must. In the Creative City Challenge inter-regional project, cities and knowledge institutions from the North Sea region entered into a joint quest to discover the role and significance of creativity in urban development. I am extremely proud that the Ebbinge Quarter and the Open Lab have been selected as the décor for the culmination of this project.

The Municipality of Groningen regarded the conclusion of the Creative City Challenge as the appropriate moment to commission temp.architecture to study the processes around the Open Lab and the Suikerunie grounds. This publication, entitled *Time Based Interventions*, is the result of their research.

The conclusions are clear. We may be satisfied with what we have achieved here with temporary use of space. It has proved to be a good means to ensure that Groningen remains an effervescent and vibrant city. As is often the case with experiments, not all aspects have been an immediate and unqualified success. But with the critical analyses given by Maarten van Tuijl and Tom Bergevoet, we can evolve further with a certain degree of confidence.

Full of optimism and creativity!

Frank de Vries
Councillor of the Municipality of Groningen

Time does not stand still in Groningen

Groningen still succeeds in being named as a breeding ground for architectonic and urban planning innovation. More than twenty years ago, Henk Voogd, professor of Spatial Sciences, wrote about ‘Groningen as a Planological Laboratory’. In his opinion, the characteristic aspects of the Groningen approach were visualization, the provision of information, and phased implementation. The emphasis was placed upon the stimulation of processes of design and investment initiatives: in short, the time factor has been consistently and explicitly present in urban planning structures in Groningen. In recent years, the concept of ‘temporariness’ has come to the fore as a configurative factor in current area development.

Building on the city

The city development throughout the long 20th century, based on smoothly running processes of design, decision and realization, has been an exception rather than a rule. Deep crisis and long-term stagnation previously held sway for quite some time. After the city of Groningen had realized an impressive expansion of the defensive fortifications in the early 17th century, for example, the issue of land and the occupation of plots turned out to take place much more slowly than anticipated. This new expansion can be regarded as a kind of Meerstad (a suburb currently under construction on the periphery of Groningen) *avant la lettre*, because fewer dwelling forms (the many secluded courtyard houses) were realized, and initially there was less use of urban space. In the early days, the area was littered with vegetable gardens and other forms of urban agriculture. From 1626 onward, the medicinal garden of Mr Munting, the chemist, developed to become one of the mainstays of scientific research in Groningen, and formed the foundation for a constellation of educational, scientific and healthcare functions that operate effectively right down to the present day. And also for the multifunctional character of the now much-loved densely populated Hortus neighbourhood.

The recent history of the city of Groningen displays an almost permanent series of activities aimed at adapting plan formulation to the requirements of the age, and at consistently redefining the city itself. For example, the Structure Plan of 1987 presented an integral future picture for the very first time and, by designating development areas such as the Verbindings Canal zone, provided space that could be further processed to accommodate urban functions. The city was thus defined as a place for encounter and contact (the City as a Stage) and as a location for interesting architectonic objects: the Attractive City. The historical inner city increasingly became the place where unprecedented urban functions could nestle, temporary or otherwise, and where a new urban elan could be explored. Similarly, the recent structural plan has no definitive blueprint but is mainly a spatial framework for socio-economic functions.

Everything is transitory

In principle, everything is temporary. For instance, a temporary information pavilion currently (summer 2012) occupies the east part of the Grote Markt in the city. It is coated with the former façade plates of the Groningen Museum, which recently underwent renovation. In addition to public information about the return of the tram to Groningen, the pavilion also presents the plans largely aimed at undoing developments in the city centre immediately after the Second World War. The front façade of the new Forum - East Façade complex on the Grote Markt will be shifted forward to comply with the alignment of the buildings prior to WWII. Prior to the new construction, leeway was allowed for archaeological excavations seeking signs of life in the Middle Ages.

The City as Lab

A far-reaching spatial experiment on an urban planning scale has been initiated in the new creative quarter of the Groningen inner city: 'For a period of five years, the Open Lab Ebbinge will arise on a future new-build location, with the aim of exploring the possibilities of temporary unused inner-city locations, and with the ambition to evolve into a temporary village where a unique mixture of innovative demountable real-estate, creative entrepreneurship and an effervescent long-term programme can be found.' The strategy behind this is to explore future use and to stimulate the trail to a certain area. The Blue Moon manifestation (2003) was a previous attempt to instil the relatively unknown zone of the former Hunzecentrale (electricity plant) with the five characteristic chimneys (then demolished) in the mental map of Groningen residents. This occurred via the construction an artificial hill (on the site of the new FC Groningen stadium, as yet unbuilt) and festivities in the former Helpmancentrale (electricity plant), now a Media breeding ground.

In view of the fact that the city of Groningen is not yet 'finished' – after almost 1000 years of effort – more work will have to be done in the coming years. This will mainly happen via the reuse of existing structures and buildings, rather than by new construction and expansion. According to Henk Voogd, this permanent tinkering with the city is '*… the essence of spatial planning: maintaining spatial quality and improving it where possible, not only in terms of shape but also in terms of functionality and durability …*'

By experimenting with temporary forms of spatial use in the margins of the inner city (Ciboga terrain) and on development areas such as the Europapark and the Oosterhamriktracé, as well as on business estates such as Westpoort and the Suikerunie terrain, the city can continue to substantiate its laboratory function for urban development and urban life.

Tjerk Ruimschotel is an urban planning supervisor at the Municipality of Groningen

A row of unfinished homes sit empty on an abandoned housing development in Keshcarrigan, Ireland, April 23, 2012

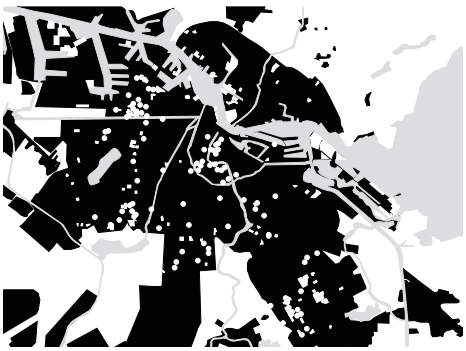
A for sale sign hangs near empty apartment blocks in the Madrid satellite town of Sesena, February 23, 2012

The end of growth

Europe is in a state of crisis. Since the ominous fall of the Lehman Brothers bank in autumn 2008, the catastrophes in Europe have been increasing in magnitude and frequency. The bank crisis, the debt crisis, the euro crisis, the real-estate crisis – all of these have left scars on our Continent. What makes these crises so disquieting is that tried and trusted remedies from the recent past now bring no relief. Apparently, this crisis is completely different. Proposals to turn the tide by means of less familiar methods, such as the comprehensive reformation of the labour market or pension system, have met with recalcitrant sentiment. Europe has difficulty with abandoning the comfort zone in which it has revelled for so long.
The comfort zone actually consisted of unprecedented economic growth that lasted for decades. You do not need to be an economist to understand that the present crises have been caused by all kinds of speculation relating this growth. As fearless speculators we took out a loan on a future full of affluence, which, unfortunately, did not materialize. Everything now points to the fact that the great European boom has come to a standstill. The demographic figures are most clear about this: against a background of the unstoppable population growth in the new economies in Asia, South America and Africa, Europe can expect population shrinkage in the coming decades. Regardless of any recalcitrant sentiment, we must acknowledge that Europe is currently standing at a crossroads.

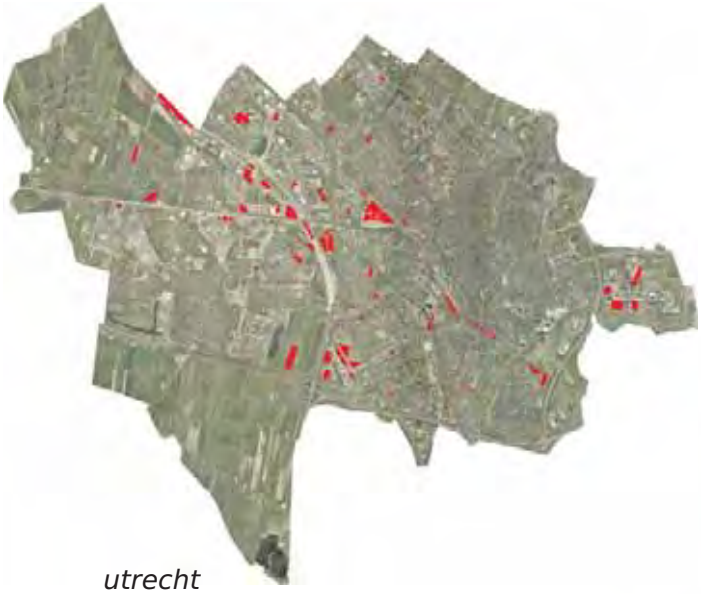
1. historical city

2. modern city



3. city in crisis

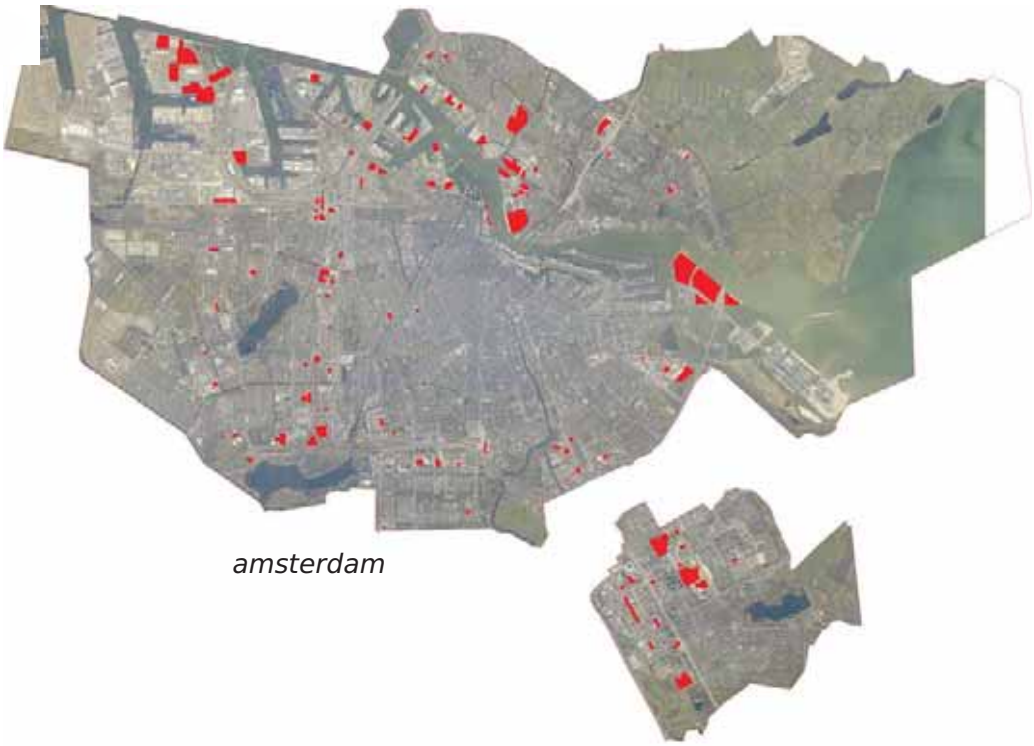
Almost all of this can be almost literally translated to the situation in our cities. Demographic and economic growth in the 20th century led to a formidable growth spurt of the European city. Here, too, speculators sharpened their wits and their tools, and there was large-scale speculation on the explosive demand for new space. This speculation, however, has recently resulted in an implosion of the city. The supply of space has grown considerably in the past few years, while the demand for space has stagnated. In the Netherlands as a whole, 38,000 hectares of vacant ground are waiting for building plans that have been announced. In Ireland, real-estate values have halved since 2007 as a consequence of vacancy. In Spain, it is estimated that two million houses are empty. In former industrial centres in Germany and Belgium, the number of abandoned factories is still on the increase. Whether we wish it or not, our cities have recently begun to behave differently. We, as professionals, must respond with means other than those normally applied.



utrecht

rotterdam

maastricht



amsterdam

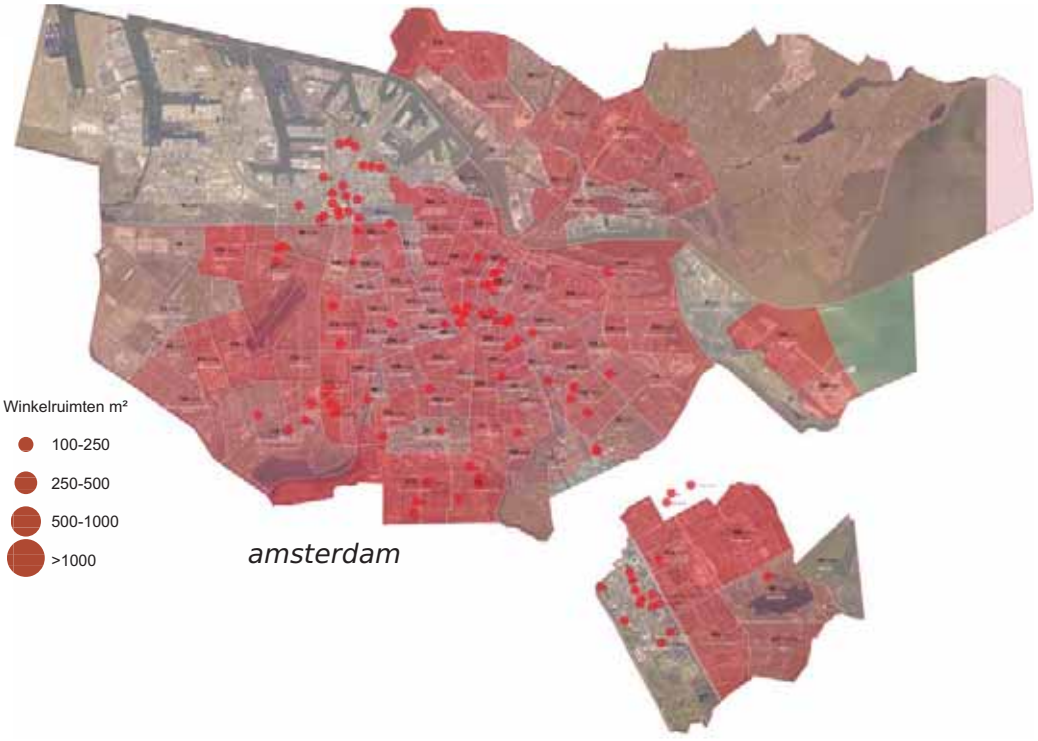
0 5000 m

Vacant buildings NL

heerlen

rotterdam

maastricht



amsterdam

woningleegstand in absolute aantallen

- < 10
- 10 - 25
- 25 - 75
- 75 - 125
- 125 - 175
- 175 - 225
- 225 - 500
- > 500

Kantoorruimten m²

- 100-250
- 250-500
- 500-1000
- >1000

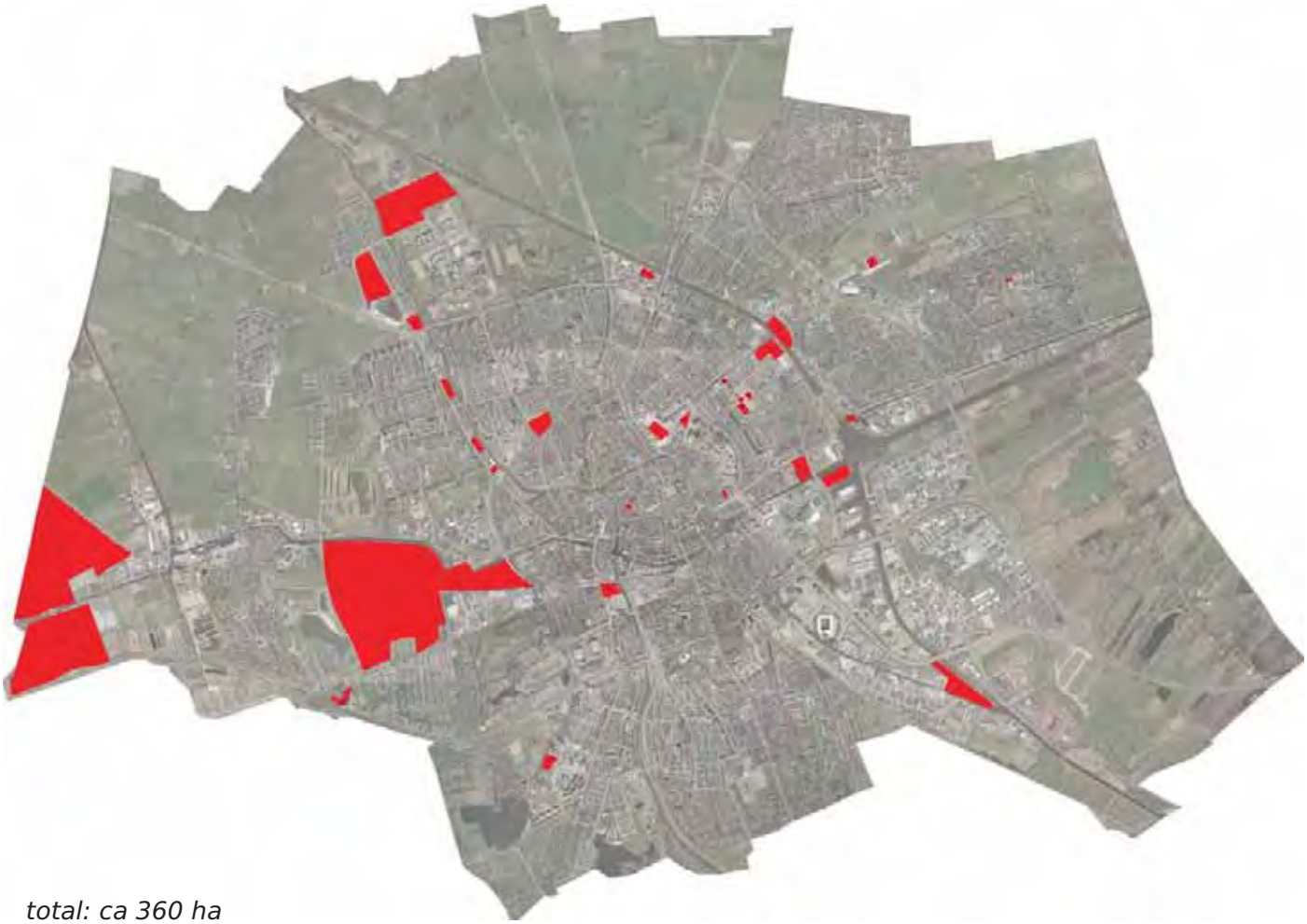
Bedrijfsruimten m²

- 100-250
- 250-500
- 500-1000
- >1000

Winkelruimten m²

- 100-250
- 250-500
- 500-1000
- >1000

Vacant grounds Groningen



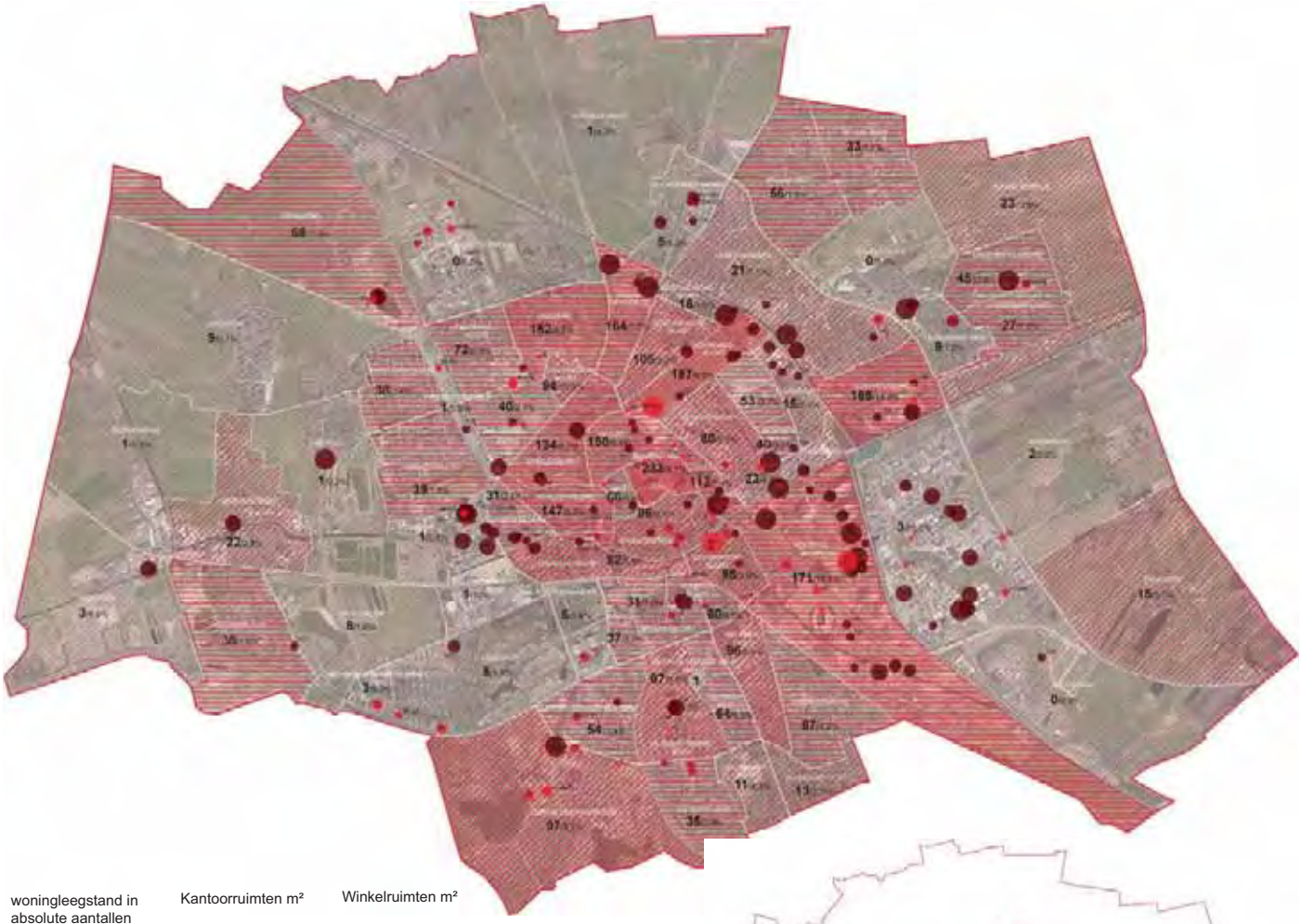
total: ca 360 ha

situation 2011
source: Municipality of Groningen

projection:
vacant grounds projected on inner city

projection:
vacant grounds projected on Meerstad-Zuid, the largest city-extension in development

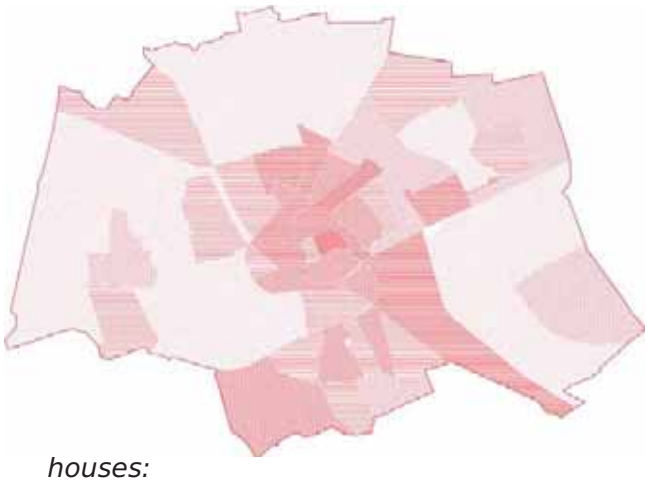
Vacant buildings Groningen



situation 2011
source: Municipality of Groningen

companies:
135.293m2

offices:
33.608m2



houses:
3663 houses

4 FROM BLUEPRINT TO IMPROVISATION I Tom Bergevoet & Maarten van Tuijl

An unpredictable future

Expansion of the city was always a relatively simple affair. Engineers and planners could realize their new worlds, without restraint, on undeveloped grounds beyond the city boundaries. Now that the European city has expanded so much, new developments will primarily occur within the existing urban fabric. The spatial assignment in the future will be one involving redevelopment and transformation.

In contrast to the *tabula rasa* of urban expansion, the context within the city boundaries is complex and determinative. Existing buildings, property boundaries, rules of accountability, etc. are all conditions that seriously restrict freedom of movement. External factors, too, are currently less stable than in the time of large-scale urban expansion. Moreover, at present no one can predict the future of the euro or how legal structures will develop. For such reasons, the transformation assignment of the future will be complex and unpredictable.

The toolbox of urban expansion is based upon modern ideology of the malleable society. The typifying feature of this is that an integral blueprint is established in advance, and remains constant during the realization and control period. Examples of so-called blueprint planning are the housing estates created all over Europe in the post-war reconstruction of the fifties. Here, on the basis of insights that were current at the time, zoning plans, ground values, footprints, etc. were determined in such a way that they have remained almost unalterable right down to the present day.

Improvisational planning

In the Studio for Unsolicited Architecture of the Netherlands Architecture Institute, temp. architecture presented the study entitled *eindbeeld naar startbeeld* (‘from blueprint to improvisational planning’)*, a proposal for the revision of common European developmental methods. Improvisational planning enables operation in an unpredictable context, due to the fact that the perspective can be shifted in the course of the process. Dynamics and flexibility are the leading principles within this framework.

Improvisational planning no longer starts with a previously determined target, but rather with a wide range of developmental potential. This range presents not one but several future scenarios. A central element of this range is the developmental perspective, a point on the horizon toward which work can be oriented to a greater or lesser extent. With the knowledge that the future is unpredictable, the development process consists of continuous interaction between determining and (re-)benchmarking. The ultimate form of the development gains shape during the process, under the influence of social dynamics that are not known in advance.

**developed with BBN consultants*

BLUEPRINT PLANNING

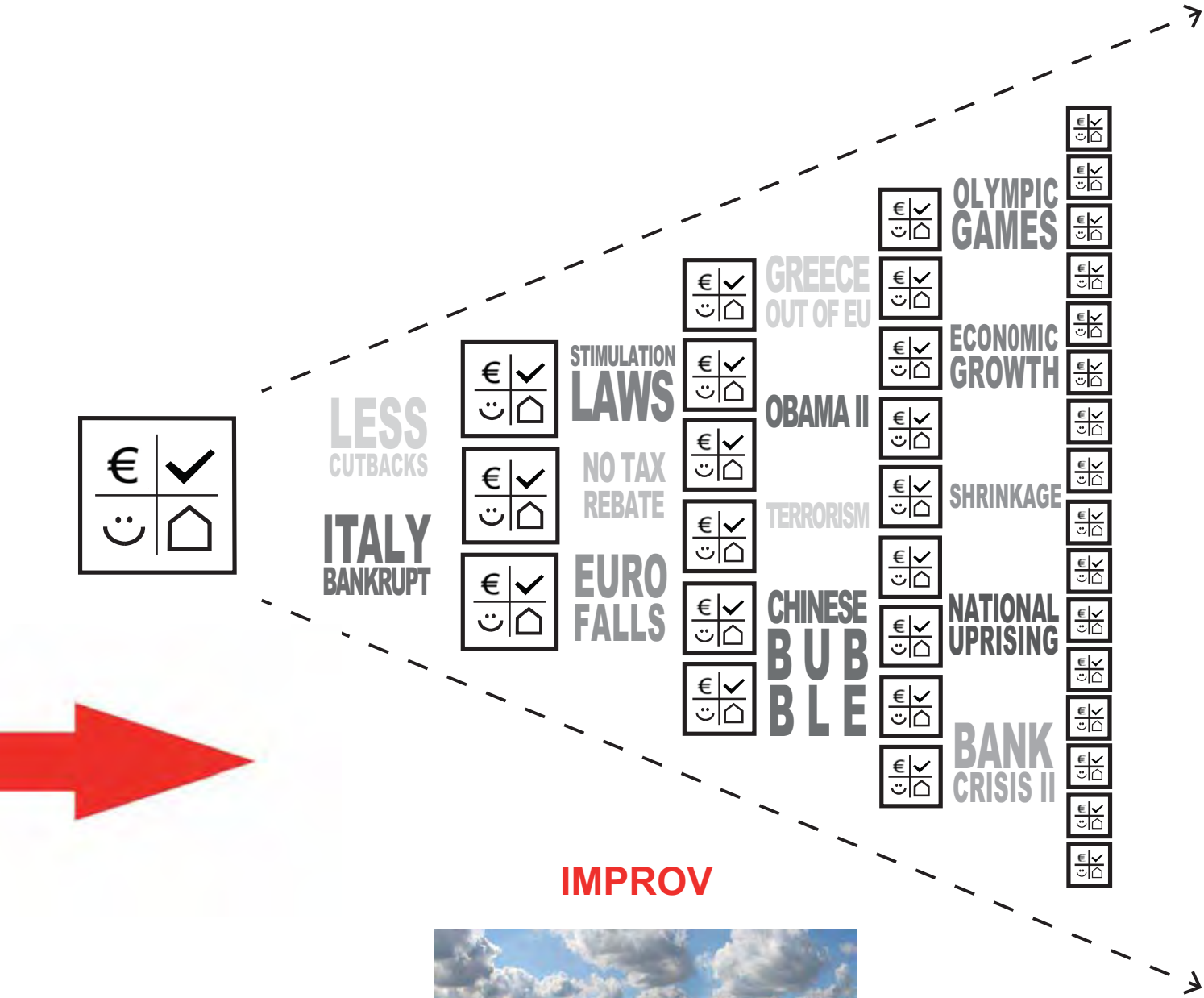
With Blueprint planning, an integral blueprint of the final situation is established. Changes have little or no further influence on this previously formulated plan. The characteristic feature of blueprint planning is that the blueprint is formulated by a limited team of professionals, top-down. Users have scarcely any influence at all. On the basis of insights valid at the moment of plan formulation, zoning, ground values and footprints are ascertained. Blueprint planning is commonly linked to large-scale development and to hefty pre-investment that has to earn itself back in the long run.

BLUEPRINT

amsterdam new west

IMPROV PLANNING

Improvisational planning takes a wide rage of development potential as its point of departure. Not the blueprint but the initial image is determinative. This improvisational plan makes a statement about the near future and maintains a perspective on various future options within this range of developmental potential. An improvisational plan harmonizes with the possibilities thrown up by the moment itself, without making a hermetic claim upon the as-yet unknown future. The ultimate form of the development is generated during the process. Improvisational planning enables operation within an unpredictable and complex context.



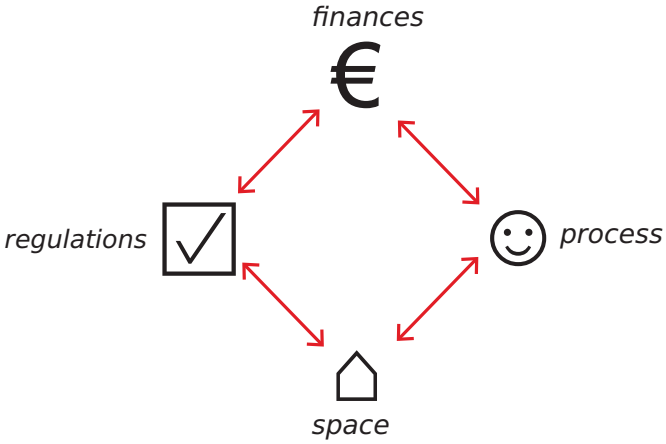
temp. impression

Thinking in time and sharing responsibilities

Thinking in terms of time is essential to our proposed model. Not the blueprint but the improvisational plan is established. This improvisational plan makes a statement about the situation in the near future and maintains a perspective on various future scenarios. Improvisational planning dovetails with the possibilities of the moment itself, without making a hermetic claim upon the as-yet unknown future.

Besides thinking in terms of time, the sharing of responsibilities is also a central element in this style of planning. A characteristic feature of blueprint planning is that it is formulated top-down, by a limited team of professionals. Users and other interested parties can subsequently exert little or no influence on the plan, certainly in the long run. In contrast, improvisational planning allows bottom-up influences from all kinds of stakeholders. The improvisational plan is determined in a process of joint creation.

The sharing of responsibilities implies the participation of many more people than has been customary up until now. The combination of thinking in terms of time and the sharing of responsibilities means that users, owners, entrepreneurs, civil servants, managers, etc. can repeatedly exert influence on the future of an area. This applies to tomorrow, to next year, and to the plans for the distant future. Accordingly, the supply of and demand for space also remain close to one another in the long term.



The four mainstays of area development

The development of space traditionally leans upon four mainstays: process, regulations, funding and spatial design. Improvisational planning has an approach quite different from the one normally used. As a result, it provides the necessary manoeuvrability and flexibility that the current developmental model lacks. The following pages present, through the four mainstays, the instruments with which improvisational planning works. The complete model is elucidated in the publication entitled *eindbeeld naar startbeeldplanning* (‘from blueprint to improvisational planning’), issued by temp.architecture in January 2012.

PROCESS

In Europe, the modern development of space is a top-down affair. The production of space systematically gets its shape from the supply side. In an increasingly complex force field, it is becoming more difficult to centrally determine the spatial supply. As a consequence, supply and demand are having more and more difficulty in coming together. New, demand-driven decision models, directed toward participation and co-creation by all stakeholders, lead to more custom-made solutions and a smaller scale.

REGULATIONS

National and European regulations are insufficiently flexible for forms of step-by-step or organic spatial development. Locations are normally allocated a permanent zoning status, and the alteration of this status demands expensive and time-consuming procedures. To landlords, the temporary renting out of ground or real estate seems to bring more risks than yield. Rapid modification of zoning status and the closure of tenancy contracts for temporary use of space should be enabled within a more dynamic legal framework in which the timelocks are less absolute.

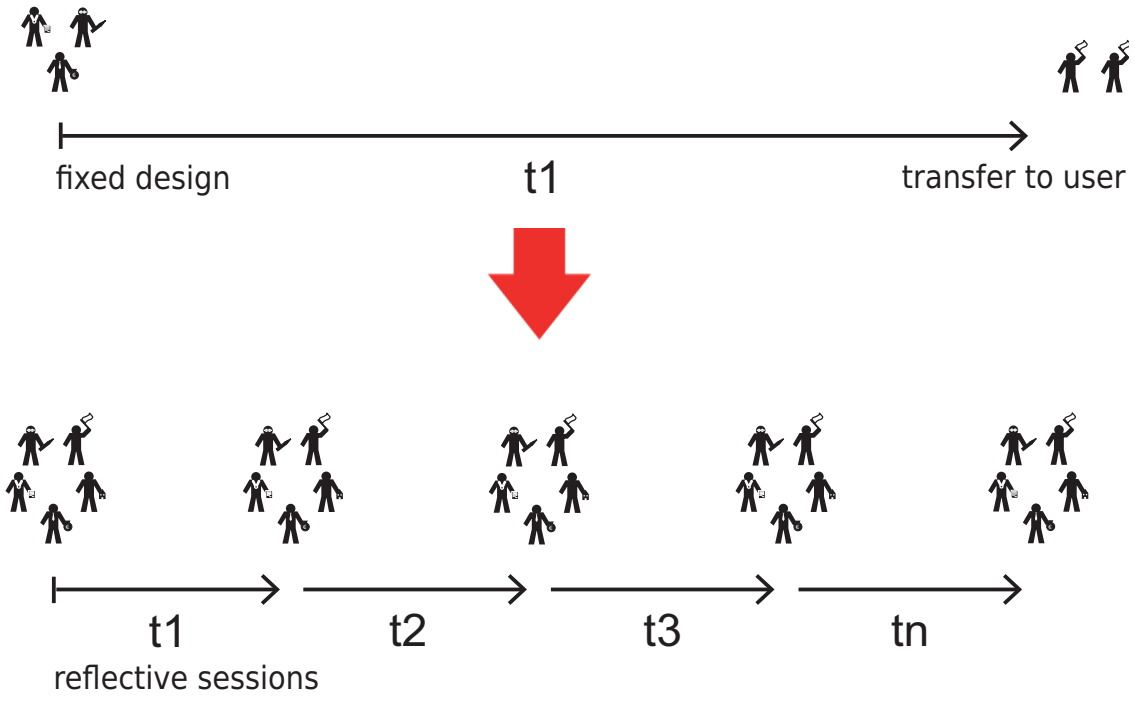
FINANCES

With blueprint planning, an area is ‘rolled out’ with the aid of one large pre-investment. The income follows, by means of which the pre-investment is repaid bit by bit. Because the period between pre-investment and reimbursement tends to be rather long, blueprint planning entails great financial risk. Improvisational planning makes use of the concept of ‘cashflow planning’. The investment risk is minimized due to the fact that the phased investments are relatively low and are quickly succeeded by yields.

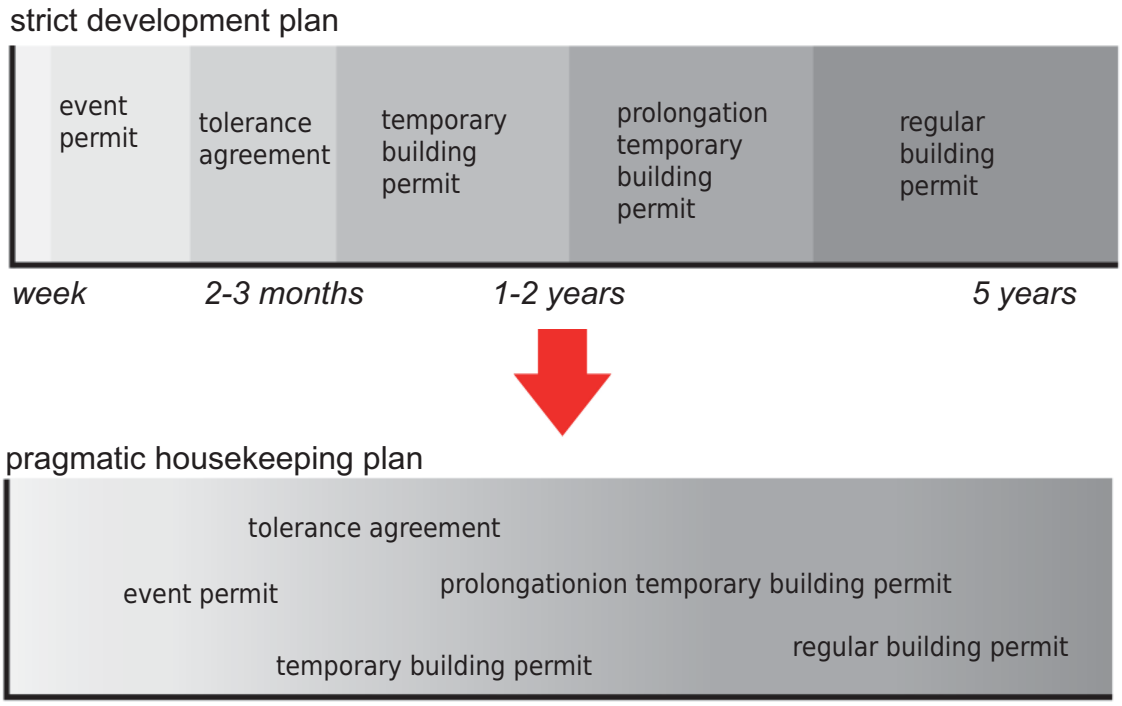
SPACE

Working with a blueprint, in which façades, building volumes and user possibilities are all determined in advance, leads to construction forms that are difficult to adjust. Area development without a blueprint requires function-neutral, flexible building structures that can change in the course of time.

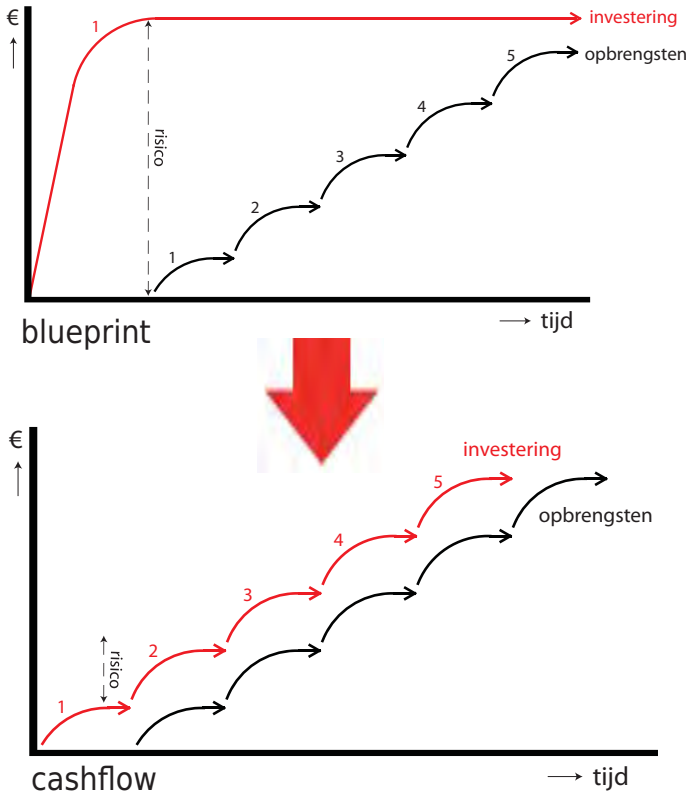
PROCESS: *FROM MONO-CREATION TO CO-CREATION*



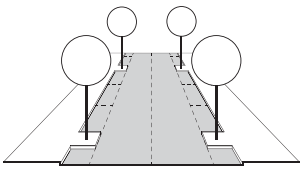
REGULATIONS: *FROM STATIC TO DYNAMIC*



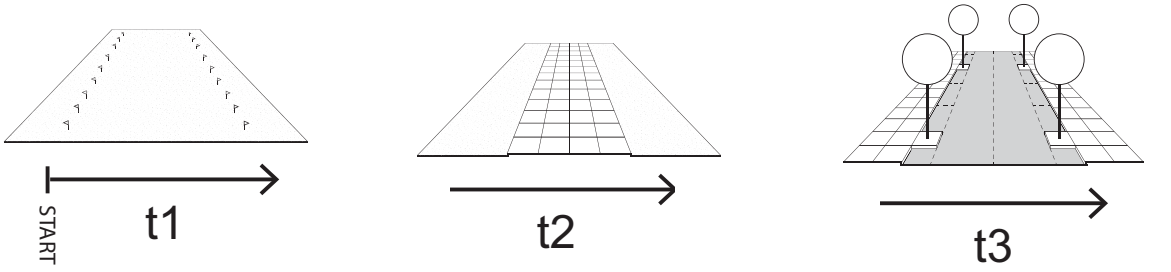
€ **FINANCES:** *FROM SPECULATION TO CASHFLOW*



⌂ **SPACE:** *FROM FINAL QUALITY TO FIRST QUALITY*



final quality in one go



step by step adjustment

The potential of temporary use of space

Improvisational planning implies step-by-step spatial development in which it is not always evident in advance whether spatial interventions are short-term or evolving. Temporary use of space is an important instrument in improvisational planning. The flexibility of temporary use of space may provide opportunities within this framework of uncertainty, and may help mobilize the user due to its low-threshold structure. To understand what temporary use of space means and what this can signify for the development of the city, we performed research* on temporary interventions in Amsterdam down through the ages.

At first sight, a temporary use of space seems to be mainly a short-lived, necessary evil rather than a serious contribution to the city: a not all-too ambitious manner to cope with an acute need for space, either in the form of an event or in the form of a temporary emergency facility such as a bridge or student accommodation. Constructions are ‘thrown up’, for better or for worse, by pragmatic engineers or handy entrepreneurs.

Nevertheless, our retrospective research showed that temporary use of space could be a surprisingly effective means in the process of urban development. Temporary use appears to be particularly successful where our regular instruments falter: in the creation of broad-based support, phased investment, an escape from oppressive regulations, and sustainable (adaptable, dismountable, reusable) construction. Temporary use of space not only makes it possible to react rapidly to change, but can also lead – with time as a lever – to durable change on a large scale.

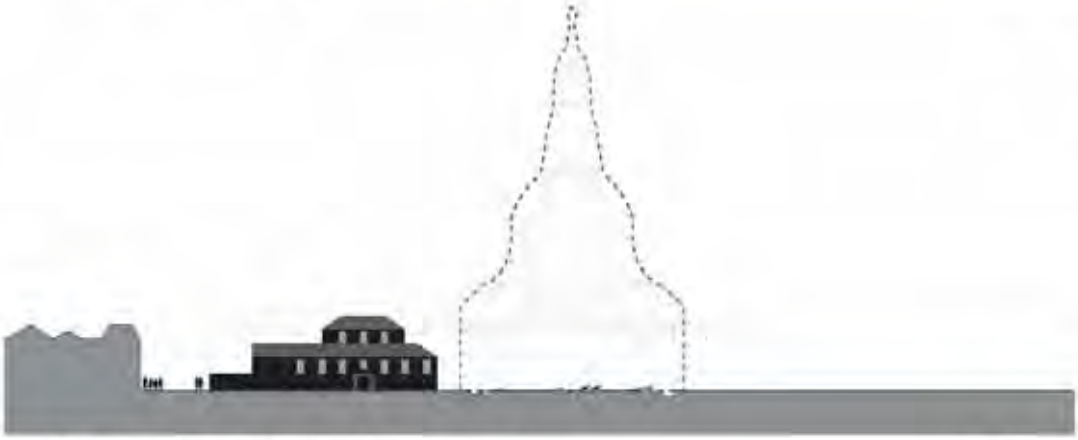
Temporary Amsterdam

In our *Temporary Amsterdam* study, we consistently presented the situation before, during and after an intervention that was intended to be temporary. Surprisingly long-term effects were revealed in both spatial and programmatic terms. The following pages display several of the many examples we investigated.

For more examples, please see: *www.temparchitecture.com*

**Temporary Amsterdam, temp.architecture, December 2009*

1. parceled out land BEFORE



2. 1668: temporary church next to buidling site reservation DURING

3. today: permanent church next to popular public space AFTER

Amstelkerk (church)

The Amstelkerk, built in 1668, had a temporary function as a church whilst waiting for the completion of a permanent stone church. However, this stone church was never built, due to the financial crisis at the time, so that the wooden church is still in use, right down to the present day. The building now accommodates apartments, a restaurant / cafe, a child daycare centre, the Stadsherstel (City Restoration) association, and several cultural programmes. The most important result of the non-realization of the stone church is, however, the space that remained open as a result. The Amstelveld is one of the few squares on a canal in the historical inner city of Amsterdam.

1. polder BEFORE

2. ELTA 1919: temporary airport DURING

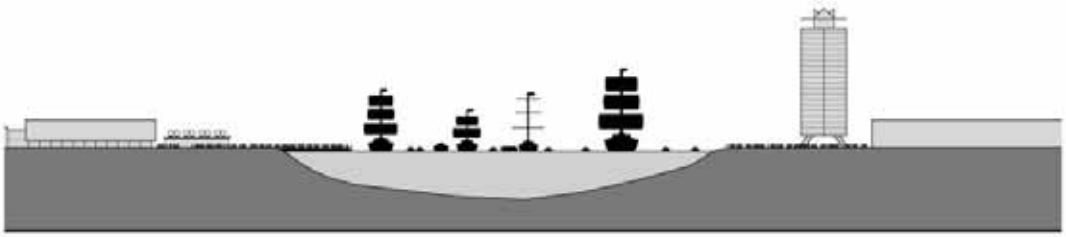
3. airplane factory, 1920-1936: inside temporary ELTA structures AFTER

4. airplane factory, 1936-1951: in big new accomodation on the site AFTER

ELTA

The ELTA (*Eerste Luchtverkeer Tentoonstelling Amsterdam* – First Aviation Exhibition, Amsterdam) was an exhibition held in Amsterdam Noord from 1 August to 14 September 1919. In a large exhibition hall on the Papaverweg in Amsterdam-Noord, aircraft manufacturers from home and abroad displayed their products. After the exhibition, Anthony Fokker set up his factory in the exhibition hall on the former exhibition grounds. More industrial activity gradually formed around this factory. Nowadays, the zone is known as the Buiksloterham industrial estate.

1. till 1975: city directed away from ij river, inactive banks BEFORE



2. 1975 ij-banks during SAIL: city directed towards water DURING

3. now: new urban developments, active banks AFTER

SAIL Amsterdam

SAIL Amsterdam is the largest freely accessible public event in the Netherlands. In 2005 the event attracted 1.8 million visitors. The first SAIL was organized in 1975 in the framework of the 700th anniversary of Amsterdam, a period in which the area around the IJ River was not particularly favoured. Since then, water has been the focus of the city a week long every five years. As such, SAIL has played a major role in the reorientation of the city to the IJ River, and SAIL is partly responsible for the recent area development along the shores of the IJ.

1. Ijburg, large building site on an artificial island BEFORE

2. Blijburg, lively city-beach club in between construction sites DURING

3. Ijburg is succesful thanks to Blijburg AFTER

Blijburg

The Blijburg beach pavilion opened on its third location on IJburg in June 2010. In a relatively short time, Blijburg has ensured that the new expansion suburb of IJburg is on the map. In a very early stage, Blijburg has already shown that IJburg is not just a boring housing estate. Blijburg's presence has ensured that the area has become more attractive as place to settle, and has even become a destination for people who do not live there. Blijburg achieved this by organizing many events; it also enjoyed its then-unique selling point as a city beach. Blijburg demonstrates that relatively small interventions can have large-scale results in the long run.

Although Groningen has continued to grow demographically, the new economy in this city currently requires fewer hectares, while the hinterland is struggling with ageing, a shrinking economy and a thinning population. The challenge is to produce unconventional solutions in order to create new dynamics, significance and value and, at the same time, to induce new private initiatives. This is happening at several locations in the city.

In the light of the above-discussed developments, the Municipality of Groningen has been experimenting with new forms of temporary area development and urban planning since 2009.

In the Ebbinge Quarter, the opening up and temporary layout of the former Gasworks terrain formed the starting signal for the advent of new, temporary users. The grounds of the Gasworks had never been accessible to the public and formed a solid spatial barrier across this part of the city. Now that the building fences have gone and a busy cycling track traverses the zone, neighbours can finally come and have a look around. Thanks to the construction of a temporary pavilion and a recreational lawn and the introduction of temporary real estate (the Open Lab Ebbinge), the area has now become an integrated component of the city.

A reversed development strategy prevails at the former sugar refinery grounds. There, the plan forming for the huge terrain was deliberately put aside after the property had been acquired. In *Stad op Scherp* ('Cutting-edge City') – the vision of urban structure as established by the Municipality in 2009 – the Suikerunie terrain was declared, as a preventative measure, a planological white area without a zoning status. After all, the message to speculators and developers cannot be clear enough: there are no plans for this part of the city for the coming decades! Groningen has more than enough locations available for housing, business parks and offices. Supply exceeds demand. As a result of the economic recession, every impulse toward urgency has been neutralized. Ultimate plans for the Suikerunie terrain will now be deliberately skipped for a generation. At present, no one can conceive what the spatial, economic and social requirements will be in 2030. The coming 15 to 20 years will offer literally and figuratively plenty of scope for new, temporary and supplementary functions that will help the Municipality reconsider the significance of the area, induce pre-investment, and bring value to the area. To arrive at new, inspiring ideas and solutions, a public competition was organized in the autumn of 2011, asking the general public for ideas for temporary use of the area. This was the start of an open planning process.

This publication analyses both Groningen experiments in new urban development, and discusses them in the light of the above-mentioned model for improvisational planning.

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Horeca

Informatiepaviljoen Open Lab

Entree parkeergarage Boterdiep (1200 plaatsen)

7 OPEN LAB EBBINGE I Tom Bergevoet & Maarten van Tuijl

Introduction

The *Ebbingekwartier* (Ebbinge Quarter) was constructed at the beginning of the 17th century as a part of the great Northern Urban Expansion. From 1874 onward, the defensive walls of Groningen were gradually demolished, after which the gasworks were built here, followed by other industrial activity. That is how the area got the name under which it was known for a long time: the 'Ciboga' terrain (from circus, *boden* ['courier'] and gas). An exceptional, temporary filling was the International Exhibition of Applied Art and Industry, which attracted 300,000 visitors within 2.5 months in 1903. At the end of the 20th century, the industrial buildings were demolished one by one, creating an untidy raffled edge to the inner city. The plans for redevelopment, formulated by the British architect Alsop in 1998, met with a difficult start and eventually ground to a halt in 2003, after which the area was used as a free parking lot from 2003-07. After the demolition of the obsolete housing on the Boterdiep side of the zone, the negative allure of the area only increased.

Believing that the plans would be refloated within a short time, in 2008 the Municipality designated the Ebbinge Quarter as a creative quarter, a future economic focal point for the Groningen creative sector. To give shape to this ambition, the Municipality organized the *Ebbinge Gist* ('Ebbinge Fermentation'), a meeting at which citizens of Groningen could advance ideas that could be incorporated into the buildings to be realized. One of the ten plans submitted at this meeting was the idea from the Association of Entrepreneurs in the Ebbinge Quarter for a temporary village on the large vacant plot along the Boterdiep.

In the meantime, the real-estate crisis had begun to play up in the background. It slowly became evident that the Ciboga terrain would remain vacant for the time being. After a turbulent period, at the end of 2009 the Municipal Council decided to allow the advent of the Open Lab Ebbinge (OLE), as the temporary village is now known. At the end of 2011, the first temporary pavilions were installed on the condition that the grounds would be handed back, clean, after a period of 5 years – thus, in 2016 – so that the planned developments could be implemented. In the meantime, the Open Lab Ebbinge has had a positive stimulating effect on the neighbourhood. For instance, 2013 will witness the construction on the Ciboga terrain of the Infoversum, a full 3-D dome theatre where science, trade & industry and culture converge.

The following pages discuss the procedural, legal, financial and spatial success factors for the development of the Open Lab grounds on the basis of three stages. The first is the start-up phase, the second the experimental phase, and the third is the phase of the definitive allocation of the ground as envisaged by the Municipality.

Wilma Naaijer: initiator

As shop owner and chairperson of the Association of Entrepreneurs, she was irritated by the vacant ground, which had a negative influence on the shops in the Nieuwe Ebbingestraat. At the first *Ebbinge Gist* manifestation, she proposed a temporary container village. In the start-up stage, she worked 1 day a week for free on this project.

'The economic recession of 2009 gave the project wings.'

Christophe de Jong: advisor in the initiation stage

At the first *Ebbinge Gist*, he came into contact with Wilma Naaijer, who commissioned him on behalf of the Association of Entrepreneurs to perform research into the feasibility of a temporary village. This quick-scan was possible thanks to a contribution from the Municipal Department of Spatial Planning and Economic Affairs.

'Because it involved a style of spatial development different from that normally used, much burden of proof came to lie on the project office of the Open Lab.'

David Inden: advisor in the initiation stage

In conjunction with Christophe de Jongh, he presented a plan for lightweight constructions on roofs at the first Ebbinge Gist manifestation. He was also approached by Wilma Naaijer. He lives near the Ebbinge Quarter and still carries out work for the OLE Foundation.

'Bottom-up urban planning is horribly laborious.'

Gerrit Schuurhuis: representative of the OLE Foundation

As financial director of the Open Lab, he has been involved in the project since 2009. He was approached by Christophe de Jongh to be his successor. He was previously the director of the COA (Central Organ for Asylum-seekers intake) and thus knows a great deal about temporary construction and building processes.

'If the Foundation does its work well, it should be superfluous after a time.'

Jeroen Saris: quartermaster

Was asked by the Municipality of Groningen to be the quartermaster in the genesis of a Creative Zone in the Ebbinge Quarter. His task was to involve (market) parties such as the UMCG, the University of Groningen, Minerva Art College, Nijestee (housing corporation) and AM (property developer) in the project.

'The Open Lab Ebbinge is one of the most rapidly realized projects in the context of temporary building; it deserves much more publicity.'

At Smit Duyzentkunst: financier

As a representative of Nijestee housing corporation he had previously worked on the development of Het Paleis. Nijestee owns many properties in the neighbourhood of the Ebbinge Quarter and has various ground and development positions in the Ebbinge Quarter itself.

"Nijestee participated out of social interest."

Tjerd van Riemsdijk: project leader Municipality

Ensured that both the City Council and the direction of the Municipal Department of Spatial Planning and Economic Affairs backed the initiative. He played a facilitating role in enabling the ground exploitation, as well as various forms of subsidies.

'I saw it as my task to facilitate the initiative as much as possible.'

Anton Visser en Jan Christiaansen: architects

During a matchmaking meeting, they established contact with their later clients and subsidizers. Their design for the MOBi temporary studio building was ultimately realized with sea containers.

'Which traces do we wish to leave behind five years from now, so that the significance of the location will be different from the one in the current plans?'

1. FROM TOP-DOWN TO BOTTOM-UP

In the spring of 2008, the Municipality designated the Ebbinge Quarter as an economic focal point for the creative sector. The former Chemistry Laboratory was transformed into a cultural complex (*Het Paleis*), and new plans were formulated for the former gasworks terrain itself. During the first *Ebbinge Gist*, the idea for a temporary village, put forward by the Association of Entrepreneurs in the Ebbinge Quarter received the most support. A quartermaster, appointed by the Municipality to involve market parties in the creative quarter, devised a structure consisting of a steering group and a core team for the elaboration of this idea. However, the parties in the steering group, including the UMCG, the University of Groningen, Nijestee housing corporation and the Municipality, invested very little energy in this project. The real motivation for the Open Lab lay in the core team, whose members went looking for opportunities to exploit this temporary experiment, bottom-up. It was only when this core team was transformed into a Foundation to which the Municipality transferred authority that the initiators felt they had found the appropriate formula for the organization and funding of the zone, as well as the necessary permission.

2. MUNICIPALITY AND FOUNDATION

In contrast to the Municipality or the larger organizations in the steering group, the OLE Foundation is small, manoeuvrable and very much up to date with the local force fields. By entering into smart alliances with the Municipality, ground owners, subsidizers and market parties, it was successful in amassing sufficient funding by the end of 2009, and in obtaining the go-ahead for the temporary use of the vacant terrain. The Foundation occupied a position in-between the Municipality and the large market parties on the one hand, and the developers and users of the pavilions on the other. The pavilion owners were supported with manpower and know-how and eight temporary pavilions were realized in the summer of 2012. However, the pavilions nurtured expectations that the Foundation could no longer realize. In addition, the pavilions began to doubt the agreements made with the Municipality and, because the Foundation had very few resources, adherence to these agreements became very difficult. In this case, the Foundation wondered whether or not to give back to the Municipality the responsibilities it had previously received.

3. EXPECTATION MANAGEMENT

The notion that the OLE would vanish into nothingness in 2016 was consistently communicated. None the less, this idea was regarded by various interested parties as very illogical. Why dispose of something that is functioning well? Why make such fixed agreements while the advent of new developments is still uncertain? At the outset, a Foundation form rather than an Association form was deliberately chosen as the best administrative structure for the OLE, in order to guarantee the agreements in terms of temporariness and to avoid giving users too much influence. Nevertheless, the question continues to arise as to whether or not the bottom-up energy from the pavilions might be better applied in enabling the future of the Ebbinge Quarter to take shape organically.

‘Each step must be taken with the risk that the next one could be fatal.’

Jeroen Saris: quartermaster

‘The decision of the UMCG to participate was an important moment. After this, more initiators had the courage to join in.’

Christophe de Jongh: advisor in the initiation stage

‘The quartermaster had devised a structure with the G7 (the seven major parties in Groningen) constituting a steering group, with a core team underneath. This structure allowed enough leeway for the bottom-up energy that had amassed around the project. The real energy came from the initiators rather than from the big organizations.’

Gerrit Schuurhuis: representative of the OLE Foundation

‘The willingness of the Municipality not to impose too many constraints made this bottom-up development feasible.’

Jeroen Saris: quartermaster

‘Housing corporation Nijestee owns much property around the Ebbinge Quarter and even owns various ground positions on the terrain itself. It will be self-evident that we have a major interest in the well-being of this neighbourhood.’

At Smit Duyzentkunst: financier

‘The Open Lab Ebbinge was actually damage control. In the long run, the zoning plan is based on a different concept. What we now perceive as temporary energy has no future value.’

Gerrit Schuurhuis: representative of the OLE Foundation

1. THE PROMISE OF TEMPORARINESS

After the first Ebbinge Gist Manifestation, the plan for a temporary container village on the Boterdiep soon gain broad-based support because it was easier (in a legal sense, with temporary building permission) to realize. The willingness of the Municipality to subsequently navigate a tricky path through the mesh of existing regulations was crucial to the success of the project. A special permission procedure was set up: on the basis of draft designs of the pavilions, a single urban plan would be made to be presented to the Building Inspectorate and the neighbouring residents. After this, all the pavilions would simultaneously receive temporary building permission for a period of 5 years. On application, temporary exemption from the zoning plan, according to art. 3.22 WRO (Law on Spatial Planning) would be issued.

2. LEGAL PARTICULARITIES

In actual practice, the construction of temporary buildings was more troublesome than first imagined. In view of the diverse preparatory procedures, it was impossible to deal with all application for permits at the same time. In addition, the Municipality is obliged to comply with EU regulations concerning state support and therefore to demand a rent that conforms with current market prices, whereas the ground had been given free on loan to the pavilion builders. To avoid this being regarded as illegal state support, users had to fill in a so-called de minimis declaration. To guarantee the temporary nature of the maximum tenancy period of 5 years, the Municipality required the landlord and the tenant to lodge a request to the local magistrate, presenting the relevant motivations, so that a tenancy agreement for this period could be formulated. At first, the Municipality did not wish to be responsible for the maintenance and safety of the area, and therefore demanded a boom gate which was eventually not installed because the Foundation held the opinion that this area was a part of the city. The fact that OLE was an intermediary between the Municipality and the pavilions thus turned out to have its negative aspects too. The pavilions felt that they were somewhat ignored; perhaps an Association might have been better than a Foundation after all. The Municipality placed the onus of maintenance on the Foundation, but this has no mandate.

3. AGREED IS AGREED?

To enable this plan to succeed within the current legal system, in which limited temporary deviation from the zoning plan is possible, it is logical that the Municipality would opt for the maximum lifespan allowed: 5 years. In the meantime, it has become evident that, after this period, the temporary interventions will not directly hamper further plans. Is it still possible to repeal the legal decision and to extend this maximum period? No, is what those who are familiar with the contracts say; the period is fixed. Even if a permanent crisis and recovery law makes it possible to extend temporary building permission to ten years, the civil law agreements in the Ebbinge Quarter are all based on a period of five years. Although no one can see into the future, everything must be determined in advance.

‘Before building permission can be requested, a single blueprint on the basis of draft designs of the various pavilions will have to be generated and presented to the Building Inspectorate.’

Memo from the Municipal Department of Spatial Development and Economic Affairs (ROEZ)

‘One of our temporary buildings was constructed with regular building permission, and is thus legitimate for an indefinite time. We wished to have a simpler test applied, but the Municipal building section felt too responsible and performed the tests in accordance with the common norms.’

At Smit Duyzentkunst: financier

‘The red-tape burden on civil servants is enormous.’

David Inden: advisor in the initiation stage

‘The ground is given in loan to the pavilion builders for free, whereas, in line with European regulations covering state support, the Municipality is obliged to demand a rent that is in compliance with current market values. To avoid any mention of unlawful state support, the users have to fill in a so-called “de minimis” declaration.’

Memo from ROEZ to OLE developers

To prevent tenants remaining in place after the agreed 5-year maximum period has elapsed, it is not enough to agree a rent period in the tenancy contract because with this, the tenant must distance himself from his right to rent protection, and that is not allowed according to the law.’

Memo from ROEZ to OLE developers

‘It remains the question whether the terrain is public or not public. Something in-between would be appropriate to us, but unfortunately the Municipal system does not provide any possibilities for this.’

Gerrit Schuurhuis: representative of the OLE Foundation

1. FINANCING UNCERTAINTY

After the first Ebbinge Gist Manifestation, the Association of Entrepreneurs, which proposed the idea of a Temporary Village, received 6000 EUR from the Municipality to perform a quick-scan that would provide insight into the financial (im)possibilities of the project. This was followed by a period of trimming and scrapping aimed at discovering how to make the project feasible. This period was tricky for all participants because their efforts were scarcely compensated, and for a long time it remained unclear whether or not the project would be viable. The framework was also vague: the Municipality was imposing economic cuts and the consequences of the worldwide financial crisis were unpredictable. Thanks to the steadfast commitment of the inspired initiators, aided by a few municipal civil servants, pledges of substantial subsidies eventually came from the Ministry of Infrastructure an the Environment (Mooi Nederland) and the EU (EFRO). The Municipality agreed to make the ground available for a period of five years, and not to issue it on loan. As such, a solid base was created for entrepreneurs to invest in the temporary pavilions.

2. TEMPORARY EXPLOITATION

From the exploitation of the grounds under the future zoning plan, the Municipality funded the cycle and pedestrian paths, the necessary cables and ducts, and the terrain hardening. It regarded this (pre-)investment as an anti-crisis strategy and assumed that private parties would also be tempted to make investment. Political circles backed the view that the project would generate about 400 jobs. The responsibility for the real-estate exploitation was transferred entirely to the pavilion operators. The OLE Foundation brought initiators with a business plan into contact with financially sound partners, such as the Nijestee housing corporation, the Gasunie, and the University of Groningen. In this way, temporary pavilions with exhibition space, studios, student accommodation and catering could be realized. With the application of a great deal of creativity, operations for the short period of five years could be budgeted and balanced. An appeal was made to Municipal and Provincial subsidizers, while user quality was adjusted downwards, residual values were manipulated, and losses were accepted here and there, as necessary.

3. DESTRUCTION OF CAPITAL?

The desired liveability and revitalization have been achieved, but at what cost? The agreements for dismantling in 2016 are fixed, and everyone knows that an operational time of five years is too short in order to break even. The promise of the Municipality for follow-on locations elsewhere after 2016 may lead to extra yield for the pavilions, but whether or not the chemistry between the programme and the new location can be regenerated remains an issue. The necessary depreciation of the pavilions in five years, after which users will have the possibility to sell some of the pavilions, offers an interesting perspective. After all, the cost price of written-off property is zero, so that unexpected exploitation possibilities can arise. When the capital amassed by the OLE does not endure after 2016 for one reason or another, this can be regarded as a form of capital destruction.

‘The quick-scan of the initiators contained an operations budget that, although not completely balanced, gave insight into what could be possible and what could not.’

Jeroen Saris: quartermaster

‘The lure of an operating period of five years was too meagre. The terrain is not yet full and we do not expect that this will happen now that there are only four years left.’

Gerrit Schuurhuis: representative of the OLE Foundation

‘Pledges have already been made to pavilion operators for the extension of the operating term to more than five years, to enable follow-up locations after 1 July 2016.’

Tjerd van Riemsdijk: representative of the Municipality of Groningen

‘The 1.7 to 2 million euro for infrastructure cannot be funded from the project itself and should be a public investment, bringing a public yield of enhanced liveability.’

Quick-scan of Open Lab Ebbinge

‘In the genesis of the Open Lab, the Municipality fulfils an inspiring and facilitating role. In this form, we are prepared to lend out the ground for a period of five years.’

Pledge by the Municipal Council to OLE

‘One of the conditions of subsidy was that the formal commissioning agent had to be the housing corporation. From the risk perspective of the subsidizers, we can understand this move. However, this condition has had a strongly retarding and therefore cost-boosting effect.’

Anton Visser (AV Architectuur) and Jan Christiaansen (Buro de Maten): architects

1 WORKING WITHOUT A BLUEPRINT

Whereas visual impressions had been made for the ‘floating island’ plan, which had now stranded, the plan for OLE had only an ‘imaginative scale model’ that indicated a scale ‘between minimum and maximum’. With a few non-committal reference images, this had to give expression to a plan that had no fixed form as yet. ‘You can help to build’, was one of the phrases in the publicity brochure. The power of conviction of the plan apparently lay elsewhere, because the Municipality approved the plan as it was part of a ‘wider quest for forms of expression in a new age’. The fact that the plan was not fixed was also shown when, just prior to realization, a substantial modification was implemented: the pavilions were not positioned along the Boterdiep but along the new cycle track cutting across the grounds. It was only at the 2nd matchmaking meeting that the developers presented the first images of the pavilions. To make these pavilions feasible in technical and financial terms, the plans continued to change right up to the very last moment.

2. THE REALIZATION OF A TEMPORARY CITY

The spatial carrier of the plan, the cycling track, is made of asphalt and, with this, directly received its comfortable definitive form. The other parts of the public space have a much more temporary nature: the events section has been sown with grass and is surrounded by concrete blocks that can be used as seats and also prevent illegal parking. Another part is paved with Stelcon plates, which also form the foundation of the pavilions. A number of underground supply points have been installed for utilities (water and electricity). Although the plans for the pavilions began ambitiously, the pavilions ultimately consisted of rapidly constructed prefab (sea) containers. Innovative construction materials, such as starch panels (MOBi) for example, were discarded because the required guarantees or funding could not be obtained in time. Due to the limited investment leeway, some of the intended comfort had to be relinquished. This occurred too rigorously on occasion: with one pavilion it turned out to be necessary to fit extra facilities to improve the climate regulation after the installation onsite.

3. FURTHER GROWTH?

With the cycling track, the urban contours of the future have been given shape. However, the question remains as to what is going to happen to the interventions that were intended to be only temporary. Is there a possibility for further growth? The Municipality has suggested a new life for the pavilions elsewhere in the city after 2016. Because the pavilions are demountable, this is quite conceivable. In this way, a travelling circus could arise, by means of which other shabby corners in the city can be revitalized and the pavilions could change function so that they could once more dovetail with the surroundings. There are also possibilities for further growth in the Ebbinge Quarter itself. It is very possible that the programmes that have taken root in the area could be adopted into the buildings yet to be built. This upgrade in comfort can be regarded as a form of organic growth. In the case that the pavilions remain on the terrain beyond 2016, an architectural upgrade will also be needed. After all, they are comprised of materials with a short lifespan. In that case, the pavilions will slowly acquire a more permanent character, thus approaching something resembling organic growth.

‘The building is intended for interim urban planning. Although the pavilion has a lifespan of longer than five years, it will never approach the traditional fifty years. Because the scope for investment was smaller, materials with a short lifespan were chosen. The budget includes an entry for the replacement of materials that were intended for temporary use.’

At Smit Duyzentkunst: financier

‘Participants have insufficient imagination. Neighbours, Nijestee, the city, AM wonen, no one could imagine how this would turn out.’

Gerrit Schuurhuis: representative of the OLE Foundation

‘The city will increasingly become a place of experience. This means that more quality will have to be incorporated into (temporary) architecture. OLE does not looking sufficiently appealing.’

Jeroen Saris: quartermaster

‘The surrender of comfort must be properly discussed with the user in advance. Which comfort can be deemed as “acceptable” and when do things go off the rails? We could have done this better. Together, we have worked to an excessive degree on the basis of a spatial concept. For example, the studios must now be improved, while I had preferred to have it done properly in the first place.’

At Smit Duyzentkunst: financier

‘If I could do it all over again, I would keep a closer eye on the goal: a maximum of liveability with a minimum of effort. A temporary park, for example, is already quite something, one small pavilion is marvellous. That wrangling with users and operators can then be skipped.’

Gerrit Schuurhuis: representative of the OLE Foundation

‘The temporariness should crystallize organically into a permanent settlement so that the city takes shape in the same way as it once did, before mass production and industrialism took hold.’

Jeroen Saris: quartermaster

Open Lab Ebbinge as Improvisational Planning

In a workfield that is completely oriented to blueprint planning, the realization of the Groninger Open Lab Ebbinge, a temporary component of the city, represents a sensational achievement. With the Open Lab Ebbinge, the previously formulated goals have been reached: the downward spiral in this part of the city has been broken, the location is findable, and it radiates creativity and energy once more.

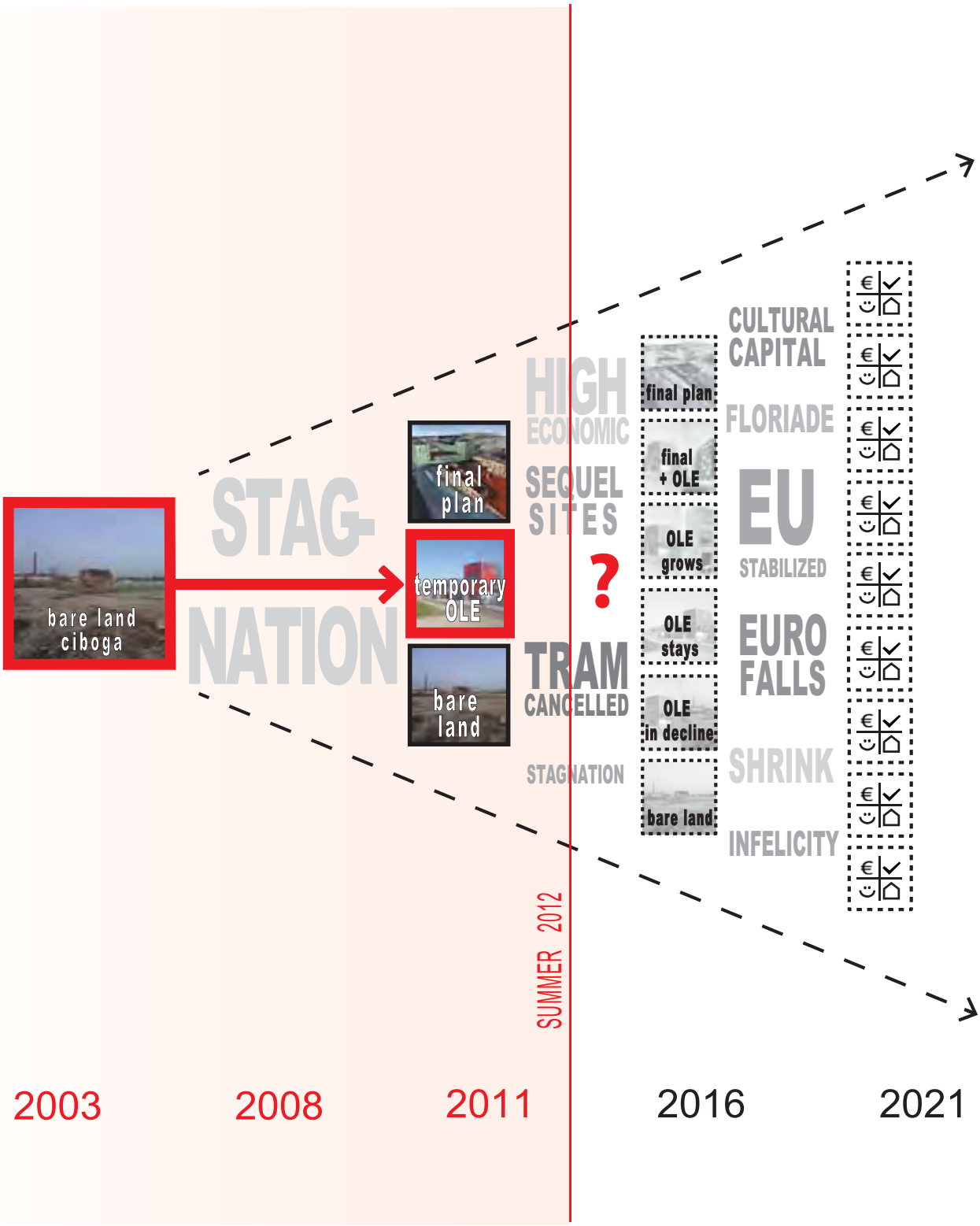
In the light of the *Improvisational Planning* approach comprehensively described in this publication, two aspects are immediately conspicuous. First, the project has a limited lifespan of only five years, which makes true organic growth more or less impossible. Although the Dutch Spatial Planning laws allows maximum temporary zoning for a period of five years, recent examples – such as the Sluisbuurt in Amsterdam (10 years temporarily) and the Blijburg Beach Pavilion (active since 2001), also in Amsterdam – have indicated that it must be possible to make room for exceptions. Second, there is the formidable flow of subsidies by means of which this experiment has been funded. It is very improbably that it will be possible to obtain a similar sum a second time. This being the case, the financial logic needed to support this new form of urban development it is not clear.

Improvisational Planning takes as its starting point the sharing of responsibilities. After the Municipality asked for ideas for the area at the first Ebbinge Gist, it gave one of the ideas abundant scope for development and supported it in a facilitating way. During this developmental process, the initiators and the Municipality felt a joint responsibility for the success of the experiment.

The sharing of responsibilities was less well organized in the management procedure. The form of management, a Foundation positioned between the Municipality and the pavilion users, seems to work inadequately. The pavilions are not literally represented in the Foundation. In addition, the Municipality has not given the Foundation any mandate, so that instruments of control and administration are lacking. An Association form, within which the members can vote and in which the Municipality could contribute to the statutes, might have been more suitable.

The OLE has shown that architecture of the temporary and of organic growth is still in its infancy. The realized pavilions consist mainly of stacked containers with little refinement. This limited variation in building products is not directly the fault of the designers. Our construction industry is still primarily geared to building for infinity. A broader assortment of building materials for organic growth would stimulate the acceptance of experimental building forms in a complex urban environment.

As an overture to a new form of urban development, OLE is an important benchmark. The experiment has been realized and has revealed the current possibilities. It is clear that the quest for new forms of urban development will continue in the Groningen OLE.



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Introduction

Originally, the Suikerunie terrain was an agricultural area situated outside the city of Groningen. On 29 January 1914, permission was given to the *Vereniging Friesch-Groningse Cooperatieve Beetwortelsuikerfabriek* (Frisian-Groningen Co-operative Beet-sugar Refinery Association) to build a sugar refinery here. After years of scale enlargement and various corresponding extensions, the refinery eventually closed down in January 2008. The reason for this was the European Union's adjustment of the sugar market policy, by means of which the beet-sugar quota was reduced. In August 2011, the Municipality acquired the premises with a view to urban expansion in the long term. At present, there are no concrete plans for this area. Because the city has enough locations for housing, business estates and offices, and because the demand for such facilities has declined, the terrain has not yet been assigned a definitive zoning status.

The terrain covers 125 hectares, and consists of a hardened section with buildings and a green section with water features. In the meantime, most of the building complex has been demolished, leaving only the lower part of the brick chimney, the former sugar entrepôt building, and the adjoining 'sugar-cube building'. The core qualities of the terrain, in its present state, include: its enormous size, its situation near the city centre, and the possibilities that the environmental contour (IMR) offers to develop a diverse range of activities.

Over the coming 15 years, the Municipality wishes to provide space for new temporary and supplementary functions. Seeking new initiatives, a low-threshold ideas competition was organized on 9 September 2011. The competition received 179 submissions (107 of which came from private parties). Many plans were based on the generation of sustainable energy, urban agriculture, festivals and student accommodation. Fifteen plans were selected from all the entries, varying from structural plans for the entire terrain by professional parties, to a proposal for a carpenter's village by one private individual.

In addition to this ideas competition and to making the terrain available for temporary use by other initiators, a hardened section measuring 20 hectares is envisaged as the location for the Floriade 2022 (a horticultural manifestation), with the aim of boosting the area by means of a large-scale and well-publicized event. In the meantime, Groningen has been nominated as one of the four finalists in the race. The winner will be announced in October 2012 at the closure of the current Floriade in Venlo. The Municipal Council is confident that this candidacy does not impede the outcome of the ideas competition. The grounds are large enough to accommodate several plans next to one another. The question is how this section of the city is going to develop in the future. The following pages present a discussion of the procedural, legal, financial and spatial success factors for the development of the Suikerunie grounds, with reference to three stages. The first is the start-up phase, the second the experimental phase, and the third is the phase in which the Municipality intends to definitively allocate the ground.

Laurens Huis in 't Veld: Municipal member of staff for policy

As the driving force behind the Municipal (infra-)structural vision entitled Stad op Scherp (Cutting-edge City), he has indicated that there will be no definitive developments on the Suikerunie grounds for the coming 15 years. At the same time, he points out that the city is completely open to ideas and will eagerly participate in discussions over temporary use of space.

'In my view, the temporary substantiation could be more oriented toward a future blueprint, despite all the uncertainty that currently surrounds the issue.'

Alfred Kazemier: Municipal programme manager

As a commissioning party for integral area development, he is involved in both the Open Lab Ebbinge and the Suikerunie grounds. Prior to this, he was, among other things, project manager of the public scale model for the Groninger Forum. His specalisms are: citizen participation, writing speeches and opinion articles, and sport and city marketing.

'The most important lesson of the current economic recession is that traditional development strategies no longer work.'

Kees Muller: project manager for the Municipality of Groningen

Was involved in the acquisition process of the Suikerunie terrain by the Municipality. Prior to this he was involved in the formulation of the IMR for the CSM (sugar) refinery. At present he is a project manager concerned with the further substantiation of the terrain, and therefore with the planning of the possible staging of the Floriade.

'The Ebbinge Quarter is so different that we cannot really learn lessons from this project.'

Klaus Overmeyer: jury member for the ideas competition

As author of the book Urban Pioneers, he is a specialist in the field of temporary use of space and bottom-up development in Berlin. He was a member of a five-strong jury that assessed the submissions to the ideas competition.

'The majority of the submissions lacked information about how the idea could support itself financially. The jury did not perform any checks on financial self-sufficiency.'

Lenze Hofstee: one of the winners of the ideas competition

With his company Carex, he acts as a temporary landlord administering empty buildings and managing grounds and buildings. From this background, unspecified (temporary) tenancy periods are no problem at all. Carex would welcome a directive function to get the project on its feet.

'All prize-winners are equal at this moment. That is a problem because some of them have a professional background and others have submitted impracticable plans.'

Jan Martijn Eekhof: Municipal urban planner

As an urban planner, he has been involved in the formulation of plans for the Suikerunie terrain. Prior to his work for the Municipality, he produced a prized graduation plan for Tempelhof Berlin, with an alternative way of area development as its focus.

'We must supervise the initiators better. Otherwise the project will bleed to death.'

1. FINDABILITY

The Municipality regards enhancement of the findability of the Suikerunie terrain, which had not been accessible to the public up to that point, as an important first step in ensuring that Groningen residents will feel that they are on home ground. When the terrain was purchased, the Municipal Council was promised that the residents of Groningen would be involved in considering a temporary fill-in for the area. For this purpose have already been organized on the terrain. In addition, the Municipality organized a very low threshold ideas competition in order to encourage as many people as possible to submit ideas and initiatives for the area. With this in mind, no demands were made on the entries with regard to feasibility. A number of professional parties, who did take feasibility into account, are included among the prize-winners. However, these plans have the same status as plans that seem unrealizable. This makes it difficult to move on to the implementation of these plans.

2. PIONEERS: ACCLIMATIZATION AND EXPLORATION

As the next step, the Municipality wishes to allow temporary functions an operational period of fifteen years, with placemaking as the goal. On the one hand, the Municipality hopes for co-creation from the 15 prize-winners. On the other hand, it also offers scope for other initiatives and for the organization of a major event such as the Floriade. On this topic, the Start-up Memo states: *'First of all, the construction of the framework for and integration of the plan area will be carried out. The initial ideas of the prize-winners will be assigned a location. What works at a certain place and what does not must be clear; we must know which supplementary measures will be needed. Developments and opportunities in and around the grounds will be examined and applied where required. The terrain will be occupied, bit by bit, by the users and visitors. An administrative organization will be formed and, in conjunction with the stakeholders, new initiatives, facilities etc. will be developed. The Municipality will facilitate aspects such as regulations and accessibility. After that, the grounds should running full speed ahead. The role of the Municipality will become a more modest one. An administrative organization will take care of the maintenance and marketing of the area. The selection of initiatives will be done by the users, the terrain will gradually gain more shape, developments will become more evident. An 'association of interested parties' will be set up to make plans for the coming five years in conjunction with the Municipality. Recent developments will be put in perspective and the direction for the coming five years will be sketched. New qualities will be determined.'* The cultivation of commitment on the part of the initiators is a crucial element in the success of this process of placemaking.

3. SETTLERS?

The intention is that, after the specified period of 15 years, a zoning plan will be formulated that realizes a rent in line with current market prices. The zoning plan may be based on existing initiatives that have proved themselves at this point, supplemented by new ones. But it is also possible that the area may be used to accommodate an urgent need for certain functions. In that case, it would be a pity to lose all the energy that had already been invested in the grounds.

‘The organization of the ideas competition was very important to the idea that we, as local government, were simply sitting and waiting for things to happen.’

Alfred Kazemier, programme manager for the integral development of the zone

‘The differences in pace and background of the initiators form an important point of concern.’

Kees Muller, project manager for the Municipality of Groningen

‘From our background as managers, we see ourselves taking on a directive role in formulating a plan for the entire terrain. Within that plan, there is scope for other initiatives.’

Lenze Hofstee, one of the prize-winners of the public ideas competition

‘Of course, I shouldn’t say it out loud, but the Eiffel Tower was also intended as a temporary construction. So it may be the case that all the supposedly temporary construction for the SUT will remain in place.’

Kees Muller, project manager for the Municipality of Groningen

‘Everyone can lease space on the Suikerunie grounds via the web. Within certain conditions, you can do what you want for an hour, a day or even a year, if you pay the required fee.’

Grontmij, one of the prize-winners of the public ideas competition

‘The aim is not to fill the holes, but rather to mobilize the user within the spatial process.’

Klaus Overmeyer, member of the jury for the ideas competition

1. OPPORTUNITIES

According to the Start-up Memo, one of the advantages of the terrain is that: *'The present environmental contour (IMR: Integratie Milieu en Ruimtelijke Ordening: Integration of the Environment and Spatial Planning) provides the possibility to develop a diverse range of activities. Essentially, everything is possible.'* Therefore, the regulations provide many opportunities for future developments. However, it is doubtful if this also applies to housing, in view of the fact that this contour is determined by industrial usage. Other functions have also been proposed that the Municipality does not particularly welcome, such as a crematorium or a factory. For this reason, a preparatory decision for the entire area will be drawn up. The preparatory decision is a statement made by the Municipal Council that a new zoning plan is being formulated for the area in question. With such a decision, provisional protection comes into force, enabling the Municipality to reject building and installation activities that are still possible under the currently valid plan. A preparatory decision determines the area to which the decision refers as well as the day that the decision comes into force. It is evident that the Municipality, as owner of the terrain, wishes to remain at the helm.

2. FACILITATING

At this moment, the Municipality is engaged in formulating a new zoning plan. This plan will be valid for 10 years and is intended to cover the experimental phase of 15 years. To enable the installation of several functions, and because the final blueprint has not been determined, a flexible or global zoning plan will be chosen. The disadvantage of this type of zoning plan is that the environmental regulations and especially the law on environmental pollution require maximum guarantees in advance. This means that all possible scenarios have to be tested in advance, which is very laborious and expensive. Another point of concern is the fact that a temporary building permit is only valid for a period of 5 years, whereas the terrain is available for fifteen years. Does this mean that permanent building permits, in which higher criteria are specified, must be requested? The Municipality has pledged to facilitate the regulations issue at this stage by supplying expertise and by helping the plans to fulfil the required stipulations.

3. GUARANTEES?

Leaving the area to be substantiated by a following generation also means a leap in the dark in terms of regulations. After all, no one knows what the situation be like in 20 years or so. Will a proposal for revised integral environmental regulations have been implemented by that time? Will the Netherlands still be a part of the European Union, with all its European regulations? Will the zoning plan still exist? These are all uncertain factors that have great consequences for the future of the Suikerunie grounds. In addition, it is impossible, in advance, to give a watertight guarantee that functions intended to be temporary will indeed disappear on time. Regardless of how well civil servants arrange this matter in contracts, real-life practice has shown that, under the influence of the media, residents and users, administrators can decide to abandon the contracts. With all the – perhaps unfortunate – consequences.

‘The question is: what is temporary and what is structural? The boundaries between these two are blurring and spatio-judicial regulations should be able to cope with this new development.’

Laurens Huis in ‘t Veld, Municipality of Groningen member of staff for policy

‘The area is available for 15 years. Temporary building permission, however, is valid for 5 years. This discrepancy forms an important point of concern.’

Jan Martijn Eekhof, urban planner at the Municipal Department of Spatial Planning

‘We have had much experience with formulating temporary contracts with users on the one hand, and owners on the other.’

Lenze Hofstee, one of the winners of the ideas competition

‘The new zoning plan for the Suikerunie grounds must be flexible, with many possible functions, as is the case with the city centre.’

Jan Martijn Eekhof, urban planner for the Municipal Department of Spatial Planning

‘We are the owner of the grounds, so we also have influence beyond the borders of the zoning plan.’

Kees Muller, project manager for the Municipality of Groningen

1. START-UP COSTS

Budget neutrality is the point of departure for the Suikerunie terrain, taking into consideration the absolutely necessary costs of pre-positioning and pre-investment oriented toward the (distant) future perspective. For the period 2011-14, a sum of 800,000 EUR has been reserved for the Suikerunie grounds through an allocation proposal that has been adopted by the Municipal Council. This sum will be used for the costs of plan formulation in this period. But, besides these start-up costs needed to enable temporary use of the Suikerunie grounds, there are also other, more substantial expenses. For example, the Municipality bought the terrain for 35 million EUR, which entails an annual expenditure of 1.2 million EUR in interest. This means, therefore, that the interest costs will amount to 18 million EUR over the intended period of 15 years. In addition, the Municipality has already incurred demolition and administration costs. The estimated total pre-investment, without interest payment, amounts to 3 to 4 million EUR.

2. DECREASING PUBLIC, AND INCREASING PRIVATE INVESTMENT

For the placemaking stage, the Municipality will generate a working framework and will improve the accessibility of the area. In addition, the Municipality will facilitate developments in the field of regulations. What are the exact costs of these steps, and how will they be covered? The Municipal Council has decided to make a maximum of 10 million EUR available for the Floriade, if this comes to Groningen in 2022. The Municipality hopes that these costs will be partly balanced by increasing yields from (some of) the temporary users. It should be clear that all these costs can never be compensated by temporary initiatives alone. In this stage, the great challenge lies in finding investors other than the Municipality. There are opportunities for developers, who will be able to gain a position with a relatively small pre-investment. However, it is also clear that no carte blanche will be issued. As mentioned previously, some investors who wished to pay handsomely for the ground have already been turned down. This is because their plans do not harmonize with the image that the Municipality would like to see here in the long term.

3. VALUE CREATION?

The aim of the experimental phase is to arrive ultimately at value creation, hoping that the Suikerunie grounds will become ‘the place to be’. After the planned period of 15 years has elapsed, initiatives there will have to pay a price that complies with current market values, by means of which the Municipality can also compensate its outlay. Because this last stage is still far removed and because the future is uncertain, it seems sensible for the Municipality to take account of a number of scenarios, including the one in which value creation does not occur as the Municipality envisaged. In addition, there is still the question as to whether or not keeping the future open may have a paralyzing effect on the investment policy of possible initiatives. After all, they have no guarantee that they will be allowed to stay. And there is a clear relationship between investment capacity and the time needed to earn back the investment. Even if the period of 15 years is more favourable to operations than the 5 years at the OLE, for example, real quality-pullers will probably need a greater investment. Accordingly, it is conceivable that divergent agreements will be made with investors in real-life practice.

‘The current economic value is 0.0. We expect to create value increase in 15 years; time, so that the economic value will grow.’

Kees Muller, project manager for the Municipality of Groningen

‘In view of the fact that the Municipality has no money to develop this area itself, it accepts a facilitating role as a matchmaker between interested parties.’

Jan Martijn Eekhof, urban planner for the Municipal Department of Spatial Planning

‘Our estimation is that we will spend 3 to 4 million in pre-investments and man-hours in order to enable things to take place here in the near future. With this, the question rises as to how we are going to earn this back. It is not an easy question!’

Kees Muller, project manager for the Municipality of Groningen

‘Finding investors other than the Municipality is the major challenge.’

Jan Martijn Eekhof, urban planner for the Municipal Department of Spatial Planning

‘Sweetsugar.nl helps the facilitation and linkage of ideas and other initiatives. With the income, Sweetsugar realizes the future basic structure of the area, bit by bit.’

Grontmij, one of the winners of the ideas competition

1. SEEKING A FRAMEWORK

At present, there are no concrete plans for this area. The city has enough housing plans and other programmes for urban development to fill the coming fifteen years. For this reason, the area has been reserved for the next generation, and given no permanent zoning status. The area will be opened up for temporary use in the meantime. The 2009 Structural Vision of the City states: 'We allow every opportunity for manifestations, in line with the City of Talent we aspire to be, harmonizing with the innovative and creative capability that we wish to stimulate, and contributing to the distinguishing capacity of Groningen in relation to other cities.' One condition that has been imposed, however, is that any initiative must be a supplement or complement to something that is already happening in the city. For example, there should be no housing that competes with other areas assigned to housing, such as Meerstad for example. To enable the temporary initiatives that are allowed, a suitable framework will have to be provided. Just how that framework will look is still unclear.

2. ALLOWING SPACE

The area is so large and diverse that many activities can take place side by side. The quantity and nature of such activities are not yet known. However, whatever the initiative, the current accessibility of the terrain is a problem. Accordingly, the Municipality wishes to construct ongoing routes to and through the area as soon as possible. Connections to the inner city will also be revised under this plan. In addition, the Municipality wishes to add at least one bridge to the area configuration to comply with the minimum festival requirement of having at least two access roads to the terrain. At this moment, the fire services allow a maximum of 500 people to occupy the terrain at one time, because there are insufficient inflow and outflow possibilities. Besides these improvements, the structure of the terrain will largely depend upon the concrete initiatives that arise in this phase. This dependence on other investors also means that there is space for negotiation. What kind of breeding ground do such initiatives require?

3. DEFINITIVE ZONING PLAN?

The Start-up Memo mentions a final and definitive zoning plan. However, everyone acknowledges that this is unpredictable at this moment in time. After all, when have you actually arrived at the final situation? And how do you know that this zoning status is definitive? In real-life practice, a city is never finished, but is constantly under pressure from changing needs. It seems to be more appropriate at this moment to relinquish the idea of a definitive zoning plan, and to impose the single condition that a market-compliant ground rent should be paid by tenants after a period of fifteen years, for as long as that lasts. If an initiative is no longer viable at that given moment, a place will become vacant and can be allocated to a new initiative. It is conceivable that a mixture of various structures in the contexts of scale, investment level and elaboration level will arise in an organic way. If there is a shortage of financial resources for new initiatives, the Municipality will have to make compromises and be satisfied with whatever is possible. This requires a spatial plan that is scalable in terms of level of ambition.

‘We must resist the temptation to formulate the plans ourselves.’

Alfred Kazemier, programme manager for the integral development of the zone

‘There is a danger that it will become a storage area for functions that cannot capture a place elsewhere in the city.’

Kees Muller, project manager for the Municipality of Groningen

‘Groningen is still only a provincial capital but, on the other hand, it does have a unique position in the Nether-German region. Due to its scale and isolated situation, the Suikerunie terrain provides an opportunity to exploit this position. For example, events such as a Stones concert could be organized here.’

Lenze Hofstee, one of the winners of the ideas competition

‘It is our task to construct ongoing routes to and through the area, as well as the appropriate infrastructure for initiatives and the organization of events.’

Jan Martijn Eekhof, urban planner for the Municipal Department of Spatial Planning

‘The area is large enough for a single idea, and therefore it should be divided into small pieces measuring 2.5 by 2.5 metres. Every resident of Groningen could come and claim a plot.’

Egbert de Warle, one of the winners of the ideas competition

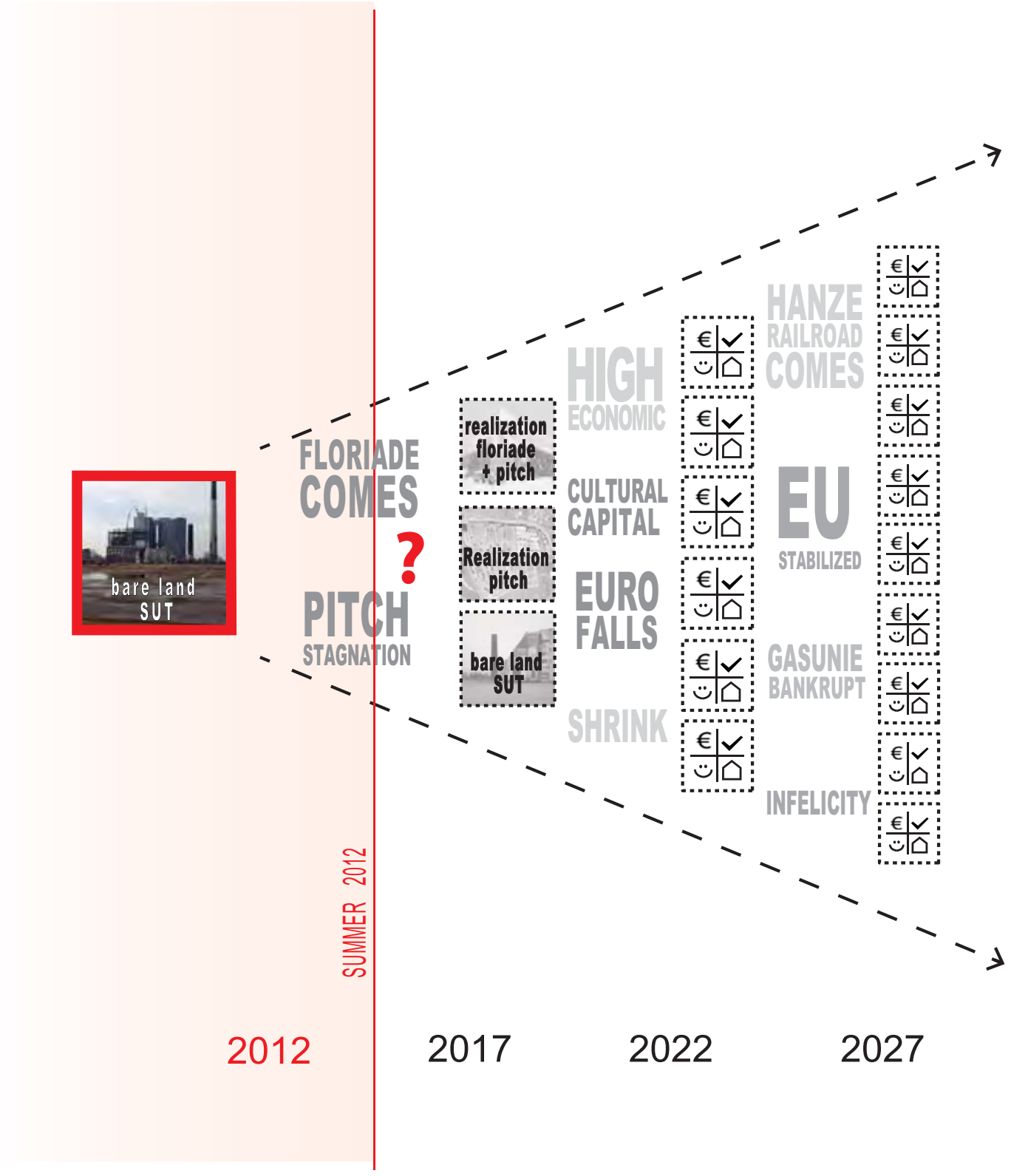
“In het verleden had de gebruiker maar beperkte invloed op zijn omgeving. In de toekomst zijn de gebruikers zelf ook de producenten van ruimte. Dynamiek en flexibiliteit zijn daarbinnen de leidende principes.”

Klaus Overmeyer, jurylid publieke prijsvraag

More than is the case with the Open Lab, the Municipality is taking *Improvisational Planning* as its starting point for the development of the Suikerunie terrain. It begins with the idea of an experimental stage for a period of 15 years, in which various initiatives are given an opportunity to prove themselves. Dynamics and flexibility are the key principles in such an approach. In addition, it is emphasized that there are no concrete plans, that there is no final blueprint. Co-creation is the dominant feature in the process. Progress takes place step by step. The intention is that in 2006 the initiators will establish an 'association of interested parties', which will formulate plans for the coming five years in conjunction with the Municipality and the administrator(s) of the grounds. At that point, developments will be put into perspective and the direction of future activities outlined. New qualities will be consistently recorded. In short, there is no mention at all of a linear process, but rather one of continual evaluation and adjustment. With this approach, the Municipality of Groningen is advancing along the path toward the urban planning of the future.

Questions can be raised about organizing a low-threshold ideas competition that places the emphasis on as many creative submissions as possible without any criteria of feasibility. After all, there is seldom a shortage of creative ideas. They stand or fall according to their feasibility. Because the Municipality wants the submitted project proposals to be self-reliant or even paying propositions, it is now in an impasse regarding the follow-on activities with the prize-winners. In practice, co-creation turns out to be troublesome if no practical frameworks are specified. As owner of the ground, the Municipality will have to take the initiative in this matter. Executable plans will have to be identified. A crucial challenge is to find investors, large and small. That will be difficult because even professional prize-winners, such as Grontmij and Carex, seem to prefer to be hired in as consultants rather than function as investors. In contrast to a temporary permit for 5 years, the experimental period of 15 years ensures a longer operations period on the one hand, but also requires higher investment to obtain a regular environmental permit, on the other.

Nevertheless, it is commendable that the Municipality wishes to keep open as many options as possible. In contrast, it is only human to want to know what to expect. What can happen here and what can not are not sufficiently clear. Therefore, just how attractive the locational climate of the Suikerunie grounds is, and for whom, remains to be seen. This locational climate is crucial for the mobilization of the user, and therefore for the cultivation of commitment. In addition, it may be expected that the initiatives that have settled there will make claims to the site, regardless of how strictly these have been precluded in the contract. Changes and newcomers may not automatically be welcomed by the 'established order'. For example, on Sporenburg Island in Amsterdam, a temporary grass field was laid out on a site after a planned apartment block turned out to be unfeasible. It is now so appreciated by the residents that it has proven to be impossible to build anything there. You might expect that the experiences with the Open Lab Ebbinge could be useful during this open-ended process. However, it is striking that everyone to whom we have spoken has emphasized that the OLE provides no lessons for the development of the Suikerunie terrain.



References:

Startnotitie Suikerunieterrein (Start-up Memo for the Suikerunie Terrain)

Juryrapport Suikerfabriek: ruimte voor ideeen (Jury Report on the Sugar Refinery: space for everyone)

Van suiker tot sloop (From Sugar to Demolition), Jan van der Hoeve and Rita Overbeek

Mentaal ontginnen: waarde creëren door tijdelijk gebruik (Mental Cultivation: creating value through temporary use), Alfred Kazemier

Document with a brief description of all ideas competition submissions

Interviews with various interested parties (for names, see elsewhere in this document)

Temporary Europe

In preparation for the Creative City Challenge symposium, for which occasion this publication has been realized, we asked our partner cities about their experiences with temporary use of space. This has resulted in a series of international examples that display the many possibilities for temporary use of space: from temporary city parks in Kortrijk (Belgium) to the temporary use of vacant real estate for the accommodation of artists in Bremen and Hamburg (Germany), from a giant temporary artwork on a silo in Goteborg (Sweden) to a touring container gallery in Newcastle (UK).

Against the background of the CCC theme of the creative city, it is no surprise that the examples mentioned almost all concern a creative form of temporary use of space.

We have asked the partner cities not only to describe the current state of these examples, but also to outline the original situation as well as expectations for the near future. With this, the time factor makes its entrance and gives perspective to the possible long-term effects of the temporary intervention. We have asked our partners to articulate the procedural, legal, financial and spatial conditions under which the project has been realized. Consequently it is possible to search for differences and parallels between the various European cities.

The questions we have asked ourselves on the basis of the information gathered are: To what extent do the exemplary processes harmonize with the developmental strategy of improvisational planning? Is this a promising strategy for a European city? Where are such strategies applied? What can we learn?

We deal with this topic in more depth in the conclusion to this chapter.

1 PAST

The citizens of Mariestad loved to hate the silo that was a big bulky building that for decades blocked the beautiful skyline. Since the business closed a few years ago it was decided that the silo would be demolished to make way for the new lakeside town.

2 PRESENT

Björn Nordén, a local artist became aware that the silo would be demolished and thought it would be exciting to do something with the building before it was demolished. Bjorn got in touch with graffiti artist Carolina Falkholt and invited a number of different persons to a meeting. When we left that meeting, we had decided that we would paint the entire silo, it would be the worlds largest graffiti artbuilding. A project that would run throughout the summer. Why? Because Mariestad is the city that is the former county town in parallel as it is an industrial town. It may seem that there is a collective low self-esteem among the citizens and we wanted to change this. We did it because we wanted to put Mariestad on the map, we wanted to stand out and do something different, an art project that would involve the citizens of Mariestad.

3 FUTURE

It became as we wanted a massive art project. The location of the silo became a meeting place for both young and old. You could choose the level of commitment, either could yourself buy a spray can and paint on the lower parts of the silo, or you could shoose just just to follow the image development day by day, on the upper parts of the silo, where the professional graffitiartists worked. Important is also the project leader and artist Carolina Falkholt, had a very social relationship to the people who were around the silo. She explained the work and created involvement.

PROCEDURAL

The first meeting took place in the end of the month of April. On July 5, started the project. We went from idea to action in two months. The project was completed on the September 6. Participants were mainly the Cultural Departement (municipality of Mariestad), the educational association Studiefrämjandet, private parties and local businesses.

LEGAL

An agreement was signed between the artist and the municipality of Mariestad, and with the company that still owned the silo until it was demolished. Cultural Committee was briefed regulary.

FINANCIAL

The project was financed largely by funds from the municipality, the educational association Studiefrämjandet and the company CanVac.
The total budget was 880 000 Skr in which voluntary work also is included. The project gave a negative result for 80 000 Skr, which Cultural Department went in and covered.

SPATIAL

We had no plans on this.

www.graffitimariestad.se

100 Union Street, Bankside, London, United Kingdom

1 PAST

For over 6 years the site on 100 Union Street has been empty, awaiting development. In an area like Bankside in London, which is under intense pressure from development, it is not uncommon for sites like this to lie empty and dormant while waiting for the right time in the development cycle.

2 PRESENT

In 2008 as part of the biennial London Festival of Architecture, the architecture collective EXTZT transformed the site for a period of two weeks – creating Southwark Lido – an open air swimming and recreation area. In 2010 it became the Urban Orchard – a temporary garden for this densely urban neighbourhood which was open for 4 months. The Orchard was conceived as a 'place of exchange'– providing space for social interaction. When it closed its doors, all the trees, plants and materials were adopted and used by local community groups on the network of food growing projects on housing sites across the area. Similarly in 2011 the site was transformed into a temporary garden of medicinal plants (the Urban Physic Garden), and the ReUnion – a pop up pub in the summer of 2012.

3 FUTURE

The construction has recently started on adjacent parcels to this site. While this means that the site at 110 Union Street will no longer be able to be used for temporary projects, the earlier hosted innovative projects have paved the way for other initiatives in the area that highlight and work with under-used and neglected spaces in the neighbourhood. New initiatives have emerged in the neighbourhood – such as Merge Festival which build on the spirit of the earlier projects, bringing new life to underused spaces in the area, as focal points for creative practice.

PROCEDURAL

The Union Street Urban Orchard took its starting point the Bankside Urban Forest urban design strategy for the area – which identifies an incremental approach to improving the network of streets and public spaces across the area. A wide group of stakeholders was involved, including the local business community through Better Bankside BID and designed by Wayward Plants. The garden was built entirely by a volunteer workforce using recycled and salvaged materials was open for four months over the summer of 2010.

LEGAL

Unknown

FINANCIAL

A benevolent landowner opened up the site as a test bed for a number of temporary uses. The Architecture Foundation commissioned both the Southwark Lido and the Urban Orchard.

SPATIAL

As a neighbourhood, Bankside has a dense urban grain and lacks significant green and open space. In this context, vacant development sites such as 100 Union Street offer opportunities to programme and create a number of temporary uses while the sites await redevelopment.

www.unionstreetorchard.org.uk
www.southwarklido.wordpress.com
www.physicgarden.org.uk/

Glamourmanifest, Amstel III, Amsterdam, The Nederlands

1 PAST

Amstel III is a large office district to the Southeast of Amsterdam, planned in the seventies and developed in the eighties. Before that it was agricultural land. The planning ideal was one of complete functional segregation -state-of-the-art back then- and attracted several big companies.

2 PRESENT

Amstel III has developed into a strong and dynamic working area. The area is 250 ha and has approximately 22,000 jobs. Of the more than 700,000 m2 of office floor area some 30% is unoccupied. In general it is assumed that half of this vacancy is structural. Ownership is fragmented, there is a lack of liveliness and the public and private external space is primarily designed for the car.

3 FUTURE

Amstel III is described as a promising problem area. Amsterdam is seeking new ways of transforming the Amstel III area from a mono-functional office park into a lively urban area. The objective is the introduction of new functions and the improvement of the external space. The basic assumption is that the municipality will not carry out large-scale acquisition and that the costs of the transformation will be largely met by the creation of value in the area. In the first ten years the transformation should commence step by step, plot by plot. This will require a strong spatial-economic transformation strategy.

PROCEDURAL

The notion of temporary use lowers the threshold for many stakeholders, enabling it to kickstart real and important change. Low-threshold but remarkable actions and activities strengthen the sense of community and trust among the current users in the area, upgrade the area's physical appearance and boost the area's image and reputation. The playful twist helps to generate a buzz and make the positive changes visible for media and people outside the area.
Stakeholders involved: municipality, real estate owners, renting companies
Timeline: Amstel III challenge is continuous, Glamourmanifest approx. 5-10 years

LEGAL

Depending on action (preferably guerrilla).

€ FINANCIAL

Glamourmanifest is supported by the municipality and a growing number of local companies and real estate owners.

SPATIAL

Glamourmanifest is an independent (bottom-up) urban transformation project, offering a strategic antidote to the economic gloom in the commercial real estate market. The project katalyses positive developments and image-forming exclusively for office district Amstel III. This requires a powerful ambition, combined with a long wind and both sensitive and resolute action.

www.glamourmanifest.nl/

Viktoria-Kaserne, Hamburg, The Netherlands

1 PAST

After long negotiations with the public administration a group of artists (Frappant e.V.) moved into the Viktoria-Kaserne (a vacant casern in Altona-Nord) in March 2010, because their former studio space, a vacant department store, was sold.

2 PRESENT

Up to now, a group of 140 artists and creatives from different disciplines (design, art, music, architecture etc.) uses half of the building (ca. 3.800m²) self-organized. The rest of the old casern is used as a storage space by the University of Hamburg. With the aim to make the whole building available for the creative industry, the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Kreativ Gesellschaft are currently drafting a new usage concept.

3 FUTURE

After the refurbishment of the building, the casern should become a lively location, which offers affordable space for creatives for the next 25 years.

☺ PROCEDURAL

Stakeholders involved: Frappant e.V., Senate of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg (Department of Cultural Affairs, Department of Urban Development, Department of Real Estate, District Authority of Altona), Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft mbH
Timeline: March 2010: Frappant e.V. moved in, Summer 2012: Drafting of an new usage concept Autumn/Winter 2012: Refurbishment of the building, Spring 2013: Additional users move in

✓ LEGAL

permit for a use of a place of public assembly
permit for a use as a studio space

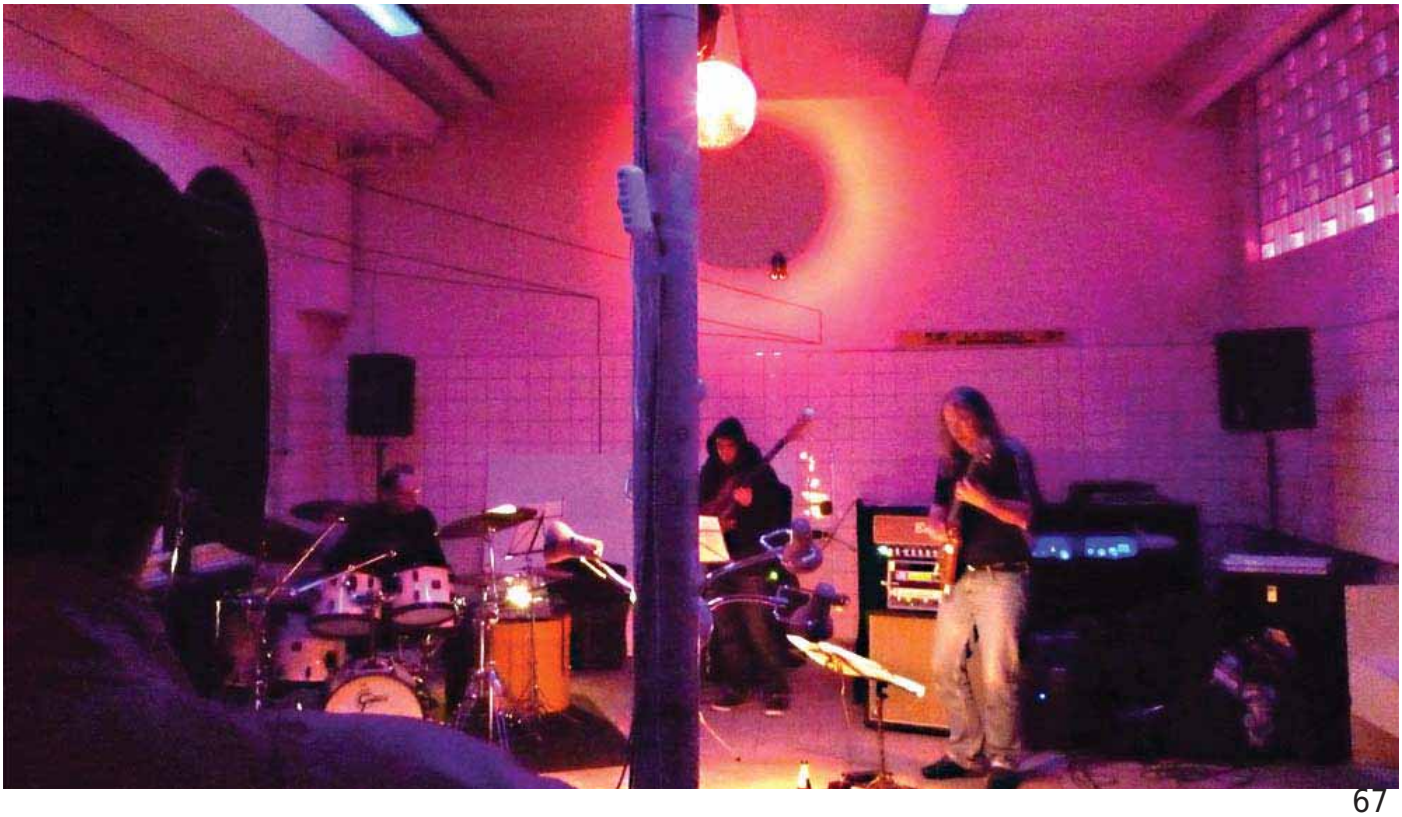
€ FINANCIAL

100.000€/p.a. rent benefit (supported by the Department of Cultural Affairs)
Refurbishment financed by the Department of Real Estate (refinanced by rent)

⌂ SPATIAL

Infrastructure: studios fitted out to a low standard; exhibition room and court for collaborative use
Spatial plan and size: 3 storeys, studio space (5.000 m²), floor space (1.600 m²), storage space (2.500 m²)

www.frappant.org



1 PAST

Gebruik de Lege Ruimte (‘Use the Empty Space’) is a project for the temporary use of land in the Spoorzone Delft. The project is an initiative of two local citizen organizations, WeSD (Werkplaats Spoorzone Delft – ‘Workplace of the Railway Zone In Delft’) and TOP (Techniek Ontmoetings Punt – ‘Technology Meeting Point’). The Municipality of Delft and the Spoorzone Delft project are involved in this initiative. Gebruik de Lege Ruimte started up in 2011, to collect ideas via the social media, brainstorm sessions, etc.

2 PRESENT

Up to the present, 20 ideas have been developed into promising proposals. Participants in Gebruik de Lege Ruimte are project owners of their plan, and invest their own time and energy in the development. Support and advice have been given in various workshops. The plans can be roughly divided into four themes: green, trade & tourism, games and recreation, and accommodation. This first batch of plans will be presented to the Municipality and the Spoorzone project on 27 September 2012, along with a proposal for the development of a strategy for the intervening time.

3 FUTURE

Temporary use will most likely start in 2014, and take place step by step. As the construction of the tunnel progresses, various locations will become available for development. As final development is not yet possible, some locations will remain available for temporary development. The aims of temporary use in the Spoorzone include creating a lively, inviting site with significant interventions, averting long-term vacant spaces near the inner city, and giving an impulse for the real estate development of Spoorzone Delft. The flexibility of the solutions is an important aspect, as well as liveliness and vitality of the initiatives.

PROCEDURAL

The Spoorzone Delft project recently inaugurated a special helpdesk called ‘Het Tussenstation’ (‘Intermediate station’) to help initiators with the realization of their plans.

LEGAL

The ‘Het Tussenstation’ helpdesk, in collaboration with Gebruik de Lege Ruimte and other initiators, explores the possibilities and opportunities for the realization of plans. ‘Het Tussenstation’ will subsequently judge the feasibility of the plans.

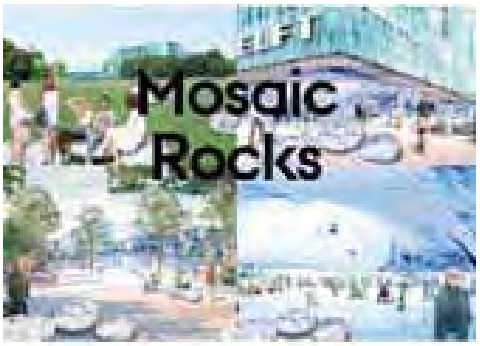
€ FINANCIAL

Gebruik de Lege Ruimte received financial support from the Municipality of Delft and Spoorzone Delft in 2011 and 2012, and receives subsidy from the Netherlands Architecture Fund and Fund 1818. This approach will be continued in the coming years. Initiators are largely personally responsible for the funding of their plan.

SPATIAL

Spoorzone Delft is the area surrounding the railway station and the railway track through Delft. This part of the city will undergo a profound transformation over the coming years. With the construction of a railway tunnel and the demolition of the current rail viaduct, significant barriers dividing the city will disappear. Currently, we expect that approximately 1,200 new homes and around 20,000 square metres of non-residential functions will be developed in the Spoorzone Delft in the coming years.

www.gebruikdelegeruimte.nl, www.spoorzonedelft.nl



1 +2 PAST & PRESENT

Today the area is still dedicated as a rail depot and dominated largely by logistics activities, at least until 2014.

Here, the conventional HafenCity development process has been turned on its head, since, instead of an urban concept being the objective of development, the process strategy is focused on finding new uses and a conceptual design for the inventory of existing buildings. The plots will not be sold, but remain the permanent property of the Special Fund for City and Port (HafenCity Hamburg GmbH) so as to retain control for Hamburg over the development.

3 FUTURE

Oberhafen is destined to become the nucleus of a large creative and cultural neighborhood. The basic concept for Oberhafen: in the medium term it is to develop into a permanent creative and cultural quarter, publicly accessible, centrally located in Hamburg. It will have close connections to the other HafenCity neighborhoods, as well as with Rothenburgsort, City Süd and newly developing cultural activities, as well as with the Hamburg “museum mile”.

A detailed concept for the project will be worked out through an intense dialog over the next few years. This would be based on a development time-frame of around 15 years.

PROCEDURAL

Stakeholders: HafenCity Hamburg GmbH, Senate of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg (Department of Cultural Affairs, Department of Urban Development), Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft, Oberhafen e.V.
Time line: The majority of the existing sites in Oberhafen are leased for logistics activities until the end of 2013. In addition the whole area is designated as a railroad depot until 2014/15. This means that, after its release from railroad use, the new quarter cannot be intensively developed and adopted for new uses until 2015.

LEGAL

Necessary permits: Change of use permits will be needed, however, if homes are to be integrated, as the buildings were not so far used as working places or for housing.

FINANCIAL

Investments: The project will involve considerable expense on modernization, as well as measures to include the area in the flood-protection zone.

SPATIAL

Infrastructure: Lengthy storage buildings and multi-story frontage buildings are the main features of Oberhafen neighborhood at the moment. The sheds and office space, primarily used by rail operator Deutsche Bahn, comprise around 21,000 sq. m gross floor area.

www.hafencity.com

Ouseburn Valley, Newcastle and Gateshead, United Kingdom

1 PAST

The area was the cradle of the industrial revolution in the 19th century, but fell in decline in the mid 20th century. In the late 1980's and particularly over the last 10 years, there has been stop-start regeneration aiming to create an urban village, mixed use, mixed refurbishment of old building and new build, aiming to juxtapose live, work play and learn.

2 PRESENT

Now the Ouseburn valley is the main concentration of creative sector in Newcastle and Gateshead. It is home to over 400 businesses and 2,000 jobs. It covers about 80 hectares, comprising over 50 sites and buildings in a multitude of individual (mainly private) ownerships. Probably about 40% of the sites and buildings have been developed, but with the economic downturn and the difficulties of making development financially viable, it looks like the remaining sites will take longer to develop than anticipated at first. As a result, the idea of meanwhile and temporary uses is very relevant – both to improve the visual and other impacts, and to maximise activity, where there is continuing demand. The Container Gallery is one of the first practical applications of this aim.

3 FUTURE

Ouse St Container Gallery involves creating a Meanwhile Use on this site. This will be two (possibly 3) brightly coloured shipping containers adapted to form a gallery specialising in video and digital art. The project will showcase Meanwhile Uses as a means of visually improving and using sites while they await development – 'Pre-vitalisation' as it has been termed. The containers will be transferred to another site in Ouseburn when development of this site for Xsite's new offices takes place.

PROCEDURAL

The container will be ‘owned’ and run by a Co-operative including Xsite with any income generated by gallery activity being used to cover its running costs , neither would xsite profit from the relocation of it to another site. The container gallery was open for the Newcastle Late shows on 18th and 19th May 2012, but the remaining fit out and external works, and the addition of a third 20 ft container on top of the 2 already on site, should be completed by the end of July.

LEGAL

The owners of the site designed and obtained planning permission for a small office building for their occupation to be built on this site. However they are unlikely to carry out construction in the near future, due to the economic downturn, especially in the construction industry.

FINANCIAL

Total estimated cost - £25,000 –

SPATIAL

This is a small site - 230m2 - a former car repair garage in the southern part of the Ouseburn valley, bought by Xsite architects in order to build a permanent home for their business – they have been renting a property in the Ouseburn for 5 years, having moved from Newcastle city centre.

www.ouseburnnewcastle.org

1 PAST

In former times the building belonged to a chemical enterprise.
Later it was used as theatre.

2 PRESENT

Since the start of CCC, Project partner Kulturetage organized the quARTierfor temporary use, with nearly 100 sqm, 5 rooms and acovered outdoor area.Each year all sorts of creative activities have taken place. More than 4.000 guests a year visited the outdoor events and 1.500 people used therooms for their own creative activities.

3 FUTURE

The old building will be broken mid-2012 to construct a new building for the local radio and TV broadcast station.

PROCEDURAL

Temporary use of the old building 2010 – 2012 in the frame of CCC
Construction of the new building 2012 - 2013

LEGAL

House owner: City of Oldenburg
Tenant until mid-2012: Kulturetage, centre for cultureand communication

€ FINANCIAL

Costs for the new building: 1.200.000 €

SPATIAL

The building is situated in the station area behind the Kulturetage. In the whole area you can find an agglomeration of cultural institutions and enterprises.

www. kulturetage.de

Bricolage Plantage, Bremen, Germany

1 PAST

The intermediation of the vacant rooms of Plantage 9 was one of the biggest interim usage projects of the ZwischenZeitZentrale. Until the beginning of the year 2009, the gross floor area of 1.600m² was used as workshop, office and sales room of a fire protection company. Because of road planning, the site was sold to the municipality, but then, the road construction got far from reality because of lacking financial resources and further planning. Perspectively, no demolition is expected anymore. Therefore and because of its structure, ZZZ - ZwischenZeitZentrale classified the property as very suitable for temporary uses. To start the project, AAA - Autonomes Architektur Atelier became contractor and rented the rooms from the municipality and sublet them to the users. At the end of 2011, the temporary users established the association “Plantage 9 e.V.”, which became principal (direct) contractor with the municipality.

2 PRESENT

Under the work title “Bricolage Plantage”, Plantage 9 is used by 30 persons, amongst them photographers, fashion -, graphic - and product designers, sculptors, painters, craftspeople and different start ups. Plantage 9 became a showpiece project for the municipality that successfully keeps creative entrepreneurs in Bremen and for the positive influence of such a project on its surrounding.

3 FUTURE

Since 27.04.2012 the “Plantage 9” is a self-governing association has signed a three-year lease with the city. 30 people working on ideas and pursue their future.

PROCEDURAL

Stakeholders: land owners: municipality, facilitator: AAA - Autonomes Architektur Atelier Bremen, ZZZ - ZwischenZeitZentrale Bremen
Usage: working space for young and old creative people

LEGAL

Temporary planning permission, fire safety approval, insurance

FINANCIAL

Investment municipality: 6.662,00 €
Investment users: 15.000,00 €
Future investments: 100.000,00 €

SPATIAL

1.600 m² area, two-story commercial building from the 60s

www.plantage9.de

1 PAST

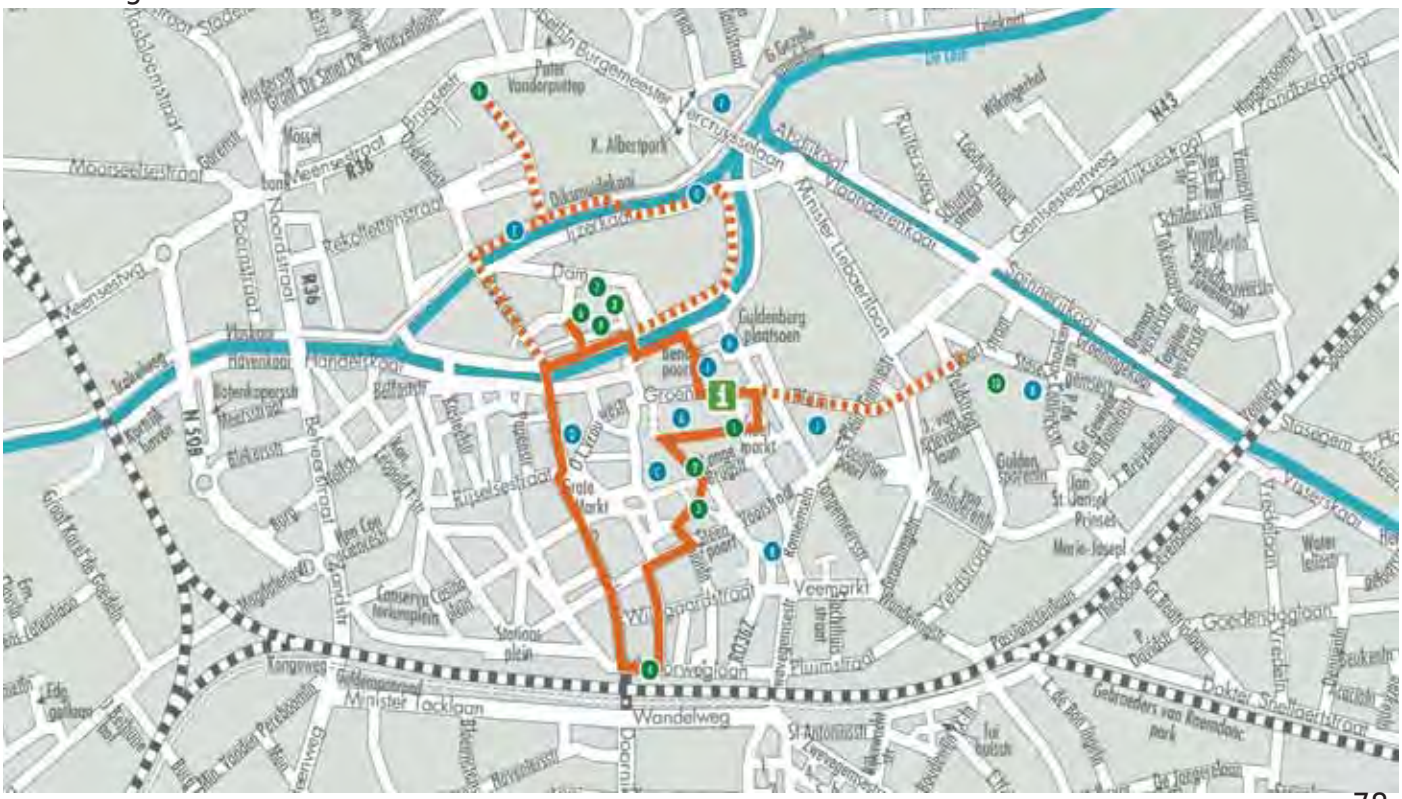
Green zones in the city that do not directly fall into the category of ‘park’ are all-too often downgraded to being sound buffers, neutral residual spaces between buildings or even parking lots. Nevertheless, it is better to emphasize the quality of a city rather than conceal its flaws. Well-cared-for, ‘occasional’ greenery can make a substantial contribution to an attractive living and working environment. In this context, we refer to sites for which no clear zoning plan has been formulated or which, while waiting for a definitive zoning plan or layout, as currently experienced as uncomfortable blemishes on the cityscape.

2 PRESENT

From 29 May to 11 October 2009, Kortrijk organized ‘Secret Gardens’ – an urban gardens manifestation. The Secret Gardens project 2009 was a project with many layers. It was design, it attempted to clean up the shabby corners of the city, while stimulating people in the neighbourhood to come together in a green environment. Above all, the intention of the project was to display gardens and creations to people and to give them ideas. Ten gardens in the centre of Kortrijk were chosen that had been generally regarded as dirty corners until then.

3 FUTURE

The aim of ‘Secret Gardens’ was to transform hidden, unknown or neglected public and semi-public spaces into places of surprise, even astonishment: locations of peace and quiet, of imagination and fantasy. This transformation was extremely successful for the few months that it lasted. The question remains as to what, besides publicity, this will contribute to the reputation of the city in the long run. Have those sites changed permanently? Although this project was all about temporary interventions, some projects could be maintained for longer than four months, according to the co-ordinator.



PROCEDURAL

- Timeline: From 29 May to 11 October 2009
- Stakeholders: Secret Gardens is an initiative of the City of Kortrijk, with the collaboration of Design Regio Kortrijk vzw, Financial co-ordinator: Chris Lecluyse, Artistic co-ordinator: Paul Geerts, Communications: Marie De Clerck, Practical organization: Lise Van Tendeloo, Practical realization and logistics: Leefmilieu directors

LEGAL

Unknown.

FINANCIAL

According to Het Nieuwsblad (daily newspaper) the Kortrijk 'Secret Gardens' project cost around 400,000 EUR. The staffing costs must be added to this sum, amounting to approximately 20,000 EUR. The City of Kortrijk sponsored 150,000 EUR.

SPATIAL

The Gardens were designed by 5 Belgian and 5 foreign landscape architects. They developed the Gardens in a creative way to form temporary oases of tranquillity for citizens and visitors alike. Bicycling and walking tours were organized, as well as all kinds of events that are linked to gardens and flowers.

www.kortrijk.be

Glaskasten, Contrescarpe Bremen, Germany

1 PAST

The suburb near the central railway station bremen suffers from shop vacancies. One of the vacancies was converted into a contact point, the “Glaskasten”, by ZZZ –ZwischenZeitZentrale Bremen. One part of the Glaskasten was the Glasbox, a shop for handmade goods. Moreover, it served as venue for exhibitions, lectures and consultation centre for people who are interested in interim uses (both temporary users and owners of houses). The aim of the project was to revive the suburb, to show the chances for development of that quarter and to popularize temporary uses, especially in that area.

2 PRESENT

In february 2012, the Glasbox moved out of the Glaskasten building and is now located in the Ostertorswallstraße Bremen.

3 FUTURE

The glasbox has a network of over 50 designers. In July 2012, a record store with real vinyl is integrated. The new owners of the formerly vacant shop are pleased with the result.

PROCEDURAL

Stakeholders: land owners: municipality,facilitator: AAA - Autonomes Architektur Atelier Bremen, ZZZ - ZwischenZeitZentrale Bremen
Usage: shop for handmade things by 20 designers, artists and crafts people in Bremen, consultation hours of ZZZ, venue for exhibitions and lectures

LEGAL

No permits required

FINANCIAL

Investment municipality: 750,00 €
Investment users: 2.000,00 €

SPATIAL

70 m² area, shop from the 60s

www.glasbox.blogspot.com

Kiem United, Sluisbuurt Amsterdam, The Netherlands

1 PAST

Zeeburgereiland (‘Zeeburger Island’) was built up and stabilized in the early 20th century. It was originally used as a military terrain. The island accommodated a water purification plant from the eighties onward. This was relocated in 2006, and the area became available for housing. Plans are already being realized on a part of the terrain.

2 PRESENT

Due to the current economic malaise, it has not been possible to market the whole island, and a part of the Sluisbuurt has now been zoned for temporary spatial use for a period of ten years. For this purpose, an open architectural competition for an area measuring 3.6 hectares was organized in 2012. The submitted plans were divided into two categories. On the one hand, there were plans that provided a spatial structure that would guarantee that an interesting area would arise organically within a period of ten years. On the other hand, there were plans that presented a clear blueprint. The prize-winner Zeilwagenpark (‘land sail park’) belonged to the latter category.

3 FUTURE

In the coming months, the City Councillor wishes to enter into discussions with parties that have submitted plans to develop the area in an organic way, in order to examine the possibilities available. The remaining strip that is not needed for the land sail park will be filled in accordingly.
The jury nominated Kiem as the best organic plan. Kiem United is an association whose aim is to involve as many people as possible in the temporary use of the Sluisbuurt. In addition to an open process, an important instrument is the deployment of a special app by means of which bottom-up area development can be stimulated. In this way, citizens can jointly determine their living environment.

PROCEDURAL

To help facilitate the process, an app for Smartphones is currently being developed. It will serve as an efficient and accessible platform between the members. It will enable everyone to read the statutes and minutes wherever they are, to report nuisance, to vote on proposals, to view one another's profile, send messages to one another and create a community.

LEGAL

By opting for an association with members and a board of directors as a tried and trusted organizational structure, good and conscientious management of the terrain can be guaranteed. An association, with members, an executive Board and statutes, has a unique structure within which all members bear equal responsibility and in which observation of the statutes can be insisted upon.

€ FINANCIAL

In the coming period of ten years, Kiem United will administer the cashflows that are concerned with the layout, the lending out and maintenance of the terrain. In the start-up stage, costs will be incurred for which pre-investment is required. This pre-investment will be repaid with interest in the second period.

SPATIAL

The plan consists of individual plots, of which several can be acquired. And there is a collective middle section, with a playing field and a field for events. It will also accommodate a community centre with a catering facility.

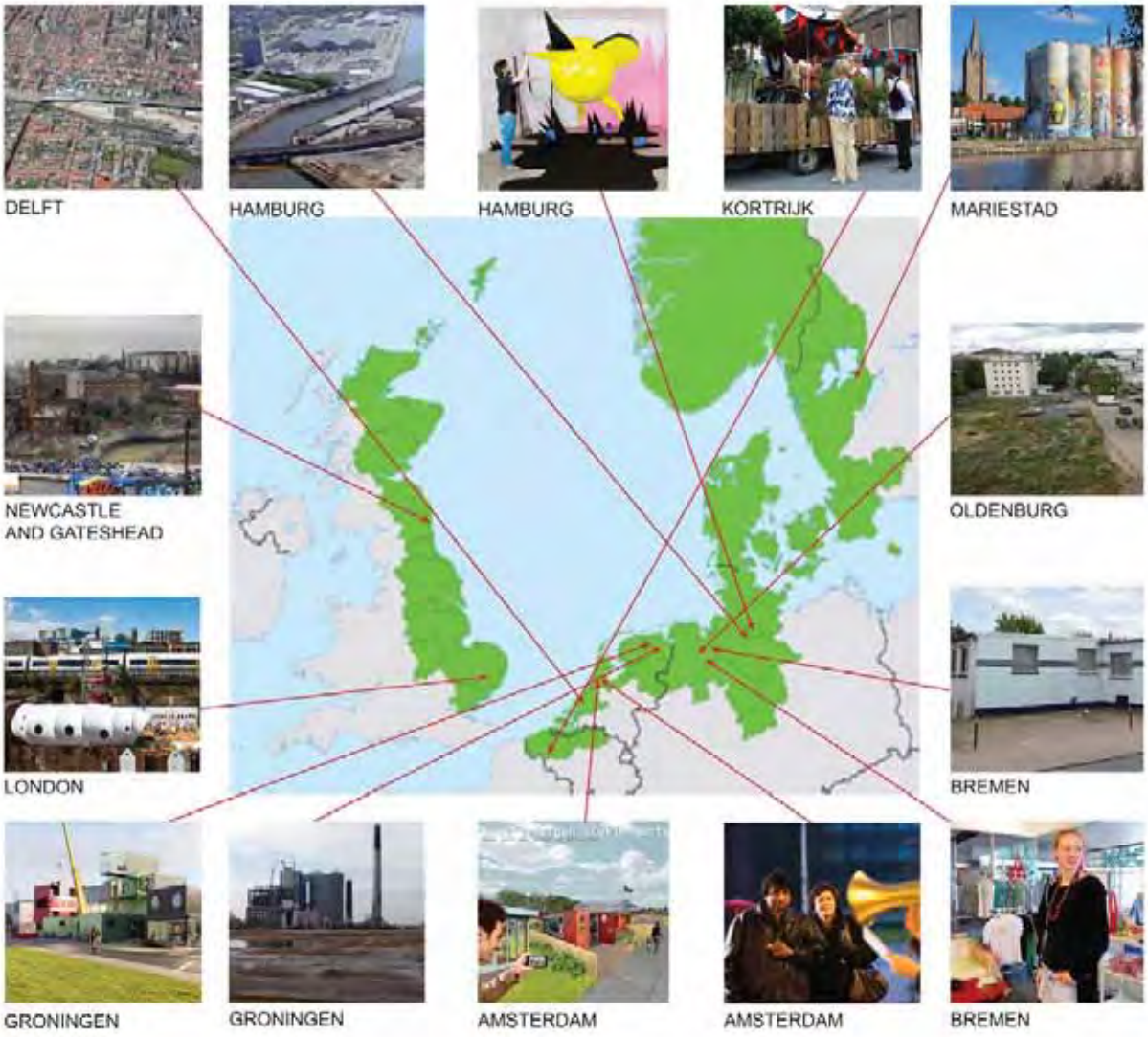
www.temparchitecture.nl/kiem

The collected examples indicate that temporary use of space is a popular instrument in the (re)developmental assignment of the European city. This instrument is frequently applied to avert structural vacancy and to ensure that empty grounds and plots remain accessible. In some cases, initiators explicitly seek to benefit from possible far-reaching consequences of interventions that are intended to be temporary. In doing so, they are intuitively applying the development strategy of improvisational planning. In Oberhafen (Hamburg, Germany) and Ouseburn Valley (Newcastle, UK) undersized budgets and small-scale interventions, intended as temporary, are being deployed to explore the appropriate dimensions, positions and combinations of new programmes. In this way, authorities are seeking the formula that will bring success and prosperity to the areas in question. In contrast to the Temporary Amsterdam project, where the consequences of historical temporary use of space are now evident, it is still too early to be able to trace results in our specified cases.

In other cases, temporary use of space takes place within the framework of blueprint planning. The exceptional local sense of community that arose as a result of temporary use of a parcel on Union Street in London disappeared when the vacant plot was developed in the traditional manner. The same threatens to occur in the Spoorzone in Delft. By retaining the development rights to the area, the Municipality has no choice but to propagate temporary use in order to maintain momentum ‘in the meanwhile’. However, any temporary energy and investment generated have no future value for the area. The promise of improvisational planning is not connected to capitalization.

The projects on display are all examples of successful alliances between municipalities and local initiators. Municipalities not only strive for the revitalization of a location, but also for an increase in social cohesion. Local initiators wish to present their own firm or talent (Mariestad) or wish to realize material gain, such as affordable workspace (Viktoria kazerne).In contrast to the Ebbinge Quarter in Groningen, where the legal framework only allows temporary use for a period of 5 years, the European reference projects seem not to be subject to exceptional legal restrictions. This is remarkable, because one would expect that the legal frameworks of the various European countries would be similar.

Almost all of the reference projects have been realized with the support of subsidy or government grant; in no instance has the temporary use of space been connected to a financially sound business case. Interesting financial forms include the cultural festival, as in London (Festival of Architecture) and Kortrijk (Secret Gardens). The Secret Gardens in Kortrijk also show that greenery, which is season-specific, harmonizes well with temporary use of space. Examples of temporary use of existing property, as advanced by Zwischen Zeit Zentrale, demonstrate that oversize in a building is almost a precondition of a second life. Glamourmanifest makes it clear that even a very temporary programme, such as a poem declaimed or a reception, can be an effective instrument for revitalization, without a physical (built) intervention having to take place.



References:

- the partners of the Creative City Challenge:

The 20th-century flush of growth in European cities has reached its zenith. New developments will generally take place within the existing city boundaries. The modern toolbox for city expansion, which is still common, is ill-equipped for the transformation of the urban fabric. This toolbox takes a previously determined blueprint as its starting point and, as such, is insufficiently manoeuvrable for the complex, changing context of transformative assignments. For this reason, we need alternative developmental methods that are capable of dealing with a complex context. Competences such as the delivery of custom-made spatial solutions, the acquisition of support, coping with legal contradictions, and the reduction of financial risks are of major importance here. This publication describes the coherence between these competences under the denominator: Improvisational Planning.

Improvisational planning implies step-by-step spatial development, and appeals to the possibilities of the moment itself, without laying claim to an as-yet unknown future. Temporary use of space not only makes it possible to react rapidly to change and then vanish into nothingness, it can also lead – with time as a lever – to durable change on a large scale. The retrospective study Tijdelijk Amsterdam (Temporary Amsterdam) indicates that temporary use of space can be a surprisingly useful resource in urban development.

The collected examples indicate that temporary use of space is a popular instrument in the (re)developmental assignment of the European city. What can these examples teach us about the future possibilities for urban development? To what extent are these examples an overture to a new integral developmental model such as improvisational planning. These questions form the core of this publication and are dealt with via the four classical mainstays of area development, namely: procedures, legal structures, funding and spatial design.

Procedural

The projects on display are all examples of successful alliances between municipalities (top-down) and local initiators (bottom-up), where interests often differ but are not opposing. Municipalities not only strive for the revitalization of a location, but also for an increase in social cohesion. Local initiators wish to present their own firm or talent (Mariestad) or wish to realize material gain, such as affordable workspace (Viktoria kazerne). Finding the right equilibrium between these interests is not always easy. At the request of the initiators of the OLE in Groningen, the Municipality relinquished the management of the area to the initiators, which has facilitated rapid realization of the plans. In the management phase, however, this role allocation appears to be less successful. The initiators have the responsibility to hold the participants in the project to the agreements made, but they have not received a mandate from the Municipality to enforce regulations.

Legal

The OLE has also shown that a limited lifespan of five years more less makes organic growth impossible. Although the Dutch administrative laws allow a maximum temporary zoning plan of five years, recent examples, such as the Suikerunie grounds in Groningen, have shown that there may indeed be loopholes in the regulations that can be exploited. The reference projects from other cities appear not to be restricted by exceptional legal obstructions. This is striking, as one would expect the legal frameworks of the various European cities to be similar.

Financial

Almost all of the reference projects have been realized with the support of subsidy or government grant; in no instance has the temporary use of space been connected to a financially sound business case. This is disappointing, in view of the fact that the ability of authorities to invest will decline in the coming years. Interesting financial forms include the cultural festival, as in London (Festival of Architecture) and Kortrijk (Secret Gardens), where (private) promotional investment can be coupled to the revitalization of locations.

Spatial

The examples demonstrate that the architecture of organic growth is still in its infancy. With a few exceptions (Union Street in London, for instance) the physical temporary interventions consist of scarcely refined, standard building containers, while empty real estate is instantly and unimaginatively filled with a temporary programme. The Secret Gardens in Kortrijk show that greenery, which is season-specific, is an interesting resource for temporary use of space. The Amsterdam Glamour Manifestation makes it clear that a sophisticated temporary programme can be an effective instrument for revitalization, if it takes place in public space.

A future for Time-Based Interventions

In general, it can be stated that initiators in most cases are explicitly interested in the possible far-reaching consequences of interventions that are intended to be temporary. In doing so, they deploy the developmental strategy of improvisational planning. However, the reference examples are too recent to be able to discern whether or not they will genuinely have an effect in the long run and on a greater scale.

In searching for new developmental methods for the European city, the exemplary projects in this publication form an important link in the chain, as we see it. We hope that this publication will contribute to this search and will inspire a new round of experiments.

Laissez Faire VOORBEELDEN
Laissez faire AMSTEL III
"Amsterdam is te mooi om braak te liggen"
Discussiekaart leegstaande kantoren

temp.architecture.urbanism

is an office for architecture, urban planning and research, oriented toward urban transformation.

temp. observes that the development of space is grinding to a halt. The enormous surface area of currently vacant ground and the great quantity of vacant real estate are symptoms of this stagnation.

temp. studies and proposes designs relating to the spatial assignment resulting from this stagnation. How can vacant ground become new space for the city? How can empty buildings be adapted in such a way that supply and demand can again dovetail?

In the course of 2013, NAi Publishers will issue a book by temp.office entitled *Stad op Maat*, naar een flexibele gebiedsontwikkeling (Custom-made City: toward flexible area development), which deals with this theme in much more depth.

temp. is a co-operative partnership between Tom Bergevoet and Maarten van Tuijl.
for more information, please see: *www.temparchitecture.com*

Maarten van Tuijl

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After completing his study of Architecture at Delft University of Technology, Tom Bergevoet worked for some time in Japan where he researched the capacity of Japanese cities to respond to societal changes. Having worked at the architectural offices of Kazuyo Sejima and Herman Hertzberger, among others, he founded Tom Bergevoet Architecture, by means of which he won various design competitions and realized several projects. Tom also works as a visiting lecturer.

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