



CATEGORY Urban design/architecture

LOCATION Amsterdam - Amstel III

POPULATION 750,000 (region 2.5 million)

STRATEGIC SITE 250 ha **SITE OF PROJECT** 16 ha

SITE PROPOSED BY Municipality of Amsterdam, Projectbureau Zuidooitlob

OWNERS OF THE SITE Municipality of Amsterdam (plots allocated under long lease)

COMMISSION AFTER THE COMPETITION to work together with the municipality on the elaboration of the (spatial) transformation strategy for Amstel III.

TRANSFORMATION OF SITE

Amstel III is a “promising problem area”. Approximately 30 % of the office area is structurally vacant (10 of the 120 properties are wholly vacant), ownership is fragmented, investment climate has deteriorated. There is a lack of liveliness and public and private external space is designed to focus primarily on the car. The city is looking for innovative ways to transform a mono-functional business park into a lively urban district. This requires a strong development strategy, one that is appropriate at every scale level. objectives are: introduction of new functions, including housing, and improving the quality of the external space. The municipality’s preference is for an integral, area-focused approach including financial instruments in collaboration with the leaseholders.

CITY STRATEGY

The transformation of office space is the fourth major assignment in Amsterdam following post-war reconstruction, urban regeneration and transformation of the old docklands and industrial areas into mixed urban districts. The transformation of large mono-functional business districts is even becoming the new assignment for the rest of the Netherlands. A study has revealed that part of the existing office stock will no longer be used for business purposes. This is due to the introduction of “new approaches to working” with fewer square metres per employee and a surplus of office space. This new approach requires lively urban areas with amenities. Amsterdam is actively seeking alternative functions for the vacant office premises.



SITE DEFINITION

Since the seventies Amstel III has developed into a strong and dynamic working area to the southeast of Amsterdam. The study area is situated between the new ArenAPoort entertainment and shopping centre with the Arena (football stadium) to the north and the AMC (Amsterdam Medical Centre) with the adjacent Medical Business Park to the south. The A2 motorway and Amstelland, of cultural-historical interest, are situated to the west, the railway and metro line and post-war housing to the east. The western part of Amstel III comprises chiefly businesses, the eastern part chiefly offices. The intervention area covers two sub-areas of Amstel III and comprises 36 plots, with an office block or commercial premises of three to eight floors, allocated on a long lease basis and owned by 28 owners. On the western side of the study area there is one – as yet to be allocated – undeveloped plot,

comprising three sub-plots divided by infrastructure.

NEW MOBILITY

The study area borders Bullewijk metro station and is 500 m from the intercity train and metro station. However, an adequate pedestrian and bicycle network is lacking. How do you get from the stations to the offices and the desired housing, hotels, café-restaurants, etc? This is precisely where the opportunities lie. The Hogehilweg area comprises a no-through road with 18 parking spaces. Is this a sustainable way forward for the future? How do you tackle this in the quest for more quality in the exterior space?

NEW WAYS OF LIFE

For the coming 10 to 15 years the municipality anticipates demand for apartments for expats (working in Amstel III), student/starter housing, extremely large shell housing (new residential-business concepts for the

creatively minded) and apartments for students and staff at the AMC. In addition, there appears to be a market for a number of hotels, restaurants, health clubs, etc. How do you tempt your new residents and users to come to Amstel III?

NEW SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

To what extent do water and green zones play a role in the study and intervention areas? Can the overall park-like character of the Atlas Arena business park to the north be further extended? The Molenwatering watercourse and the green railway zone with abundant water are attractive landscape elements that could possibly be exploited to better advantage and perhaps a more green approach to the plots, façades and roofs of the buildings could provide a promising theme for the transformation.

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