

**SCALES:** L - urban + architecture  
**TEAM REPRESENTATIVE:** architect / urbanist  
**SITE FAMILY:** MAKING PROXIMITIES - Interfaces and short cycles  
**LOCATION:** Rotterdam, Brainpark I  
**POPULATION:** 650,000 inhabitants (Rotterdam)  
**STRATEGIC SITE:** 101.6 ha    **PROJECT SITE:** 17.9 ha  
**SITE PROPOSED BY:** Municipality of Rotterdam  
**ACTOR(S) INVOLVED:** Municipality of Rotterdam, Erasmus University, owners and users of the office buildings on site  
**OWNER(S) OF THE SITE:** Mix of public and private ownership  
**COMMISSION AFTER COMPETITION:** Design (or research-by-design) assignment on implementation at the project site (or a site with

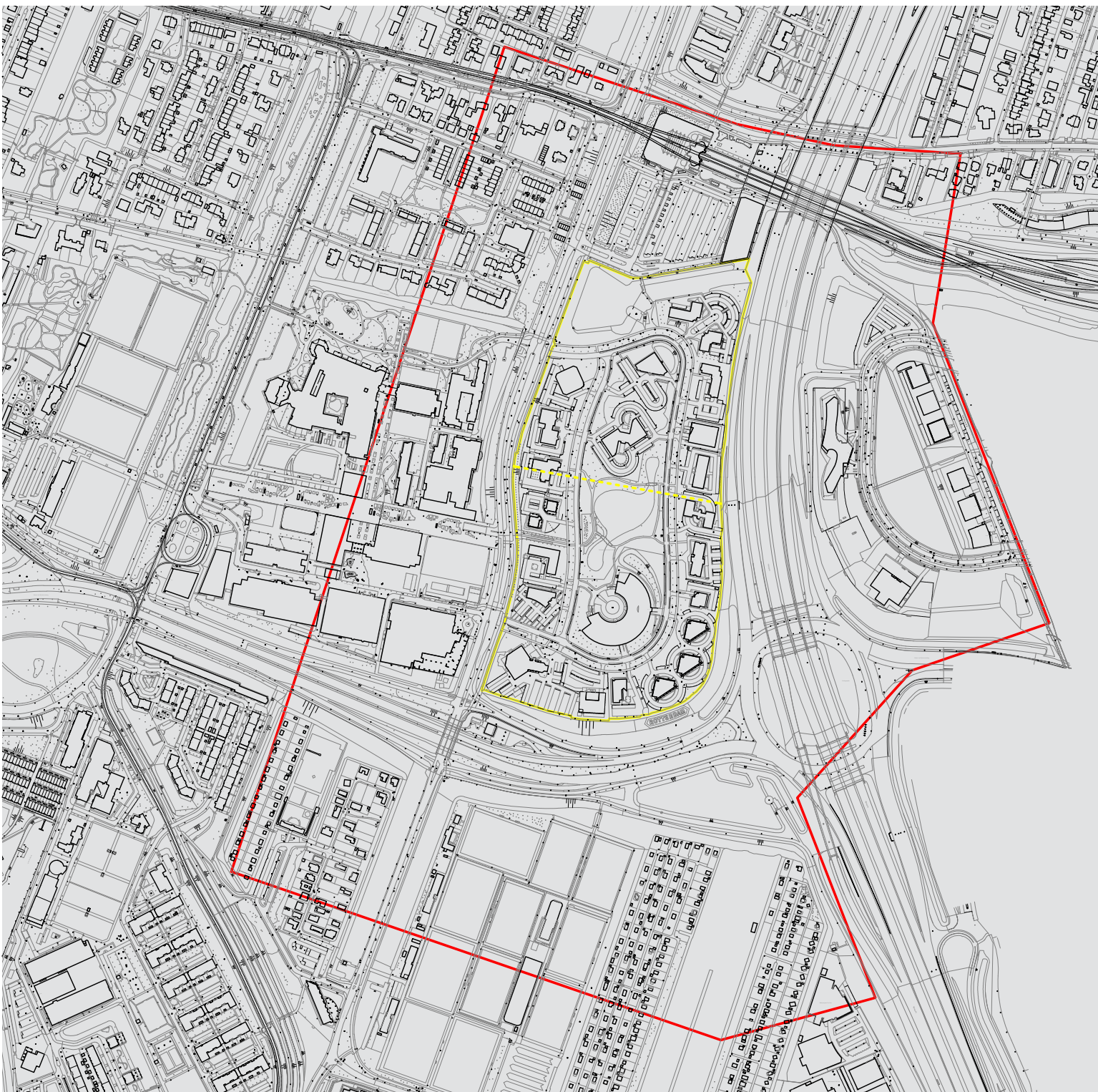
similar characteristics) commissioned by the municipality of Rotterdam and/or private partners

**HOW CAN THE SITE CONTRIBUTE TO THE PRODUCTIVE CITY?** Certain districts are not in prime locations, but considering their unique characteristics and exceptional connectivity they do have the potential to become one. A new compelling story and strategic design interventions could push future developments towards a higher level of ambition. In the case of Brainpark I, a new mix of functions based on strategic partnerships on site – for example the Erasmus University in collaboration with research-orientated private firms and small-scale innovative businesses – could be the catalyst to the development of a future-proof, compact, mixed-use work-and-live area.

**CITY STRATEGY** The City of Rotterdam seeks opportunities in the combination of accommodating its growth and boosting the next economy with vibrant places of interaction among all kinds of economic activities and among citizens with widely varying backgrounds. In the case of Brainpark I, there is a twofold spatial strategy. On the one hand, densifying the area with innovative workhome housing typologies, using the potential of the public transport hub and dealing with the challenging environmental issues on site (such as car noise and highway emissions). On the other, strengthening interaction milieus by creating high-quality public space and places to work and live, and more importantly by creating the right mix of functions. A strong asset is the nearby Erasmus University; embedding this economic engine in the interaction milieus on site adds mass and unique components to the mix.

Photos by Frank Hanswijk





**SITE DEFINITION** Brainpark I is an isolated office area in eastern Rotterdam, bordering Erasmus University's Campus Woudestein. It was built around the 1990s to accommodate spinouts of the university, inspired by 'productive parks' like MIT in Cambridge. Situated between the A16 motorway and Kralingse Zoom, an important regional public transport hub, it is easily accessible. It is in the vicinity of remarkably green public areas and powerful institutions and attractive neighbourhoods. In other words, Brainpark I clearly has a high-potential profile. Nevertheless, it is currently characterized by rather traditional businesses with no link to the knowledge infrastructure, relatively small and some vacant buildings, and public space that lacks activity. The challenge is to develop a cross section of Brainpark I, presenting a densification strategy that unlocks the productive potential of the site, setting the

transformation in motion from a monofunctional business area along the motorway to a healthy, vital and interactive work-and-live milieu that is well-connected to the university campus and public transport hub.

## **HOW IS PRODUCTION CONSIDERED IN THE URBAN DIVERSITY PROGRAM?**

Rotterdam is growing. The city aims to build 50,000 new homes in the next decade and to vigorously enhance the quality and energy performance of the existing built environment. Rotterdam is looking for 'good growth': building a compact, circular, productive, healthy and inclusive city with equal opportunities and high quality of living for everyone. It aims to be a vibrant and welcoming place for people of all walks of life, ages and beliefs, enabling them to prosper. Citizens of Rotterdam should be able to live productive lives by working,

learning, caring or in any other way contributing to the development of the city and its narratives. Therefore, it is important to remove barriers, to increase connectivity. Europaan15 focusses on sites that might catalyse opportunities on multiple levels, places of meaning that might enhance the city's social resiliency. These are some of the abstract notions rooted in the new Rotterdam vision and regulatory framework on spatial and socioeconomic developments, called the *Omgevingsvisie*. This framework is currently being drafted by the municipality. It should accelerate innovative spatial solutions and sustainable socioeconomic developments. It is supported by an extensive participatory process and an action research program. The Europaan15 sites have been selected to implement this process, through research-by-design and its aim of implementing exemplary projects.



# European 15 – Rotterdam (NL)







Brainpark I and Erasmus University, with skyline of the inner-city in the background



Public transport hub 'Kralingse Zoom' next to Brainpark I



Brainpark I: typical office architecture from the 1980s-1990s and large high-quality green public spaces



Infrastructure inbetween Brainpark I and the campus of the Erasmus University