

REPORT OF AMSTERDAM SITE VISIT 19 MAART 2011

The site visit to the Amstel III site in Amsterdam was held in a site cabin on the study area. The pleasant weather tempted many potential participants to this site visit and with approximately 35 visitors it was very cramped in the site cabin. Consequently Roy Berents from the Physical Planning Department (DRO) of the Municipality of Amsterdam and Iris van der Horst from the Zuidoostlob planning office kept the presentation brief in order to have more time to walk around the site.



Amstel III is part of the Amsterdam Master Plan 2040. In this master plan the emphasis is on the growth of Amsterdam within the present municipal boundaries, with no expansion outside them. Part of this growth is in the Amstel III area. In the 1970s the study area was laid out as a business district. At present this district comprises almost exclusively office premises, private parking spaces and there is one day nursery and one catering establishment. The objective is to transform this business district into a more lively and urban area, where working, living, entertainment and recreation go hand in hand. Amstel III should be given a new individual character. Linking up with the neighbouring Bijlmer district is not advisable. The Bijlmer has its own character, one that does not fit in with the plans for Amstel III. The assignment for this area is to find a **strategy** for the transformation of Amstel III into a livelier, urban district.



For the transformation into a more urban area the municipality of Amsterdam faces the following problems. The vacancy levels are high in the business buildings. The offices are partly or wholly unoccupied and this is structural vacancy. In addition, ownership is fragmented. The municipality of Amsterdam will not buy up large parts of the study area so Roy Berents repeatedly emphasised that the strategy for transformation should appeal to the many owners. Another problem is that the layout of the area is chiefly oriented towards the use of the car. There are hardly any footpaths or cycle tracks. The growth of motor traffic has resulted in the building of large basement car parks with relatively small buildings on top.



During the extensive walk through the area Roy Berents explained the issues he had mentioned previously. He pointed to a number of issues that the potential participants should take into account when designing their strategies: student accommodation, expats (growth of the Asian market, accustomed to high-rise), self-build by groups of young people, restaurants and hotels. Many buildings in the study area have just three or four floors. These can be extended upwards by adding apartments on top.

Many business premises still have a green space of five to six metres between the building and the pavement. Here the development can be focused on the breadth. The transformation will take place step by step. Here and there changes are already

taking place: an alteration to a façade, or, for example, four owners who want to turn the space between their premises into a garden.

The transformation will not only apply to the office premises, the public space will also have to change. At present all the parking spaces are private property, in an urban area public parking facilities, footpaths and cycle tracks are needed.

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