

Report Assen site visit 13 April 2013



Alderman Henk Matthijssse wished the more than 40 people present a very WARM welcome in the drafty, cold, but interesting space inside the silo. He introduced Assen, the fastest-growing town in the region, passionate about innovation. One of the spearheads in the field of innovation for Assen is sensor technology. Assen is known as “sensor city”, and wants to expand these activities in the coming years. Up to 2030 the government will invest € 220 million in *Florijnas*, the umbrella programme for all economic developments in Assen. This is expected to create a € 1½ billion spin-off for investments in the city. *Havenkwartier*, the new residential-business area, forms part of *Florijnas*, as does the new train station, Stadsboulevard, Blauwe As, Assen aan de Aa, the Assen Zuid work landscape, and the

Toeristisch Recreatieve Zone.

By participating in European 12 Assen expects the young architects and urban developers to submit refreshing and innovative ideas, something to which the municipality attaches great importance and that will be appropriate for this day and age. The assignment for this site comprises two parts. Firstly, a strategy is required for a development whereby the industrial area should “transform” into a mixed area in which residential functions also have a place alongside business functions. The second assignment concerns two new apartment buildings that need to be created. In this framework it is interesting to note that representatives from developing company Treanth were also present that day.

Frank Aikema, urban designer at the municipality, then presented the site – as he had done two weeks earlier at the information market in Rotterdam (see www.european.nl).

After the presentation the company split up into smaller groups, each led by an expert, to explore the site. The municipality is very keen to preserve the silo and is seeking an interesting programme and an enthusiastic investor. The shed next to the silo can be demolished creating an interesting, temporary, venue for events.



The municipality does not intend buying up everything that comes on the market: it is specifically seeking private individuals or market players with the municipality playing a facilitating role in the development.



Standing on the southern side of the harbour the visitors heard how the green bank by the DIY store on the other side of the water is one of the project sites and that the other project site is situated on the water of the inner harbour. The water level will be raised several metres (to 30 cm under the quay), which will enhance the water’s appeal.

This will be achieved by constructing a lock on the eastern side of the study area. This work will take place towards the end of 2014. There are no further details available at present, since there has been no call for tenders as yet. The contract will be on a design and construct basis.



The project sites raised the question as to whether the development should follow the assignment to the letter, with a building height of four floors. This apparently is not absolutely necessary but the footprint is definite. The development can be moved a little to the left or the right along the waterfront. The municipality considers a building height of four floors appropriate in the urban setting and is hoping for an exceptionally striking and appealing design that fits in with the context. If this deviates from the building height mentioned above this need not pose a problem.

The water, together with the connecting canals, forms the “blue axis”. North of this axis the spatial design will be informal and green, south of the axis it will be urban.

The municipality owns a number of premises in the area. The policy is that existing premises are to be filled with interesting functions within the temporary framework concept. An ownership map will be made available indicating what is municipal and what is private property.

Regarding the question of what target group was envisaged for *Havenkwartier* the answer was the so-called “red/blue target group. This group cannot be divided into age categories, but indicates more the housing requirements and the lifestyle of the consumer. The red target group represents consumers with an urban orientation, who value freedom and independence. They are enterprising, seek a fitting physical environment, but do not favour commitments and engagement in the community. On a social level their interests are focused outside the neighbourhood, they seek challenge, culture and sporting activities, work at home and prefer living in unconventional, old premises with plenty of space. Characteristics of these consumers are a zest for life, taking on challenges, individuality and self-awareness.



The blue target group represents the consumer who wants to live in areas that have a certain status, among like-minded people. These consumers are fond of privacy and are in general highly ambitious and dedicated to their work. They use their analytical abilities, assertiveness and intelligence, but they are also cautious and their decisions are well-considered. Characteristics include a businesslike attitude, self-assurance, success, independence, career orientation and materialism.

Consultations with the water purification plant treatment have taken place regarding possible collaboration on environmental engineering aspects. For example, deployment of the residual heat from the water treatment for heating the residential area has been discussed.



The railway poses a noise nuisance but, for the time being, this is not an issue for the European assignment. The housing on the southern side of the railway is an example of what the municipality does not envisage for *Havenkwartier*. This is mainly due to the fact that, in the area, you are unaware of being close to the centre. There used to be an industrial factory here, this was demolished and, with new parcellisation, a residential area was built. All

historical traces of earlier use of the site have been lost. This is what the municipality wants to avoid in *Havenkwartier*. For *Havenkwartier* it is assumed that the existing parcellisation and the existing road infrastructure are retained because they are very satisfactory. In addition, this is a sustainable solution because the existing cables and pipes need not be moved and the roads can be retained.

The cattle market site is situated on the opposite side of Industrieweg, it currently serves as a free parking area. This site forms part of the first phase of the *Florijnas* intervention where housing will be constructed. A Japanese sushi and grill restaurant will shortly be opened in the former Marktzicht café (1935, by municipal architect J. Jansen van Galen) that also served as a market building and party centre.

The last stop was at the “camperplek” that mobile visitors to the town had already occupied. Mobile homes can park there for a maximum of three days. In the summer months up to ten mobile homes park there. Electricity is available on the site for the users.



After a welcome cup of coffee (much appreciated after the biting wind) with gingerbread or cake in the silo, a small group gathered around the scale model of harbour area and others climbed to the top of the silo in order to take photographs of the general view. And just as the programme ended the sun hesitantly broke through...

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