

PRESENTATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT



Marc Visser first spoke about Abe Bonnema, an architect from Leeuwarden who died in 2001 leaving a large sum of money. This was placed in the Abe Bonnema Stichting with the aim of spreading and increasing insight into, and knowledge of, contemporary architecture and promoting the newbuild premises of the Fries Museum in Leeuwarden. The museum has in the meantime reached completion and the properties on Turfmarkt, where the museum was formerly located, are now vacant. In addition to this, the foundation annually awards an architecture prize. Participation in European 13 in Leeuwarden is possible thanks to the financial support of this foundation.

A brief introduction to the province of Friesland and the assignment in Leeuwarden then followed. Marc Visser emphasised that the assignment does not ask for a design assignment as such, but rather a strategy. In addition, the project site indicated is not a key factor: participants can themselves choose a project site to illustrate their proposed strategy. In that connection also the area around the Bonifatius Church is emphasised.

Alderman Henk Deinum wished everyone a warm welcome.

He said that he was proud of his city that will become the European Capital of Culture in 2018. He expressed his gratitude to Abe Bonnema for the new museum, adding that it has also led to vacant premises in the European site area.

He said that, thanks to the ideas put forward by the European participants, he envisaged this area in the future blossoming into a new *Quartier Latin*. This in connection with plans for the establishment of a faculty of the university (University Campus Fryslân).

The theme “Adaptable City” fits in well with the city’s ambitions as the European Capital of Culture in 2018. Strong links with Europe are being forged. The city faces the same challenges as many other cities. The key word for 2018 is *mienskip*: the unique commitment that Friesians have for their closest acquaintances, family, neighbours, clubs, corps or choirs.

The alderman wished the European participants every success, adding that he was eager to know the results and was convinced that people in the city would be willing to work together with everybody.

Architect Bauke Tuinstra then explained the city’s history. How it came into being on the shore of the *Middelzee* and how it developed. He illustrated his talk with old maps. In addition to urban expansion, he explained how the construction of the railway and waterways played an important role.

Jos van Langen from the municipality described the problems – or rather the challenges – that the city faces. One important point is the vacancy levels in the city centre, though this is not unique to Leeuwarden. Another point is the “sacred cow”, the car.

Using a (street) map he indicated where the mediaeval city lay in relation to the present city, where the shopping area is located etc., finally arriving at the European 13 strategy area.

Trending topics are: economy, market tendencies, retail shift, digitisation of society, demographic transitions, market displacements and rental prices.

He showed figures for vacancy levels in various Dutch cities and concluded that “preventing, care-taking and healing” were key words in solving the problems.



He emphasised the pressing need for a new strategy and hoped that the European 13 participants can provide an interesting contribution.

Bauke Tuinstra addressed the meeting again, this time to explain the final item on the programme: a number of ongoing projects, namely *Blokhuispoort* and *It Hege Hûs*. He used Amelandstraat as an example of a potential project site for the participants: the space around the Bonifatiuskerk.



To conclude, Liesbeth van der Pol – interim-chair of European Nederland – addressed those present. She explained the *raison d'être* behind European: the fact that new ideas are lacking and the younger generation can be expected to have innovative ideas.

WALK THROUGH THE STRATEGY AREA



The group first stopped at the passageway under the Turfmarkt, which formerly connected both parts of the Fries Museum. The passageway is temporarily closed because at the other side of the street material of the Frisian Museum is stored. In the passageway two meeting facilities have been created.

Various buildings were pointed out on the way. The Provinciehuis [provincial government building], designed by Sjoerd Soeters, was also a plan that increased the building density of the city centre. The former post office is a congress centre and belongs to Grand Hotel Post Plaza. Tweebaksmarkt has been restructured. There is now more space for pedestrians.

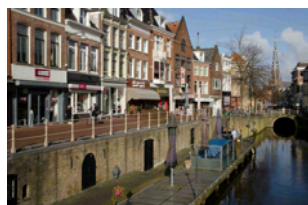


Via Nieuwstraatje the group arrived at the site above the new basement car park where a housing plan by Bauke Tuinstra will shortly be built. This plan follows the former street pattern. The garage doors of the properties along the Gedempte Keizersgracht will be opened on the ground floor making these façades more attractive combined with the new development. During weekdays the car park is for staff and motorists visiting the Provinciehuis, but open to the public on Friday evenings and at weekends.



The KPN building is vacant, but crammed with infrastructure still in use. The building will be completely empty in 2017. It has been purchased by two developers who have plans to build accommodation for the elderly and student housing. Leeuwarden has 15,000 to 20,000 students thanks to the three *hogescholen* established in the city. Some hundreds of students will be added as soon as University Campus Fryslân is established.

Via Nieuwe Oosterstraat, the group had a quick look at the edge of the study area, after which the walk led to Blokhuispoort. In the continuation of Gedempte Keizersgracht a breakthrough will be made to one of the Blokhuispoort (inner) courtyards, so that the building complex is accessible from that side too. The building is currently exclusively accessed via the entrance gate. The former cell complex can be entered via the two main courtyards. Studios and small businesses are located in the cells. A café (“De Bak”) is available as well.



From the south side of the Provinciehuis one of the courtyards can be viewed where staff take their breaks. In the weekend the gates between the Provinciehuis courtyards and the adjacent streets are shut.

The bridge at Kelders provides an excellent view of the unique lower-lying wharf. Similar wharves are characteristic for the city of Utrecht. The canals were “cleaned up” some ten years ago making them navigable for canoes and sloops. Now, 40,000 visitors a year take a boat trip. From the bridge looking south, the red light district is on the right. In spite of a lack of concrete plans many people hope that this spot ever will be tackled.

The group stood still at the birthplace of Mata Hari, the well-known World War II spy. There is a commemorative plaque here in memory of her.

Leeuwarden wants to project a distinct identity as the city of ceramics. Keramiekmuseum Prinsessehof [the national ceramics museum] is established in the city. Friesland has traditionally produced an abundance of ceramics, with Makkumer earthenware being particularly renowned.

Apotheek Broekema has an example of the many *tegelplateaus* [tile plaques] to be found in the city. Hygiea, the Greek goddess of health, cleanliness and hygiene, is depicted on the plaque.

Walking along Voorstreek the increasing number of empty premises were conspicuous, as were the vacancies on the floors above the stores. These were originally housing units. In the course of time access to these homes often disappeared entirely in order to create more retail space.

From the eastern side of Tuinen it is clear that the project site building was originally larger. Turfmarkt nummer 2,4 en 6 are absent. Following a fire, a far narrower property was rebuilt, creating more pavement space and more space for parking.

On the northernmost side of the strategic area, on the bulwark, a supermarket and a car park have sprung up. The history of the development of this part of the city is depicted on the supermarket façade.

The next stop was Bonifatiuskerk, with its splendid, leaded windows. Bonifatiusplein gives a dismal impression. It is bordered in part by the backs of the premises on the northern side of Tuinen. This spot has great potential and is considered emphatically one of the possible alternative transformation areas.

It must be stressed that interventions in the city should always go hand in hand with the wishes of the (private) owners and users that should form part of the strategy required in the Leeuwarden assignment.

Via Tuinen, the tour ended where it began, in the Kanselarij.

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