

Report Site Visit: **Kop Dakpark, Rotterdam (NL)**

Synergy between Productive Forces
**Transforming an Urban Void into the Missing Link between a Vulnerable
Neighbourhood and an Upcoming Makers District**



**Site visit 'Kop Dakpark', with Sabina van der Spek, Sander Klaassen and
Robbert de Vrieze as site representatives**

Photo: Frank Hanswijk

On Friday 26 April AIR and European NL organized a full day programme to introduce the five European sites in Rotterdam in depth. It was a unique opportunity to explore the five areas and meet representatives and stakeholders of each site.

SITE VISIT (morning)

EXPERTS ON SITE:

Sabina van der Spek (City of Rotterdam, project manager Kop Dakpark)

Sander Klaassen (City of Rotterdam, landscape architect)

Robbert de Vrieze (independent city maker / Transformism / Delfshaven Coöperatie)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:

Q: What is the general question for this site?

A: The Kop Dakpark (the 'head' of the rooftop park) is an important connection between the former port area of Merwe-Vierhavens (M4H) and the Bospolder-Tussendijken (BoTu) neighbourhoods. The challenge for this area is to densify the urbanisation and to make it greener at the same time. In the bigger area 18,000 new houses are planned in the coming 4 years. For this plot, the municipality will try to find a developer in the coming year. The main questions for this plot are:

- How to connect the different areas and their dynamics?
- How to create a programmatic mix to fuel these vital connections?
- How to integrate green into the building; how to create a 'good' building in terms of green and biodiversity?

In short, the main themes are: social, infrastructure, green, mix, connection.

> Read the site brief for the official assignment: <https://www.european-europe.eu/en/session/european-15/site/rotterdam-kop-dakpark-nl>



Participants enter the 'Kop Dakpark' site, coming from the M4H area

Photo: Frank Hanswijk

Q: Does the desire path ("olifantenpaadje") next to the entrance of the parking garage show the connection?

A: A staircase was planned on this spot as part of the building on this site (Kop Dakpark). It is not built yet due to the economic crisis. This connection should be integrated in the European proposals for this site.

Q: What kind of houses are planned on the actual site? And why is there a mix with other programmes necessary?

A: A mix of rental houses: 50% social housing, 25% middle segment (max. rent between €800-€1000/month), and 25% more expensive. The municipality is looking for a better mix between social housing and starters. This site offers a good chance to realise this mix. However, it has to be combined with other programmes to create a realistic business case for the whole site.

Q: What is already defined for the site on street level?

A: The initial zoning plan had a school planned here. The image in the European site brief shows that the height of the building is max. 50 metres. The building should fit, but as this is a competition you are allowed to challenge this if you make it better. There is a strict separation now between the surrounding areas, so the challenge is to create strong connections. Community centres in some surrounding neighbourhoods are closed and sold to private developers. This makes it even more urgent to implement a programme on site which connects people with a mix of:

- Good public space on street level, connection to the area;
- Mix of housing typologies;
- A connection between the makers district in M4H and the neighbourhoods: an exchange of people with different skills. The building could be a first step in this exchange.

Q: How are the shops underneath the Dakpark (rooftop park) connected to this site?

A: We expect that these so-called Big Shops will not stay on the long term. During the economic crisis several entrepreneurs had to close their store, and even now some spaces are vacant. Hopefully, new scenarios to transform this strip in the future will be part of the European plans and strategies as well.

Q: Are there any plans to redevelop the Marconiplein?

A: Currently the infrastructure of the Marconiplein blockades the Green Connection. There are long term studies going on, addressing this problem, but it is not likely that there is anything going to happen soon.

Q: What is the demarcation of the plan area?

A: The building site is clearly shown on the images, but if your plan involves the Marconiplein: do it! It can be a first step towards the transformation into an actual Marconi square, as nowadays it does not function like that. The main landscape elements coming together on this site are:

- The Green Connection following the old derelict railway tracks.
- The citizens' social-green initiatives with these green areas.
- The dikes (primary dike: Westzeedijk; secondary dikes: Spoordijk, Mathenessedijk) dividing the site into an inside area and a riverside area.

So, we recommend you rethink the whole area. The competition design should not be a stand-alone 'icon'; it is part of the larger urban structure and the urban fabric.

Q: Could you elaborate a bit more on these landscape elements?

A: The Marconiplein is a place with large potential when the cars would leave in the future. M4H will not get its own metro station, so Marconiplein will become an even more important public transport hub, dominated by people instead of cars. We are also planning a new train station here. It could become a central urban area with a local, national and international focus. The municipality is currently studying how to densify the city and to make it greener at the same time. The Marconiplein is at the intersection of four different neighbourhoods and the Mathenesserweg (an important axis towards the centre). Currently the square is a barrier, a void and the missing link in the Green Connection. Next to that, we have the Dutch difficulty of the existing dikes which act as barriers too. Therefore, we need an architecture that deals with these barriers and creates connections.



[View towards the 'Kop Dakpark' from the other side of the Marconiplein](#)
[The participants are facing the infrastructure where the Green Connection continues](#)

Photo: Frank Hanswijk

Q: Should we hold on to the existing soil level?

A: Yes, because the site is next to and on a dike. You cannot lower the ground. So, emphasize this notion of the dike. It's a visible green landscape element towards Schiedam.

Q: Should we take the urban framework for the M4H area as a guideline for this European assignment?

A: Feel free to take a critical position towards it.

Q: Is Schiedam, a different municipality, involved in the plans?

A: In the M4H area, the municipality of Rotterdam and Schiedam work together. Part of M4H belongs to Schiedam and we do not want the citizens on the edge of the municipalities to feel neglected.

Q: How are the paths of the Green Connection created?

A: These paths are lying on the foundations of former railway tracks. The paths are higher than its surroundings: people like to experience the area from different heights.

Q: How is the site linked to the Dakpark (rooftop park)? Is it a local park or a big city park?

A: It's big and local at the same time. The scale is big, but it is strongly embedded in local social networks and primarily driven by citizens' initiatives. The two entrances on both ends of the Dakpark are connected to a metro station so it is well connected to the city. The maintenance and programme of the park is locally organized. It is an urban park on the scale of Rotterdam.

Q: Who owns the park?

A: The city of Rotterdam owns the public space. The entrepreneurs of the shops own the roof and the building. The parking garage is owned by developer DuraVermeer. The park is not finished yet: the 'head' and 'tail' are not developed yet.



[View towards the 'Kop Dakpark' site from the Dakpark](#)

[Jan Damman from Stichting Dakpark explains the history of the Dakpark](#)

Photo: Frank Hanswijk

[WORKSHOP \(afternoon\)](#)

EXPERTS:

Sabina van der Spek (City of Rotterdam, project manager Kop Dakpark)

Bas van der Pol (moderator, AIR)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:

Q: What are the main aspects of the Kop Dakpark site?

A: Important aspects are:

- Continuation of the Dakpark to Marconiplein
- Biodiversity
- Green Connection
- Connection between different groups
- Create a mix of income brackets
- Create a programmatic mix
- Create a public ground floor

We would like to house people that really live here and actively participate in the local life.

> Read the site brief for the official assignment: <https://www.european-europe.eu/en/session/european-15/site/rotterdam-kop-dakpark-nl>

Q: Could you elaborate on the housing policy of Rotterdam?

A: The City of Rotterdam aims for a division, measured by neighbourhood, of:

- 20% social rent
- 30% middle income
- 30% high income
- 20% 'happy few'

For all neighbourhoods there are diagrams with the current mix and the desired mix. This is not defined per site. So different projects define the total mix of a neighbourhood. This is

clearly a presumption the competition can address. In the bigger area the municipality will built 18,000 houses in 4 years. On the 'Kop Dakpark' site developments are planned to start in 2021. For feasibility reasons on social housing, the housing corporations need to build at least 50 houses on one site. On the site we will have to build 100-120 houses with the following division:

- 50% social
- 25% middle
- 25% high
- 0% 'happy few'



Discussing the guidelines for the 'Kop Dakpark' assignment

Photo: Frank Hanswijk

Q: What is the percentage of the plot that can be built?

A: This is not defined. Only the maximum height of 50 metres for the whole plot is defined. It cannot be as high as the Marconi Towers. However, it's a competition. You are allowed to think outside the box and be critical.

Q: Are there developers interested in building here?

A: Yes, there are. But to push the ambitions for this plot, we need out-of-the-box studies to explore new possibilities that fits the location.

Q: How many square metres is the size of a social house?

A: A pricelist with the calculation method will be added to the Complete Site Folder. The assignment asks for a mix in housing. You can challenge these sizes and amounts.

Q: The program related to the housing is clear. What is expected of the other programmatic elements?

A: There is a wish to make affordable work spaces for 'makers'. What kind of programme would be good for the ground floor is a key question. Currently, the shops underneath the Dakpark (rooftop park) do not seem to be future-proof. Rethink the programme. Think of inclusion and productivity.

> See for inspiration the newest **DASH Magazine 15: Home Work City**

Q: The dike is an important part of the site. Is there a plan and section available?

A: The ground level of the site should remain the same as it is part of the dike. A section will be added to the Complete Site Folder.

> For heights see also: <http://www.ahn.nl/index.html>

Q: What is the story behind the staircase follies around the Green Connection?

A: These were part of a cultural festival: ZigZag city. There were interventions from the Schouwburgplein towards the Marconiplein, to give people a change of perspective.

Q: The Marconiplein towers are being transformed?

A: The small tower is used by the 'reclassering'. The big towers are transformed into the Science Tower and housing.

Q: Who is the owner of the plot?

A: The plot is currently owned by the municipality, but the plot will be sold to a developer with a lease ("erfpacht") contract on the social parts.

Q: What is the parking policy?

A: New parking guidelines (parking places/m²) are being drafted. But there are also scenarios possible involving car sharing in combination with public transport. Besides, in the parking (in-between the shops and the rooftop park) are 750 parking spots available. However, in the current situation this garage is only accessible during the opening times of the shops. So, for this site the parking should be integrated in the European design. Parking policy will be added to the Complete Site Folder.



Photo: Frank Hanswijk

Q: What is the view on the continuation of the Dakpark towards the Marconiplein?

A: Now it's an infrastructural area. But in the future the Marconiplein might become a place to be, a part of the Green Connection. The main questions to address are:

- How to overcome the height barriers of the dikes?

- How to connect to the four neighbourhoods?
- How to make an intervention adaptable, long-term and future-proof?

Although the Marconiplein is officially not part of the European project site, you could include a vision on it in your plans, introducing the next step that could set things in motion.

Q: Is there more information available of the old port buildings in M4H?

A: Yes, it is part of the site brief of 'Vierhavensblok'.

> See pp. 22-23 of the 'Vierhavensblok' site brief: <https://www.euopan-europe.eu/en/session/euopan-15/site/rotterdam-vierhavensblok-nl>

Q: Can you build underground near the dike? Are you allowed to modify the dike?

A: No, it is the most important dike of Rotterdam, hence the name 'Tussendijken'.

> Rules for building near dikes can be found here:

- De legger (map with 'waterstaatwerken' in NL):
<https://www.hhdelfland.nl/overheid/beleid-en-regelgeving/leggers>
- De keur (rules regarding 'waterstaatwerken'):
<https://www.hhdelfland.nl/overheid/beleid-en-regelgeving/keur-1>

Q: Was the dike there before the Dakpark?

A: Yes, the Dakpark is constructed next to the dike on a former marshalling yard.

Q: Is there a connection through the Dakpark?

A: There is one connection for pedestrians in the middle of the Dakpark with stairs and an elevator. Perhaps the new building could be a new connection? A part of the building should be a staircase connecting to the park.

Q: What is the vision on the water management?

A: In the project to make Rotterdam a water sensitive city ("Rotterdams Weerwoord") the city is considered as a sponge. M4H is outside the dike, so here you will get wet feet.

> See for more information: www.rotterdam.nl/wonen-leven/rotterdams-weerwoord/

Q: Is there a database available with the statistics of people living in the area?

A: Yes, see the URLs below.

> See for specific statics of Bospolder-Tussendijken: <https://www.gobotu.nl/>

> See for statistics of all Rotterdam neighbourhoods: <https://rotterdam.buurtmonitor.nl>

Q: What is the vision on ecology and biodiversity?

A: Now there is a very monofunctional green area with a lot of rabbits and a mix of plants. You will get extra points for including nature in the building and adding to the biodiversity.

Q: Who owns the surrounding buildings?

A: Offices, police office, metro, Woonbron dwellings, Lee Towers, Science tower, Reclassering, transformer buildings (Stedin), Leen Bakker/Praxis, private owned. A map of ownership around the 'Kop Dakpark' will be added to the Complete Site Folder.

Q: What is the waste-heat pipeline route?

A: This is an important element: Bospolder-Tussendijken will be the first neighbourhood in Rotterdam without gas. The route is drawn on the map, which will be added to the Complete Site Folder.

Q: Will the European competition be used as an inspiration for a future tender on this site?

A: The European competition could be the input and inspiration for further cooperation on this site or another. There will be a general commitment. European is all about connecting talent to developers.

Q: Is there a certain target number of dwellings or households that the municipality already imagines for this area?

A: Around 100-120 dwellings.

DOCUMENTS ADDED TO THE COMPLETE SITE FOLDER:

- Pricelist with the calculation method for social housing
- Section of the 'Kop Dakpark' site
- Parking policy of the City of Rotterdam
- Map of ownership in study area
- Map of the waste-heat pipeline route

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

- Tour: 60
- Workshop: 60

END