

## **A creative approach on the reuse of industrial sites**

### **Introduction**

This is a story about the city. It's about the people that live in the city, the places where they want to be, the places where they want to meet other people. I want to take you with me to some of the city's spectacular and unfamiliar places.

We all know them, because we have been there: the derelict factories, the empty quays, the forgotten shipyards, the rusty cranes. We recognize their beauty; we are touched by the air of disrepair that surrounds them. We know that these are the places where our prosperity was generated or our safety ensured.

But they tend to be difficult to reach. Either they are fenced off or the would-be visitor is kept at a distance by roads, walls, railway lines, canals or rivers. Sometimes these places are even real islands; often they just feel like islands. These are the places in the city where you were not allowed to venture. These are the places with the 'keep out' sign. Warnings adorn the fences. The bridges are closed off.

As soon as you set foot in such a place, you are reminded of why you came. There is a distinctive atmosphere, a special quality. True, there is pollution, and there are many old, often dilapidated, buildings. Nature has flourished here. Unfamiliar animals and rare plants call these places home. The spaces are remarkable and usually huge. The light there is often enchanting.

I want to take you on a walk among those places. I want to find out why these derelict sites are so important for the future of our cities. Why we need them, why we have to reuse them and what they can mean for us. I also want to find out how to best do that. I want to find out if there is a model for the regeneration of polluted industrial sites. But before I do that and before we can depart I want to have a closer look on who we are and where we are in the city.

### **The industrial city**

The industrialization of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries led to the dramatic growth of cities in both Europe and the United States, a growth that is now continuing in many countries on other continents. Wherever a factory was built, people were drawn there too, in search of work. Typically, industrial cities did not have a very good image. They were notorious for their pollution. In other places, industry settled at the edge of the city, on the banks of a river, closer to the port. The stench could be overwhelming, the racket deafening. It could often be dangerous.

And at the same time these industrial sites provided an important social context: the factory, the pub and the church. For a long time these were the main places where many people gathered to meet one another.

This polluting large-scale industry has now almost completely disappeared from the cities in the western hemisphere. The products are now made more cheaply elsewhere. With the departure of industry, new economic activities are arising in many of these places. Part of it (and this is to a very large extent depending on the definitions that we are using) can be referred to as the knowledge economy. Others are talking about the creative economy. It is by any means an economy that is much cleaner. It is an economy which still can operate in many large businesses but which also operates in countless small companies. But more than anything else it is an economy which is much less dependent on location than the industry it has replaced.

As it turns out, the city can make good use of the spaces that industry left behind. People once again want to live and work in cities, as long as the city has a pleasant living environment to offer. Many of these industrial spaces turn out to be extremely interesting and seem to offer new opportunities that cities need. Of course, work is important, as is a sufficient supply of suitable housing. But more and more the quality of the facilities on offer is playing an important role. People are looking for the stories behind.

This is a story about the city.

### **The red countryside**

The former industrial sites offer ample opportunities for the city to redevelop itself. It all seems so logical. The city needs to regenerate itself. The city is looking for green spaces, for new places to meet. The city has to attract people. And there is this growing need for the story behind the site. There is this search for a new and better image and another identity. What is it that all these projects have in common? How can we learn from successful projects?

In a search to find my way in 'the mist of time and space' I came across an article by Waldemar Herngreen<sup>1</sup> that captured my imagination. The world is a thousand riddles, a thousand stories, a thousand half-baked solutions, Herngreen says. And then he wonders what a human being is supposed to do in such a world. In his efforts to find an answer to all those questions, to find a way through the time and space we call life, Herngreen explains to us that we can look at life in three different ways: the way of the countryside, the way of the military barracks and the way of the city.

In the way of the countryside, humans try to survive in a world full of danger. People seek to appease the forces of nature with rituals, totem poles, dances of death or sacred objects, and hope this helps. Picture a Wagner opera: beautiful, mysterious, and alive with ancient customs and natural lore. This is the cautious, but also often suspicious way of the countryside. These days it is the position adopted by many environmental organizations.

Then there is the way of the barracks, which averts danger with knowledge. What cannot be seen does not exist, and indeed is not allowed to exist. Riddles are there to be solved. Here the world is one dimensional. Multiplicity of meaning is dangerous nonsense. That's how the barracks think. We all know that this is also how the office thinks. It exemplifies the way managers think and act, the way many administrators, civil servants and consultants view the world. It is the bureaucratic approach in which rules are all powerful. But we cannot do without the barracks. Without them the light would not work and our country (at least the Netherlands) would sink into the mire. We must not leave it to the barracks to set the conditions under which life is really lived or, worse still, to determine the nature of life itself.

And then there is the way of the city. The city recognizes those things which can only be seen out of the corner of your eye. These things are no threats, but they should instead be seen as opportunities and enrichments. Riddles and multiplicity, stories and poems, art and play: the city has those places where human existence truly comes into its own. The city is playful, the city is culture. The city can appreciate those things which are not directly linked to survival, or to incantations or to clear-cut aims. The city loves loose ends, loves those details to which our memories become attached. The city loves favourite places. The city can never in itself be creative. But the city is the right place for creativity.

The countryside, the barracks and the city are always there, everywhere. It's a mistake to think you can only find the city culture where large numbers of houses are grouped together. It is as big a mistake to think that the way of the countryside is confined to rural areas. The countryside can quite often be found throughout the city, so that there are even tribes living

in New York and Calvinist villages in Rotterdam. By the same token, the barracks and the city are also to be found in many parts of the countryside.

The countryside is therefore emblematic for tradition and ritual, the barracks represents rules and straightforward thinking. And the city is where culture, surprise and creativity flourish.

### **The renewed popularity of the city**

The city is enjoying a new lease of popularity. The departure of industry means the living environment is improving in many cities significantly. Cities have become cleaner. And thanks to the frequent application of (what we can now call) the barracks protocol, the city has probably become a safer place as well. An important effect of the city's appeal is that house prices there are still on the rise. Today's huge housing shortage is for a large part due to the fact that fewer and fewer people want to live in more and more square metres of space.

Much can be said and already has been said about the city and the future of the city. There are plenty of people around who are predicting the city's demise. Sir Peter Hall, the British professor and the author of *Cities in Civilization*<sup>2</sup>, is definitely not one of them. Hall writes about the renaissance of the city, and about the new economy which is changing society and transforming the city.

This transformation cannot be said to be taking place in the same way everywhere. New companies are springing up and old industrial activities are adapting. As Sir Peter Hall puts it, there will always be leaders and followers. Just as Manchester took the lead in the late eighteenth century, Detroit in the late nineteenth century and Silicon Valley in the late twentieth century, there will now and again be cities that come to the fore and take on this role. This will depend primarily on the right choices at the right moment made in these cities.

And as always, there will also be plenty people who would rather deny this new reality. Across the globe, there are ever so many examples of cities that fail to respond to these new circumstances or that only do so to a very limited extent. These are cities where people keep harking back to past successes; these are also the cities where everything still seems to be going well and where people therefore see no reason to rock the boat.

### **The creative city**

Several years ago now, the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment organized a discussion in the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam on the subject of the 'creative city'.<sup>3</sup> Sir Peter Hall was present at this occasion, and his speech was followed by a contribution from the British historian, Professor Jonathan Israel. He presented an account of Amsterdam in the Golden Age<sup>4</sup> as the most creative city in the world at that time. One of the most important reasons for the success of the Dutch Republic in those days was its open character and its tolerance with regard to immigrants, Professor Israel said.

September 2003, to mark the reopening of the Westergasfabriek, we hosted the international conference 'Creativity and the City'. One of the speakers at this conference was an American economist, Richard Florida, author of the groundbreaking book 'The Rise of the Creative Class', published in 2002<sup>5</sup>.

Unfortunately Richard Florida's appearance did not spark any discussion at all in Amsterdam. That September, Amsterdam's newspaper *Het Parool* did not print a single word on the subject. A few months later, when Amsterdam's mayor Job Cohen announced that he was working on a policy paper on the subject the same newspaper described the discussion as elitist.

Elitist or not, today almost every city in the Netherlands is discussing its creative potential. It is easy to prove that the creative economy as described by Richard Florida is for a large part resembling the knowledge economy. It is true that many authors have been discussing the subject before. And if one adds Peter Hall and Jonathan Israel's ideas together there is a lot of Richard Florida in it. Put some Charles Landry<sup>6</sup> to it and bring it to a bowl. But when the medium is the message Florida certainly knows how to beat them all. Perhaps that's where Peter Hall's frustration on Florida "who has made himself a kind of one man salesman for the new urban holy grail" comes from.<sup>7</sup>

### **The creative economy: part one**

The enormous influence of the changing economy on the urban planning of our cities as well as on the living qualities in the cities has aptly been proven by many authors among them Sir Peter Hall, Jane Jacobs<sup>8</sup>, Saskia Sassen<sup>9</sup> and many others. The idea that the open economy with a tolerance versus immigrants was the basis for the economic success of the Dutch Republic in the Golden Age is an important point made by Professor Jonathan Israel in his book

It may be in the way Richard Florida is making his point that many others find reasons to criticize his ideas. It may also be in the words he is using. It is interesting to see though that there is not a single article published on the subject that doesn't mention his ideas in one way or the other and after some bashing of the subject comes to exactly the same conclusion.

Let's have a short look at the words "creative class" that a term that many people seem allergic to.

*"The concept of the "creative class" should therefore be understood as neither elitist nor exclusionary. In fact, I coined this term largely as a result of a personal and intellectual frustration with the snobbery of such concepts as "knowledge workers," "the information society," "the high-tech economy" and the like. I chose "creative class" because I found it to be both more accurate in defining the real source of economic value creation and also more useful in highlighting who of our fellow workers is or is not rewarded monetarily and professionally for making use of their own inherent creativity."<sup>10</sup>*

And it is all far from the major point that Florida addresses in his "Rise of the Creative Class". Such as: what influence does the quality of life in our cities have on the interests of large groups of (mainly young) people on willing to live there and how and why is that so important for the economy in our cities?

### **A new Karl Marx?**

When introducing Richard Florida on the occasion of the 'Creativity and the City' conference, I suggested that the changes he is describing might well turn out to have a greater influence on the coming century than the changes that were described by Karl Marx in Das Kapital had on last century.

While Marx addressed the transition from the agricultural society to the industrial society, today we are seeing a far more drastic change: the transformation from the industrial society to the creative society. Back in Marx's time, a physical factor was replaced by another. Raw materials took the place of land and were combined with physical power. At this moment we are seeing the physical factor in the production process being taken over to a large extent by a purely human factor, that of creativity and intellect. Pure power is being replaced to an increasing extent by knowledge-based labour. And as Richard Florida sees it, this transition will completely change our lives. It will change the way we work and the way we live. And because of that it will change the way in which our cities are organized.

### **Art as catalyst**

It is a huge mistake to think that a creative economy is only about art and culture. The new economy is neither limited to a select handful of high tech, info tech, software or multimedia companies. Instead of that creativity is the driving force behind the whole economy and influences all sectors. This also means that we can see a 'creatification' of the services sector and industry.

Rolf Jensen<sup>11</sup> in his book "The Dream Society" is even going some steps further. He is not an economist and not a geographer, but a futurologist.

*"The sun is setting on the Information Society", he is writing, "– even before we have fully adjusted to its demands as individuals and as companies. We have lived as hunters and as farmers, we have worked in factories, and now we live in an information based society whose icon is the computer. We stand facing the fifth type of society: the Dream Society!"*

Jensen is making completely clear that it is not only the information based economic added value, it is not even the creative economic component, but it is finally going to be the story behind and in the product that will deliver it a large part of its market value. The story behind the product already makes up an increasingly large part of the price we pay for our products today. Whether we are talking about our shoes, the ovens we cook our food on, the food itself or the wine that accompanies it, the car we are driving, the price is no longer simply determined by the production costs. We pay a large part for the informational component, the creative added value and the story. We pay for the flavour. And in many cases this has very little to do with the actual cost of the product. And when these "floating" components start to grow, even start to be the largest part (the product comes with the story), this part of the economy becomes more and more important. And this economic added value doesn't come from factories or materials. It is a purely human component.

### **The human factor**

So the important production factor has become people. Creativity can only come from people. In this respect it is important to understand that every human being has creative potential. That is exactly why the creative class can not be seen as an elitist entity you have to struggle to belong to. Each individual is creative in one way or another. Accordingly it makes no sense at all to focus only on creaming off the most gifted creative talents. The key factor will prove to be to appeal to the knowledge and creativity inside everyone.

The growth of the creative economy will have major implications for society as a whole. While our current economy primarily revolves around white middle-aged men, the creative economy sets hardly any store by race or ethnic origin. Age will play far less of a role and there will be no more preference in terms of gender.

The great thing about all of this is that no one really knows where creativity comes from. Does it come from the university, the laboratory, the opera, the theatre, or the business community? It doesn't come from a mine, you can not grow it on a field. No, much of it comes from the streets.

### **Tolerance**

Creativity can only thrive in a tolerant environment. This is the important point that was already made by Sir Jonathan Israel. Sir Peter Hall is telling the same story over and over. Think of Silicon Valley where every hippie was able to set up home in the nineteen-sixties and seventies, many of whom went on to become computer nerds. Creativity feeds on diversity. The most important raw material is the people themselves. But even more importantly, creativity needs exchange between people in order to flourish. It needs places where people can meet in an informal atmosphere. Creativity calls for an open city. Creativity calls for places where people can really meet.

## **Place**

Whoever thought that technological developments meant that place would come to hold less of an appeal got it wrong. Given the chance, people will travel the globe in order to meet other people, to come face to face with the unknown, to discover what else is possible. The city is the most important organizing factor of our age. In times past, people went to live near the factory; today, people (when they can afford it) mainly want to be and live in an agreeable environment. Places with quality, places that are clean and safe, somewhere they can be among others, and where they can meet other people. They seek out places that are full of life, places where diversity abounds. They are drawn to places with a creative quality.

People have more free time nowadays. People have a greater opportunity to decide for themselves where or when they want to work. They are in search of new and different places to meet each other. In the creative city of tomorrow it is all about diversity and tolerance.

## **Back to the city**

Since industry left the city, more and more former industrial sites and military locations are becoming available for re-use. And more and more cities are going in search of possible new uses for these special places in the city. This process can also be seen in the light of the three approaches that were mentioned earlier. The way of the countryside would be to demolish the derelict buildings, clear away the polluted ground and replace it with clean soil. At the same time, this approach would leave the land in its existing state as much as possible. The ferns and the water voles would perhaps be saved. Every tree would be seen as sacred.

The way of the barracks can be seen all around us. This is the approach that piles rule upon rule. It is the approach of the administrative decree, the three-phase decision, the zoning plans and a host of other legal procedures. This is the approach many politicians say they want to get rid of. There is much talk about abandoning this approach in favour of fewer regulations but in fact more regulations continue to be generated. And then, of course, there is the way of the city.

## **The way of the city**

Throughout many countries we can see cities working to regenerate their old industrial sites. Be it on a large scale or a small scale, more than a few municipal authorities in Europe have embarked on their own urban renewal odyssey in one way or another. Many of these cities are at least taking steps towards determining their new post industrial identity. This is often far from easy. Although I have not conducted any scientific research into the subject, over the past thirteen years I have encountered a great many people who are involved in this issue and a number of points have occurred to me. The approach of the city is very often a creative approach. Successful projects can be found where cities were prepared to take drastic measures and started to do things differently.

## **A model for creative redevelopment**

Could there be such a thing as a model for creative redevelopment. The notion of a model tends to prompt strong objections by the people behind such projects. It sounds too much like a cookery book, a set of prescriptions and rules: a 'how-to' manual for dummies on the redevelopment of complex inner-city locations. Perhaps they are afraid of it. No one is eagerly anticipating being snowed under by yet more rules from the barracks. In comparison it would almost be preferable to adopt the countryside approach which sees the regeneration process as simplicity itself, as a matter of chance, as a fairytale or as something from another planet.

Nevertheless there is reason enough to assume that some kind of a creative model for redevelopment has to exist. There is reason enough to have a look at the do's and the don'ts.

Quite often it's the creative economy that determines the future potential of such derelict and polluted areas. If all these projects share a common characteristic, it must surely be their complexity. They all involve several layers of decision-making. In all cases, an enormous amount of rules have to be taken into account. And it seems as if only a creative approach, a multidimensional approach, an integral approach, be it an approach that therefore operates along various channels, can succeed in bringing these projects to a satisfactory conclusion.

### **The Chinese encyclopaedia**

It is an easy thing to say that a prescribed model for complex regeneration projects cannot really exist because every situation is unique. But the discussion need not stop there. If we take what we know from our own experiences and add it to what we have learned from our predecessors, it can help others to find an approach that works. Even if it amounts to little more than a simple list of guidelines for removing the element of luck or chance from the process.

An ancient Chinese classification system once divided animals into simple categories like:

- Animals belonging to the Emperor
- Pigs
- Dogs
- Animals that look like a fly when seen from afar
- Animals that shake like crazy
- All other animals

Such classifications seem downright absurd to us today. But they do supply us with a useful point of departure. And, of course, the most interesting is the 'all other animals' category, the group containing all other things as long as they can not be placed in one of the known categories.

The animals belonging to the Emperor are of course primarily the facts. They will represent the context. These are things that we simply know. Depending on who or what we are, the amount of facts can of course vary greatly. The pigs and the dogs are things we can describe because we see them. These are the physical aspects. This group can be extended with the animals that look like a fly when seen from afar. And this is where complexity starts to creep in. In the case of this group, we know something, but not everything. And then we have the programmatic characteristics. These are the animals that shake like crazy. This category is no longer based on what they are but what they do. And finally, of course, we have the finest category, 'et cetera', home to all the paradoxes and all the other stuff that we cannot yet fit in anywhere else.

It is good to have a look at the facts first. In this model that is the context as it is described in the first part of this article. Accordingly we will move on to the physical characteristics.

### **Infrastructure**

The types of projects we are talking about are in most cases characterized by the presence of an enormous amount of infrastructure in the direct vicinity, such as railway lines, canals and motorways. This immediately gives rise to a paradox: at first glance you would imagine that because of this these areas are easy to get to, yet they are unknown to most ordinary people. They have no place on our mental maps, simply because in most cases we have never actually been there.

The excess of infrastructure has major consequences for the project, both positive and negative. It is difficult to get there. New bridges have to be built, new stops created, new access and exit ramps. Walls have to be broken down and fencing removed.

But it is often this very isolation that gives these places their own character and special atmosphere. For that same reason it can be a place to which people feel particularly drawn. The relative isolation can offer an important point of departure for their future purpose.

### **Buildings**

Such locations are often home to old buildings, huge halls that were built for industrial purposes. They have awe-inspiring dimensions, wonderful windows, exceptionally beautiful light.

The architecture can be staggering, yet it has gone virtually unnoticed among the general population. Many projects still treat such buildings as if they are only in the way. IBA Emscher Park, the enormous programme undertaken in the northern Ruhr Valley between 1990 and 2000 set the tone where building conservation is concerned: wherever possible they were spared. In some instances, the buildings have been virtually reclaimed by nature, with trees growing in through the windows.

### **Pollution**

Almost all of these locations are polluted. This poses the most serious problems. Pollution is invisible and barely manageable. This is the subject that engineering firms throw themselves into with abandon.

And yet, paradoxically enough, the pollution also has important advantages. In many cases the projects simply wouldn't exist if it wasn't for the pollution. From the nineteen-fifties to the present day, unusable buildings at uncontaminated locations have simply been demolished. And the clean-up process can have another important advantage, especially due to the high costs associated with it: it becomes possible to generate work with work. Saving a few per cent on the clean-up costs can free up a small fortune.

Pollution and the clean-up operations are almost entirely the domain of the countryside and the barracks. For most people it is inaccessible material, riddled with countless question marks and sensitive issues. And when the clean-up process finally gets under way, the process is beset by regulations. Regulations which contradict one another at every turn.

In the course of the Westergasfabriek project, the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment decreed that all contaminated soil had to remain on site, while the Labour Inspectorate ordered that it be removed. Project managers and all other parties involved are forced to be creative with the rules, something that the ministry itself now also propagates. On the Westergasfabriek site, every single square metre has its own story to tell. Each section of land involved an intricate balancing act between different sets of regulations.

In the Ruhr Valley, the clean-up was carried out under mining law because this legislation permitted the polluted ground to be relocated and covered over. There are hundreds of similar stories to be told of how people all over the world are busy hacking a path for themselves through a forest of rules and regulations.

### **Ecology**

And then there is nature. In these locations, the countryside has won back territory from the city. Quite often a whole new natural environment has developed in such places. The pollution means that special trees and plants grow there. Since humans have not been near for years, a special ecological balance has emerged.

Colonies of herons can be found in such places, or real forests. The most unusual ferns and other plants take root, having travelled with the coal or iron ore from far off countries. In the park at Duisburg North, the landscape architect has made a point of conserving as many of



these plants as possible in order to make special gardens of them. At the Westergasfabriek we first set about creating a new habitat for the natterjack toad and the spotted salamander. The rare ferns had to be placed in cages to save them.

The problem very much in evidence here is the desire to retain many of the existing natural values. This is often impossible because the decontamination of the soil means that the entire site has to be turned upside down. In the Ruhr Valley, they solved this problem by declaring the area 'forest' and by not setting out paths through the area. This means other pollution levels in the subsoil are permissible.

### **Program**

The transition from the industrial society to the creative society generates a demand for new places in the city where people can participate in recreational activities and meet each other. It is now time to turn look at the programme. In essence, of course, the entire process turns on the programme: opening up these places in the city once again, turning them into places that people can use. It is all about offering a programme that makes these places worth preserving for the city. The complexity of these projects is defined by the complicated set of physical aspects that have to be taken into account. The reason we start to do this is not that we like to do complicated projects.

We all know them, the breathtaking examples of buildings and locations being used as a setting for the most amazing performances. The otherworldly on-location shows by the Dogtroep theatre company, the Helicopter String Quartet by Karl Heinz Stockhausen. The music festivals at Ferro polis. Where else could such spectacles be held?

In the IBA Emscher Park, the emphasis was primarily on restructuring public space and offering renewed opportunities for employment. The renovated buildings stood empty for years. Today some of them are home to the Ruhr triennale, an exciting art and cultural programme. And the ordinary visitor, who was once inclined to hit the accelerator when driving through the Ruhr Valley on the autobahn today has a reason to get out of the car and visit on of the parks or the numerous events taking place.

These buildings, this public space, these projects ask and indeed demand to be developed as part of a coherent whole.

### **Public space**

In today's city there is an enormous demand for parks and for new high-quality public space. The urban park, the square, the city forest and the city beach have all attracted more and more interest in recent years.

Paris led the way in this respect. Three parks were created on former industrial locations in the French capital: Parc de la Vilette, Bercy and Andree Citroen. But Barcelona, too, developed a strategy whereby high-quality organization of public space became a main focus of policy.

Nowadays we can see this happening everywhere. Antwerp is developing a new park on an abandoned railway embankment in Antwerp Noord. The park is clearly intended as a strategic instrument to lift this deprived area out of its malaise.

### **The approach**

We are looking at large, complex projects, everywhere in the industrialised world. The Docklands in London, IBA Emscher park in Germany, Bilbao Ria 2000 in Spain and countless others smaller or on the same large scale. We can have a close look at their physical aspects and see that all these projects have a lot in common. We can look at the

way they are all working on their programme, their new life, their direction. And it is also striking to see all the similarities.

But the main reason to look at this is the process. What we want to know is how to do it. What do we need to bring such a project to a successful close?

Such projects call for a creative approach. It is striking just how many major similarities can be found in the approach taken in many of these projects. Let us start to look at the way they are organised. They always begin with a discussion on who is to take charge, who is to take responsibility and how is going to be the driving force behind the project.

In the Westergasfabriek project this discussion was played out between the central city council and the district. In the Emscher Park it was decided to establish a whole new organization at a regional level. The same approach was taken in Bilbao, where the organization Ria 2000 was set up. In the UK, Margaret Thatcher went so far as to disband the entire Greater London City Council and appoint one of her ministers, Michael Heseltine, to give shape to what eventually became the reasonably successful construction of a whole new city. In France, too, such projects can count on a great deal of attention from ministers, mayors and other politicians. To this day the director of the Parc de la Vilette still contacts the culture minister when problems arise.

There is no clear answer to the question of where such a project belongs, to which layer of government it can best be entrusted. However, it is interesting to note that such projects can almost never be realized within the usual existing channels. The regimented approach of the barracks is not sufficient to bring such projects to a satisfactory conclusion. It would seem like the obvious choice to give the running of the project to the administrative layer which benefits most from speedy completion. However, in practice there are often conflicting interests at stake.

It is far more important that all the administrative layers and any other parties capable of assisting or blocking the project feel involved in some way or other. This means that a great deal of time and energy must be invested in communication. The successful projects are to be found among those in which the project teams succeeded in anchoring responsibility for the progress of the project within all administrative layers.

### **The driving force**

Another aspect worth noting is that such projects often only really take off once there is a clear driving force at local level. Someone has to really throw themselves into the project. This force often takes the form of a small team of people who are mainly engaged in communicative activities. I have met many such people and visited their offices. These 'civil servants' all tend to possess qualities typical of the members of the creative class. There is hardly any demarcation between women and men, with women often being well-represented. The team members often keep unconventional working hours and are based at an office that reflects the essence of the project itself.

In my experience, the project team can best concern itself with strategy and communication and should therefore consist of people who are not too heavily or too personally involved in one of the main issues. They should be all-rounders whose main focus is on coordination and communication, but who are also quick to see a problem from all angles, to come up with a solution and to carry it out. People who can think creatively. People who can take decisions and who dare to take decisions. They are travellers, if you will, people you can send on a mission and who will always come back with what you asked for or at least something along the same lines or something that fulfils the same purpose just as effectively. People with the characteristics of the city.

## **The money**

I haven't mentioned the money yet. These projects call for creativity and this creativity often extends to the financing as well. The money tends to come from all over the place. In my eyes the person with the final responsibility for the project has to be fully aware of everything taking place within the framework of the project. While he need not understand all aspects, without insight into the financial organization, it is virtually impossible to manage the risks inherent in any project.

It also means that a creative kind of accountant is called for, an accountant who speaks the language of the project, someone capable of separating out all the various financial channels and yet who can explain at any given moment what the latest state of play is.

The successful completion of such a project entails a high level of risk management. Modern computer technology, for both exchanging and disseminating information, can be essential in this respect.

## **Vision**

When will the project be ready? How often have we heard this question and others like them? When will it be opened? When will it be finished? A good project is never finished. In the same way as a project doesn't really begin when the first meetings are held on location to sort out the initial ideas and to agree on a strategy. The project moves along many different channels. Of course, the completion of the buildings and the public spaces is a milestone. But in fact that's when the real work begins.

Successful regeneration projects require a vision, a direction, an open objective and a strategy for achieving that objective. Just as programmers at Microsoft do not know exactly what the program will look like when they start work on a new operating system, in the same way the commissioning party in a regeneration project can never know exactly what the end result will be.

This is another reason why such projects are difficult to finance. The project can only generate its own demand from the moment when the fences come down and the buildings are open once again. Interest tends to ebb away once work on the buildings and the public spaces have been completed, whereas this is usually when the real life of the project begins. It is only with a strong and outspoken vision of the potential future significance of such a place that a project like this can maintain the necessary momentum to survive.

## **Strategy**

I have already talked about strategy. Every successful project begins by setting out a strategy. A strategy which ensures that visible successes can be achieved in the short term. A strategy which ensures that something visible occurs.

The creative economy in its most outspoken and clearly identifiable form is art, and art plays an important part in many of these projects. Artists are called in to put the project on the map, in some cases before there can even be said to be a project. Art is capable of giving places a whole new meaning. Artists can sometimes be brought in to think about the strategy and the vision. Art can play an important role in embedding the project in people's consciousness. In many cases it is no longer possible to distinguish between the architect, the landscape architect, the project manager and the artist. The Guggenheim in Bilbao is an artwork in itself, and the same applies to the many bridges and structures by prominent figures like Santiago Calatrava. No public relations campaign, no matter how ingenious, could have done for Bilbao what Frank Gehry's Guggenheim has succeeded in doing. A rainy, grimy industrial city, has been given a whole new image.

Bilbao could only cement this reputation by delivering quality in countless other areas. Architects like Cesar Pelli and Norman Foster were called in to design a new city centre and the metro. This brings me to another remarkable phenomenon: some commissioning bodies think attaching the name of a leading international architect to their project is enough to get their project noticed. In such cases the choice of the architect betrays the vision.

## Conclusion

The city is searching doggedly for all kinds of possibilities to renew itself. With or without Richard Florida, with or without the creative class, almost every municipal authority in Europe has addressed the issue of its identity, its image and the question of how to further develop itself in these times when change is a given. Many municipal authorities choose to make use of their industrial or military heritage as part of this strategy. We can see all around us that successful projects can arise in all kinds of different ways.

Little research has been done in this area and there are next to no models available to help us in this onerous task. Much more should be invested in exchanging knowledge and experience gained in the course of working on such projects. A wealth of experience is now available. It should be possible to make far greater use of it.

In my creative model for regeneration I have made clear that we are looking at a certain type of projects that usually have three or four important physical aspects in common. It is also clear that these projects take place in a context where the city is rebuilding itself in the transformation from the industrial city to the post industrial one. In this post industrial city the creative economy is starting to play a role of major importance. Because of the time frame and the complexity the projects are usually carried out by special project teams. There is a special kind of creative worker in these teams. In order to be successful a strong vision is needed and all parties involved should agree on a clever strategy. Next to that the normal activities like money management and risk management should be taken care of in a very serious way.

I have made reference to three ways in which people can approach the issues that surround them. The way of the countryside, that of the barracks and that of the city. The way of the countryside can have a beauty all of its own. Let us leave it for what it is. The way of the barracks can only lead to greater problems in my opinion. In cases where the total sum of the rules is taken as a basis for action, nothing much usually happens at all. The city's answer to all this is creativity. Calling in the artist. The architect as artist, the project manager as artist. Setting all the objections aside. Simply setting off on the journey.

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<sup>1</sup> Hengreen, Waldemar, *Het Rode Platteland*; I only have a copy of this article in a Dutch magazine.

<sup>2</sup> Hall, Sir Peter (1998), *Cities in Civilization*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson.

<sup>3</sup> Hemel, Zef (2002), *Creative Cities!* Amsterdam, Ministerie van VROM.

<sup>4</sup> Israel, Sir Jonathan (1995) *The Dutch Republic : Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477-1806*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Florida, Richard, 2002, *The rise of the creative class*, New York, Random Books.

<sup>6</sup> Landry, Charles (2000) *The creative city*. London: Earthscan.

<sup>7</sup> Hall, Sir Peter, (2004), *Creativity, Culture, Knowledge and the City*, in *Built Environment*, vol 30 no 3, Oxford, Alexandrine Press.

<sup>8</sup> Jacobs, Jane (1969), *The economy of cities*, London: Weidenfeld,

<sup>9</sup> Sassen, Saskia, (1994) *Cities in a world economy, sociology for a new century*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.

<sup>10</sup> Florida, Richard, (2005); *The Flight of the creative class*, New York: Harper.

<sup>11</sup> Jensen, Rolf (1999), *The dream society*, New York: McGrawHill.