

Delft Bacinol, new chemistry through creativity, guts and cooperation

Intro

In this paper the authors describe how, with creativity and guts, a growing number of small creative business firms in Delft are transforming a vacant, former industrial building, - once the cradle of Dutch penicillin production, and now an architectural landmark, into a thriving creative business centre, which should become an icon for Delft as a Creative City. The important role of the municipality in this process will be explained as well as the crucial function of close and intensive cooperation between municipal actors, the business community and the local civil society.

Delft is not only famous for its history, Prinsenhof, Vermeer, Delft Blue etc. It has a Technical University that produces hundreds of young creative academics, architects, designers, planners, and other engineers each year. It also houses many research and design firms and institutions, large and small. Delft wants to take its place as a centre of knowledge and creativity in the larger metropolitan framework of the Randstad Holland. Bacinol, a former part of DSM-Gist which is a major yeast and pharmaceutical plant and research firm, is a very characteristic, 55 years old, industrial building with a typical steel frame structure that is suitable for flexible use.

In April 2005, 38 creative companies occupied the building and now in July we count 42. This includes 10 artists who have a special agreement and a reduced rent. Also Bacinol-EXPO has opened the first exhibition showing the diversity of the building and its occupants. In February 2005 an open house and house warming party resulted in a good reputation. A special part of this event was a series of debates in the EXPO-hall of the building, on the topic of Creative Economy and the chances for Delft.

In this paper the following topics will be dealt with. First a short description of the development process. Second an analysis of its occupants and the economic effects. Therefore all inhabitants are asked to fill in a questionnaire about their own background and the usage of the building. Third the outcome of the debates on the creative industry will be discussed. Finally the paper will explore this on going experiment and discuss the chances for the future considering the development of Delft as a creative city.

The building and its occupants do have their own website and logo (see www.bacinol.nl).



Figure 1: logo Bacinol

History

In 2002 the municipality of Delft and DSM-Gist agreed to develop a temporarily accommodation for creative disciplines in the building. In anticipating the plans for the future train tunnel on the location of the building, this was temporarily an opportunity for an experiment with very cheap floor space prizes. The building was vacant for a few years already and the agreement was to undertake the exploitation for more or less free for the

time until it will be demolished, probably in 2008. Chances are however for more changes as DSM is considering leaving more space in the future.

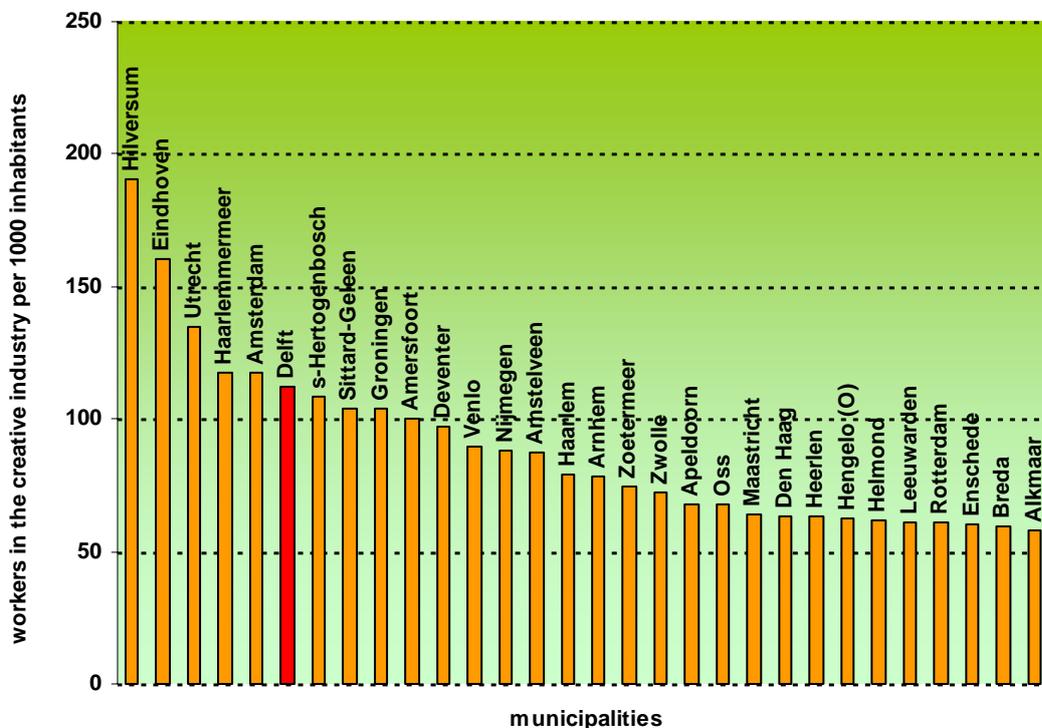
To move into the building it had to be cleaned, since asbestos was all over and the steel framed building needed fire protection to make it safe and useful for all different companies and disciplines. So, in August 2003 alterations to enable the different use were started. Hulshof Architects agreed with the municipality to move into the building and co-ordinated the alterations on the site. Gerard Meijerink, being the keeper of the site, undertook the most necessary and in April 2004 the municipality of Delft formally opened the building as a melting pot for the creative community with an exploration tour through the building titled "Chemistry".

Delft as a creative city

The first Technical University in the Netherlands was founded in Delft. Several important technical centres are situated in Delft; for instance the national research centre TNO, IHE Institute for Water Education and Delft Hydraulics. Further more, Delft is an important centre for architecture. Famous architects graduated at the faculty of architecture and the city is the home of many designers.

Since we consider art, research, design, architecture, consultancy and ICT as the core of the creative industry, it's possible to give an impression of the position of Delft compared to other cities. Therefore the number of workers in de core of the creative industry is calculated in relation to the number of inhabitants. The average score for the entire Netherlands is 61 workers per 1000 inhabitants. In Delft the score is twice as high. As centre of all Dutch media, Hilversum has the highest score. Eindhoven is second best as technological centre and Delft is on the sixth place right behind Amsterdam.

Figure 2: The position of Delft between other greater cities in the Netherlands



The first focus of the city is to strengthen Delft as a technological centre. Therefore the Technopolis project is started using an area of 86 hectares near the Technical University. The second focus is the reinforcement the cultural sector in coherence with the technical expertise and the historical background of the city. The development of Bacinol is one of the main projects within this framework.

The Bacinol building

The building was constructed from 1949 till 1951. Until recent years it was used as a laboratory and a small scale factory. The name Bacinol was a codename for penicillin during World War II. The production of penicillin was explored then and became a major product made there. The building is 6 stores high and there is a total of approximately 4500 m² floor space. Each floor is over 5 meters high which makes the use of entresols possible. Some were already there as the steel frame allowed the formation of these in between floors according to the use of the area before, some are added by the new occupants. It is one of the first steel framed production buildings and its history shows several different products including Pharmaceutical goods. It also contained laboratories and offices.



Figure 3: Steel framework Bacinol

The steel frame allows a completely open floor plan except for the stairs and elevators. The main building has identical floors with a piping shaft along the ceiling in the middle, connecting the main stairway and the escape stairs on the other end of the building. The stairway on the south façade forms a Landmark especially with the coloured lights during the night. This effect is now the logo and branding symbol for Bacinol.

In the building there are several facilities. On the ground floor there is an exhibition centre and a cantina. The Bacinol-EXPO opened in February 2005 with the first exhibition showing the diversity of the building and its occupants.

A meeting room is situated on the first floor. On regular basis the tenants come together to discuss the management and maintenance of the building and to plan future activities.



Figuur 4: Bacinol in 2005 (foto Barbra Verbij) en 1950

Occupants and diversity

In juli 2005, 42 companies occupied the building. They rent about 3000 m² and 1500 m² remains available for new tenants. The 42 firms include 12 artists, of which 10 have a special agreement and a reduced rent. Furthermore there are 7 architects, 11 designers, 6 consultants and 6 ICT firms. Apart from these there is also the Bacinol Expo instituted by the municipality and supported by the city with a yearly allowance. The Expo aims to realize four expositions a year and each in one of the fields active in the building. Their goal is to attract public to the creative industry.

Table 1: number of firms per branch in Bacinol

branch	firms in Bacinol	
	(abs)	(%)
architecture	7	17
art	12	29
design	11	26
consultancy	6	14
ICT & research	6	14
total	42	100

The majority of the new tenants had their office or studio at home. Most of them have a one-man business. The step from home to Bacinol is important because it asks for a more professional approach and it is important to extend the network of each individual firm. Before moving to Bacinol there was almost no contact between the different workers in the cultural sector. After moving the co-operation has expanded immensely. Nearly all firms and artists in Bacinol take up activities with other tenants. This is probable one of the main reasons that the satisfaction is very high. On a scale from 1 to 10 the average score is 8.5.

The products of the firms and artists reflect the different branches. There is a long list of products with for instance landscaping, housing design, interior design, furniture, light objects, 3D visuals, web design, jewellery, photography, ceramic sculptures.

The importance for Delft as a city is different per branch. Architecture operates all over the country. The same accounts for research and ICT. The latter branch uses often suppliers from Delft. Art is a more local affair. Perhaps there are possibilities for this branch to broaden the network with the help of the other branches.

Table 2: characteristics per branch

branch	starters	coorporation		satisfac tion	customers in Delft	suppliers in Delft
	from home	before	after moving			
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(scale 1-10)	(%)	(%)
architecture	17	0	86	8,2	14	17
art & design	39	9	91	8,9	56	54
research, consultancy, ICT	62	0	67	8,0	8	31
total	43	5	83	8,5	36	42

Economic development

A great building and satisfied customers are important, but this is not the only thing that counts. Its also important to know whether there are any economic results. In Table 3 the results are show with respect to the real estate before and after moving to Bacinol. Before moving to Bacinol the different firms rented about 1300 squared meters. A great part of the tenants worked at home and didn't pay any extra rent. The total sum of the paid rent was 45 thousand euro. After moving to Bacinol the total amount of rented floor space increased strongly to more then 3000 squared meters and the total costs grew to 212 thousand euro. The firms and artists were willing to pay much more then they were used to pay. More space, more colleagues, the location and the charisma of the building were reason enough to pay extra money for a better accommodation.

Table 3: floor space and rent per branch in Bacinol

branch	floorspace		prise per m2 bacinol	total rent	
	before Bacinol	in Bacinol		before Bacinol	in Bacinol
	(m2)		(euro/m2)	(x 1000 euro)	
architecture	570	631	81	33	51
art & design	502	1845	60	10	111
research, consultancy, ICT	236	553	90	2	50
total	1307	3029	72	45	212
rent in % turnover				2%	6%

The next question that comes up, is whether these extra costs are paying off. Therefore we look at the development of the number of workers and the total turnover. In

Table 4 the results are shown. In 2002 the numbers of workers of the 42 firms were 63. Most firms moved to Bacinol in 2003 and some in 2004. In 2003 the number of workers was 69; a growth of 10%. This increase is in line with the creative sector. After 2003 the growth of the number of workers was much better and amounted to 19%. The results in terms of turnover were even better. Between 2003 and 2002 there was an increase of 6% and between 2003 and 2004 the growth of turnover was even 43%. The result is thus more employment and an increasing turnover per place of work.

Especially in art and design the results were good. These branches made a big leap in network and professional approach. The firms operating in architecture were more or less already settled firms looking for more space. The gain for them is less spectacular.

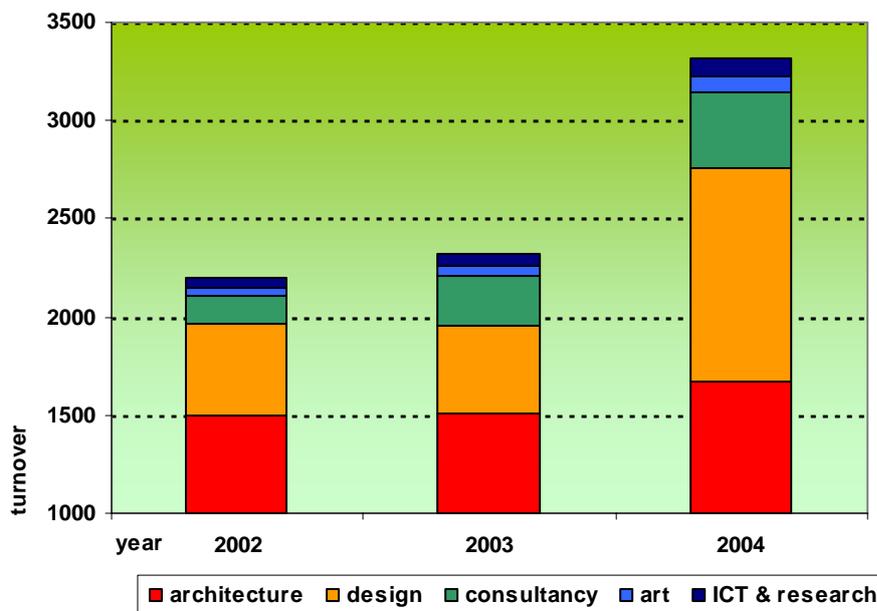
A simple way of looking at the results is calculating the ratio between the extra expenses for rent and the extra turnover. The result is 6 (=997/167); a very good investment. In fact this is not a complete comparison. Moving to a new place leads to new other investments. Nearly all tenants renovated their accommodation and did other investments.

Table 4: development of number of workers and turnover

branch	workers			turnover		
	2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004
	<i>(abs)</i>			<i>(x 1000 euro)</i>		
architecture	27	31	35	1498	1512	1668
art & design	21	21	31	504	496	1170
research, consultancy, ICT	16	18	16	199	317	484
total	63	69	82	2201	2325	3322
	<i>(growth)</i>			<i>(growth)</i>		
architecture		15%	13%		1%	10%
art & design		0%	48%		-2%	136%
research, consultancy, ICT		13%	-11%		59%	53%
total		10%	19%		6%	43%

Figure 5 is showing the results for 5 branches. Design and consultancy are the most fast growing branches. Art and ICT are important in numbers but not yet in turnover.

Figure 5: development of turnover for 5 branches



Bacinol Debates and Meetings

In February 2005 a big event organised by the tenants to show their new environment to relations and to present the so called Bacinol Formula of Creative Chemistry resulted in a good reputation. Apart from an open house and a house warming party there were gatherings during three public sessions. These debates on the topic of Creative Economy took place in the Expo-hall of the building.

The so called “creative debates” were organized to attract the people of Delft to the building in order to create more understanding of the possibilities of creative economy and the interaction between art, design and science. The debates resulted in a series of initiatives on topics to undertake in Delft. Now the new Bacinol society is organizing a new market to enable the financing of these initiatives.

Apart from the public debates every month there is a gathering of tenants on a changing location in the building where people meet and each area shows their team and products. In the mean time this resulted in the founding of a Bacinol Society to support the Bacinol Formula, to continue the public debate on the Creative City of Delft, to share ideas and knowledge and to see how the future of the physical environment for this economy can be secured.

We already have enlisted over 150 members and on June 21st a creative market with six top initiatives was organised to try to raise the funding in money, time, knowledge and space for each of these. The market to really invest will be the next major event in the Bacinol Building.

The outcome of the debates on Creative Economy is also of interest as the initiatives are creative and adding to the economy and culture in Delft. For example the creation of thinking space in the new church in the centre of Delft. A park for rejected art objects and deteriorating technical items. A cultural festival during the renovation of an old city area.



Figure 6: appeal for an alternative approach during the debates

Future scenario

The Bacinol building is special and it is very easy to transform its interior. Every user made the interior suitable and invested according to the economy of the different firms. The investments made by different companies differ. It is very interesting to investigate the objectives of these companies. For example the Architects and Town planners used the structure of the building in their own creative way.

Bacinol is unique in Holland for its architecture: a steel framed building made for industrial production; situated near a historic centre and because in a short period the chemistry in culture, arts and economy was established, it realised an impulse on the economy.

The next step depends on the development of the different firms. Will Bacinol stay extrovert and experimental or is a stronger professional approach ahead? In the first case it's logical to plan more activities which strengthen the present culture. On the other hand it's possible to facilitate other activities like marketing and reorganizing financial structure of the firms. Improving the environment in order to be more attractive for new customers is also an activity that strengthen a market oriented approach.

An other interesting aspect is the effect of the activities on the economy of the old city. A design centre with a public side might support the economy, attract more people to leave their home and work in this environment. It attracts people and stimulates artists and companies to open their introvert practices and dare to share in order to gain similar to what seems to happen in Bacinol.

This leads to the following conclusions:

- The renovation of the Bacinol building has brought a growth of the employment and turnover with regard to the firms involved.
- A lot of firms made an important step to a more professional organisation; from introvert and experimental to more extrovert and in most cases still experimental.
- The location near the historic centre attracts creative talent and investment.
- The architecture and construction of the building attracts and stimulates creative approaches and adapts easily to different uses.
- The urban environment was very suitable, but it only lacked the physical possibilities.
- This development opens new perspectives for the city of Delft, becoming a melting pot of creativity and science.
- The importance of one experiment is however for the city of Delft in quantitative terms modest. The total employment in Delft in the creative sector is about 10 thousand workers. The importance is much greater when we view at this project as an inspiring example that pays off very well.

The authors of this paper are responsible for the research and data including the interpretation of the actual position of the economy created in Bacinol.

Ineke Hulshof,
Hulshof Architecten,
www.hulshof-architecten.nl
Jan Brouwer,
ABFresearch
www.abfresearch.nl
Peter Jonquiere,
PlanQonsult