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Refitting Vacancy for the Creative Industry A Strategy to Create and Maintain a Creative Community

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The vacancy rate in the office building market in the Netherlands is 16% (DTZ, 2015b; NVM, 2015). Currently there is both a quantitative and a qualitative mismatch. The high vacancy is mainly explained by an over-supply in relation to demand for office space. The demand is expected to decrease further due to aging of the population, a changing economy and the lower need for space. The qualitative mismatch is explained by vacant property that is too old, of insufficient quality and at the wrong location. That new offices are still being constructed is not the result of a quantitative question but because of a replacement market (Van der Voordt, Remøy, & Hendrikx, 2012).

A possible new end-user is the creative industry. The different working standards of this industry lead to a different use of office space than the large-scale offices of the production economy. Adaptive reuse can create a solution for the need of new developments in the office market. If vacant buildings can be adapted in such a way that they meet the demands of the growing creative sector, this could partly solve the vacancy problem.

The following main research question had to be answered: 'In which way can property owners adapt their vacant offices in order to attract and retain the creative industry?' To be successful in the transformation of a vacant office building into work places for the creative community, in this research project a strategy has been developed that explains which characteristics a vacant office building must meet, which facilities it must offer and how tenants should be selected and managed.

The problems the property owners encounter during vacancy have been researched on the operational levels of property, facility and community management by a detailed literature research, three in-depth case studies with successful redevelopments for the creative industry in Eindhoven, Rotterdam and Amsterdam, and interviews with several experts in practice.

KEYWORDS: Adaptive reuse, Creative industry, Office buildings, Strategy, Sustainable