Urban regeneration of a desolate site with the power of the people

Keywords: participation, involvement in design, desolate site, urban regeneration, design as politics, democracy, citizens

Location

Project description

For this graduation project the starting point is to regenerate an urban area with the involvement of citizens.

The urban regeneration of cities is chosen as design principle, because it is currently an important topic in modern developing cities all around Europe. Even in small cities like Delft this shift to urban regeneration is noticeable the last couple of years.

Instead of developing and building new neighbourhoods to the city, the municipality of Delft tries to redevelop the inner city tissue. Some projects are on the restructuring of existing city parts, others are about the regeneration of totally or partially desolate sites.

The involvement of citizens in these urban regeneration projects is often not more than having insight in the zoning plans, after the plans are made. Citizens can then decide to agree on these plans or not. During the realization of these zoning plans the involvement of citizens is usually not more than informing them. Genuine participation during the development of zoning plans does not take place.

Problem statement

The chosen case study area in Delft is a partially desolate industrial sites, embedded in the northern city centre of Delft. It is a shrinking industrial area that consist out of a still functioning site in use by industrial giant DSM and a desolate area, or brownfield, formerly in use by Unilever.

The industrial area has been located to the north of the city centre since 1996. For about 120 years the citizens of Delft have been living with its industrial neighbour. A long period of environmental noise and small contamination with explosion hazards as well. Besides these past and still existing burdens, the citizens are now facing a shrinking and partially abandoned area.

The core of the plan is to sort three kinds of temporary functions in the area. The history of the area and new environment needs to be taken into account when making plans. These needs are also described in the case study area.

Delft is the partial owner of the case study area and therefore this company is responsible for the area. In addition DSM also create some kind of neighborhood around its site. The municipality of Delft is responsible for the entire site. These environmental circles are of great importance for the plans of the area as well as for the core of the plans.

The involvement of citizens in the design process before involvement tool

Participation by involvement tool

To increase the participation of the citizens or people in general, an involvement tool is created during this graduation project. The involvement tool, or matrix, is developed from elements that come from the case study area Delft. These elements are general variables that can also be found in other urban regeneration projects for desolate sites.

With the involvement tool, the people will be involved during the design process and not after the design is made.

Aim

The aim for this graduation project is to involve the people in design projects, by giving them more democratic power in the design process. To achieve this, an urban regeneration project will be done for a case study area in Delft, where the involvement of the citizens takes a central role.

Stakeholders

The municipality of Delft develops the neighborhood, which partly for all the companies in Delft. The rules of the municipality and the other stakeholders are the base for the zoning plans. These zoning plans can create zoning plans, for the case study area, but the plans have to be discussed with the owner in the area. DSM is the partial owner of the case study area and therefore the company responsible for the area. In addition DSM also creates some kind of neighborhood around its site. The municipality of Delft is responsible for the entire site. These environmental circles are of great importance for the plans of the area as well as for the core of the plans.

Involvement tool variables

The involvement tool was launched on a website on 11-04-2013 and closed after two weeks on 26-04-2013. In this period 74 people voted on one of the 16 designs. The winning design is design number 8 with 21 votes, the second design is design number 6 with 13 votes and the third most voted design is design number 18 with 12 votes.

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From principles to design

Design

The final design is the last stage of a phased plan. The yellow plots from the layout plan now hold sea containers for temporary use. Halls have been build in the middle and south-western corner. There is a park in the east and a free space in the west. The formal Calve area functions as a structural, temporary creative industry area.