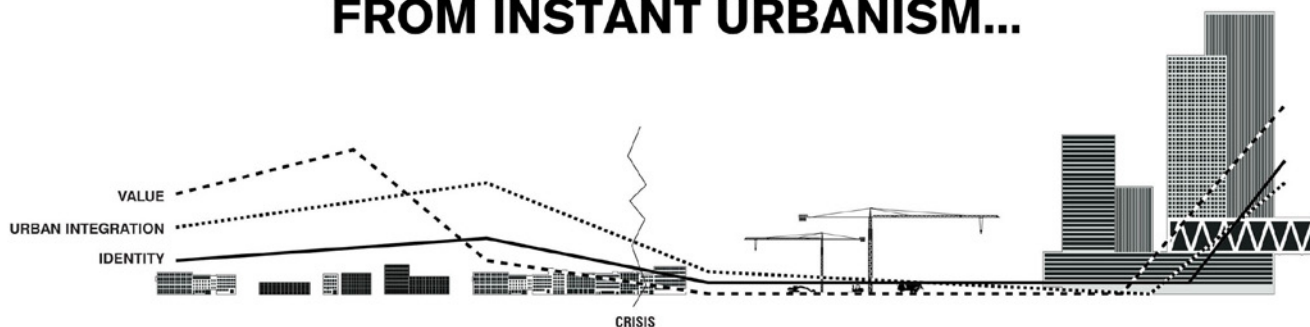


ZUS /  
Elma van Boxel /  
Kristian Koreman

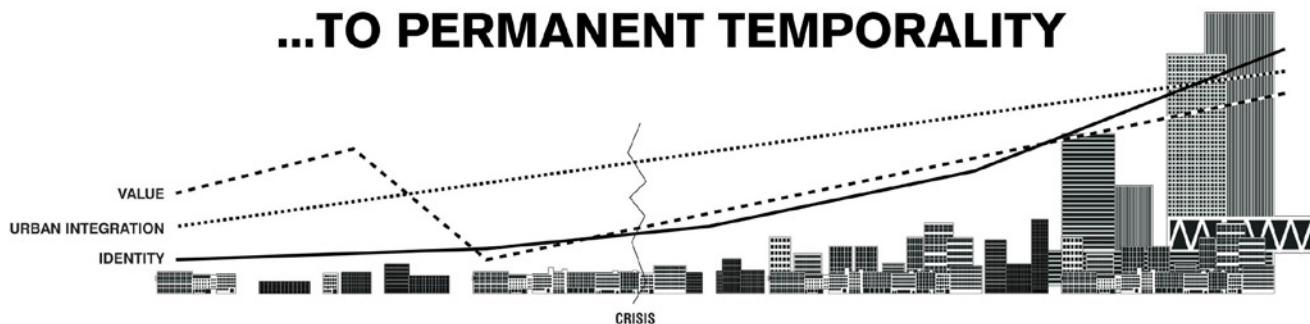
Founding partners of ZUS  
[Zones Urbaines Sensibles]

# City of Permanent Temporality: incomplete & unfinished

## FROM INSTANT URBANISM...



## ...TO PERMANENT TEMPORALITY



## Act one: Rotterdam is many cities 2001-2008

On July 22nd, 2001, there was the third shooting in a month. The municipality of Rotterdam declared the area around Rotterdam Centraal Station a zero-tolerance zone, installed 360° security cameras, and imposed the umpteenth ban on disreputable bars and clubs; thus, another twenty meters of boarded-up shop fronts. It was 2001; a strange year in which the rise of the right-wing populist politician Pim Fortuyn coincided with Rotterdam's celebration of cultural diversity as the Cultural Capital of Europe and the announcement that multiculturalism was a failure in the Netherlands. And finally, there was 9/11. On the Hofplein, a major traffic junction in Rotterdam's city center, these expressions of hope and hopelessness came into sharp focus. Citizens, in search of an appropriate city square, took to occupying the Hofplein roundabout to celebrate or to mourn. The administrative nervousness that arose in this confused period was repeatedly expressed in even stricter policies to keep the city and especially its streets 'clean, well maintained, and safe.' Ensuring a lively atmosphere on Rotterdam's streets was difficult enough, never mind the additional measures being deployed to systematically remove the last traces of the informal use of the public domain.

While the newly implemented policy for public space increasingly established itself under the motto 'Livable Rotterdam,' behind the scenes the city's development continued unabated. Since the eighties, Rotterdam was the mecca for investors and developers because enough space and opportunities were given for building large-scale offices and apartments. The surging capital market easily found its way into the city, which took no time in adopting the label 'Manhattan on the Maas'. In keeping with this, the Rotterdam Central District (RCD) around Centraal Station was identified as an attractive business location – a VIP area – and one ambitious plan after another was developed. Multinationals including Shell, Unilever, Nationale Nederlanden/ING, and Fortis were already established on the Weena, a broad city-center avenue. The planned arrival of the High-Speed Line (HSL) railway to connect the Randstad – a megalopolis in the Netherlands comprising its four largest Dutch cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht) – with Paris and London, gave further impetus to these ambitions.

A third development began to emerge in the wake of this real estate speculation. With the newly developed urban areas, such as the Kop van Zuid and Stadshavens, there was a need for interesting cultural programs to inject these areas with the appropriate vibrancy. Within a few years, several cultural institutions relocated Kop van Zuid from the city center: the Fotomuseum, LantarenVenster cinema, and the Rotterdam Academy of Architecture. The already limited cultural infrastructure was thus further diluted, which did not benefit the city center's quality of life.

This paradox of frenetic control over the public sphere on the one hand and unbridled real estate speculation on the other led to

**Frontispiece** From Instant Urbanism to the City of Permanent Temporality. Moving away from the conventional way of urban development allows a city to build up its identity, urban integration and (social-cultural) value gradually. This results in a more ingrained way of city making.

an implosion of the city center's development and a cannibalistic restructuring program. The first plans for the RCD were developed behind closed doors, and when they were announced in 2006, the first signs of a lack of occupancy were already becoming apparent. In the area around the Weena and the railway, a number of office buildings stood empty because companies were lured with 'smart' structures to brain parks, post-war buildings had been abandoned since the early nineties, and the area was literally deleted from urban management plans.

This paradox was the result of the blind belief in a master plan to transform the area into a vibrant 'Glocal City District' within twenty years.

How can a city be made in a neo-liberal climate where only economic value seems to be of significance? How could we relate to this as architects and urban planners? Silently sail on the flow of capital and build for lack of occupancy? Continue to agitate from the sidelines for a change in direction? Continue entering international competitions when the assignments and opportunities were already under our noses?

In 2007, we decided to make the leap from our secure position behind our drawing and writing tables into this unruly and paradoxical situation. Without knowing what the repercussions would be, we chose to traverse the tightrope between an independent architect-urbanist practice and a heteronomous position that mixes our approach with other disciplines. Acutely aware that this could go horribly wrong, we took the risk of being dismissed as naive and perhaps opportunistic activists who, in fact, participated in gentrification. We chose the ambition of developing the city in the RCD area to effectively bring it a step further by trying to connect the world of planning to the urban situation in new ways.

### **Act two: First tests of transformation 2008-2010**

In 2008, the first rumors began circulating about concrete plans for the area's development, including the demolition of many properties located in the RCD area, including the Schieblock: a vacant and derelict office building. Meanwhile, Lehman Brothers fell, and the problem of a lack of occupancy began penetrating political agendas. The question was whether to demolish, or whether to build and run the risk of creating more unoccupied space? The demolition plans enabled us to point out alternatives, such as moving away from instant urban design and deploying a more gradual transformation. In this period, three events opened the gates for new opportunities.

In 2008, in protest against the city's cultural impoverishment, we developed the concept *Dépendance - Podium for City Culture*. Since cultural institutions are often focused on their own domain, and some high-profile institutions had allowed themselves to be moved into new developments beyond the city center, there was a need for the establishment of an annex where they and many other initiatives could maintain a focal point within the city. The idea galvanized when the Rotterdam Academy of Architecture wanted to organize an exhibition.

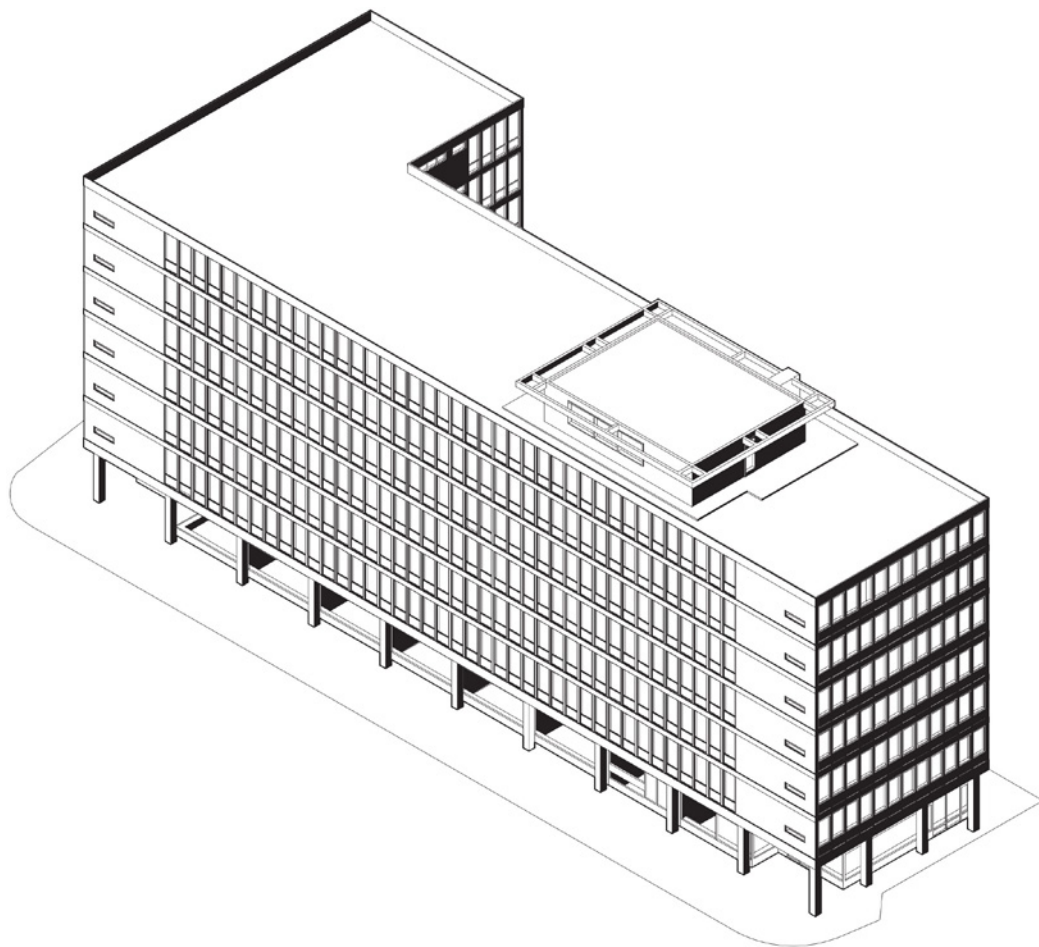


Fig. 1 The Schieblock

Fig. 2 Corner location for the future  
Dépendance at the Schieblock

Fig. 3 Schieblock: the Dépendance – Podium for  
City Culture



Fig. 4 Schieblock: the 'Dépendance'



In spring 2009, in just three weeks, the Schieblock's hitherto lifeless ground floor was converted into a cultural platform. This was the start of transforming a building already earmarked for demolition. Importantly, the event saw the first fruitful alliance between ZUS, the municipality of Rotterdam, and the building's owner, LSI.

In June 2009, we received an invitation to participate in *Maakbaarheid* (English: Make-ability), the main exhibition of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR). The RCD area was our starting point and, together with the LSI, and the municipality of Rotterdam as our client, we began investigating the possibilities for better connecting the RCD to its environment. Using routing, circuits, and programmatic studies, we saw opportunities for a multi-layered linking of the area with surrounding networks. From this, the *Plan des Circuits* emerged, which forms the foundation for the subsequent routing network for the RCD. It was the first time that the various alternatives were discussed informally.

During this period, we met Codum, a new developer, with whom we developed an alternative business plan to revitalize the Schieblock. The financing model was built on direct and substantive involvement. Within a short time, a network of entrepreneurs filled the entire 8000 m<sup>2</sup> complex, occupying units from 10 to 700 m<sup>2</sup>. The partnership that

we signed with IABR, one of the first parties committing itself and moving to Schieblock, enabled the building's rebranding as a city laboratory. Motivated by the temporary nature of the Schieblock, it was possible to experiment with new types of city making.

One building does not make a city, and a city is not made with just three stakeholders. To effectively demonstrate the gradual transformation of the RCD, it was necessary to develop a comprehensive strategy. Firstly, it required establishing a broad alliance with the municipality, proprietors, entrepreneurs, cultural institutions, and universities.

We expected a complicated process. Nevertheless, a reality check was also long overdue. The biggest challenge was developing new tools to bridge the gap between privately funded, market-driven development and a retreating government. Could we convert the idea of 'Permanent Temporality' into an actual strategy? What role would we serve: pro-activist, facilitator, or practitioner?

### **Act three: The area becomes the Test Site 2010-2012**

During a public presentation in early 2008, new plans for the RCD were first announced by the municipality of Rotterdam. A regional vision was established, the Glocal City District, whose ambition was 'to adapt a universal place, such as a station area, according to the local milieu.' However, the urban plan that followed proved to be an instant plan without empathy for the physical and economic context. The criticism, partly fueled by the ever-deepening financial crisis, was that the plans were very far removed from the urban reality. What was missing was a development strategy in which the area can be transformed for the next thirty years. New financing structures, new alliances, and specific references were also missing. Here was an opportunity to experiment using urban curatorship to examine and reflect on the distinguishable space between towering ambitions and stubborn reality. In the fall of 2009, IABR and ZUS decided, therefore, to officially declare the RCD as Test Site Rotterdam.

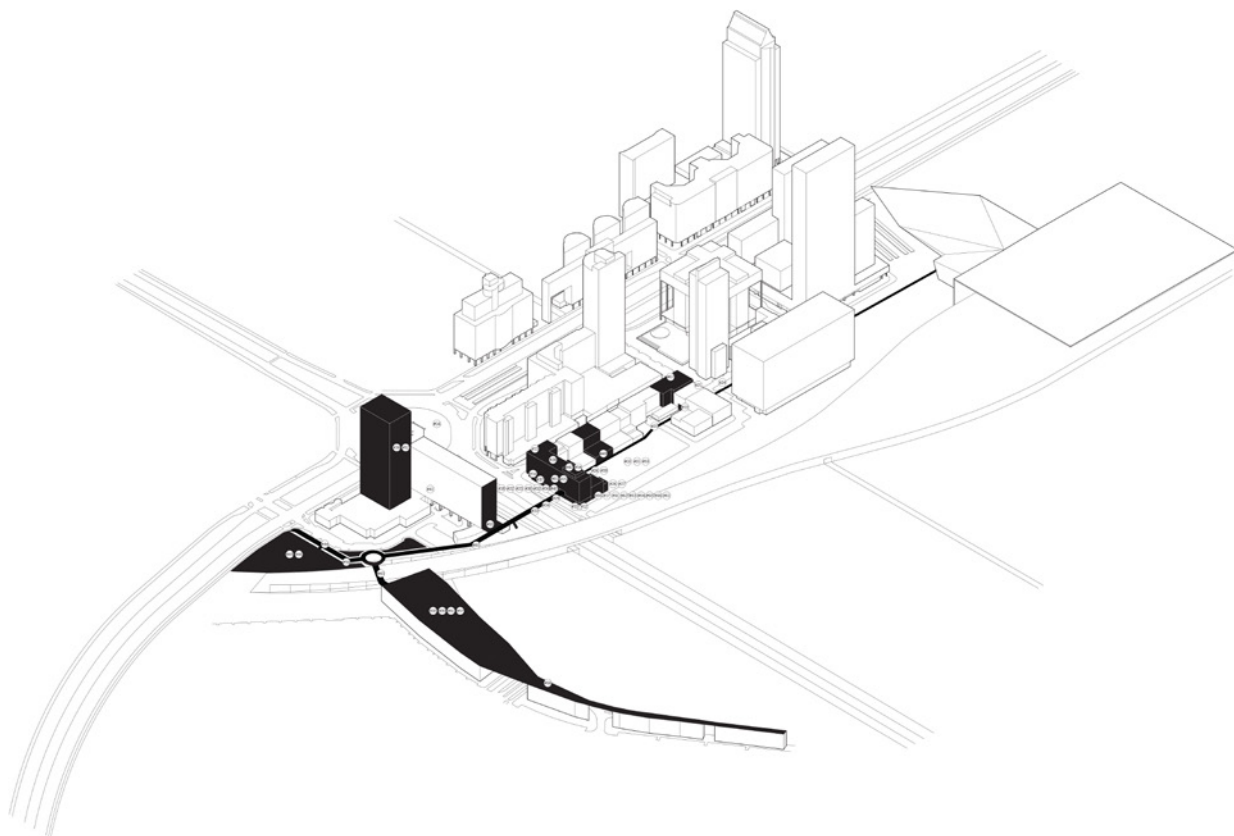
The implementation of specific projects revealed that the economic engine behind three decades of flourishing urban development was beginning to falter. The most notable incident was that the entire municipal service would be moving from the Marconi Towers for a yet to be realized building – De Rotterdam – on the Kop van Zuid. But there appeared to be no plans for the 60,000 m<sup>2</sup> of vacated office space. During this period, the Weena's boulevard of metropolitan offices became synonymous with 'To Let' signs. The optimistically planned brain parks on the city's ring rapidly had to contend with a lack of occupancy. Was this just a symptom of the economic crisis? Slowly a new sense of reality set in. Apparently, investors and developers were not only shortsighted, but policymakers and planners were unable to anticipate that these mono-functional and large-scale real estate developments would be the new ghettos of the city. The short-term

thinking and the emphasis on economic gain created a city full of urban phantoms, and the question was whether it could be brought back to life. How could the Western-European city, faced with stagnating economic growth and an aging population, shift the agenda from new construction to transformation? How do we make a city in times of crisis and stagnation?

The RCD and surrounding areas, such as Pompenburg, were plagued by a lack of occupancy and the rear sides of buildings, but they still had prospects. There were many relatively small-scale developments such as the MiniMall, Central Post, the Creative Cube, DS 25, and the Schieblock, which were beacons for transformation in the area. The Test Site focused on the places and buildings that could provide guidance for a new development strategy. There were plenty of determined stakeholders with whom the alliance could take shape. It was about distilling what was workable in existing projects. For example, public space can develop without depending on procuring real estate. This implies researching new revenue models, alternative alliances, and spatial solutions. The research and alternative developments required a *sabbatical detour*. This is a methodology developed by the IABR in 2007 both with and for the city of São Paulo. It seeks new and different ways of connecting to the urban situation via the launching of a test site, which involves a particular period of design, planning, (international) reflection, and knowledge exchange.

The Test Site Alliance is defined through three themes: Permanent Temporality, Urban Tissue, and New Economy. These themes were informed by five strategies: Routing, Place Making, Transformation, Density, and Local Economy. In practice, it meant examining how long-term ambitions could be ‘temporarily’ realized in the short term through specific projects and alliances. Thus, one of the projects, the Luchtsingel – a slow-traffic connection from RCD to Pompenburg – was a direct translation of the ‘Mixone’ idea, part of an existing urban plan by Maxwan Architects + Urbanists. Seen strategically, the big difference was creating a shared commitment ahead of the real estate development instead of treating it as a tailpiece. By using crowdfunding as a financing model, direct results can be achieved. This proactive project opened the door for future projects along the new route formed by the Luchtsingel. A building’s rear becomes the facade, vacancy is reallocated, and passive actors are activated.

The Test Site is simultaneously a city that exhibits itself and an exhibition as city making, showing how a city works through best practices. In doing so, one can directly test whether an individual strategy makes sense, without questioning the entire planning process. Research by designers and universities and the testing of programming for the area led to alternatives and reflection. Moreover, the direct involvement of policy makers, planners, and citizens increase: all parties gradually see more opportunities to bring the area and its economy to life slowly.



#01 Unit 303  
 #02 Discoforum  
 #04 Hofpodium  
 #10 De dépendance 1.0  
 #12 Infocentrum schieblock  
 #13 Summer school  
 #14 Schieblock werkhof  
 #15 Schieblock  
 #16 Fabrique urbaine  
 #17 Crate furniture  
 #18 Making city – test site rotterdam  
 #19 Delftse passage  
 #20 Super zebra  
 #21 Space frame  
 #22 De dépendance 2.0  
 #23 Indoor gym  
 #24 Mi have een droom  
 #26 Luchtsingel phase 1  
 #27 Biergarten  
 #28 Dakakker

#29 Luchtsingel phase 2  
 #30 Vrijdagmiddagkaffee  
 #31 Delftsehof  
 #32 Bar  
 #33 Luchtsingel phase 3  
 #34 06-Restaurant  
 #35 The new forest – wunderbaum  
 #36 Luchtsingel debate  
 #37 Groos  
 #38 24Hofpoort  
 #39 World food festival  
 #41 Luchtsingel infoshop  
 #42 Op 't dak  
 #43 Luchtsingel phase 4  
 #44 Luchtsingel phase 5, 6, 7, 8, 9  
 #45 Pompenburg park  
 #46 Pompenburg pavilions (wunderbaum's the house)  
 #47 Amsterdam-rotterdam city embassy  
 #49 Annabel

#50 Mi have een droom  
 #51 Urban picnic  
 #52 De dépendance 3.0  
 #53 Three models for delftsehof  
 #54 Slimdak  
 #55 Hofplein 19  
 #57 Luchtpark hofbogen  
 #58 'S zomers botanical warehouse  
 #59 Dj booth  
 #60 Luchtsingel painting day  
 #61 Incomplete unfinished gallery  
 #62 Elevator door  
 #63 City vision  
 #64 Nieuw delftsehof  
 #65 Schieblocktoren  
 #66 Culture wall  
 #67 The independent school for the city



2012 was the Test Site's moment of truth because the strategy was visibly developed and experienced for the first time. Due to time constraints, there was a strong emphasis on spatial interventions and the economic model. Part of the testing, which occurred on site and through public debate, reflected on whether the area's performance met expected goals. But how could we assess the initiated projects? Through what criteria could we adapt and evolve? Was there sufficient involvement of citizens, entrepreneurs, and the area's current and future users to continue the strategy? Do the precarious intentions of the stakeholders remain? Is the structure of strategies and projects robust enough to trigger a different form of urban development?

In 2012, the 5<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Biennale of Rotterdam (IABR) provided a platform to initiate meaningful discussions and make vital connections. It is striking that this kind of culmination point introduced a new focus regarding how the different parties work together. To ensure the Test Site's necessary continuity, it was extended and connected to the 6<sup>th</sup> IABR, so that the methodology of Permanent Temporality employed in 2014 could fully come to fruition.

#### **Act four: A new agenda for the city of tomorrow 2012**

Through the decentralization of governance and transition of the government's role from active to facilitating, the citizen was seen as providing new promise for urban development. Governments consider the citizen's role as 'public development,' 'the neighborhood takes control' and a new policy – the city initiative – was created: 1% of the municipality budget was reserved for the best citizen's initiative of Rotterdam. There was a fundamental transition from policy production to co-production.

At the start of 2012, it appeared that the alliance of stakeholders were almost all swimming in the same direction. The process for a new way of city making was rapidly accelerating. We were no longer talking about fancy designs or possible strategies. The alliance was professionalized into project teams that manage licensing procedures, develop funding models, and expedite the realization of the first projects.

The continuation of the economic crisis meant capitalizing on even the smallest possibilities. Through the Test Site's design study, we slowly managed to convince the alliance and the government to participate in a different form of city making.

During the IABR in 2012, the design research was shown to the city. Together with economists, architects, artists, policymakers, Stichting Fonds Architectenbureaus, Architectuur Instituut Rotterdam, and the municipality of Rotterdam, an agenda for the Test Site was formulated. Through workshops, lectures, conversations in the Test Site café, mini-festivals, tours, and screenings, we committed to action and reflection on city making.

### Act five: City Initiative 2013-2014

As part of Rotterdam's coalition government accord, the D66 party ensured that 1% of the annual public budget, four million Euros, would be applied to a citizens' initiative. To realize this ambition, the Rotterdam City Initiative was launched. In 2012, we were approached by one of the ambassadors who wanted to persuade us to submit the Luchtsingel project. At one minute before midnight on New Year's Eve, 2012, we delivered the proposal, which explained the motive, idea, and process. A few weeks later, we were invited to present our plan to the jury. Armed with the first planks for the Luchtsingel bridge that we had

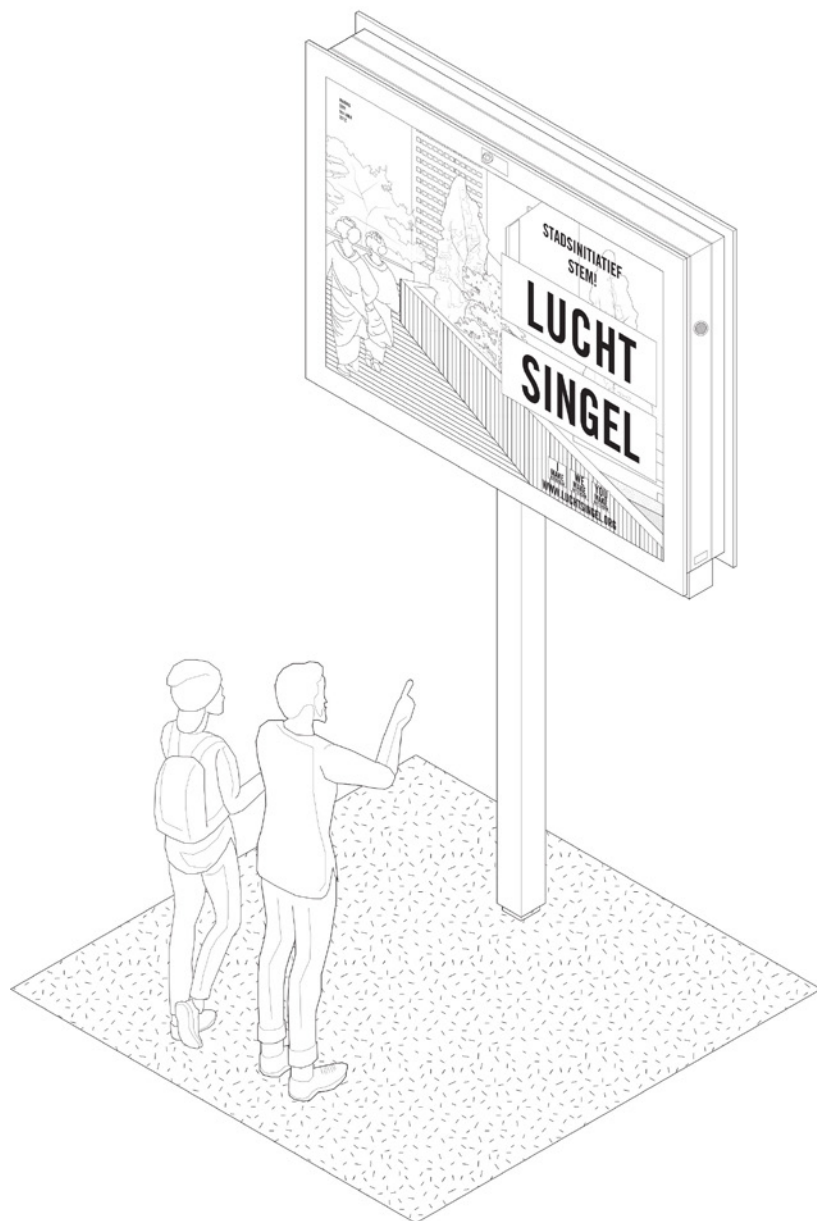


Fig. 6 Luchtsingel campaign

Fig. 7 The Schieblock is cut through by the Luchtsingel. Photo: Frank Hanswijk

Fig. 8 Dakakker on top of the Schieblock

Fig. 9 Dakakker; rooftop urban farm. Photo by Ossip van Duivenbode

Fig. 10 Luchtsingel Birdseye view. Photo by Ossip van Duivenbode

Fig. 11 Luchtsingel

Fig. 12 Luchtsingel roundabout. Photo by Ossip van Duivenbode

Fig. 13 Luchtsingel roundabout. Photo by Ossip van Duivenbode

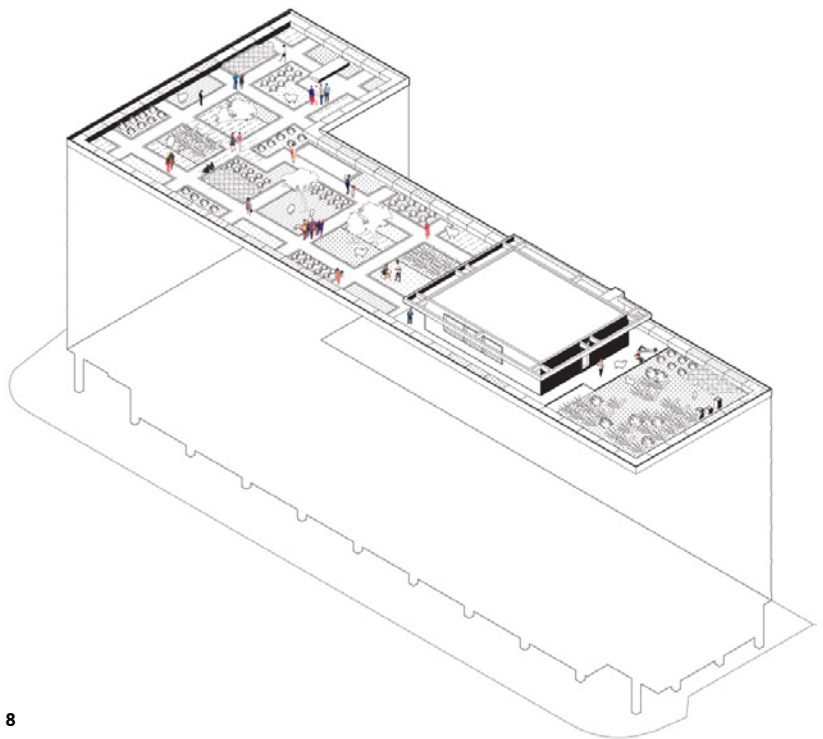


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sold to Rotterdam citizens as part of our crowdfunding strategy, we justified our plan. We were immediately informed we were on the short list of five proposals. Our competitors were Stadsboeren (City Farmers), Yoga op School (School Yoga), De Hef, and a music festival.

The challenge was to convince Rotterdam residents of our plan within a three weeks period because they were the ones who voted for the best City Initiative. For this, two weeks of frenzied preparation began immediately: poster campaigns, a temporary polling station, Luchtsingel ambassadors, TV commercials, and lots of talking. Since we had to convince ordinary citizens, there was no room for our usual jargon. With simple slogans, we tried to make it clear that the former city center deserved a boost, and one would again be able to saunter on foot through the RCD area.

Five grueling weeks of negotiation and campaign preparation paid off with us receiving 48% of the votes, and we could immediately begin implementing our plans. The next morning, we set the first piece of the bridge against the Schieblock as a measure of our intent. The Schieblock passage was soon cut through the Schieblock building, and the construction of the Dakakker began – a rooftop farm garden for the Schieblock as one of the Test Site's interventions. These were the first two major statements announcing a new style of area development had started.



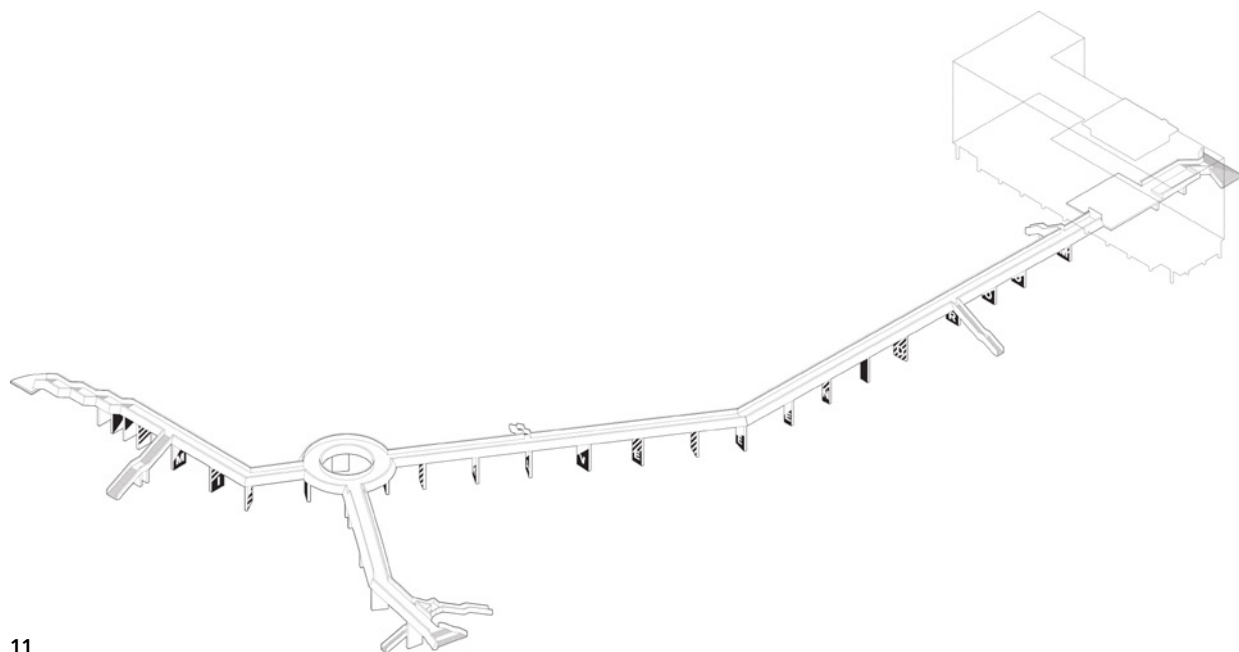
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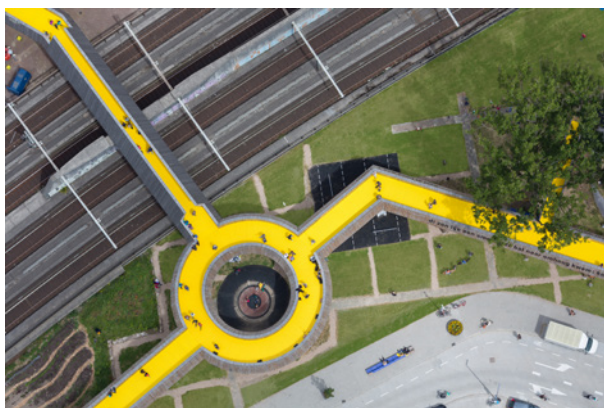
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Fig. 14 Dinner at the Luchtsingel roundabout

Fig. 15 Luchtsingel train bridge.  
Photo by Ossip van Duivenbode

Fig. 16 Luchtsingel – Schieblock – Dakakker.  
Photo by Ossip van Duivenbode





Fig. 17 Yellow Super Zebra as part of the Routing strategy at the Delftsehof side of the Schieblock. Photo by Ossip van Duivenbode

Fig. 18 Location for the Delftse Passage before the intervention



Fig. 19 Yellow passage cut through to create an unimpeded walking route from Rotterdam Central Station. Photo by Ossip van Duivenbode

Fig. 20 Delftse Passage, seen from Delftsehof/ Schieblock. Photo by Ossip van Duivenbode

Alongside the project's realization, an organization taking care of its implementation and monitoring was established. We worked very effectively to realize the bridge with a core team consisting of the municipality, ZUS, and different specialists. A supervisory board for the City Initiative was formed. It advised six times a year on the steps to be taken. A team was assembled within ZUS to be responsible for the design of all components and for communicating with all crowd-funders and stakeholders.

Since the Luchtsingel makes its course over different types of property, we were very dependent on the willingness of the various partners. Strikingly, Prorail was the most resolute of all, and the process of getting the bridge over the rail track went very smoothly. We could piggyback on the decommissioning of tracks as part of the final reconstruction work for Rotterdam Central Station. November 20<sup>th</sup> was an exciting night. We had to install the bridge parts from midnight to six in the morning. It was not possible to work on the railway line because the power could not be removed from the overhead cables. At five a.m. the power went off, and at seven a.m. the bridge was placed.

The other parts followed culminating in the final piece being installed alongside the Hofplein 19 office building, which had long been refused building permission by the FGH Bank due to potential risks.

The entire Luchtsingel was designed and realized within two years. The construction of the Dakakker and Pompenburg Park – a park for urban agriculture and recreation – was also set into motion. These two spots were realized in collaboration with many volunteers, the Rotterdam Environmental Center, and Stichting Vredestuin (Peace Garden Foundation). The ultimate goal of the Luchtsingel was always to enable a stroll from the HSL station into the polder, without encountering a car, using the Luchtsingel and the former train line leading from the Hofplein to walk out of the city. Indeed, another long-term ambition was the design and construction of a meadow on the roof of the former Hofplein Station. The roof offers one of the most beautiful views of the city skyline, bookended by the Laurens Church and the newly reconstructed Centraal Station. This place offers space for reflection on the former city heart of Rotterdam.

The final component of the development is the Management Plan. Since the Luchtsingel is a temporary bridge, its demolition is written into the budget. A budget has also been reserved for a lasting activation and stimulation of the surroundings. A part thereof is the management of the public space, such as combating graffiti and neglect. Together with the municipality, the Luchtsingel Management Plan was established, ensuring its effective management for the coming years. To support the idea of developing management, it was decided to appoint a Bridge Master, who is responsible for the daily management of the area and, more importantly, indicates where the opportunities for improvement are.

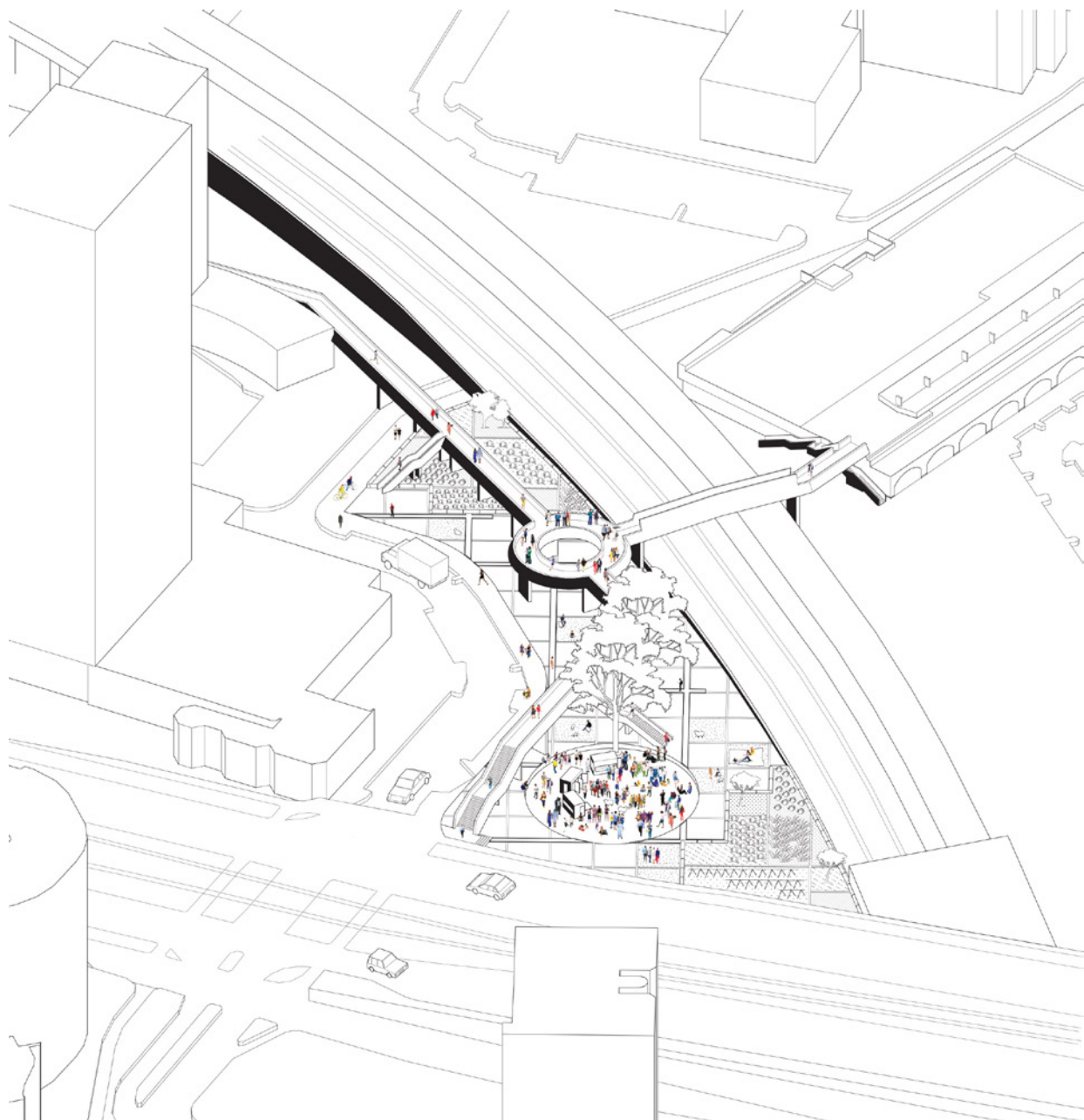


Fig. 21 Pompenburg park



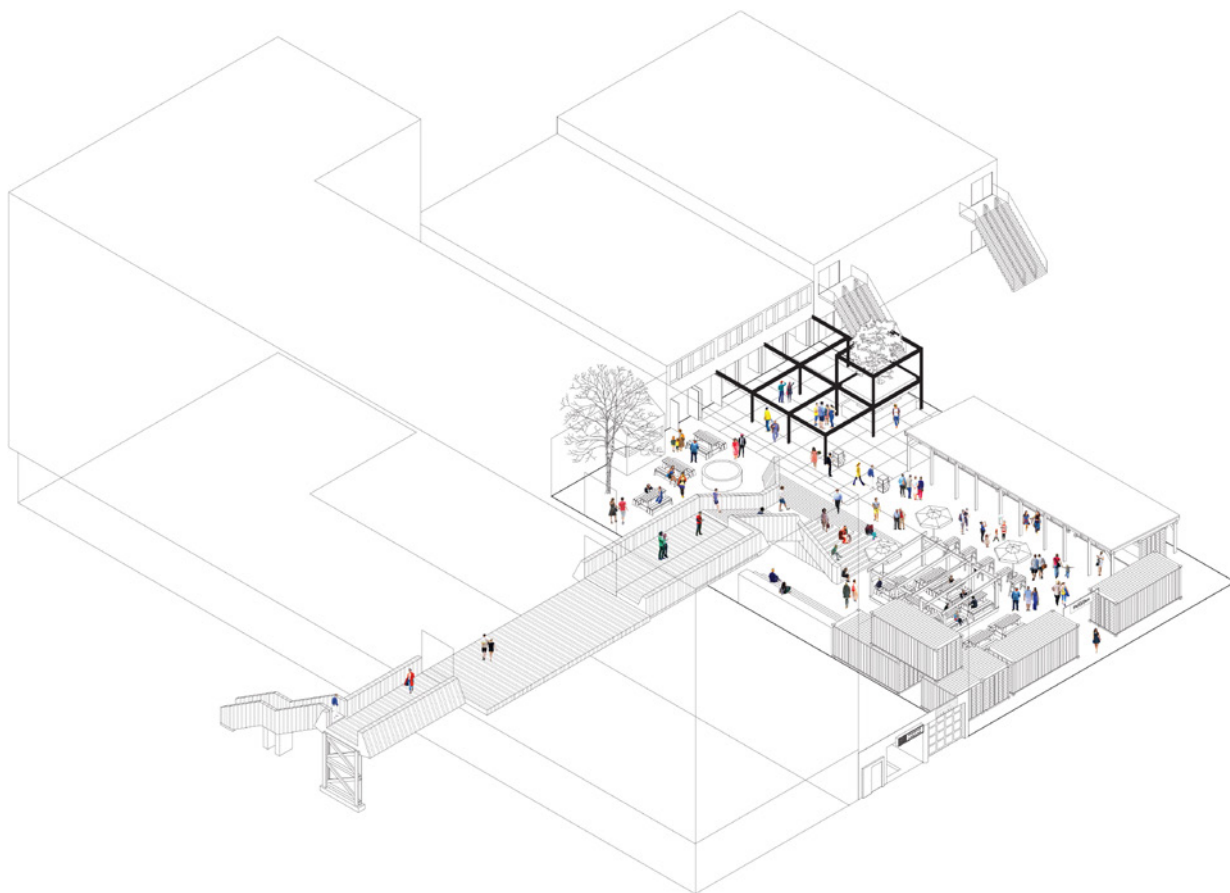


Fig. 22 Biergarten

Over the past three years, we have learned that listening to and being open to all kinds of initiatives leads to a substantial agglomeration effect. Through enabling small activities, they can become key drivers for an attractive public space. Thus, the Biergarten started as a shipping container in a deserted parking lot and within three years has grown into a nationally known, fully-fledged catering establishment that gave the Delftsehof area behind the Schieblock an identity. Small interventions in public space can also lead to its better use. Attaching a temporary swing to the Luchtsingel proved successful because many children suddenly started visiting Pompenburg Park. The Bridge Master will continue this approach to allow the area to flourish further.

#### **Act six: Beyond temporality 2015-2016**

One of the objectives of the Luchtsingel City Initiative was to reduce the lack of occupancy and boost developments in the area. The belief was that proactive investment in public space would lead to investment in private real estate.

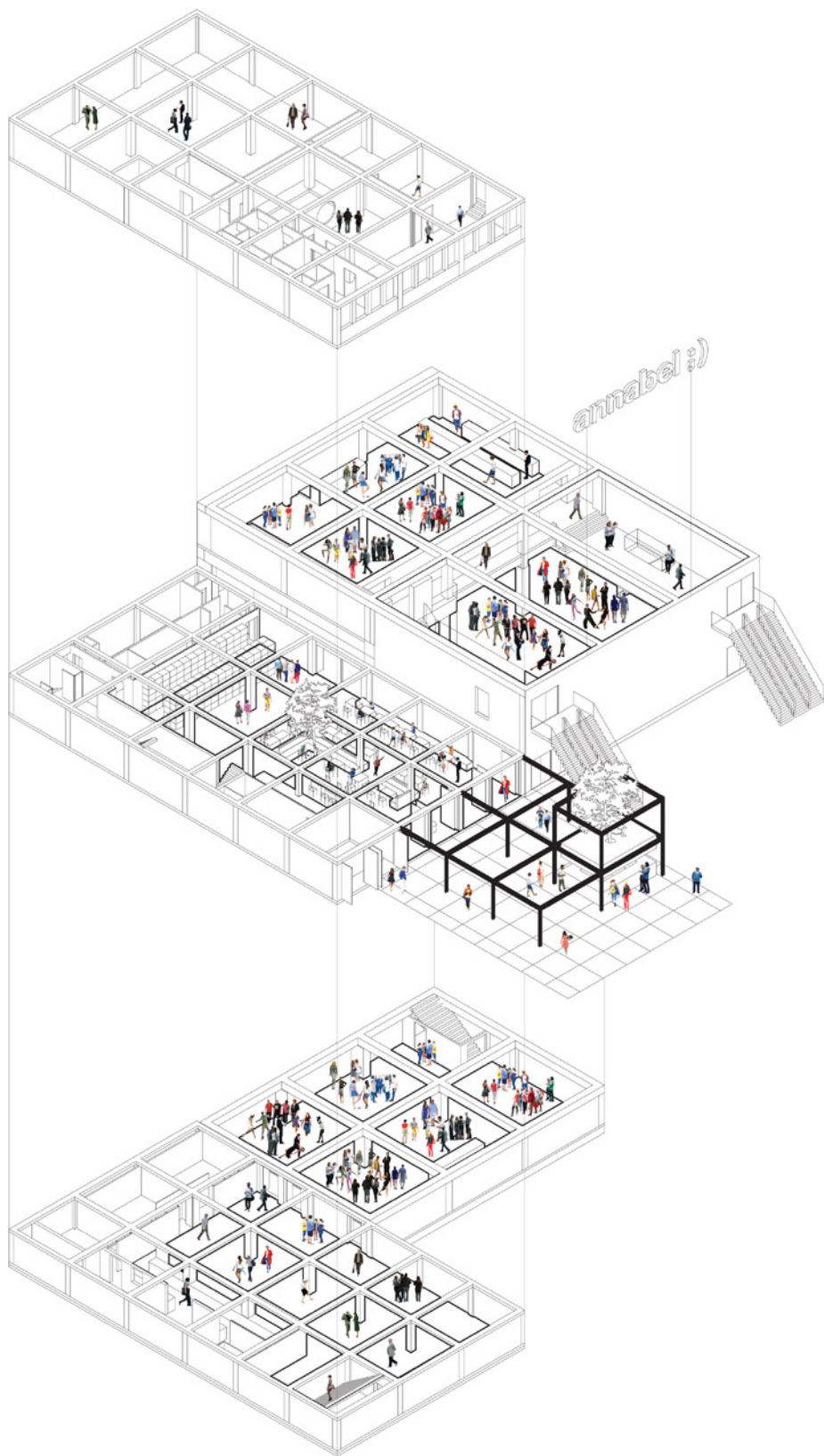
The first test of this approach is certainly the extension of Schieblock's contract. Originally intended as a temporary experiment

to provide an alternative to demolition, it suddenly became a serious business case, boosting the local economy. The owner, LSI, therefore had plans to upgrade the building and to seek a higher segment tenant. However, we convinced LSI that the investment needed to enable this would deliver the same yield over five to ten years as leaving the current business model intact. Moreover, Schieblock resulted in more than a collection of tenants in a transformed building; it is a living ecosystem of companies, institutions, and individuals that lead to increased activities and the area's vibrancy. Schieblock is like an incubator for businesses that grow slowly and can develop further elsewhere in the area. The fact that the Luchtsingel runs through the building contributes to the belief that, for the time being, it should not be demolished. After nearly a year of negotiations, we managed to get an extension of five to ten years. A temporary experiment that contributes to the continuous development of the RCD.

The Biergarten began as an experiment where once stood the De Klerk dance school. The original idea was to create parking spaces, but fortunately, the municipality agreed to a temporary experiment, which we christened the Biergarten. The idea was to place containers and wooden furniture made in the adjacent Fabrique Urbaine on this sunny spot next to the railway, thus attracting people to come and drink a beer. It soon became apparent that the combination of beer, sun and the Luchtsingel's grand staircase was a successful formula. Weather permitting; lots of people came down on Thursdays and Fridays. The terrace's informality attracted many people to this place. In 2015, in consultation with LSI, the Biergarten was extended toward the parking lot and doubled in capacity. The Biergarten is equipped with a full kitchen and substantial beer tanks to cope with the expected influx. The set-up was also fitted with roof structures, allowing for a longer opening season. This again exemplified how temporality slowly developed into a more permanent condition.

Like the Biergarten, Club Hollywood always tried to plug into to the attention the area received and the subsequent inflows of people. But their target was the weekend youth that visited nightclubs and consumed copious amounts of alcohol. With the introduction of stricter licensing laws, raising the legal drinking age to eighteen, their approach became their downfall. After more than 20 years in the area, Club Hollywood closed its doors in 2014. The owners of Perron, Aziz Yagoub and Marc Zee, acquired a lease on the property to establish, no less, a cafe and music venue. Averse to subsidies, Aziz Yagoub and Marc Zee wanted to create an economically independent venue through wide-ranging programming, thus maximizing the location's use. The venue was called Annabel. The first thing the licensing regulators deemed wise was moving the entrance to the Delftsehof. That was good news because it aligned with the Luchtsingel's route and placed more emphasis on the Delftsehof as a place. Annabel asked ZUS to develop a design for the venue, thus boosting the area's attractiveness. This gave

Fig. 23 Annabel



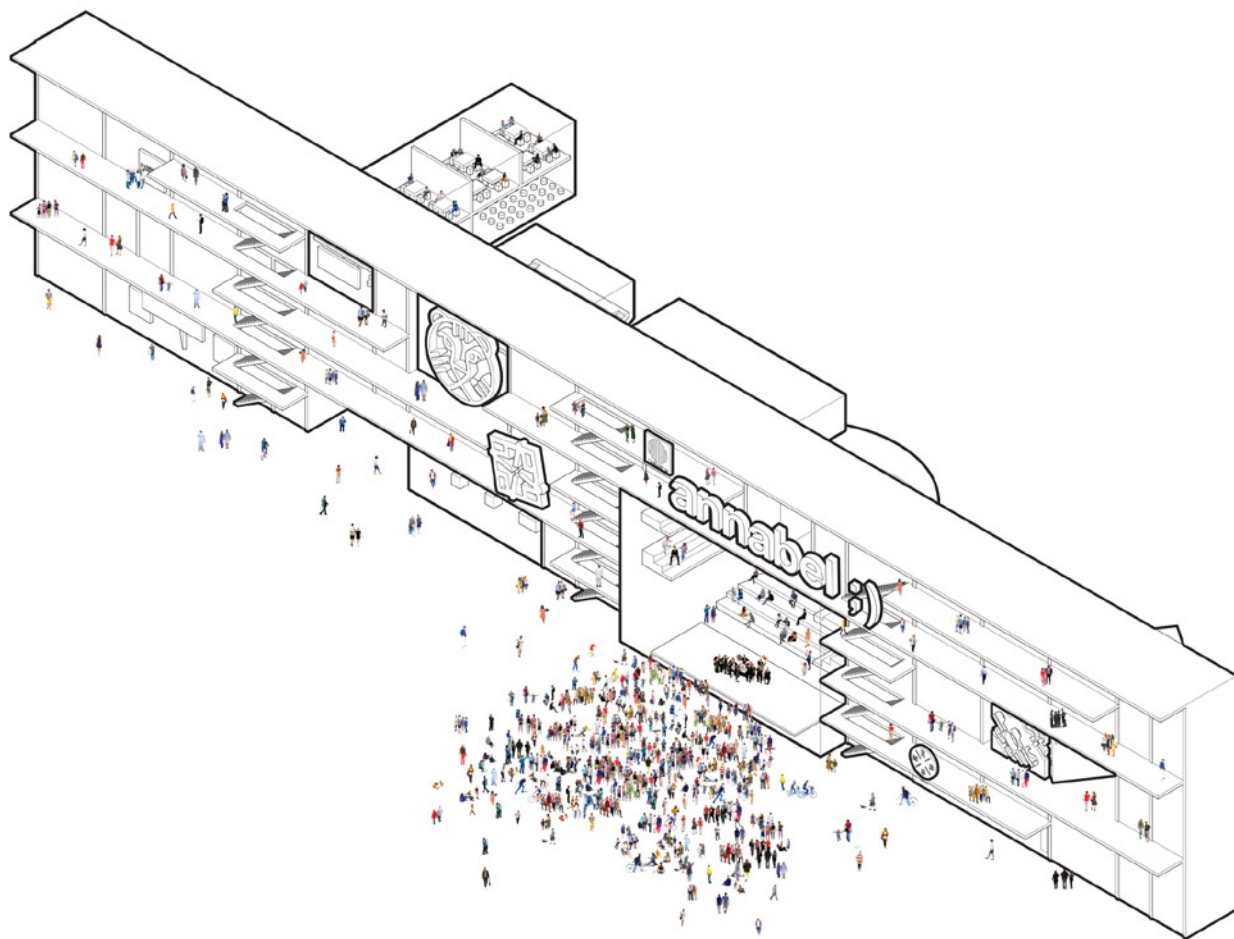


Fig. 24 Culture wall and Annabel

us further opportunity to intertwine the public and private to a higher level. Therefore, a frame structure extended Annabel's interior into the public space and included an outdoor bar. The route of the Luchtsingel crosses this outdoor terrace. In April 2015, the Petit Café and the terrace opened. A month later, the club opened in the basement and in September the large main room opened with an international act. This will permanently change this area's prestige.

Through the further development of the Schieblock, the Biergarten's continuity, and the arrival of Annabel, LSI gained a new perspective on the development of the Delftsehof or the Schiekadeblok, as it is known in real estate terms. Instead of the instant model that was planned in response to the 2008 economic crisis, LSI started thinking about a gradual transition model; plot-to-plot development that retains the urban structure, rather than demolishing the whole courtyard for underground parking. The parking problem is instead addressed through a modular car park, which can gradually transform into a permanent parking garage as part of a building volume. Through their

knowledge of the area, LSI asked ZUS to conduct a study to research a gradual transition model for the Delfstehof area. Moreover, ZUS will act as an intermediary between LSI and the municipality.

The Delftsehof can, therefore, be an example of Permanent Temporality. Thus, the focus on the relationship between building and public space will continue.

One of the biggest thorns in the side of the city center's urban development is the former Shell headquarters. Built in the seventies, it was already vacated in the early nineties for other locations. Although Shell returned in 2009 to occupy premises opposite on the Weena, the former Shell office buildings at the Hofpoort and Hofplein 19 remained empty. To make matters worse, these buildings were cunningly built on the site of the old heart of the city, meaning they are now representative for the area's failure. The Luchtsingel was especially intended to breathe new life into those buildings, despite the fact that we were entirely dependent on the properties' owners. We asked each property owner: we are building a bridge and investing in the public space, what are you doing for the area? AXA, then the Hofpoort's owner, represented a group of German investors for whom the building accounted for a lot of money on the books. It was not possible for them to do something about the rent or financially contribute to the area's development. AXA's contribution was, therefore, giving us the key to the Hofpoort so we could use temporary resources to breathe life into the tower. A whirlwind of programming culminated in 24Hofpoort, where we transformed the entire building into a vertical city for 24 hours. These and other activities have contributed to the tower being sold to a Czech investor for half of the book value. As a result, new redevelopment opportunities arose, including Spaces, the transformation of the building's lower seven floors into flex-work offices. This will shake things up in a currently lifeless building. We are also busy talking to what was formerly the Dépendance, which over the years grew into an independent entity, to establish a center for urban culture in the Hofpoort, thus providing a cultural boost to the Hofplein. The redevelopment of Hofplein 19 won't be long in coming.

The Hofpleintrace, a three-kilometer stretch of disused elevated railway on a monumental archway starting at the former Hofplein station is beginning to develop further. The first part is completely renovated and fully rented to a variety of shops and restaurants. The arrival of the Dakweide or Dakpolder (English: Roof Meadow) on top of the former train station gives rise to further reflection on the rest of the Hofpleintrace. Until recently, none of the parties concerned took responsibility for the roof of the former train station, but recently, an agreement was signed between the developers and the municipality to initiate a sustainable design for the roof. This can mean that the dream of walking from the HST to the polder will become a reality within a few years.



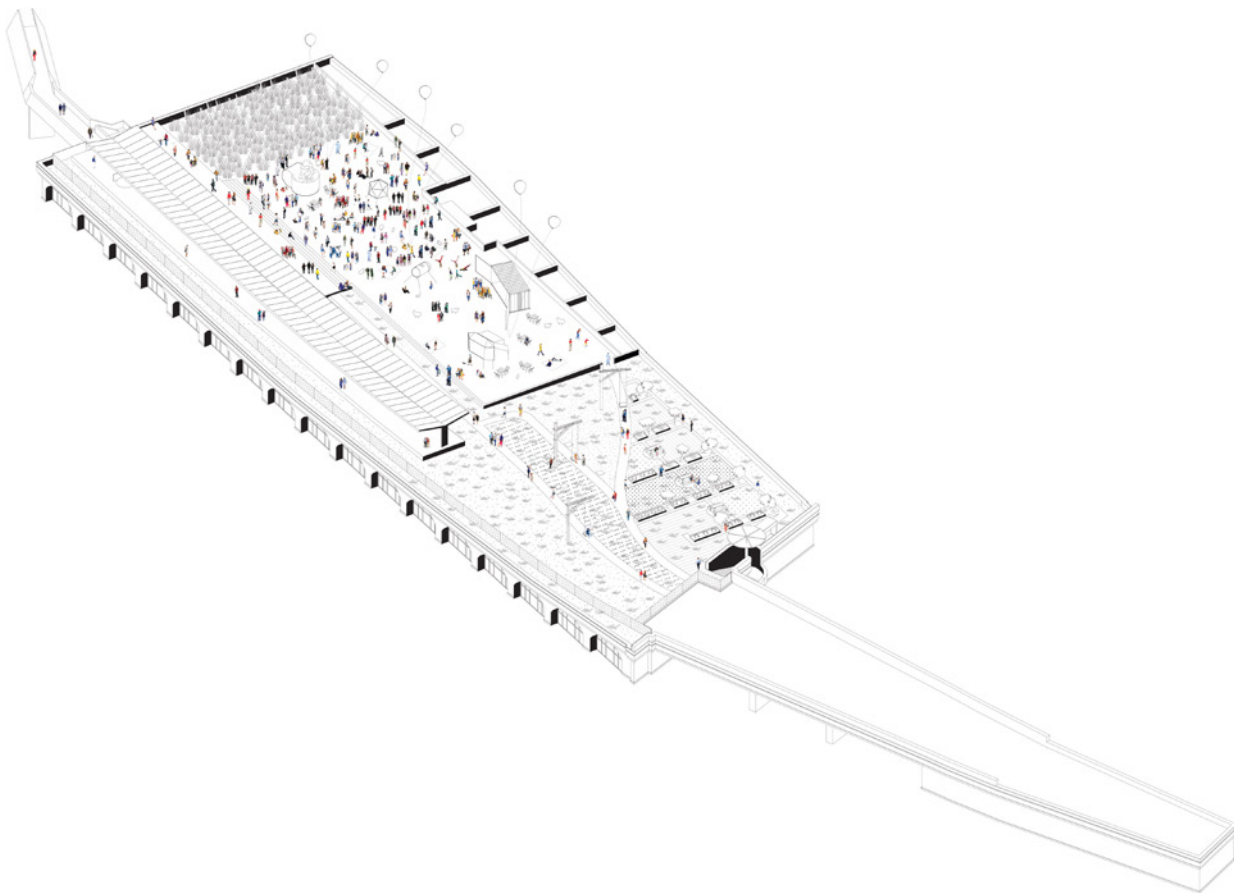


Fig. 25 Birdseye view Dakpark, Hofbogen and Luchtsingel. Photo by Ossip van Duivenbode

Fig. 26 Hofpleintrace; from the Dakpark the trace leads into the polder.  
Photo by Walter Herfst

Fig. 27 Dakpark Hofbogen



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**Fig. 28** Luchtpark Hofbogen.  
Photo by Ossip van Duivenbode

**Fig. 29** Luchtpark Hofbogen.  
Photo by Walter Herfst

**Fig. 30** Open air cinema at Luchtpark  
Hofbogen. Photo by Walter Herfst

The area's various developments require all stakeholders to revisit the plans. The Glocal City District vision may be still relevant, but the urban plan certainly isn't. The Central District Association, are therefore urging for a reassessment of the plans. It must be established whether the goals are realistic and how the ambitions should be formulated. What actual exchanges will take place between the area's small and large players? In what way will public space be invested in for the time being? And what organizational form is needed to guide the process of permanent temporality? These will be the biggest challenges for the coming years. The City Initiative has at least contributed to setting a new course; its continuation will have to be addressed by all the different parties together.

## Act seven: Incomplete & Unfinished 2017-2018

“Break up that old thing,” reads a headline in the local newspaper. This time it is the populist Leefbaar Rotterdam political party stirring up a storm in a teacup. Their statement implies that the municipality cannot take a loss on the area’s redevelopment. No matter what, new towers must be built for the development to be cost-effective. Through the local newspaper and Twitter, the other right-wing party, the VDD, announces a desire to “demolish and rebuild the Delftsehof.”

A few months earlier, the municipality’s City Development Department had called with an invitation to cooperate on an urban development modeling study for the area. “It should take the insights gained from recent years into account. This means examining whether the current buildings can be renovated, whether a number of the existing functions, such as Annabel and the Biergarten, can have a place in the new plans, and whether the area’s accessibility and liveliness can be strengthened. We expect the brief to provide 110,000 square meters of new functions in the area.”

Together with the municipality, an intensive investigation is started, from which 23 different options initially arise. These are whittled down to three models, each based on a different definition of the public space: a street model, a court model, and a three-dimensional landscape. With absolute precision, it is investigated how to add volume to the existing buildings without completely blocking out the sun at street level. If there’s one thing ZUS has learned in recent years, it’s that this is the source of the location’s public capital. The fact that one can enjoy a sun-kissed, city-center courtyard here, with music in the background and passing train traffic, make this spot unique in Rotterdam. Partly because of this, the court model emerges as the favorite option.

With the political debate in the back, it seems that ZUS’ endeavors on urban models seem hopeless. If the decisionmakers don’t know the whole story behind the district they can never approve a model that saves some of its value. Therefore, it is concluded the real problem is the line of communication between citizens and them as representatives. So far, communication has gone through Twitter or the local newspaper which is a mere exchange of statements, no dialogue. ZUS’ insists on having a good conversation and decide to invite all the council members one by one.

“Dear Council Members,

*The protracted discussions concerning the Schiekadeblok, in Rotterdam Central District, are currently being conducted in very black and white terms. Plans for new towers are in direct opposition to the transformation of existing activity and Rotterdam culture. It is clear there is a substantial need for densification, but there are many conceivable scenarios for achieving this. In order to broaden the*



debate, which is mainly taking place in the media, there needs to be an open dialogue about future visions that can lead to a complete, integrated, and broadly supported approach to the area. ZUS has initiated and organized New Delftsehof, a series of discussions, workshops, expert meetings, and debates, to expose, discuss, and capture divergent interests in a realistic and well-founded scenario for the future. For this series, we are inviting Rotterdam policymakers and politicians, as well as local and international thinkers and doers, to ensure the widest possible cross-fertilization of knowledge, insight, and experience. During the next three months, the talks will take place in a dedicated space at the Delftsehof: Incomplete & Unfinished Gallery. Past, present, and future scale models, accompanied by projected imagery, shall enrich the conversations, with knowledge, experiences, and ideas from the area itself. The outcome of the discussions will feed into a further design and thinking process. In the spring, the exhibition will open to the public along with the publishing of a book about the area. We should like to invite you to an informative and inspiring dialogue, on 14, 15, or 16 February, at Incomplete & Unfinished Gallery at Schiestraat 14. We look forward to hearing from you and should be happy to know which day would best suit you.

*With Warm Regards,  
Elma van Boxel and Kristian Koreman"*

After years of distant dialogue, ZUS sends an invite directly to the political world. To a great surprise, all parties react positively within a few weeks, despite the forthcoming municipal elections and consequently overfull diaries. A tight schedule is made and invite every party for a two-hour slot. ZUS wants to highlight the area's vitality as well as listening to the motives of the various political parties. To properly prepare, all the election programs are examined to discover which political statements can apply to the developments in the Delftsehof. The statements range from the very general, "we advocate more green spaces in the city center," to the specific, "keep the area between Delftsestraat and Schiestraat [Schieblock and surroundings] as a 'Rotterdam Creative District.'" During the conversations, the most important statements are projected on the wall, to confront our interlocutors with their viewpoints and to encourage discussion.

Days of intense dialogue later there is a shift in the tone of voice. The council members seem to appreciate the fact that this area has self-regenerated over the last decades and is now full of life. After leaving their statements in the gallery they exit. We now have to wait how this has influenced their opinion on this matter.



Fig. 31 Incomplete and unfinished gallery

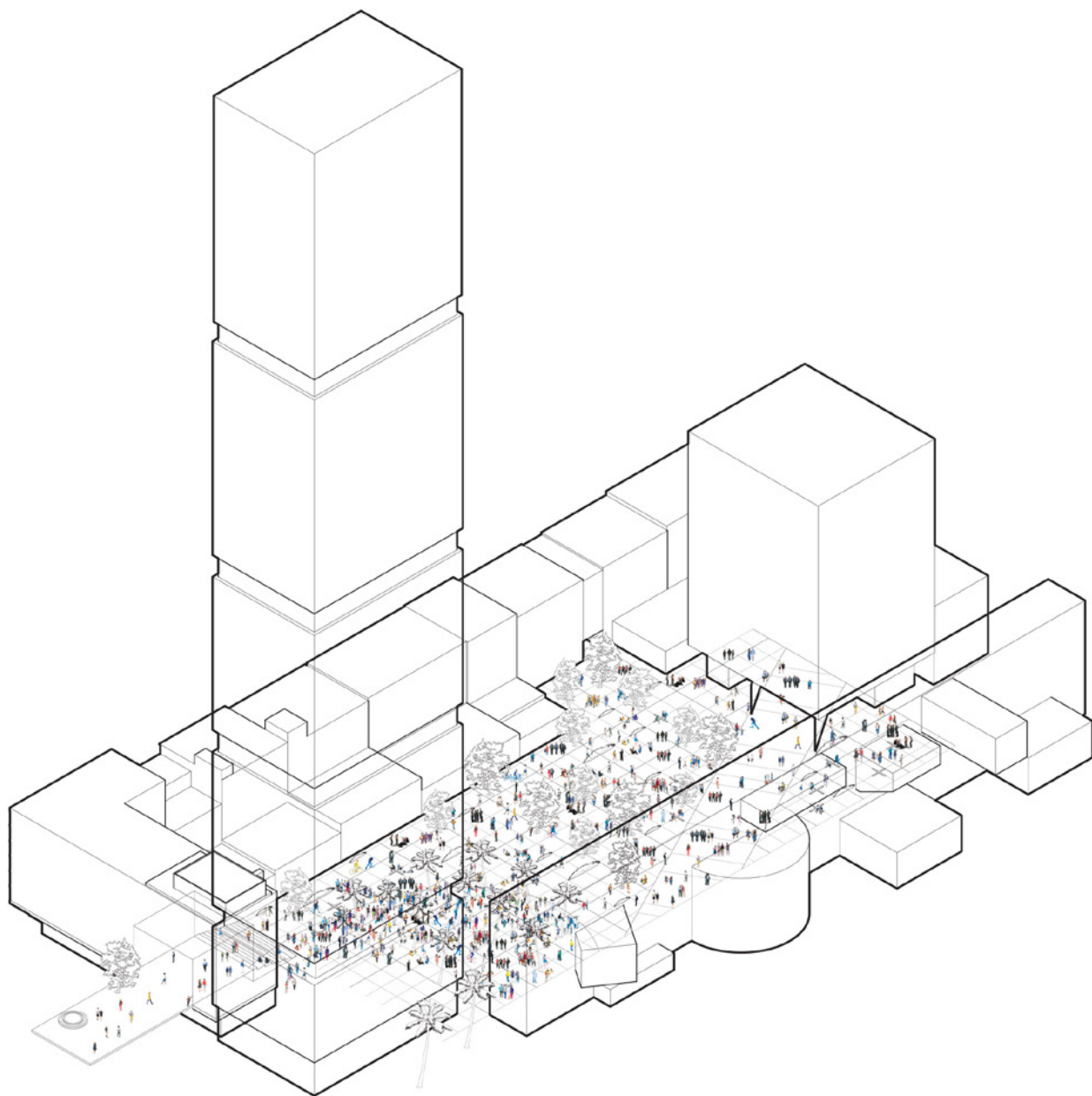


Fig. 32 New Delftsehof



Fig. 33 Open air cinema at Luchtpark Hofbogen. Photo by Walter Herfs

Recently new plans for the area have been issued and remarkably show a lot of similarities with the proposals ZUS has done so far: there are courtyards, most of the existing fabric is kept and a high-rise is connected to the Schieblock. It seems the strategy has worked, and we now have to wait for the next phase of development. The moment were fluid ideas and plans have to become solid.

It has been 18 years since ZUS has been involved in the story and yet it feels only half way. To register the happenings and to reflect on the lessons learned 'City of Permanent Temporality - Incomplete & Unfinished' is published. It covers all the years with journals, project descriptions and guest critics, such as Michael Speaks, Rory Hyde, Michelle Provoost, Wouter Vanstiphout, René Boer and Mark Minkjan. It reflects the drive, frustrations, sheer utopia and blunt reality of a city in the making. The district and ZUS' involvement have reached the age of maturity; it has been taken care of, stimulated, and enriched it from the ground up. The area has progressed through adolescence and flirted with ideas of giving up. But now it is older and wise enough to make decisions about its future. Choices are no longer solely dependent on others or the context, and it is evident which direction the area wants to go.

Things will remain restless for a long time in the polis: the city as politics, and the politics as a city. The city will always be in a state of permanent temporality, remaining incomplete and never finished.