

Transforming Strijp S : from Philips industrial site to new residential and creative area.

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Transforming Strijp S : from Philips' industrial site to new residential and creative area.

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Aim of this paper is to illustrate the project of renewal of Strijp S, one of the former industrial areas from Philips' Electronics in Eindhoven, The Netherlands.

Eindhoven is the birthplace of Philips' Electronics, and until 2000 it was the manufacture area of the company, occupying large terrains for the production. The influence of Philips on the city of Eindhoven was not only economical but also 'physical' and social. Aiming for a healthy and productive life, Philips built industrial units, housing estates, public green areas, sport terrains. This strongly affected the urban development of the city.

After departure of the production, the Municipality was confronted with the presence of many 'vacant' sites (where historic characteristics and memories were strongly embedded) and the need of activating an operation of urban regeneration that would combine preservation, renovation and re-use for new activities. Within this large range of industrial sites, Strijp S is identified as case specific. The impressive 'white spine' formed by three tall white buildings and the first laboratory of Philips, named Nat-Lab, are the cornerstones of the company and are listed monuments. In this area was invented the first CD and produced millions of light bulbs. The site has an extension of 27 ha and is strategically located between the city centre and the open green field of De Wielewaal, creating a unique connecting corridor. The site is known as the 'forbidden city', due to restricted access to public. In 2006 the first buildings underwent to conversion, thus making this site accessible to people's use. The transformation includes a mixed program such as housing, offices, cultural activities and so on.

Firstly, this paper will discuss on the meaning and heritage values of these former industrial sites for the city of Eindhoven. The local and regional identity is still tied to these locations, although activity has moved away. Secondly, the specific area of Strijp S will be taken in consideration. The author will show the process of transformation of the site from enclosed industrial area to open residential neighborhood. Starting from the environmental issues of Strijp S (soil pollution), this paper will explain about the implications of the existing industrial heritage on the new design of the area. Moreover, it will point out both successes and failures of the conversion. The paper will conclude by showing how the industrial heritage of Strijp S has played a crucial role in the transformation of the historic urban landscape of the city of Eindhoven and why it is becoming a design reference for other projects of industrial conversion in The Netherlands.

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