



Two sites, one city

Utrecht is on the move

Besides the plans to redevelop the area around the Central Station and the reconstruction of post-war districts such as Kanaleneiland, Utrecht is building the largest residential area in the country on one of the *Vinex* locations (being sites that are earmarked for housing development): Leidsche Rijn.

Leidsche Rijn Utrecht

The landscape is changing on Utrecht's western perimeter. Construction companies, residents and local authorities have joined forces to developing a new and as yet uncompleted urban district. This is Utrecht's Leidsche Rijn – the largest residential and business property development in the Netherlands.

The Leidsche Rijn Master Plan was drawn up in 1995 with the purpose of making a contribution to solving the huge demands for housing in the Utrecht region. At present more than half of the residents of Leidsche Rijn originally lived in the City of Utrecht.

By 2015, some 30,000 houses will have been built in this new district accommodating around 80,000 people. The development of Leidsche Rijn is not predefined, instead the district is being designed and constructed neighbourhood by neighbourhood. An approach which enables the urban planners and architects to respond to new developments. The enormous scale of Leidsche Rijn offers them special opportunities – opportunities rendered visible in the great diversity in the architecture and the types of housing. Consequently each neighbourhood within the district has an individual identity and its own particular ambience. Moreover Leidsche Rijn has a particularly rich history and the archaeological remains from its past are carefully incorporated in the development of this district.

High-quality office space

The central location of Leidsche Rijn is also attractive to businesses. Some 700,000 m² of office space will be provided in four new business estates, and about 40,000 people will ultimately find employment in the region. One of these four estates,

Papendorp, offers high-quality office accommodation to companies focusing on business-to-business services. More than half of all the people working here are either directly or indirectly active in the ICT sector.

Infrastructure

The development of Leidsche Rijn also involves the construction of new infrastructure. The plans include the relocation and partial covering of the A2 motorway. Three new bridges to be constructed over the Amsterdam-Rijn canal will link Leidsche Rijn to Utrecht's city centre. Additional access will be provided by two new railway stations, the future Randstadspoor railway line servicing the Randstad conurbation, new bicycle paths and a high-speed bus service.

Although the network will not be completed for some years to come, accessibility is a priority and consequently the local authorities are making a great deal of effort to provide these facilities.

Environment

Leidsche Rijn is being built in accordance with the principles of sustainable construction. Large investments have thus been made in environmental protection and energy management such as a rainwater collection system. The low-energy street lighting and the low-energy consumption of the houses will result in savings for both the Municipality and the residents. Moreover large areas of Leidsche Rijn are connected to the city's district heating system thereby achieving a reduction in the demand for expensive fuels and a decrease in the level of emissions of carbon dioxide.

Public parks

Extensive attention is being devoted to nature and public parks and gardens in the

district. The neighbourhoods' designs will incorporate a large amount of vegetation. The Leidsche Rijn Park, a park with an area of no less than 300 hectares planned for the centre of the district, will be one of the Netherlands' largest city parks. The larger and smaller parks and gardens are linked to each other by connecting zones allowing plants and animals to spread throughout the entire district.

Roman Leidsche Rijn

On the discovery of a Roman road and two Roman ships Leidsche Rijn immediately acquired international importance. The road was part of the peripheral road linking the Roman army camps along the Rhine. Consequently the northern perimeter of the former empire runs straight through the middle of Leidsche Rijn. The finds are spectacular: the Roman ship appears to have sunk with literally everything on board, and the Roman road provides archaeologists with a wealth of information on the ancient craft of road-building. A section of the road will remain visible above ground level when a 400-metre long footway is laid out precisely along the location of the original road. Consequently pedestrians will literally follow the Romans' footsteps.

How far have we come?

By 2005 one third of the residential construction will have been completed and other sites will have been prepared for the building of 2000 to 2500 houses a year over the next five years. The parties involved, representing both private and public sectors, are committed to achieving this goal.

Until recently the take-up of office space had been going well, but is now stagnating due to the drop in demand and more than ample supply in the current office market.

Agreements have been reached with the national government about:

1. widening and integrating the A2 motorway through Leidsche Rijn by means of an open/covered tunnel and
2. doubling the railway tracks in Leidsche Rijn and the construction of two additional stations. Building work will start in 2005 and preparations have already started.

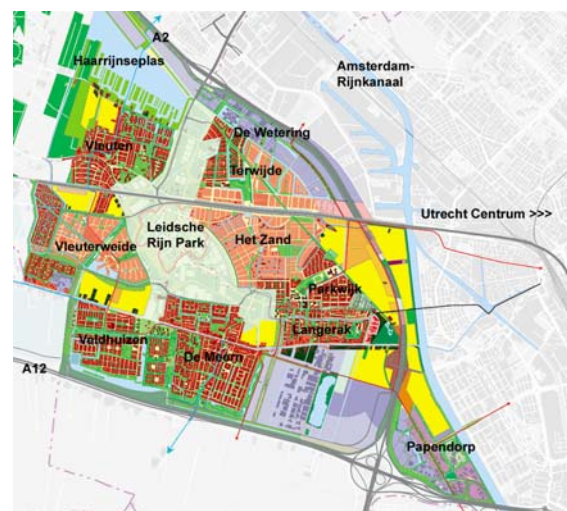
The attraction of Leidsche Rijn will be further enhanced:

1. by the development of the 300-hectare Leidsche Rijn Park, based on a unique design by Bureau West 8. Actual landscaping work has started this year.
2. with the second phase of the development of the Haarrijnse Plas starting in 2004. This man-made lake will both serve the water system in Leidsche Rijn and have a recreational function. An experiment, funded by the EU, is being conducted with a heliophytic filter to improve the quality of the water.

The Roman limes run through Leidsche Rijn. Remains have been found of watchtowers, a castle, the unique find of a Roman ship and a Roman road and waterworks. Plans are being drawn up for an archaeological centre where the Roman ship that was excavated in 2003 and other finds will be conserved and exhibited. The Roman past will be on display in various parts of the area.

In 2010 the construction starts of Leidsche Rijn Centre along the inner ring of the Deltametapool close to the A2 motorway and the railway line to The Hague and Rotterdam. It will become one of the major junctions in the Randstad Holland network (the conurbation incorporating Amsterdam, Utrecht, Rotterdam and The Hague).

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Map Leidsche Rijn