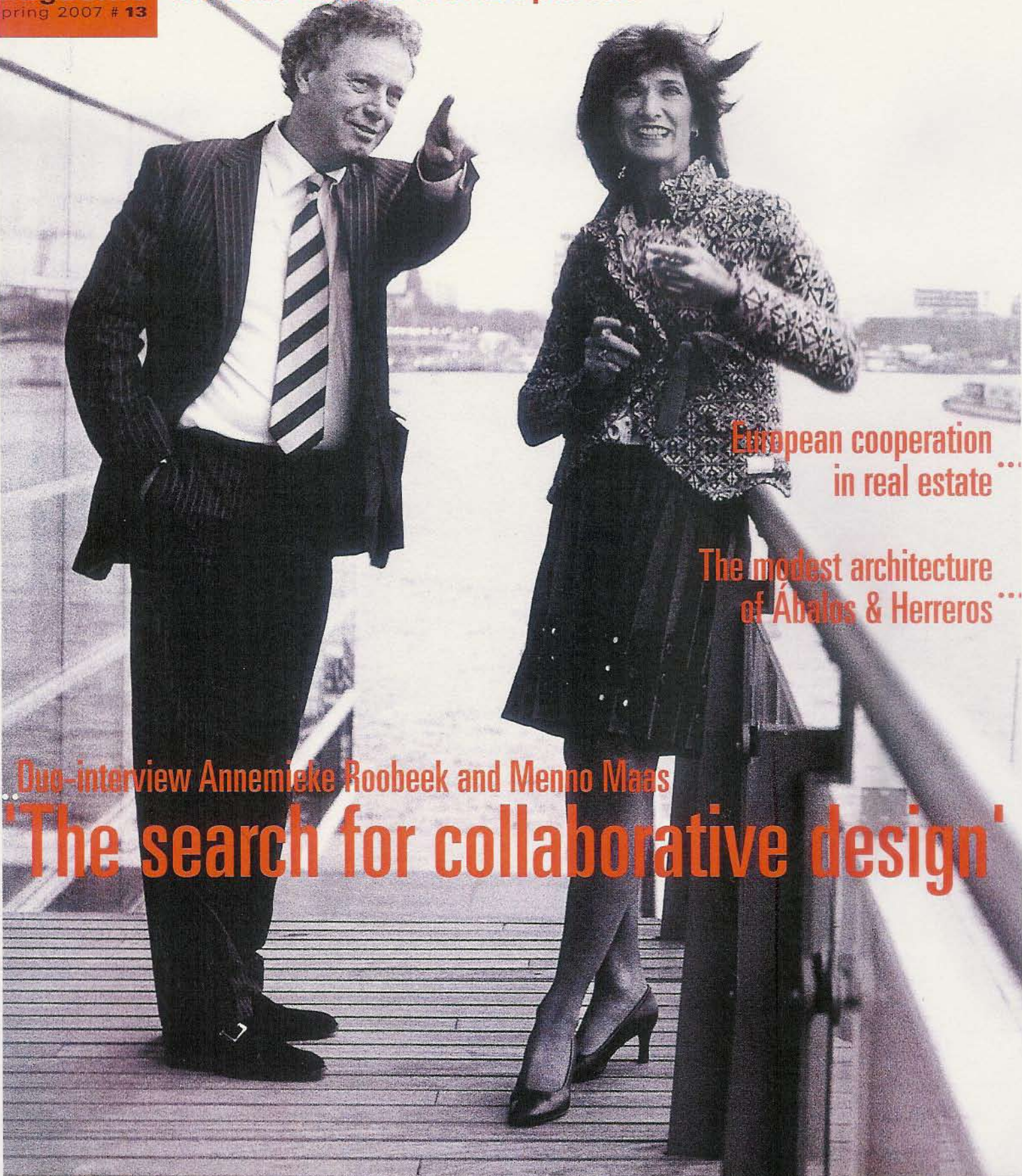


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Statement

on real estate development



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Duo-interview

Annemieke Roobeek and Menno Maas on successful cooperation programme

'The search for collaborative design'



• In the first edition of this new section
• Statement invites two opinion leaders
• to a special location for a unique debate.
• Annemieke Roobeek, professor of strategy and
• transformation management at Nyenrode
• Business University and founder/director
• of MeetingMoreMinds, and Menno Maas,
• CEO of ING Real Estate Development meet
• in Amsterdam's Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ to
• discuss smart building, sustainability and
• successful cooperation in real estate
• development.

• By Toine AI, photography: Ingmar Siegram



The discussion takes place in the Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ, designed by the Danish architectural firm 3x Nielsen. What do Annemieke Roobeek and Menno Maas think of the location in terms of the architecture and its value for Amsterdam?

AR: This entire complex is a visual milestone for the development of the banks of the IJ. Well planned and a very successful entrance to the Oostelijk Havengebied behind it. With the old city centre close at hand. Now Amsterdam no longer has its back to the water but hereby includes it, identifies with it.

MM: It is a metaphor for Amsterdam on the IJ. The new Central Station will also help with that. But the complex as such already has an important emotional significance. Its height, dimensions and the long sightlines across the water give Amsterdam the right scale for a big city.

As professionals what burning question did you want to ask one other?

MM: When I first met Annemieke a few years ago at a PGGM brainstorming session on pension in kind, I thought I would really like to know how she brings together groups with diverse opinions and helps them generate new ideas.

AR: It struck me then that Menno was one of the few people at a meeting on pension in kind with a definite vision on lifestyles, on the basis of which he managed to generate an innovative business on the

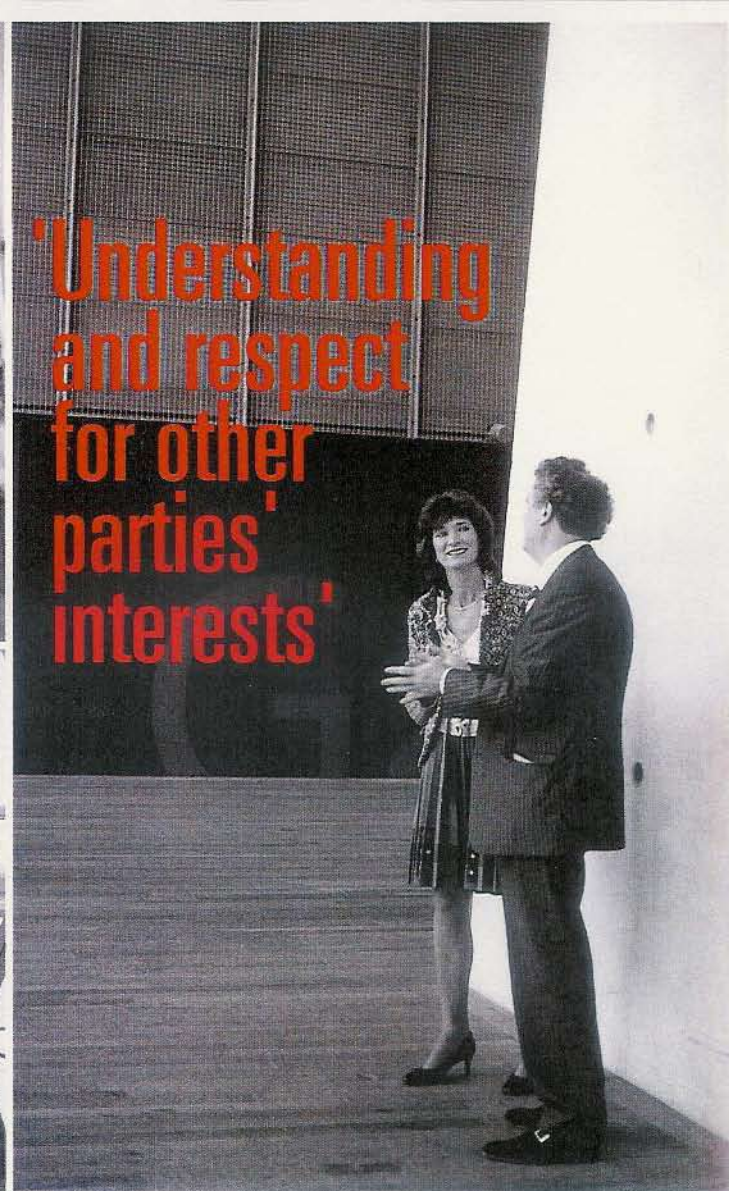
interface between real estate and services, as he did at Amvest. A true innovator, then. But isn't going from a frigate to a much less manoeuvrable tanker like ING Real Estate Development a huge leap?

MM: The company looks much more complex and bigger from the outside than it actually is. The division operates in 13 countries. So the local units per country are much smaller and at least as flexible as the organisation that I came from.

What is the biggest challenge for the organisation when it comes to cooperation?

AR: In terms of real estate development it is increasingly about what I like to call collaborative design. The design and development in the public space of multifunctional projects closely related to their environs is no longer the exclusive preserve of specialists. Long before the architects and town planners come up with their well-considered plans, the stakeholders: users, residents, authorities, real estate develops and investors, need to discuss with one another their ideas, needs and wishes regarding a certain area or building. Due to the number of interests and the functional blending of built areas, things are now much more complex to start with.

We live in an experience economy in which more people want to satisfy a variety of needs in a shorter time. That comes out in the different ways we colour in areas. In the past we built pure



'Understanding and respect for other parties' interests'



dormitory towns. These days the only way to give an area sustainable value is to combine and facilitate a number of designated functions. Say you want to combine living, working, business functions and culture. That means players who once would never have sat at the same table – real estate developers, a theatre manager and housing corporations – must do so now. And the funny thing is that that leads to livelier town planning as well as a more worthwhile dialogue with tangible results. And in that sense to the essence of democratic action when it comes to the spatial layout. Therefore, rather than being a nuisance, residents, users and fellow neighbours can be very good allies, if at a very early stage they get involved in the process of bringing about sweeping changes.

MM: Apart from the experience economy I see another stimulus for more multifunctionality. The economic growth in Europe will be less extreme and, what's more, we attach greater importance to sustainability as well. That means that we create less new space and will want to use/reuse existing space better. Which can only be done with more well thought-out, multifunctional concepts of greater benefit to more people at once.

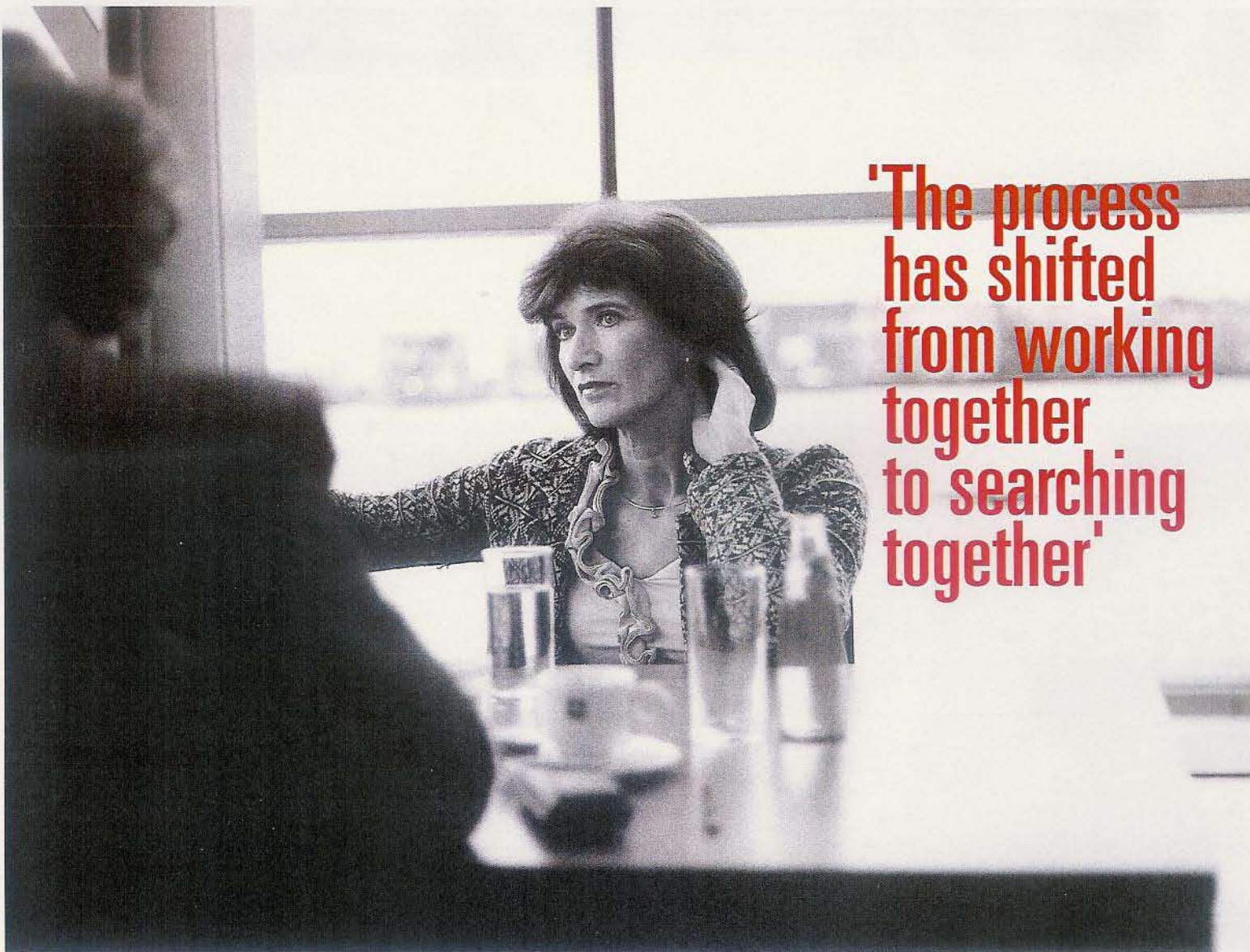
What is the essence of effective cooperation in real estate development?

MM: Understanding and respect for the other parties' interests. Only then is it possible to formulate a common higher objective and ambition.

AR: The past 15 years have seen a structural change of direction. The process has shifted from working together to searching together. There is now much more emphasis on a creative interpretation. There is more scope for a greater diversity of opinions during the course of the process. All concerned can put forward their ideas and talk about them. We are getting much better at making attractive total concepts from the sum of ideas. That's why everyone recognises something of themselves in the end result, which in turn creates greater support for real renewal in area development.

Does that say something about society?

AR: It certainly does. It has become less hierarchical, less top-down. Look at education, the way we bring up children. How the media deals with authorities. The levels of knowledge and information on which we are playing is different from decades ago. Relationships are now on a more equal footing. Discussing things within the network of players is a matter of course. It has not always been so. Usually it was pro and contra, the power versus the powerlessness of those who wanted something different, or saw that more could be done with a certain area than demolition or leaving it undeveloped. In this respect we should be grateful to the squatters of the 1980s for their campaigns. It is to their credit that in the cities particularly they anticipated and stimulated the development towards restoration or reuse of rundown areas. That's why the Amsterdam district Zeeburg



'The process has shifted from working together to searching together'

[the Oostelijk Havengebied in Amsterdam] still has so many old warehouses in full glory along the IJ.

MM: You see that the real estate sector increasingly uses more modern research and marketing technology to consult consumers at an early stage. That enables you to convince the stakeholders as well. Even if at local level you subsequently need an administrative body with vision in order to effectively take decisions. Men and women who dare to be visionary.

AR: What you now see is combinations of stakeholders who years ago wouldn't have dreamt of sitting at the same table. Even if you plan to build in five or ten years' time, you need a commercial concept now. That is what determines a building's success. And that was often lacking in the past.

But haven't they been talking with all concerned for ages?

AR: Yes, but it was mainly a case of information after decisions had been taken. Only in the 1990s did it become more usual to work with civic forums or interactive planning methods. Now all kinds of stakeholders are involved with the construction of a new hospital. But in the 1970s when Amsterdam's Academisch Medisch Centrum was planned and built the result was an introverted bunker instead of a building related to its surroundings. Only much later, in the late 1990s were more buildings erected around it, like the training institutes of the Amsterdam Hogeschool.

MM: Creating new coalitions is indeed a recent trend. Take for example the alliance between real estate developers and environmental organisations to set off 'green against red'. Or the cooperation between developers and housing corporations in urban regeneration. The wish to understand one another and respect one another's interests is an important step towards shaping a common objective.

What are the most efficient forms of cooperation?

MM: For efficient implementation you need very big and financially powerful players, who can provide the requisite investments. After all, the plans cover lengthy periods. We often develop large area developments together with other big players. Such as Hamburg Hafencity with SNS Property Finance or the Overhoeks project in Amsterdam with Shell. Organisations capable of entering into joint ventures lasting many years. Our role is to organise the search and design and direction of the subsequent stage. The cooperation process.

Are there other decisive success factors?

AR: Always invite other players, municipalities, creative thinkers and doers, and other real estate developers when you want to make an initial study. Searching together results in a common ambition and shared responsibility for the results.

MM: I call it striving for transparent figures. You ensure that

'The bottom line is that you eventually acquire a license to build'

nobody is sole owner, everyone knows as much as everyone else so nobody has a monopoly on knowledge. That creates trust and really speeds up the decision-making.

AR: I also call it strategic synchronisation. That means getting all the parties involved to have intensive discussions with one another. It also means recording as much as possible in the interim as well as constant updates on the status of the process progress on several levels at once. Local residents may be concerned about very different issues from those preoccupying the officials of the environmental department. Starting from the process you keep the information lines open to one other, while making sure that each line leads to choices. You then bring them together again in a coherent report. The government is often an unreliable player in this process, being the only one with a mainly short-term interest. You can neutralise that by setting regular 'go/no go' moments for the government during the process. You then compel it to make a pronouncement and choices just like the other stakeholders. A 'yes' is then an irreversible 'yes'. That way you make it impossible for the government to go back on its word at the end of the process, to the frustration of the citizens, companies and investors.

MM: That's right, that way you constantly set the necessary milestones and make sure that you do indeed go from intention to commitment. During that entire process the power of imagination and enticement are decisive factors for success.

AR: Yes, literally. Talk, for instance, about the future prospects of a building in the neighbourhood with all the parties concerned. That way, later visual designs will hold no surprises, being recognisable translations of what was previously discussed. That also helps to create support and enables you to achieve more complex objectives.

What needs to happen when the requirements have been wrongly assessed?

AR: As regards the use of a building or an area an increasing amount of space must be reserved for interim changes and adaptations, because projects are sometimes spread over periods of ten or 20 years, during which ideas, needs and wishes can change. In Hafen City, Hamburg, for instance, building on a massive scale is taking place over a short period. It is much of a muchness, making it impossible to allow for the organic aspect of urban development. Later on, 20 years after the design phase, when the last stone is laid, the concept will be outdated. That may also apply to many Vinex areas in the Netherlands.

MM: Yes, but you can't keep starting a new round of concept formation, at a certain point things have to be implemented.

AR: That's why a development corporation must have new expertise in house. You need trend watchers, for instance. Users are increasingly living in the 'the fourth dimension' of virtual reality. Shopping is becoming a new kind of experience. How do new buildings connect with that? If real estate developers wish to add long-term value to a project, there must be sufficient leeway for changing retail concepts, for instance.

MM: That's why you must have the courage to leave parts of a project unbuilt. Then you can always adapt later on to social and demographic developments.

AR: The question of how best to intervene in an area can be answered by temporarily filling it with a different type of resident. Then you often get new perspectives on potential uses. For example, the future multiple functional uses of the NSM NDSM? site and, following on from there, the northern banks of the IJ and the Shell site, resulted partly from temporary occupation by artists and creative entrepreneurs. Elsewhere in Europe, too, there are examples of how temporary use of space can stimulate people to move to an area, or underline the desired character. There are similar examples in Naples, Berlin, Helsinki and Vienna.

AR: As real estate developers you need to tackle small-scale renovation projects in such areas with several players. That gives you a good sense of the possibilities and the kind of ambience needed.

MM: Support for cultural and leisure activities also helps to advance things. Take IJburg in Amsterdam. It simply didn't have any atmosphere. The potential residents had no affinity with the place. But with the creation of the artificial Blijburg beach things began to look up – although Blijburg certainly wasn't the only reason for the increased interest in IJburg. But it did help. The motto is 'act local'. Make sure that you are firmly rooted in the district and the local community, and that you know the right locals.

AR: And that you have a large dose of altruism! You have a responsibility to all stakeholders. The bottom line is that you eventually acquire a license to build. And you get that through collaborative design.

MM: That's right, and this holds true not only in the Dutch context but worldwide as well.

