



Edo Hofland, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Foreword

Urban and campus design are topics of growing interest. We see that in the Netherlands too. The growing interest in urban design in the Netherlands is necessary to maintain the present standard of living in its towns and cities. It is a country with a population density of almost 400 persons per square kilometre, which is one of the highest in the world.

From personal experience I know that the subject of campus design is also of great importance to our Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Quite a number of our diplomatic representations, in particular in Africa and Asia, take the form of a campus, where working and living are fully integrated. The so-called diplomatic chancellery and the consular section are on the same compound as the ambassador's residence and accommodation for staff members.

Of course, the conditions for such a project are quite different from those that apply in the case of an academic or industrial campus. In the case of diplomatic representations, security demands special conditions, a situation which necessarily often leads to a degree of splendid isolation. At the same time, parts of the building such as the consular section, the trade section and the cultural centre should be open to the public and encourage people from the host country to step inside and come into contact with different aspects of our country.

Besides the chancellery and staff accommodation, our embassy in India also has integrated sports facilities within its own grounds, namely a swimming pool, fitness area and tennis court. In addition, there is also a technical workshop on the premises. The public courtyard is open and inviting. The design of the new embassy in Warsaw expresses the traditional Dutch qualities of transparency and openness. The ambassador's residence and the chancellery complement each other. The chancellery is open and transparent, the residency is more like a private villa in the park. There is a public courtyard between the two buildings. The whole radiates a park-like quality and adds value to the green surroundings.

Within the Netherlands itself there are examples of a growing interest in campus design. The High Tech Campus Eindhoven is a world-renowned technology centre. Diverse high-tech companies work together with more than four thousand Philips scientists in the development of new technologies, from idea to concept to prototype. The architecture of the High Tech Campus is intended to encourage interaction and teamwork. Enabling people to share their knowledge and ideas with one another creates synergy. The new buildings contain a variety of meeting places where staff members can discuss matters in an informal atmosphere.

Glass and other transparent materials have been widely used in the new buildings, in order to create open rooms and workplaces and to bring in the natural surroundings as it were. Most of the existing and future buildings will not be taller than four storeys, thus emphasising the contact with the landscape. These innovations are the basis for the products in the (near) future that will help to improve the quality of people's daily lives.

The importance of the connection between design and industry has also been recognised by the Dutch government, and one of the spearheads of Dutch economic policy focuses on the creative industries. These include various forms of design such as architecture, fashion, advertising, theatre, media and entertainment. This year the Dutch ministry of Economic Affairs started an incentive programme for the creative industry, including architecture and urban design. Among other things, it stimulates the interaction between designers and industry to innovate, cooperate and exchange knowledge.

Examples of private initiatives in this area are the Urban Design Fair, which will be held for the fourth time in Amsterdam in 2009 (campus design will also be present at this fair) and the exhibition *Dynamicity*, highlighting tactics for a changing metropolis, which was organized by the Netherlands Architecture Institute in Rotterdam in 2006. Four designers presented their views on tactics, visions and strategies for the changing city.

But, it is not only in the Netherlands that campus and urban design is a hot topic. Another well-known example is the Architecture & Urban Design Excellence Promotion Programme in Singapore, which started in March 2005. It is clear that campus designers have an interesting future ahead of them.