



# Transformation of office parks into mixed-use

An exploration from the perspective of landowners

Sebastian Zeno Carpentier Alting

TU DELFT Master thesis

## Colophon

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### Contact details

<b>Name</b>	Sebastiaan Zeno Carpentier Alting
<b>Student nr.</b>	4391411

### Research

<b>Institution</b>	Delft University of Technology
<b>Faculty</b>	Architecture in the Built Environment
<b>Track</b>	Management in the Built Environment
<b>Graduation lab</b>	Urban Development Management

### Supervisory team

*TU Delft*

<b>1<sup>st</sup> supervisor</b>	W.K. (Willem) Korthals Altes
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> supervisor</b>	E.H.M. (Ellen) Geurts
<b>External examiner</b>	A.J. (Aart) Oxenaar

*Akro Consult*

<b>Supervisor</b>	P. (Paul) van Dijk
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## **Abstract**

The way we work and the demand for offices is changing. This poses the question whether the traditional office park is still viable. However, the demand for housing provides an opportunity to transform these outdated office parks into new mixed use areas which are currently much more desirable. This way the quality of the area could be improved and the area could be utilised better in a time where demand for inner-city and brownfield developments is high and available land is scarce. The literature shows that the transformation of offices to mixed-use can be successful. However, there is a lack of research on how this transformation process of office parks into mixed use should go. The available literature shows that land owners can oppose this transformation. Therefore, this research will study how shareholders can be better involved in the transformation process. This research will be conducted through (1) a literature study on the barriers and drivers for the transformation, (2) semi-structured interviews with professionals, (3) case studies of development processes that went either smooth or problematic due to problems with the landowners in the area. This research aims to identify the barriers and motivators for landowners to transform property in their portfolios that are situated in office parks into mixed use. With this insight the research want to further stimulate the redevelopment process of such areas. It will give process managers an insight into what is at play for landowners, which in turn can help with the process as a whole.

## **Keywords**

Office parks, transformation, mixed use, landowners

## Contents

Colophon.....	1
<b>General</b> .....	1
<b>Contact details</b> .....	1
<b>Research</b> .....	1
<b>Supervisory team</b> .....	1
Contents.....	3
1 Introduction .....	5
Scientific relevance.....	6
Societal relevance.....	6
2 Research method.....	7
Main research question .....	7
Sub-research questions .....	7
2.1 Type of study .....	8
2.2 Research design .....	8
2.3 Methods and techniques used .....	9
Literature review .....	9
Case studies.....	9
Expert panel .....	11
2.4 Data plan .....	11
2.5 Ethics .....	12
2.6 Research output.....	12
Goals and objectives .....	12
Deliverables.....	12
Dissemination and audiences.....	12
2.7 Personal study targets.....	13
2.8 Research plan.....	13
2.9 Reflection graduation laboratory.....	14
3 Literature Review .....	16
3.1 Office parks.....	16
3.2 Mixed use .....	16
3.3 Landowners .....	17
3.4 Landowners in office parks in the Netherlands .....	17
3.5 The regulatory playing field.....	20
EU law and effects .....	20
Dutch Law.....	20

Policy..... 21

3.6 Stakeholders in the transformation process and their interaction ..... 22

3.7 The conceptual model..... 23

4 Literature:..... 24

## 1 Introduction

There is a demand for housing in the Netherlands for the coming years, the government of the Netherlands has the aim increase the housing stock by 900.000 dwellings by 2030 (Nationale Woon-En Bouwagenda, 2021; VVD, D66, CDA & ChristenUnie, 2021). This poses the challenge to find available land in the Netherlands to provide space for the development of housing. The ambition of the Dutch government is that the preferred locations for these projects are situated near existing infrastructure and nodes (VVD, D66, CDA & ChristenUnie, 2021). Developing these locations on Greenfields increases urban sprawl and therefore not sustainable. Redevelopment of already developed land can be a feasible way of dealing with urbanization and limit urban sprawl (Korthals Altes, 2019; Loures, 2015). Therefore redeveloping already developed land could help in reducing the shortage. For this redevelopment it is most effective and efficient to retrofit the urban structure instead of replacing the urban structure (Buitelaar & Leinfelder, 2020). There is an opportunity to transform offices into housing, however, there is also a demand for offices in the Netherlands (Grote krapte op kantorenmarkt dreigt | Netherlands, 2022). Therefore, there is a need to reconsider the use of already developed land and find opportunities to increase their utilisation. One of such areas could be monofunctional office parks.

Office parks are monofunctional office areas and have become popular since the 1980's (van Meijel, 2013). Often situated on the fringes of the city when they were developed, next to highways and infrastructure hubs (Jansen & Ryan, 2019; van Meijel, 2013). Transforming these areas into mixed use concerning their location is in line with the ambitions of the Dutch government. The current demand for offices has shifted towards offices that are located in areas where multiple facilities and meeting places are present (Jones Lang Lasalle, 2019). As a result the monofunctional office parks are becoming obsolete and generate a lower yield for investors, therefore they are in need of revitalisation (Jansen & Ryan, 2019; Mallo et al., 2020; Remøy & van der Voordt, 2014). Recently there has been research done about the transformation of office buildings into mixed use buildings. This shows us that the transformation of offices is possible in practice (Remøy & van der Voordt, 2014). There are opportunities in transforming office buildings into housing especially offices located in the inner-city. However, 70% of offices was located in segregated locations, which were not suitable for conversion in 2014. For these sites a complete transformation of the location was needed (Remøy & van der Voordt, 2014). Despite the research on transformation of single offices into housing there is a lack of research about the transformation of specifically office parks as a whole (Mallo et al., 2020). Research that has been done on transformation of office parks has shown that motivations of different actors in the redevelopment process need to be researched (Jansen & Ryan, 2019).

Office parks need to be revitalized this coupled with the demand for housing in the Netherlands makes transforming office parks into mixed use a viable option. Unfortunately there is a lack of research on office parks. The different actors in this transformation process need to be researched further. Additionally, it is reasonable to expect that office parks have a fragmented ownership, making this transformation process more complex (Eidelman, 2018). Municipalities have shifted from an active role in urban development towards a facilitating role (Heurkens, 2018). Leaving uncertainty on who is taking the initiative in this needed transformation. Private parties can take the lead in urban development processes. However, a large part of landowners in office parks are investors (NVM Business, 2021), which are not likely to take this initiative (Geraedts et al., 2018). Property in office parks are of high value even when structurally vacant (Remøy, 2010), making it less desirable for developers to acquire these lands for redevelopment since they will have limited returns. The objective of this research is therefore to explore how municipalities can create a situation through policy that entices market parties, especially the landowners, to initiate the transformation process. Hence, the research question for this thesis is: *How can landowners in office parks effectively be included in the transformation process of mixed use developments?*

### Scientific relevance

Currently academic research about office parks and their characteristics is lacking (Mallo et al., 2020), despite a need for revitalisation of these urban areas (Jansen & Ryan, 2019; Mallo et al., 2020; Remøy & van der Voordt, 2014). There is not enough known about the characteristics of the landowners and their motivations in these already developed lands (Mallo et al., 2020). Investors that can be expected in to own land in office parks. There is limited knowledge about the role that investors play in spatial planning. Additionally investors are often treated as an homogenous group in the academic world (Özogul & Tasan-Kok, 2020), but research shows that investors are heterogenous increasing the complexity of finding the motivations of the landowners in office parks. This research will add value to the academic world by exploring the options for municipalities to activate landowners to take the initiative in redevelopment of office parks through land policy and regulations. It will provide insight into the motives of landowners in office parks, the role that investors play in the process of transformation and compile a list of barriers and enablers for this transformation process.

### Societal relevance

When there is a better understanding of the transformation process of office parks into mixed use, it is possible to provide space for the development of housing and at the same time revitalise urban areas that are underutilised. Having this knowledge can aide in solving the current housing crisis of the Netherlands. It can help to prevent urban sprawl and let Greenfields stay Greenfields instead of becoming developed land.

## 2 Research method

### Main research question

The objective of this research is to explore how municipalities can create a situation through policy that entices market parties, especially the landowners, to initiate the transformation process.

Therefore the research question is:

*How can landowners in office parks effectively be included in the transformation process of mixed use developments?*

### Sub-research questions

- 1) *Who are the landowners that can be expected in office parks in the Netherlands, and what are their motivations?*

To be able to research how the landowners can be included in the transformation process and encourage them to take initiative into transformation, there first needs to be known who they are and why they hold land positions in office parks. In the literature review the expected landowners will be identified. An overview of these landowners will be made that include the motivations of the landowners to hold the land in these office parks. This overview will be tailored to the landowners identified during the case studies, with the intent to further detail the motivations of these landowners through interviews.

Method: Case studies

Technique: Literature review & Document analysis

- 2) *What is the regulatory framework in which municipalities can support transformation projects of office parks?*

When the legal framework is known in which the municipality can operate, it is possible to see what the options are for redevelopment. It can be expected that different legal tools can be used to entice initiative from market parties. What regulatory tool needs to be used where and when is dependent on a case to case basis. Therefore, having an overview of these possibilities linked to different contexts can further help to align the tools to the cases. What policy tools and laws have been used in the cases will be examined. Based on these findings the regulatory framework will be revised to make them specific to the cases researched, deepening the understanding of the material.

Method: Case studies

Technique: Literature review & Document analysis & Semi-structured interviews

- 3) *What is the current practice for the transformation procedure in urban redevelopment for office parks?*

During the literature review an overview will be made of the current practice of urban redevelopment. During the case study the current practice for the case study will be analysed. This includes the interaction between different stakeholders, such as the landowners and developers, landowners and the municipality etc. This will give the information needed to proceed with the next sub question.

Method: Case studies

Technique: Literature review & Document analysis & Semi-structured interviews

- 4) *What are the barriers and enablers for transformation of office parks encountered in transformation projects?*



When the interaction between stakeholders is known in the case studies and the legal framework of the municipality, it is possible to identify where the bottlenecks are for the transformation process. An overview will be made of what the barriers and enablers are in the transformation process for the case studies. This provides vital information on how to include the landowners in the transformation process.

Method: Case studies

Technique: Document analysis & Semi-structured interviews

When these sub questions have been answered it is known: who are the landowners and what are their motivations; what regulatory tools have the municipalities to steer and stimulate the market parties to take initiative; what is the current practice for transformation projects in office parks; what are the barriers and enablers in this process. This provides the information needed to be able to give recommendations on how municipalities can create a situation through policy that entices market parties, especially the landowners, to initiate the transformation process. By giving this recommendation municipalities will be able to include the landowners in the transformation process.

## 2.1 Type of study

The logic of inquiry for this research is inductive. The theory will be derived from the analysis and synthesis of the findings in the study acquired by the case studies and the semi-structured interviews. This is partly due to having limited possibilities to test an already existing theory on the topic. This logic of inquiry is also in line with exploratory research (Blaikie & Priest, 2019; Bryman, 2016). Furthermore, the logic of inquiry of induction is suitable to answer *what* questions (Blaikie & Priest, 2019). The sub research question are all what questions, it is trying to find an answer of characteristics related to the transformation of office parks. Ontology that suits induction is that of the cautious realist, the idea is that reality has an existence that is independent of human minds. However, direct access to this reality is not possible. This line of reasoning paired with induction is in line with the epistemology of conventionalism (Blaikie & Priest, 2019).

Furthermore, this research will be qualitative in addition to it being exploratory. Since there is a lack of cases and literature on hand to work with. Due to the political component and policy making that is tied to the purpose of this thesis, it suits better to research the topic in-depth prior to validating the findings in a quantitative way (Bryman, 2016).

## 2.2 Research design

In this research there will be a mix of research methods used: literature study, case study and semi-structured interviews which will be elaborated on in chapter 2.3 In Figure 1 is shown how this research connects the different stages, research questions and outputs. Furthermore, the product that is delivered per research question is given and for clarity the research question and corresponding output is colour coded.

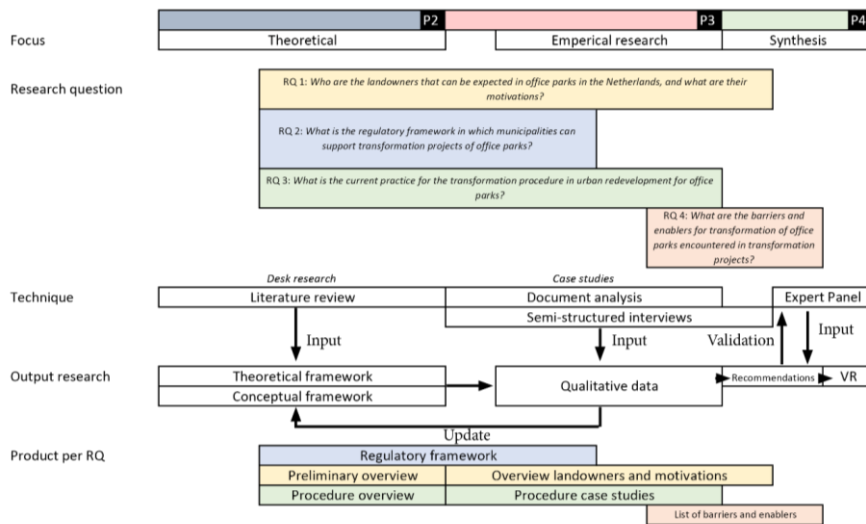


Figure 1: Research design overview (own work)

### 2.3 Methods and techniques used

For this research different methods will be applied namely: literature review and case studies. By utilising many sources of information, the risk of subjectivity is diminished, and the case study may be analysed from a variety of perspectives, providing information on the various participants' specific roles and the influence they had.

#### Literature review

There are two main functions of the literature review. It links the proposed research to the current available knowledge of the topic, and secondly it helps as a source of possible explanatory ideas or theories (Blaikie & Priest, 2019). Even though the literature on the topic can be scarce there will be made use of a literature review.

#### Case studies

In the way the sub questions are set out it is possible to find relevant literature for this study. When this information is known there will be made use of case studies, that will be analysed in a later stage. For the case studies there are 3 stages, firstly to start with the define and design, secondly prepare, collect and analyse to conclude with conclude stage (Yin, 2018). Since the decisions of the landowners and other stakeholders are social actions in the transformation process that are situated in the real world, case studies can provide an in-depth description which also suits qualitative research (Yin, 2018). In the first stage the (define and design) the cases will be selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Furthermore documentation and data that need to be collected will be specified. In the second stage (prepare, collect and analyse) the case studies will be conducted, for each case study an individual report will be made. In the last stage (analyse and conclude) prior to the conclusion, a cross-case analysis is carried out to determine the key takeaways from this research by combining the theoretical framework's predictions with the most significant findings from the empirical research.

*Case study selection*

Two relevant case studies will be selected for this research. They will provide information about how the initiative started in the transformation process of monofunctional office parks into mixed use. The cases chosen are selected by purposive sampling. The cases will be ex-post cases. Ex-post case studies are a type of research design where the inquiry begins after the fact, independently of the researcher. For the case the following inclusion and exclusion criteria are set and an overview can be seen in Table 1:

1. The area of the case is originally a monofunctional office area that will be transformed into a mixed-use area: definitions for office park and mixed use can be found in the literature review.
2. The area contains a cluster of office buildings that are designated in function to be independently used or intended use of desk related work or supporting activities.
3. The location of the case study has to be on the edges of the cities. This excludes office parks that are situated on the countryside and the centre of cities. It is not expected that office parks will be situated in city centres, due to them being realised because the city centres proved to be too expensive in land acquisition.
4. At least two different municipalities have to be included in the total of case studies. This enables comparison in approach by the different municipalities and collaboration of the different stakeholders. Limiting the possibility that accidentally the chosen municipality works in a different way than the rest of the Netherlands.
5. In the new situation there needs to be no substantial reduction in the amount of offices realised. Since, the problem statement is that we need space for housing as well as offices. Replacing offices with houses while not compensating these offices is not in line with the problem statement of this study. Since one of the aims of the study is to better utilize the already developed land.

Case	Location	Municipality	Cluster of offices	Office space retention	Type of case study
Amstel III	Amsterdam	Amsterdam	Yes	Increase of office space	Ex-post case
Overgoo	Leidschendam	Leidschendam-Voorburg	Yes	Yes	Ex-post case

*Table 1: Case overview (own work)*

*Obtainable documents*

Besides data that will be analysed through interviews there will also be looked at documentation of the cases itself. Information retrieved by these documents make it possible to develop a deeper understanding of the process of transformation in office parks, which, in turn, increases the validity of the study. The materials will also act as the basis for a preliminary understanding of the case, which can direct the preparation for the interviews. The following documents, at the very least, will be sought for by the research:

- Municipal land policy
- Land-use plan
- Masterplan
- Anterior agreements
- Municipal memo's and notes that are relevant to the case

### *Semi-structured interviews*

For most qualitative studies the collection method is usually the interview method (Burnard, 2004). It has been proved that this method is versatile and flexible in data collection, leaving room for participants' individual verbal expressions (Kallio et al., 2016). Which is in line with the exploratory nature of this research, there is not enough knowledge to build in, despite trying to form a basis for the interviews by the literature overview and the case study there needs to be room in the interviews to explore unknown facets of the project. Making use of purposive sampling the participants are strategically selected, ensuring that the sample is relevant to the research questions (Bryman, 2016). Additionally snowball sampling is used when from the interviews it becomes apparent that other interviews are required and recommendations from the selected participants is possible. Finally, the study leaves room for interviews with parties separate from the case studies to gather additional information that can provide insights into the motivation of the related stakeholder. These interviews would be held prior to interviews with participants of the case studies, it can provide additional information as preparation for the interviews. These participants will be contacted through the network of the company that the researcher is interning at, as well as, the personal network of the researcher. The interviews will be performed in accordance with a protocol that will be developed during interview preparation.

### *Expert panel*

Due to the lack of data that is available on this topic and the study having an exploratory qualitative nature, thus providing a limited amount of data, an expert panel will be used. This panel will provide validation on the legal feasibility and the viability of the recommendation. It will be composed of professionals in the urban area development. As a result, the research would have stronger external validity because the experts have tacit knowledge of a large number of cases that examine the dependability of the cases (Bryman, 2016).

## 2.4 Data plan

As a consequence of the nature of the research it is conceivable that the data obtained during this research is sensitive and maybe even confidential in nature. Therefore, data obtained during this research will be handled as per the guidelines of the FAIR principle. Fair stands for: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable.

### **Findable**

This principle is twofold it is about the research itself and about the sources used. For the research itself this principle is safeguarded by publishing the final research on the repository of the Technical University of Delft at: <https://repository.tudelft.nl/>.

### **Accessible**

All relevant data will be disclosed in the research. This will also make the research accessible, since the research will be accompanied by keywords for improved findability and accessibility.

### **Interoperable & Reusable**

For the sources, they will all be cited in APA 7<sup>th</sup> style making them traceable for other research and abiding to the interoperable principle. To make the research reusable and interoperable the research will be formulated in formal and comprehensive language. The interviews will be held in Dutch to reduce the changes of miscommunication between the interviewer and the interviewee. Documentation that is analysed with the case studies will mostly be in Dutch as well. However the report and findings themselves will be formulated in English.

## 2.5 Ethics

For this research people will be involved in the semi-structured interviews for which a limited amount of personal data will be collected. The research will handle sensitive data in a respectable way. The background questions that will be collected are: name, to be able to reference to the participant during the interview and other communications; profession, to be able to attribute the interview to the right stakeholder and perspective; contact details, to be able to contact the participant in case there is need for a follow up interview.

The data that will be available after the research is finished will be anonymised. This will help to protect the participants for any unforeseen negative consequences of participating in the research. Unprocessed data, will be deemed not relevant for this research, it is can be expected that parts of the interviews will be irrelevant, since they are semi-structured. Data that has been unprocessed will be destroyed when the research is finished. This will be done to make sure that this data is not a liability in possible data leaks in the future.

Data will be stored as per the guidelines of the TU Delft in accordance with the European laws. Informed consent forms will be used to be able to process the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews.

## 2.6 Research output

### Goals and objectives

Office parks are in desperate need to be revitalised since they are becoming obsolete with the changing demand in office types. This demand for revitalization should be seen as an opportunity to allocate space for housing and increase the utilization of already developed land. The research aims to identify where this transformation process is hindered and how, with regard to the legal and regulatory framework, municipalities and other stakeholders can remove this blockade. Furthermore, it aims to add knowledge to the academic world about office parks and their characteristics that is limited at the time of writing. The objective is to provide municipalities with recommendations on how they can use policy to entice market parties, with the focus on landowners, to initiate the transformation process. And secondly to give recommendations to the other stakeholders what they can do to unlock the transformation process of office parks to mixed use.

### Deliverables

As elaborated earlier in this thesis there are several deliverables that will be produced during this thesis. To start there will be an overview of what landowners can be expected in office parks with their motivations, based on literature and empirical research. Secondly, a regulatory framework will be provided that municipalities can use in relation to the research topic. An overview will be made of where the current transformation process is hindered with a list of barriers and enablers.

At the end of this thesis the barriers and motivators of stakeholders in office parks will be identified in a clear overview. Furthermore, the current role of stakeholders in the process of transformation of office parks will be tested against their barriers and motivators. This will give a better perception on what to improve upon in the process management.

### Dissemination and audiences

Findings of this thesis are targeted mainly to municipalities, the knowledge gained in this thesis can aide them in making strategies for redevelopment of office parks. The recommendations advices them on what they can improve on in their policy. Consultancy firms that advices municipalities in such projects are the secondary target group. Providing insight into the transformation process as a

**Commented [ZA1]:** Make it specific to transformation of office parks into mixed use

whole can aid them in their work of being an intermediary between the different stakeholders. Having a better understanding of the motivations of the different stakeholders increases the ability for such firms to give suitable advice.

## 2.7 Personal study targets

During the bachelor of architecture I realised that I would like to work in the field of the build environment but rather to be on the management side instead of becoming an architect. After having worked for some time I decided to enrol in the master track of MBE, approaching the build environment from a different perspective.

There are several personal goals that I would like to achieve during my thesis. I would like to get better at my analytical thinking skills, analysing new data and being able to extract relations from it. Coming to a better understanding of the processes that are running underneath projects. This skill will help me during my graduation thesis, but this ability will certainly also come in useful later in my professional life. As a job, therefore, I would like to continue doing something where people are central, and be able to help solve complex problems from a management perspective. Furthermore, I would like improve on my skills to understand what motivates people to do certain actions and their reasons. Being able to come up with solutions that all stakeholders with sometimes conflicting interests can agree on. Lastly, I feel like doing this thesis can help me in my skills for planning, setting targets and achieving them. Setting up the research of identifying a problem and designing a way in which I will be able to come to a solution will certainly help in achieving my other personal goals.

For the thesis itself, even it ends up to be another thesis in the repository of the TU Delft, the lessons learned and knowledge gained can directly help me in my future work. In that way it still can help better utilizing what we have.

## 2.8 Research plan

A detailed overview of the milestones that are set and how I am planning to achieve a desirable outcome can be found in Table 2. Having the electives during Q2 made it rather challenging to work on my P2 rapport, I look forward to finishing these electives so that I can finally fully focus on my graduation thesis.

Graduation plan	Q2 2022-2023					Christmas	Q2 2022-2023					Q3 2022-2023										Q4 2022-2023						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Electives</b>																												
Research methods 2																												
Research methods 3																												
Value Capturing																												
P deadlines																												
Designing RQs																												
Literature review																												
Conceptual framework																												
Research design																												
<b>Case study</b>																												
Case study selection																												
Collect documentation																												
Documentation analysis																												
<b>Interviews</b>																												
Contact interviewees																												
Prepare interviews																												
Conduct interviews																												
Document interviews																												
Analyse interviews																												
<b>Case Analysis and Conclude</b>																												
Validating conceptual framework																												
Detailing Conclusion																												
Writing recommendation																												
Expert panel																												
Writing discussion																												

Table 2: Research Plan

### 2.9 Reflection graduation laboratory

When reflecting on the graduation process of the last half year there are several things that I would like to get off my chest. It has definitely been a process with ups and downs. In the beginning of the year there was a lot of uncertainty, of what is expected from you and if you are doing the right thing. But of course also on what topic you would like to research during your thesis, which has been difficult. I already started to think about what my topic could be, however while doing a literature review I noticed that there was already quite a lot known about the topic. Having the ability to talk to the MBE staff has been really helpful. They showed a positive attitude and were willing to think with you on what your topic could be about. For me personally I found that they were willing to make time for you to talk through these topics.

For the course itself of the graduation laboratory there are several things that are done right, but also several issues that could be improved. The idea of having themes is great. It helps you to find the field in which you would like to do research, it also helps with getting an idea of what kind of topics can be researched. I can see benefit for the idea of presenting your P1 for the whole theme group. Providing information on where you stand as a student compared to other students, while also getting feedback and ideas in the early stages where you still have doubts and uncertainty about your topic is helpful. However clear communication of room reservations between themes can be improved. My theme was under the impression that the mentors had to make the reservation, while other themes knew that a room was booked to do all the P1 presentations consecutively. Resulting in me having to book a room myself for my P1 presentation and not having the benefits of presenting for the whole theme group.

For when and how the graduation lab takes place in the year schedule can also be improved. Currently the programme on the TU Delft website for MBE advices you to take 5 ETC of electives in

Q1 combined with graduation lab (10 ETC) and Research Methods 2 (5 ETC), and for the Q2 you would have to do 10 ETC of electives leaving 5 ETC for working on your P2 from P1. However RM2 does not end in Q1, the workload of RM2 is in Q2 worth 3 ETC. So if you did what was advised doing 10 ETC of electives in Q2 you end up with doing 13 ETC for courses leaving only 2 ETC (56 hours) for your graduation thesis. Having to do 4 different things in Q2 has severely limited the time and effort that I was able to put in my thesis. In my opinion it would be better suited to show the graduation lab spread out over both quarters (5 ETC each quarter), likewise for RM2. And advising students to do 10 ETC worth of electives in Q1. Since for me personally it feels like that considerable more time and effort is needed for doing your P2 than for your P1. I am aware that this last part is more feedback than a reflection, however, it does provide further insight on how my graduation process was so far. I hope that this feedback is taken into consideration, as I have heard from other students, that started their thesis last year, that this has been a problem last year as well.



### 3 Literature Review

Introduction of what can be expected in this chapter and what the general layout is of the chapter. Several aspects of the sub questions will be examined in this chapter based on a literature review. For starters the core concepts of the research namely, office parks, mixed use and landowners will be defined. Secondly the different types of landowners that can be expected in office parks will be examined and summarised. While also detailing why they might hold land in these areas and what their motivations are. Thirdly, the regulatory framework that can be utilized by a municipality in which transformation projects can occur will be set forth. Fourthly, the current practice of transformation projects of office parks into mixed use will be examined. The different stakeholders that are involved in such projects will be summarised and the relationships between them. The chapter will be concluded with a conceptual framework in which the core aspects will be linked together to better understand what their relationships are.

#### 3.1 Office parks

There are different ways in which real estate can be categorised. One of the definitions is that real estate encompasses ground and everything that is housed on that. There are different functions that are tied to different types of real estate, this can vary from housing, farms to offices (van Gool et al., 2013). For the office market the function that takes place is an independent factor where commercial and administrative activities are happening (van Gool et al., 2013). In this thesis the office will be defined as a building in which the function is that its independently used or intended use of desk related work or supporting activities. Such locations that are housed inside other types of locations such as industrial, hospitals etc are excluded from the research (NVM Business, 2021).

The office park itself, is a cluster of offices often located at the edges of a city. They became popular in the 1980's, when due to technological advances and the introduction of the computer made it possible to work outside the inner city. This in tandem with the rising costs of the inner city where offices at the time were located (Jones, 2009). There was a shift of focus on the location of office from the inner city towards the outside of the city where the ground was cheaper for development (Louw, 1994). This caused the phenomenon of the office park to emerge, a monofunctional work area for office use at the periphery of the city adjacent to highways for increased accessibility by car. Due to this accessibility by car and the expansion options of the locations these areas became popular with every city having their own office park (van Meijel, 2013). The definition of office parks in this thesis is that of an area containing at least 10.000 m<sup>2</sup> in lettable floor area for office functions as defined earlier. In this area the main function in zoning is offices and related work. This is in line with other research that use the definition of monofunctional office areas (Jansen & Ryan, 2019; Van Velzen, 2013, p. 39).

There is a distinction to be made between office parks and business parks in this thesis. For business parks the definition at the time was that the area housed high quality surroundings with low density buildings that house a wide range of activities such as: manufacturing, assembly, customer support, research and other office and commercially based functions (Jones, 2009). For this thesis, office parks will be researched. They will have a limited amount of manufacturing as a function within the area. The primary focus is on office parks that house office and commercially based functions.

#### 3.2 Mixed use

Mixed use can be defined in different ways, in the literature there is not a singular consensus on the topic. According to Rowley (1996) there are different spatial levels on which mixed use can occur the: building, block, street and district. Furthermore, there are different dimensions that mixed use can be expressed in, point (a single space that can be used for two different functions), vertical (different uses in the same building), horizontal (different uses on the ground) and time (different

uses in time) (Hoppenbrouwer & Louw, 2005). Urban development of mixed use can therefore be organised in different ways in spatial levels and function. Due to the demand of offices and nearby facilities (Grote krapte op kantorenmarkt dreigt | Netherlands, 2022; Jones Lang Lasalle, 2019; NVM Business, 2022), and the demand for housing there should be looked at how all of these functions can be developed together on the building block level.

### 3.3 Landowners

Since, one of the limiting factors of redevelopment of office parks is are the ground owners especially when the ownership is fragmented throughout the park (Chen & Chou, 2018; Eidelman, 2018; Louw, 2008). The composition of shareholders in the parks is unknown and should be researched further. However, from literature it is known that institutional investors were quick to adopt offices located in office parks, since this market was deemed mature enough to be equivalent in risk to other offices (Jones, 2009). Other shareholder that can be expected in office parks are firms that own their own building within the area. These should be included in the research since firms are more interested in continuity, and have fewer resources for measures that don't give them a direct effect and are therefore less inclined to participate in the transformation process. (Bugge, 2021, p. 85).

### 3.4 Landowners in office parks in the Netherlands

To come to an answer there are first a couple of sub questions that will be answered:

Sub question 1: *Who are the landowners that can be expected in office parks in the Netherlands, and what are their motivations?*

To be able to research how the landowners can be included in the transformation process and encourage them to take initiative into transformation, there first needs to be known who they are and why they hold land positions in office parks. With literature there will be looked at what types of landowners can be expected in the case studies. From here there will be looked at what their motivations might be to hold this land and what their goal is. It is likely that this can vary between landowners, an owner-occupier might only be interested in the land and structures on top of the land to facilitate the core business. In contrary to a developer that holds positions that would like to (re)develop what is already present with future sale of the plot to realise profit.

In this part an overview will be made of what landowners can be expected in office parks, based on literature. Their motivations for holding this land will be explored. The information of this part will help with understanding the composition of the landowners in the case studies later on in this research. The landowners identified are: owner-occupier, the land is there to support the core business; private investors, the land is to provide investment returns through rental income; institutional investors, three subclasses with the motivation ranging from generating return through rental income to generating return through capital appreciation; developer, land in ownership with intent to develop and sale with capital appreciation as form of return.

#### *Owner-occupier*

Companies often make a business strategy that is focused on the long term plans to achieve the business goals (Motohashi, 2015). In order to respond to the organization's changing environment, the functional strategy therefore focuses on how the internal departments and supporting practises must be changed (integrally) as a whole. The real estate strategy is included in the functional strategy (Hengel, 2021). These two strategies should be aligned, for the business strategy to work properly the real estate strategy should facilitate this strategy (Heywood & Arkesteijn, 2018).

**Commented [ZA2]:** Toevoegen op welke schaal deze mixed use dan gebruikt kan worden in de office parks. Dit geeft dan ook aanleiding voor later in het onderzoek dat er door meerdere schalen gedacht moet worden over de kansen

So what we know from this is that the owner-occupier is likely to own the property to support its core business. How this owner uses the land is based on the real estate strategy. With the changing demand of office types it is likely that this demand also changes for the owner-occupier and thus the real estate strategy changes. They might be interested in participating in the transformation process of office parks into mixed use. Since, a mixed use area better suits the new demands of employees, providing facilities nearby the office (Jones Lang Lasalle, 2019). Ownership of offices in 2013 in the Netherlands was that less than half of the offices was owned in a user owner relationship (van Meijel, 2013).

#### Investors

Contrary to the owner-occupier that uses real estate to support the core business and falls under corporate real estate, there is the commercial real estate for which real estate itself is the core business. The main aim is to provide risk adjusted return to the investors (Heywood et al., 2015). In the academic world there is limited acknowledgement of investor heterogeneity especially in relation to urban development (Özogul & Tasan-Kok, 2020), despite that property investors are expanding in power and influence (Heurkens, 2018; Özogul & Tasan-Kok, 2020). Investors are not a homogenous group, despite being often treated as one in research. There are many distinctions that can be made, for example between: global vs local, small vs large, institutional vs individual investors (Özogul & Tasan-Kok, 2020). There are also differences to be found in how investors buy real estate and from who, however literature about these practices is still limited (Cvijanović et al., 2022). In the academic world there some researchers that advocate for a better understanding of investors, their roles and characteristics in urban development (Özogul & Tasan-Kok, 2020). However, from the literature that is available several types of investors, that have real estate with the intend to provide risk adjusted return, have been distinguished. The investors can be divided into institutional investors, investment banks or development investors. Institutional investors are for example pension funds or insurance companies. They will generally buy real estate from developers to incorporate the real estate into their portfolio. Investment returns will be made through cash flows during the real estate operation (Heurkens, 2018). According to Inrev (European Association of investors in Non-Listed Real Estate Vehicles) there are three main classification styles for risk for institutional investors (INREV, 2012). An overview of these types is listed in Table 3.

Type	Investment types	Use of leverage	Development exposure	Return
Core	Income producing	Low	Low	Income return
Value Added	Any property type	Moderate	Balanced; part of investment allocated for (re)development	Balance between income return and capital appreciation
Opportunity	Any market or sector; individual markets or property types	High	High; active asset management	Primarily capital appreciation

Table 3: fund style of institutional investors (adapted from INREV, 2012)

There is a majority of foreign investors in the office real estate market active in the west of the Netherlands (provinces Noord-Holland, Zuid-Holland, Utrecht, Flevoland) (NVM Business, 2021). The amount of risk that an investor takes depends on the individual investor, therefore it is not possible to classify investors based on country allocation (INREV, 2012). From reports it is known that in 2020

64% of the investments of offices were situated in office parks (NVM Business, 2021). It can be expected that institutional investors are a considerable player in this market. Since, they were quick to adopt real estate in office parks as an investment opportunity (Jones, 2009).

The investor that operates based on the core type is the least likely to initiate redevelopment out of the three types. They are focused on realising return through rental income. Even during times of high structural vacancy in office buildings the investors were not inclined to sell the building, this is due to the alleged high value of the structurally vacant building (Remøy, 2010). Consolidation, or keeping the building as is while looking for new tenants and waiting for better times, is the option most owners take. Rent reductions can draw renters, but they are not a structural answer in a housing market where supply is outpacing demand for the existing function. Selling is frequently also not an option. Since the value of office buildings is largely on their future rental return, the sale of a vacant building frequently generates less money than the building is worth on paper. The majority of owners are unable to tolerate this monetary loss. Similarly, it might be challenging to justify new investments for remodelling or renovating a building to investors who have already suffered losses on a property (Geraedts et al., 2018). Furthermore, typically investment firms have different departments that focus on different kinds of real estate, for example they can be focused on housing, commercial or other types of real estate. In the empirical part of this thesis the communication between departments of investment firms should be investigated. It is possible that the fund manager for commercial real estate is not inclined to transform a part of his portfolio towards housing, since this will mean that his portfolio declines in size. Also the risks are different per real estate type, since they have different characteristics.

There are also development investors, they participate in the development stage of the real estate, developing real estate for their own investment portfolio. Their financial returns are anticipated to cover the costs of real estate development. As a result, they are capable of acting as long-term, dedicated, private actors and can use integrated development and investment plans. An example of such an organisation is Amvest in the Netherlands (Heurkens, 2018).

#### Developer

They can hold land in an office park when they know or expect that the area will have a different zoning plan coming up. This is called speculative land ownership? The goal normally for a developer is to acquire land to develop property on, with the intend to sell the land when development is done with a profit according to their profit margin.

#### Conclusion

To conclude there are multiple possible landowners in the office parks of the case studies. The motivations of holding these lands vary. From the owner-occupier to support the core business to holding land to realise gains. An overview of the expected landowners can be found in Table 4.

Who	Subclass	Aim	How	Development experience
Owner-occupier	n/a	To facilitate business	Through real estate strategy	Not likely
Private investor	Unknown	Generate yield	Type dependent	Mixed
Institutional Investor	Core	Generate yield	Through rental income	No

	Value added	Deliver return	Rental income & Capital appreciation	Some
	Opportunity	Deliver return	Capital appreciation	Experienced
<b>Developer</b>	n/a	Generate profit	Capital appreciation	Core business

Table 4: Overview of expected landowners in office parks (own work)

### 3.5 The regulatory playing field

In this part an overview will be given of the relevant laws and regulations for urban development. With the focus on the role of the municipality as acting power. Since there is a substantial amount of laws in the Netherlands it is not viable and relevant to include all laws. Therefore, the possibility exists that this part needs to be revised when new information and questions arise during the empirical part of the research.

Dutch municipalities for decades have played a very active and dominant role in urban planning and development, which in international respect can be regarded as an exception (van der Krabben, 2011). However, there has been a change in this policy approach, municipalities moved from an active policy to increasingly focus on a facilitating policy (Heurkens, 2018). In urban development the municipality still plays a central role. They can make agreements with the landowners on a time schedule, when delays in development happen they can also utilize public and private law to enforce the time schedule. This can lead to a sense of urgency with the private parties for development (Korthals Altes, 2021). Regulations can come in different forms and the municipality has a playing field in which it can make the regulations. This does not apply for the law, since the law is made on a higher governmental level, the state level and the European level in the case of the Netherlands. Therefore an overview of the relevant laws will be detailed in the following section

#### EU law and effects

The European Union (EU) has no specific planning powers and competence on spatial policy. However, indirectly EU directives and law influences spatial planning in their member states (F. A. M. Hobma & Jong, 2016; Korthals Altes, 2015). The concept of a single market is one of the cornerstones of the European Union. Within this concept lies the four freedoms. These include the freedom of establishment within the single market as well as the free movement of people, products, and capital (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013). Another cornerstone of the European Union is that of the single market, that is open and equal for all. Member states are not allowed to interfere with this concept. An example of interference is if a member state sells land under market price to a private party. The European Law may consider this to be state aid (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013). However, exceptions can be made to this rule. If the state decides that certain services and products can be categorised as public services (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013). For the transformation of office parks to mixed use it is reasonable to expect that social housing will be included in the final product. Permissible state aid could be an option to ensure that this is developed. The maximum compensation may not be sufficient for social housing associations to establish themselves in high value locations. In certain situations, it may be preferable to apply conditions when making land use plan amendments. One of these can be the need that developers include a specific number of units of social housing in their projects in order to obtain a permit.

#### Dutch Law

##### Property law

Property law is composed of several rights that it gives the owner, it can be referred to as a bundle of rights (Janssen-Jansen et al., 2008). It also include the right to develop, which is tied into the ownership of the land.

- Self realization
- Rights to buy
- First option
- Expropriation

### Policy

Municipalities have several planning tools at their disposal. In the current legislation the procedure goes as follows. The municipality drafts a land-use plan that determines what can be build and where, regulations are tied to this plan. It is an effective instrument to prevent buildings from being built on places where they are not desirable from a spatial viewpoint (F. A. M. Hobma & Jong, 2016). Proactive powers are powers that enable the government to take development initiatives which may concern urban expansion, infrastructure construction and hydraulic engineering works. There are different ways in which the government can acquire land if full ownership is required for the development project. They can purchase the land from another party under private law, acquire land by exercising pre-emption rights and through force by the means of expropriation. Pre-emption rights give the municipality the right to be the first to enter into negotiations with a seller under the municipal rights act. The last option for a municipality would be through force making use of expropriation, however, the municipality needs to compensate the original landowners (F. A. M. Hobma & Jong, 2016).

\*this part needs to be restructured an rewritten\*

Land assembly to be able to conduct urban development. The main characteristic of land assembly is that it entails changing the ownership of land by purchasing the appropriate land pieces to enable construction of infrastructure and the development of properties. Fragmented ownership can have a severe impact on urban development (Louw, 2008). Another tool that can be utilised is that of land readjustment. Land readjustment normally happens through voluntary agreements, when this is not possible there are other ways of making it happen. But, they often are met with a lot of resistance. Examples of risks associated with expropriation are: controversial negotiations, irregular demands on compensation for the expropriated plots, longsome court proceedings can follow (Müller-Jökel, 2004). The general idea of land readjustment is that within the project area all the land plots will be pooled together to be redistributed when there is an agreement with all the involved stakeholder within the project (Müller-Jökel, 2004). With this tool, the project will be self-financed and the municipality requires less funds to implement the (re)development of the urban fabric. In return the landowners within the area will get a plot of land in return with a higher valuation (Mittal, 2014). To begin with land readjustment there needs to be a strong legal framework for the tool. This is one of the disadvantages when there is yet to be a legal framework, it can cost the government time and resources to draw up such a plan. However, if used correctly the municipality is able to implement urban transformation without high up front investments, since the method is a self-financing one. It does however require strong political leadership to get all participant to cooperate. It needs a lot of participation by the different actors, the landowners within the project area need to be included due to the negotiations that need to take place (Müller-Jökel, 2004). This can both be an advantage when there is a political figure that is capable of bringing everyone together, but, a disadvantage when such a figure is missing in the project (Mittal, 2014). Also, land readjustment works only well if the final land value of the project is higher than the initial land value, this makes it tied to the market and the risks associated with them (Mittal, 2014). Land readjustment can lead to a better plan than the more traditional methods of urban development. This is especially the case when the negotiations with the stakeholders works well (van der Krabben & Lenferink, 2018). Also, land

readjustment works only well if the final land value of the project is higher than the initial land value, this makes it tied to the market and the risks associated with them (Mittal, 2014). And since the Netherlands already have a strong working paradigm, implementing a new method requires a paradigm shift for the municipalities. Which takes time and effort that Dutch municipalities might not want to invest into (van der Krabben & Lenferink, 2018).

### 3.6 Stakeholders in the transformation process and their interaction

In this part the current practice for redevelopment will be explored. There are different forms in which this redevelopment can happen ranging from almost no partnership between public and private parties towards heavy collaboration between the parties where they erect an consortium. A public private partnership (PPP) is not a specific procurement approach, it should be seen as a relationship between a public and private party (Lousberg & Noorderhaven, 2014).

For urban development the process usually goes in four distinct phases: initiation, feasibility, exploitation and management/use (Bouwend Nederland et al., 2019). There are different ways in which redevelopment can happen in general. One of the factors that determine what strategy is suitable for the transformation is who is the initiator for the transformation process. The initiative can lie with the municipality or a market party. For the market parties this could be a developer or landowners within a project area. For the municipality there can be made use of active land policy or passive land policy for which they have a more facilitating role in the transformation process. However, transformation of such areas can be capital intensive through land acquisition and erecting governance structures for municipalities. Resulting in that this strategy is not preferred by the municipality (F. Hobma et al., 2019). Urban redevelopment often includes multiple land owners, which can make the whole process more difficult for municipalities (Eidelman, 2018).

For redevelopment of business areas there are different strategies for the initiator to accomplish this. Especially when these areas are fragmented in ownership. This fragmented ownership can form a barrier for the initiator. (Hobma et al. 2019) offers four strategies for the initiator to deal with this problem, which are on a sliding scale from none, selective to integral acquisition: Plot development, Organic development, Developing Apart Together (DAT), Aggregation of ownership. One of the barriers of urban redevelopment is caused by ownership constraints (Louw, 2008).

There is a shift in the who takes the leading role in urban development projects in the Netherlands, private parties are increasingly taking the leading role for urban development projects. While at the same time the local planning authorities focus more and more on facilitating such private development initiatives (Heurkens, 2018).

The different strategies for developing by the different stakeholders and their legal basis:

#### *Bouwclaim*

One of the cooperation agreements for realising urban development is the Bouwclaim model. This method is can be chosen in order for the municipality to prepare the ground in a more efficient way since these plots are all adjacent to each other. Furthermore, with the housing shortage the municipality can ensure that enough housing will be developed having this steering capability is less the case with the Developing Apart together (DAT). For the developers there is the advantage that they have less risk in participating (Bouwend Nederland et al., 2019).

#### *Joint venture by agreement*

This agreement will be organised by means of a joint venture by agreement, this gives a formal agreement between the parties while still offering flexibility. Within the formal cooperation there are some strong joint criteria that the participants are bound to (Bouwend Nederland et al., 2019). One example of such a criteria would be that all the members should strive for sustainable design.

### Self-realisation approach

For the other plots in the area there is made use of the self-realisation contract. Since these plots and the plot owners can self realise the projects. Costs made by the municipality in this plan are put into this contract under the Ground Exploitation Act (Bouwend Nederland et al., 2019). Stipulations have been made about requirements on topics such as sustainability and circularity in the anterior agreement.

### Developing apart together

There are several cooperation strategies that can be used in order to carry out an urban development project. The leading strategy is developing apart together, this has a public private partnership character without being a formal one it is also called PPP light. The municipality and the participating developers have an agreement on developing a vision for the area that is in alignment with the ambitions of the parties involved. Also, they have drawn a plan on how to arrive at that vision as can be read in the phasing part of this document (Bouwend Nederland et al., 2019).

## 3.7 The conceptual model

There is a demand for housing in the Netherlands, this demand urges the municipalities to designate areas in the city for redevelopment. One of the areas where this is possible is in office parks, increasing the housing stock as has happened in the cases of Amstel III & Schinkelkwartier. The owners in the office parks also feel pressure in a changing demand for offices, and the context of most office parks has changed since their realisation in the 80's. Resulting for the office park as a whole that there is demand for change. There are different options for this change, three of which are: redevelopment into housing, into new offices or into mixed use. The conceptual model can be seen in Figure 2.

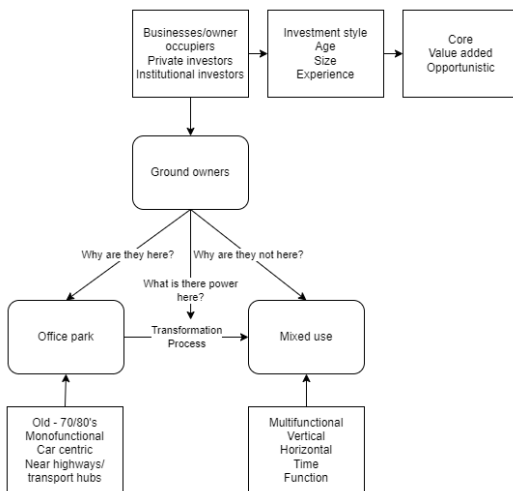


Figure 2: conceptual model updated (own work)



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