

# 15. Marineterrein - Navy Yard (Amsterdam, The Netherlands)



Picture 1. Voorwerf en Scheepvaartmuseum. Photo by Siebe Swart.

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# 1 Introduction

Marineterrein (Navy Yard) is a historic 13-hectare area close to the Central Station in Amsterdam. Built in 1655, it was an innovation area used for the construction of warfare ships for the Dutch East India Company - which transformed The Netherlands into a world power and brought much affluence into the country.

Due to its military nature, this navy base has been sealed off from the rest of the city for 350 years.

In 2013, during the economic crisis, the Ministry of Defence decided to sell the terrain. Because the municipality of Amsterdam could not afford to buy the terrain at the time, it led to an innovative collaboration between the national government and the municipality – who together opted for a slow transformation of the site, led by the historical value of the area, with the aim to create long-term value for the city and country.

Since 2015, the area has been gradually opening up to the public and will be transformed into a future-proof city quarter.

*"We had these values - innovation, connection, focus - and I really want to make [Marineterrein] a new kind of area. So not a business district or a start-up place, but to really find something new. And I always said, I don't know what it is because if I would know, it would be something that already exists!" – Liesbeth Jansen, director Bureau Marineterrein.*



Picture 2. **Ground plan phase 2.** Photo via [www.marineterrein.nl](http://www.marineterrein.nl)

## 2 Timeline

**1650** — The Eastern Docklands are built.

**1655** — The Admiralty of Amsterdam establishes “The National Dock” (“Lands Werf”) for the construction of warfare ships for the Dutch East India Company.

**1915** — The navy yard closes and the name is changed to Marine Etablissement Amsterdam. It becomes a military base for the Royal Navy.

**1968** — The western part of the terrain is demolished to make room for the IJ-Tunnel. Many new constructions are built such as several educational buildings, a conference centre, sports fields and a helicopter landing site. The terrain is completely isolated from the city by a wall and satellite images are blurred. The terrain functions are largely kept secret.

**1973** — The National Maritime Museum ([Scheepvaartmuseum](#)) is established in the former warehouse of the Admiralty of Amsterdam, a building from 1655 at the edge of Marineterrein.

**2013** — Amidst the economic crisis, the Ministry of Defence decides to vacate most of the terrain by mid-2018. A cooperation agreement is signed between the government (represented by the Ministry of Defence and the Central Government Real Estate Agency) and the municipality of Amsterdam – to develop Marineterrein gradually. Liesbeth Jansen is appointed as director of [Bureau Marineterrein](#).

**2015** — The Ministry of Defence vacates the first part of the terrain: Voorwerf (Front yard). The first renters move their office on site. Voorwerf officially opens to the public.

**2016** — Transformation of building 027E to host the events related to the EU presidency of the Netherlands. Opening of Kade West area for the public. Construction of the commander’s bridge, connecting the terrain to the rest of the city.

**2017** — First big research project and collaboration between several tenants – [research about blue-green roofs](#).

**2017** — Motion by the local council – the municipality decides to increase the percentage of housing on the terrain. Beginning of the second phase, the planning phase. (October)

**2018** — Arrival of some key community members: [Codam](#) – an innovative coding school, Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions ([AMS Institute](#)) and [Nemo Museum of Science](#).

**2018** — Construction of the boardwalk on water. The inland port becomes an unofficial swimming spot in Amsterdam. (July)

**2018** — Planned date for the Ministry of Defence to fully vacate Marineterrein. The Ministry of Defence announced that they want to stay in a larger area than initially planned. (July)



### 3 Story of the Area

*"In this area, the ships were stored, repaired, built, and from that, the Netherlands spread out all over the world, in the so-called 'Golden Age'. It was, I guess you can say, the biggest country in the world. (...) But we were, and still are a very big trade nation. That all started in this innovation quarter." – Michiel Buchel, director NEMO Science Museum.*

Marineterrein is a historical area of 13 hectares located on the eastern side of the centre of Amsterdam, on one of the Eastern Islands. The Eastern Islands were built in 1650 to create a new wharf during the "Dutch Golden Age", to build large ships to protect the Dutch East India Company's fleet. The terrain was used by the Admiralty of Amsterdam and later by its successor, the Royal Navy.

In 1915, the Navy Yard closed and the terrain was renamed to Marine Etablissement Amsterdam. The area's function changes to education and training centres for the Royal Navy.

In 1962, the western part of the area was demolished to make room for the IJ-Tunnel, a car tunnel under the river IJ which connects the centre of Amsterdam with the Amsterdam North neighbourhood. Several new buildings were constructed in this period, to replace the old ones from the western side, such as several educational buildings, a conference centre, sports fields and a helicopter landing site.

*"This has always been a military zone, and it has always been close to the city, in one way to protect this heritage of the trading history. Even though it is not always reflected in the buildings themselves, this has always been a very important place in a historic sense." Liesbeth Jansen, director Bureau Marineterrein.*

In recent history, until 2013, the function of the area was secret. The terrain was completely separated from the city through the large outside wall, and the satellite image above the area was blurred on Google Maps. Sometimes, leading suspects or threatened politicians would be hosted on the site.



Picture 3. **Blurred satellite map of Marineterrein in Amsterdam from 2007.**  
Photo via Google Earth Image © 2019 Aerodata International Surveys

## 4 The Initiative

*"The municipality couldn't afford to buy the whole area, so we had to work together with the national government. And it's... I think it's really special that the national government decided not to sell for the highest price, but to instead obtain long-term value for the city and the country." – Marlene Rienstra, municipality of Amsterdam.*

In 2013, the Ministry of Defence decided to vacate part of the terrain due to the need to cut costs during the economic crisis. The municipality of Amsterdam was not able to buy the terrain at that point. Therefore, the municipality and the national government decided to sign a cooperation agreement for the development of the area in December 2013.

Because of the economic crisis, it was opted for a **guided organic transformation** approach: starting from existing buildings and infrastructure, the area would gradually be open to the public and for programming, as soon as the Ministry of Defence would release each building. Moreover, the direction of development was determined based on a few starting points:

- The area would become an innovation workplace with international appeal
- The area would be developed based on its 400-year old history of maritime power
- The area would create added value for the city and would become a meeting place
- The iconic value of the area should be in the programming, and not in the buildings.

The method chosen for the development strategy of Marineterrein is a **guided organic transformation**. This means that the transformation is based on an area concept (see page 25) and not an urban development plan. Moreover, there is no specific end-goal for the transformation.

Specifically, this means that the programming of the site is done in an incremental way: using available resources (eg. rental fees) to organize the programming and the maintenance works. The process involves a lot of flexibility in steering the process. The step by step approach is considered essential to transforming an area into an innovation district – in a rapidly changing world, it is imperative to remain flexible.

**An innovative aspect of the contract** is that it was decided to form a new independent organisation to lead the transformation, Bureau Marineterrein. With a big mandate, it has full decisional power to select the renters and do the site programming and the communication in the temporary phase.

*"There was a combination of administrators who had the guts to do it this way. Because this way, you take some of the responsibility out of the separate levels. So, the municipality and the government don't have much to say about what's going on the temporary base, because we have this contract which says it's out of the municipality's hands, and it's out of the government's hands, it's what we do together. It really gives some space to do what's good for this area..." – Marlene Rienstra, municipality of Amsterdam.*

Liesbeth Jansen was directly appointed as director of this newly found organisation. She was known for having been the director of [Westergasfabriek Amsterdam](#) for over 18 years – a famous example of organic transformation of a site. Her role as director is to lead the first phase of temporary programming and establish a local community.

*"Nobody believes us if we tell them that we have these contracts with the mayor and the deputies, saying that the Marineterrein should be developed in an organic way. Everyone thinks, 'how is that possible?' " – Liesbeth Jansen, director Bureau Marineterrein.*

Through the cooperation agreement signed between the national government and the municipality of Amsterdam, the two parties decided to give form to their cooperation by establishing a **joint project organisation** to lead the development, maintenance and exploitation of the area: Bureau Marineterrein.

The **mandate** of the director of this organisation includes the following, according to the contract: implementation of the area development, concept monitoring, hiring staff, responsibility for the development, liabilities under € 100.000, alienation of movable property, renting out spaces for a duration of under 5 years and for spaces under 1.000 m<sup>2</sup> GFA.

This is considered one of the main success factors so far by all stakeholders of the project because it offers continuity to the process, reduces bureaucracy and facilitates a hands-on approach to the transformation.

In January 2015, the Ministry of Defence vacated the first part of the terrain (Voorwerf). The first renters started coming in, and in April 2015 the area became officially open to the public, while nevertheless maintaining its quality as a private terrain. In 2016, a second area was released (Kade West) and some small interventions were made, such as connecting Kade West to city through a new temporary bike bridge. Many buildings were renovated, the first restaurants opened and slowly the community and the area started to develop according to plan.

In 2017, at the end of the first phase, the transformation up until that point got evaluated by several parties including the general public, the adjacent neighbourhoods, policy makers and entrepreneurs. The municipality then decided to adopt a motion to realize more housing on Marineterrein than initially planned. One year later, in 2018, the Ministry of Defence announced that, for strategic reasons, they would like to remain in the area. The area that had already been opened for the public would stay that way, however they would not release any new buildings. The situation at the moment is still uncertain with regard to adapting these two changes into the future plans and resolving the conflict of interests.



## 5 Community

*"We started by distilling the ambition and the brand values starting from the description in the cooperation agreement. So, we came quite soon with 'innovation', 'connection', and 'focus'. And of course, there were other values, but I think these should be always there, such as sustainability." – Liesbeth Jansen, director Bureau Marineterrein.*

Soon after the start of the transformation process in 2014, Bureau Marineterrein started to bring more focus to the development by developing the **three core values** of the project: innovation (being able to adapt to a constantly changing world), connection (being able to work in cooperation with other sectors) and focus (working with really important topics with a wider societal value). These values helped to **select the tenants**, as the management team received more than 900 applications.

*"It's about how can you ensure that you get interesting, talented people in your buildings, people who can really contribute to your ambition, while at the beginning that ambition is not yet very concrete. What we did was to offer short-term contracts so that there is flexibility, but at the same time there is also a sort of gut-feeling, that is just very good at Liesbeth. You should make sure that the tenants are also people who not only sit here for themselves, but also want to contribute something to the city, and find it exciting to contribute to that development taking place here." – Jacqueline Verheugen, communication Bureau Marineterrein.*

The community working on site at Marineterrein represents a mix of innovative companies and organisations. Currently, the area has more than 40 tenants including three restaurants, a hotel, several organisations dealing with sustainability in cities, research institutes, start-ups, digital innovation or education centres. All contracts with the tenants are temporary, lasting a duration of 1-3 years with the exception of tenants who had high investment costs in the buildings themselves (such as Codam Coding College and restaurants Pension Homeland and Scheepskameel), who received 5 to 10 year contracts. Codam is since the summer of 2019 the biggest community on site.

*"The number of employees will soon be outnumbered by students, so we will get many young people who want different things on site, who are curious about everything happening here, who want to collaborate and do internships, who are less cautious and that is... now the golden age is about to start, I think". – Jacqueline Verheugen, communication Bureau Marineterrein.*

The main role of Bureau Marineterrein is to ensure that there is interaction between the numerous community members and to think of ideas and formats which contribute both to the aims of the transformation and the individual aims of the organisations involved. Usually, Bureau Marineterrein aims to start initiatives which would be later on adopted by individual organisations. According to the initiators, the most important elements of this sort of community building are time to experiment and flexibility to adapt what is not very successful or appropriate for the site. Moreover, the initiators underlined the importance of giving community members some time to settle in before cross-fertilization can start, which can take up to 3 years.

*"Without the community, you can never develop an identity. For me, it really starts with a selection of a community. Community members. And then comes the selection of a programme." – Liesbeth Jansen, director Bureau Marineterrein.*

## 6 Activities



Picture 4. **Open day in 2014. Photo by Arjen Veldt.**

Several activities are organized in order to bring the community together, create cohesion and involve them in the programming of the site. Some examples:

- Community drinks – organized periodically, every time in a different building on site. The aim is to create cohesion in the community. Mostly employees participate. Sometimes organised together with a workshop or a masterclass given by one of the community members.
- Directors lunch – a new initiative to invite the directors of the organisations on site for lunch to brainstorm about new ideas or spaces.
- Online community tools – from a weekly newsletter for community members to Slack, Instagram etc.

By selecting the core values and the tenants, several common threads started to appear as potential themes for the area's programming. The aim of the programming is to address city and country challenges and to propose new solutions. The area profiles itself as a place where innovations are not only invented but also tested and put into practice.

*"This area only has small spaces, the biggest space can hold 60 people. It's only offices. So, I thought, we will not have festivals here. At first no one believed it, 'every place in Amsterdam has festivals'. We have one now, that is the Amsterdam Water Games. It's organized by Pension Homeland, to involve the neighbourhood. That's one party in the year. It's big, and the rest is all very serious business" – Liesbeth Jansen, director Bureau Marineterrein.*

## Programming Themes

The current themes approached by Marineterrein in their programming are **housing, water, learning, traffic and health**. The aim of the themes is to stimulate cooperation between community members and to stimulate them to develop programmes together.

*"There is having businesses on the terrain, and there is having a community. As long as the tenants do not work together, it is a business park and not an active community." – Anikka Fulop, project assistant Bureau Marineterrein.*

**Temporary programming** is an essential part of organic development. It involves the testing of possible uses of a building or site by organising various events and pilot actions. Usually, this type of programming uses few resources and it is essentially a series of tests which can be scaled up if enough alignment is found with values of the site or the community. Moreover, programming is an important tool in branding a site.

At the moment, the theme **learning** is considered the most relevant at Marineterrein. As the world is changing faster and faster with new technology developments, learning is considered a key theme in helping the city and the neighbourhood adapt to new realities.

Many community members at Marineterrein deal with the theme of learning such as [Codam](#) (a non-conventional school for coding), [GrowthTribe](#) (teaching companies how to hack their growth) and [Cinekid](#) (who has an awareness programme for children and social media).

The programme related to learning includes meet-ups (such as "successful dropouts"), teaching modules designed to introduce teachers to new skills for the future (such as project-based education and peer to peer learning) and an expedition about the future of learning (five community members give workshops on future skills to a broad public).

*"And then you always hope that the community will embrace this and continue it themselves, because they also get something out of it. I think this is important when you work with communities, that you don't just ask them to do things, they really need to see the added value for themselves, be it to have more students, or more business to business connections." – Anikka Fulop, project assistant Bureau Marineterrein.*

## Living Lab

Since 2019, Marineterrein also hosts a Living Lab, where community members and other organisations can test solutions for future-proof cities. A great advantage of the area is that it is a private terrain which is publicly accessible, meaning that it is easier to test many developments before applying them to public space.

*"We always experiment with the aim that the city and the country and the region benefits from it. So we are looking for experiments that have a chance of upscaling." – Anikka Fulop, project assistant Bureau Marineterrein.*

*"We have started to set up a living lab, so we have created spaces where we can test things in the open, like vehicles without a driver. We also see it as a place where we cannot just gather opinions, but also gather real data – what solutions do work? For example, about the work on cleaning the water, there were still some sewers coming out on that water, which made it too dirty to swim in. So the Marineterrein found out where this comes from, tested every day, and now people are swimming!" – Michiel Buchel, Director NEMO Science Museum.*



## Future Transformation

As mentioned above, Marineterrein is currently being involved in an organic way, meaning that the development of a community and of programming for the site are the leading principles at the moment. However, the end goal is to also transform the site from a physical perspective, and the current phase gives many of the components for the transformation later on.

*"There won't be one moment when the temporary phase will end. It will be an ongoing process and buildings will follow programming, and not the other way around." - Marlene Rienstra, municipality of Amsterdam.*

*"I think the advantage of an organic development approach is that you take the time to find the value of the area together with stakeholders, and by doing that together, people start feeling ownership for the area. (...) if you take the time, you can really get many people involved. This also has the disadvantage that you don't get to see results quickly and people will keep on asking questions about the plans." – Anikka Fulop, project assistant Bureau Marineterrein.*



Picture 5. **Measuring water quality.** Photo by Maarten Pedroli.

## 7 Context

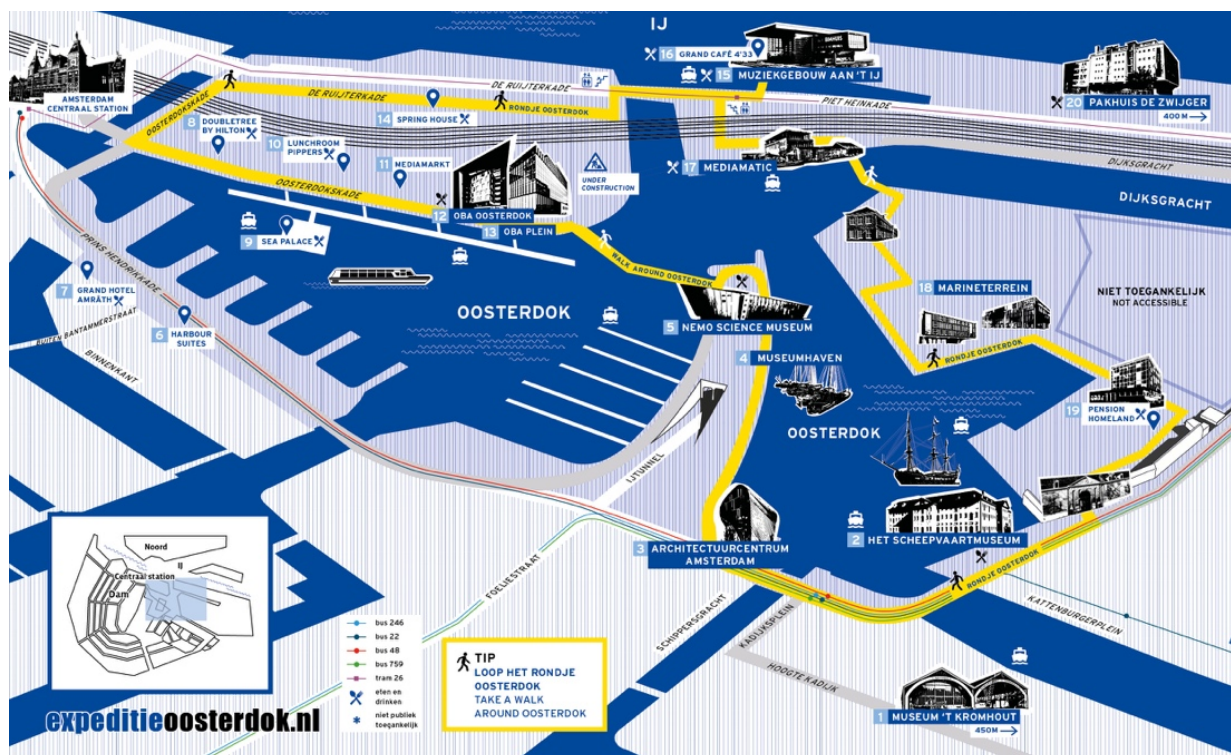
### 7.1 The Wider Area - Oosterdok

Besides working on building a strong community on site, Bureau Marineterrein is also working on creating a wider community who feels connected to the site. One example is [Expeditie Oosterdok](#). Oosterdok is the wider neighbourhood in which Marineterrein is situated, which shares the naval history of Marineterrein.

In 2017, Bureau Marineterrein initiated a walking route (Expedition Oosterdok) with several cultural organisations in the neighbourhood, such as [NEMO Science Museum](#), [The National Maritime Museum](#), [the Conservatorium](#), [The Central Library of Amsterdam](#) etc. Later on, several companies in the neighbourhood connected to the initiative, such as [Booking.com](#), [TomTom](#), [Oracle](#) and others.

Slowly, the whole neighbourhood is starting to get the image of an innovative quartier of the city and are beginning to work together. For example, once a year, all organisations now set up an open day where people from the neighbourhood and the public at large can come and explore all developments of the area.

*"If you want to collaborate, you need to understand who is the other. We all have our autonomous responsibilities. Which is, for us, to keep the museum healthy and get enough visitors, and work for our collections. But we also have a second layer on top of that, that is to say 'we live in this street and we work together'. And then, there's the third level, which is 'we share a mission; we have to take care of our planet'. And we all have our own possibilities, or limitations, but that's a sort of second umbrella or third umbrella that lies on top of it. If you want to join the hub, you have to join these visions and missions." – Michiel Buchel, director NEMO Science Museum.*



Picture 6. **Expeditie Oosterdok**, [expeditieoosterdok.nl](#)



## 7.2 The Neighbourhood – The Eastern Islands

The residential neighbourhood surrounding Marineterrein used to be a rather different neighbourhood in the centre of Amsterdam, characterized by many social housing projects built between the 70's and the 90's. Currently in the process of rapid gentrification, as the rest of Amsterdam is, many of these social houses are being sold. In recent history, there have been some known cases of gun violence amongst youth groups from the area.

Some of the residents who moved in before the 90's have been very active in city policies and development plans through active civil engagement and lobbying throughout the years. These residents, together with some newcomers, form very organised social structures in the neighbourhood and have been very vocal in the transformation of Marineterrein to date.

In 2013, when the Ministry of Defence announced that they will vacate the terrain, the neighbourhood created ["Neighbourhood platform Kattenburg Marineterrein"](#).

*"Its main aim was to prevent that the Marineterrein was developed without a connection with the existing area. We wanted to be connected to social coherence, but also that Kattenburg should profit from development here." – Jeroen Verhulst, local resident.*

Many members of the neighbourhood appreciated that the municipality and the government appointed an **independent organisation**, Bureau Marineterrein, to use the buildings and the facilities already on site and that they opted for a **slow development** approach, which gives the neighbourhood more time to react in the process of defining the definitive functions on site.

Often, organic transformation processes have a slower pace. This means that no major investments are made in the first years. Instead, the first years are used to test some ideas for the area, develop a community and discover the type of programming needed for the specific site. This gives stakeholders time to react on plans or developments and often results in high community engagement.

Bureau Marineterrein organises a bimonthly session with the neighbourhood, where the municipality would also present plans or give information on various processes. Also, the neighbourhood would invite various contact persons from the municipality and the bureau to their local meetings, which usually give better results and more focused discussions. However, the residents were initially not very happy with how the municipality gave form to local participation in the physical transformation of the site and wanted to become more involved in the actual plan-making process.

*"We are trying to make a contract with how to relate to each other. So, how do we relate with the surrounding, with the neighbourhood, how do they want to participate in this project, and also what's a non-negotiable topic? Because the municipality, the decision makers, need to provide a framework for discussion." – Marlene Rienstra, municipality of Amsterdam.*

Bureau Marineterrein, the municipality and the neighbourhood are currently doing research into how to better formalize the participatory process through a project ([R-link](#)), which looks at possibilities for developing a 'neighbourhood' contract. The

aim is to come up with new ways of interacting with a wider local community that goes beyond the already active local inhabitants.

*"There's a lot of pressure and all the stakeholders have very different interests and goals. (...) And for me it's really a search to find the right groups and participants for the conversation, because it's not only for the people who live around, it's for the whole city." – Marlene Rienstra, municipality of Amsterdam.*

An important activity in creating a relation with the neighbourhood and with the city of Amsterdam as a whole was the opening of a new swimming spot in Amsterdam, at Marineterrein, once the boardwalk was set up. Though the swimming area is not yet official, various organisations at Marineterrein have been testing and improving the way water quality can be measured and improved through a Living Lab. The aim is to make this an official swimming spot.

*"The funny thing is, if the weather is nice, instantly the whole neighborhood, and the whole city knows to find this area, because they are all here, swimming in the harbor, so that's very interesting." – Liesbeth Janson*

Other activities which are organized directly for the neighbourhood summer camps (activities organized by the community members for children and teenagers from the neighbouring areas) but also the main festival on site, Amsterdam Water Games, organized by the restaurant Pension Homeland together with people from the nearby neighbourhoods.

*"I think that Pension Homeland and the water have been very important in getting the neighbourhood to come here, and to create a bond with them. The terrain has been completely closed off for 150 years and (...) even though the door opened, we really had to pull the neighbourhood in at the beginning. Now we are a few years later and of course everyone knows where to find us now. But in the beginning that wasn't all that obvious." – Koen Vollaers, founder Pension Homeland.*

Some of the community members such as Codam Coding School and the upcoming chef's school are being perceived as very interesting to connect to the local residents and especially youth from the direct neighbourhood. Also, all the initiatives related to transforming the area into a sustainable district are supported by the surrounding community.



Picture 7. **People swimming from the boardwalk at Pension Homeland.**  
Photo by Alina Tomescu



## 8 Buildings / Complex / Site



Picture 8. **Community at Marineterrein.** Photo by Alina Tomescu.

Part of the site at Marineterrein is currently still being used by the Ministry of Defence, and that area is separated from the publicly accessible area by a fence across the whole territory. The parts which are open for public are Voorwerf (at the main entrance to the site) and Kade West, which in the meantime has been connected to the city through a temporary bridge. One building which also historically belongs to the marine complex but which is not currently a part of the transformation process is the former warehouse from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, currently hosting the National Maritime Museum and which is a protected monument.

Only one national monument is located on the Marineterrein site itself, namely the gatehouse at 003, a 100-meter-long building separating the area from the city, dating from 1655. Also, buildings 024 (built in 1860) and building 031 (beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century) fall under protected cityscape regulations. Most other constructions were built after 1960 and are characterized by prefabricated constructions and standardization. (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018)

Building nr.	Former use	Current use
<b>001</b>	Commander's residence. Was found in good condition.	Restored in august 2015. It hosts Bureau Marineterrein.
<b>002</b>	Infirmery	Offices
<b>003</b>	Gathehouse (Poortgebouw). Offices, sail production, entrance to the area.	Offices
<b>006</b>	Officer building	Pension Homeland - restaurant, hotel
<b>022</b>	Building for shooting practice.	Experimentation space for VR installation and digital art.
<b>024</b>	Logistics school	Offices, restaurant
<b>025</b>	Alloy	Medium-term accommodation (6 days – 6 months), circular canteen and chef's school
<b>027L</b>	Offices	Offices, museum, brewery, makerspace
<b>027W</b>	Education centre	Offices
<b>027E</b>	Education centre	Restored in 2015 to host events related to the Netherlands EU Presidency. Restaurant Club House, offices
<b>031</b>	Storage	
<b>039</b>	Offices	Codam – programming school

**Table 1. Adaptive reuse of buildings on Marineterrein**



## Renovations



Picture 9. **Boardwalk Marineterrein. Photo by Marnix Foeken, Orientation Travel Productions**

Many of the buildings on Marineterrein have been adapted to host new functions – most have become offices or horeca businesses. As most of the buildings were highly functional 60's buildings, they were relatively easy to transform into office spaces with minimal interventions.

A few interventions were made in order to facilitate better access in the area, such as signage, a new bridge and a board walk. Also, some buildings were renovated to various degrees in order to make them suitable for new functions. Three examples are presented below.

### 8.1 NEMO De Studio



Picture 10. **NEMO Science Museum – De studio. Photo by NEMO De Studio.**



One of Marineterrein's direct neighbours is NEMO Science Museum, the 5<sup>th</sup> most popular museum in the Netherlands. The museum focuses on interactive ways to explore scientific topics for families, children and schools. In 2018, NEMO decided to extend across the water and open an extra space on the Marineterrein.

*"For us the studio is a place where we can experiment with other types of stories, targeted at adults. Whereas in the NEMO museum we develop the exhibitions ourselves, in the NEMO studio we want to develop them together with partners from the terrain, but also with other organisations, NGO's or universities." – Michiel Buchel, director NEMO Science Museum.*

The building (dating from the 1960s) has 1400 sqm and was originally a sports hall for the military troops. The transformation of the site was done in a circular way, so that it would be in sync with the ideas presented in the museum, but also because it was cost effective. Furniture was bought second hand and many of the elements which were removed during the renovations were donated to offices, schools, a mosque or the fitness garden on Marineterrein.

*"We didn't have very big budget, so we sort of had to convert it in a very basic way. We wanted to be able to host 1000 people there, so we had to change the infrastructure. We could not really change the building in itself because it's part of the architecture of the other buildings around it. So, we came up with the solution with the architect, to put a little extra layer in front of it that we can easily replace, because we can only rent space there for temporary periods (5 years). So, we had to be very practical and pragmatic in terms of how much can we invest." – Michiel Buchel, director NEMO Science Museum.*

The NEMO Studio officially opened in July 2019 with an exhibition on the Future of Food. The objective of the studio is to translate important scientific and technological developments into accessible exhibitions aimed at citizens, so that they can not only form opinions, but also contribute to the solutions.

*"One of the things that I learnt and that struck me most was – if you do a project and you do it together with your neighbours and people are motivated by the goal, there's enormous amounts of energy that comes free. People give things, you know, people work many more hours than they are paid for... and this inspires me enormously. Because this is the sort of energy, positive energy that we will need to make real change. (...) I think that's where the heritage can play a role - to bring people together" – Michiel Buchel, director NEMO Science Museum.*

For the adaptive reuse of the building hosting NEMO De Studio, circularity is a central theme: 100% second hand furniture, the façade is made of spare materials from the car industry, there is a 100% recyclable floor and a pay per use light system. Moreover, most elements removed from the building were donated to organizations on Marineterrein or in Amsterdam. ("Circulaire gevel voor omgebouwde sporthal op Marineterrein Amsterdam – BouwTotaal", 2019)

## 8.2 Pension Homeland



Picture 11. **Pension Homeland.** Photo via [www.Pensionhomeland.nl](http://www.Pensionhomeland.nl)

The first publicly accessible space to open on Marineterrein was [Pension Homeland](http://www.Pensionhomeland.nl) – a hotel, restaurant and brewery. Inspired by the location of building 006, a former lodging for military officials, Koen Vollaers and Astrid van der Meiden decided to transform it into an accommodation for people working on site and a restaurant. Pension Homeland plays an important role in bringing together the community on site, the defence authorities, the neighbourhood and the city.

*"As far as the brewery is concerned, that was very exciting, because of course that was not entirely in line with the objective of the site. But I also thought it was especially important to actually produce something, not only digital things. Because this also makes it more accessible to other people, because it brings life, literally and figuratively. You have to be extremely careful if you develop a site like this, that it does not become dead site at six o'clock when everyone is gone. You have to find a very good balance between public things and office-like functions, and I think the brewery also helps with that." - Koen Vollaers, Pension Homeland.*

The renovation took much longer than originally planned, as the building was in a rather bad condition, with traces of asbestos. The costs also got out of hand (1.4 million euro, while the initial investment was estimated at 1 million euro), but the owners were motivated to continue investing in the place. Many of the original elements were kept, and the additions respected the 60's heritage: simple, functional rooms with furnishings from the same period. Feeling it was too sterile, the owners decided to bring their private art collection into the building.

*"There is also another reason why Pension Homeland looks like this. In the beginning, there were some difficulties with the Ministry of Defence, they were not so comfortable with all the civilians coming on their terrain. So, we thought, we have to make a place where they feel at home. And that really worked well, because there are a lot of old militaries who came here and they said 'wow, how beautiful it has become here, we used to sleep here!'. And that has really helped in the mutual tolerance and I think it has opened some doors." - Koen Vollaers, Pension Homeland.*

### 8.3 Codam



Picture 12. **Codam.** Photo via [www.codam.nl](http://www.codam.nl)

An important landmark in the transformation of Marineterrein is also the arrival of Codam, a revolutionary programming school based on the concept of the French school 42.

*"It's quite revolutionary actually. It is completely tuition-free, it's open 24/7, we don't require any kind of experience or former diploma, anything... You can just give it a try and come. Here, we don't have any teachers, we don't have any planning, we don't have exams and things like that. Everything's different. We use peer learning, so the students are going to learn from each other and with each other, so that's a lot of fun." – David Giron, Codam.*

About 25% of the students are from the Amsterdam. Even though being connected to the local neighbourhood was not an initial objective of the transformation of Marineterrein, the commissioners are beginning to see the benefits of a better connection with the community. As the nearby neighbourhood is known for a relatively high percentage of youth at risk, with drugs, violence and early drop-out of school, the presence of Codam could offer solutions.

The building transformed by Codam used to be an administrative building with narrow hallways and dark rooms. Through extensive interventions, it was transformed into a modern school in about 6 months. The building also attracted the attention of the militaries, and students sometime play football with the soldiers in the military area:

*"Often as the militaries go past the barracks, some step in and ask us about what we are doing here. And we show them around, and they get very excited! And now it's sort of this thing where the traditional world of the military and this crazy world of Codam, it's sort of colliding and it's a very special thing. Which is really interesting, because there's a lot of IT jobs also, for the safety for the country, so that's a beautiful way to work together." – Lisa Stamm, Codam.*



## 9 Heritage

*I find some of the buildings on site really great. But actually what I find even more special is the story we want to continue to tell, as an area that has always been of great value to the city, region and country. A lot of value has been created from here and we aim to do that again. – Anikka Fulop, Bureau Marineterrein*

Already in the area concept developed in 2013, it is mentioned that **Marineterrein is iconic through values, not architecture**. Most stakeholders agree that the terrain in itself has an important historical value for Amsterdam and the Netherlands. However, the attachment does not always reflect in the individual buildings on site.

Only one building remains from the time of the Admiralty of Amsterdam, namely building 003, the gatehouse separating the terrain from the Kattenburg street and neighbourhood. While some of the stakeholders (such as the inhabitants of the neighbourhood on the other side) would rather have more access points towards the Marineterrein from the main street, there are also stakeholders who appreciate the sort of mystery given by having this wall around the terrain and believe that this could help maintain the terrain as a green oasis in the middle of Amsterdam.

*"I think that you should aim for the highest possibility in choosing a function for a heritage site, to give it meaning to as many people as you can think of. In this phase, for Marineterrein, it is quite difficult. At the moment I am thinking about the best destination for the gatehouse. Currently it hosts offices, but it is a very special building, so I believe it should have a public function. But in order to develop such a function, you'd need to invest a lot in this building, and you cannot do it for 5 or 10 years, it should be at least 12 or 15 years. That's difficult in the temporary phase." – Liesbeth Jansen, director Bureau Marineterrein.*

There are also two buildings, 024 (built in 1860) and 031 (built in early 20<sup>th</sup> century), which are protected under the protected cityscape measures, and will therefore also be kept as such.

For the rest, many buildings on site date from the 60's and have a highly functional character. Here, opinions are divided about whether these should be kept in the next phase of the transformation of the Marineterrein, which will involve physical development of the terrain. The Monuments and Archaeology office of the municipality of Amsterdam evaluated the historic value of the buildings and recommended that most of the buildings, including the ones from the 60's, should be kept, to showcase the historic context.

*"But it's hard to keep all the buildings when you have to increase the density of an area. Because they are really in a strange setting, they just... the defence authorities, they didn't care about urban planning, they just spread the buildings over the whole area." – Marlene Rienstra, municipality of Amsterdam.*

*"As heritage, the buildings don't have that much value I think. But the buildings in use now, were renovated, and they look better now, so why should we demolish them? It's easier to keep them. But there are more buildings hardly in use now. They can be demolished..." Jeroen Verhulst, local resident.*

*"I actually think every building here is heritage, because it simply stands here. (...) Yes, I think every shed and every building is actually a shame to demolish, because then you also have to build something new for it" – Koen Vollaers, Pension Homeland.*

Few buildings from the 60's were transformed more thoroughly, such as 006 (Pension Homeland), 039 (Codam) and 027E (transformed on the occasion of the Dutch EU presidency). Many stakeholders have started to become attached even to these buildings or to not see the use in demolishing them. Especially when it comes to Pensioen Homeland, the adaptive reuse managed to put the historic context of the buildings in a new light, which made many stakeholder appreciate the style of these buildings much more.

*"Homeland, it should actually be listed as a monument I think. It is really architecture built in a very special way and also shows a very good picture of buildings from the sixties. Precisely because of those straight lines, precisely why some people would find this an ugly building, there are also other people who think this is a very beautiful building because of its spirit of the time."- Koen Vollaers, Pension Homeland.*

Many of the interviewees saw (built) heritage as a starting point for the design and programming, which gives direction to the transformation on the site. They all agree that heritage, both immaterial and material, add a lot of value to the area. However, heritage is perceived as most valuable when it can find a new spot in contemporary times.



Picture 13. Kade West, Gebouw 027E. Photo by Arjen Veldt.

*"I think heritage gives some backbone to what we do here, because otherwise you can do whatever you want here... I think the value of heritage, you can see it when you can incorporate it in modern times. It shouldn't be a museum; it should be part of the city. And for that, maybe the buildings will remain, but you always have to do something with the function of the buildings. And for that, when you do that, it has value. If you don't, I think it will lose its value." – Marlene Rienstra, municipality of Amsterdam.*

The decision of the defence authorities to remain on a large part of the area is also perceived as a double-edged issue. On the one hand, it gives less room for the city to develop. If 13 hectares could have really become an important new neighbourhood for Amsterdam, this will be more difficult to achieve having only a part of the site. On the other hand, having the military on site adds to the special character of the site and is also adds value with regards to continuity and heritage. However, the main challenge will be to manage to involve this new key stakeholder in the vision for the site.



*"Maybe it's a good development that the defence part is becoming bigger than what we envisioned at the beginning. Because in that way you can relate also physically to the history, and take it to a next level. But only if we can cooperate with them, if they decide they want to be part of the innovation environment." - Marlene Rienstra, municipality of Amsterdam.*

*"In a way, there have been a lot of inventions here, it's always been an international community, so it's interesting... Most innovations start in the military, like the computer, all kinds of things. In a way, it took a while to connect with the Ministry of Defence on this subject, but it's sort of slowly coming." - Liesbeth Jansen, director Bureau Marineterrein.*

*"Personally, I actually find the militaries nice, because it makes it different. It makes it weird and exciting and also somehow very safe." - Koen Vollaers, Pension Homeland.*

## 10 Regulations and Policy

Marineterrein is a very peculiar area from many points of view in the context of policy and regulations, which allowed for the transformation to take place in a special way. There are a few interesting developments and instruments which have laid the foundation of this way of working.

In 2012, the government together with the municipality commissioned several documents that laid the foundation of the **cooperation agreement**: A recognition study ("verkenningstudy") in 2012 to see the development potential of the area, as well as an **area concept** ("gebiedsconcept") and a development strategy ("strategienota").

The **area concept** is described as "not an end-goal, but a compass for the organic transformation of Marineterrein. It provides guidance for the (temporary) development but also offers the flexibility to respond to the needs of society". The area concept of Marineterrein was to, just as in the past, create a context where innovations can originate and which in turn contribute for a better city. Three key themes were identified: (1) Maritime power, (2) Water park, (3) Innovative Workplace.

In the **cooperation agreement**, this "slow transition" was estimated to last for 10-15 years and the aim was that it would lead the later transformation of the area. In the **first phase** (2013-2017), no major interventions and no well-defined urban plans would be developed. The transformation would happen gradually, based on the area concept and not on an urbanistic plan. Another important principle of the first years was that the value development process would take place for the area as a whole and not for the individual buildings.

A key success factor was also that, in the cooperation agreement, the two parties (the government and the municipality) decided to appoint an **external party** (Bureau Marineterrein, led by Liesbeth Jansen) to lead the temporary phase.

*"[Something that was really important for the development] is the fact that in the contract it was put down that we shouldn't do the transformation ourselves, but have this project bureau instead, an organization which has the mandate to do the things thought to be right for this area. That's really important. The normal decision making process for a municipality and also for a national government takes a very long time and then you are not able to anticipate the chances and the opportunities you see on the terrain." - Marlene Rienstra, municipality of Amsterdam.*

When the Ministry of Defence decided to stay on a larger part of the terrain, despite the contract between the government and the city, the parties needed to start renegotiating the context of the development. In this specific situation, having an independent organisation to lead the development was also very beneficial for the transformation, as it ensured continuity.

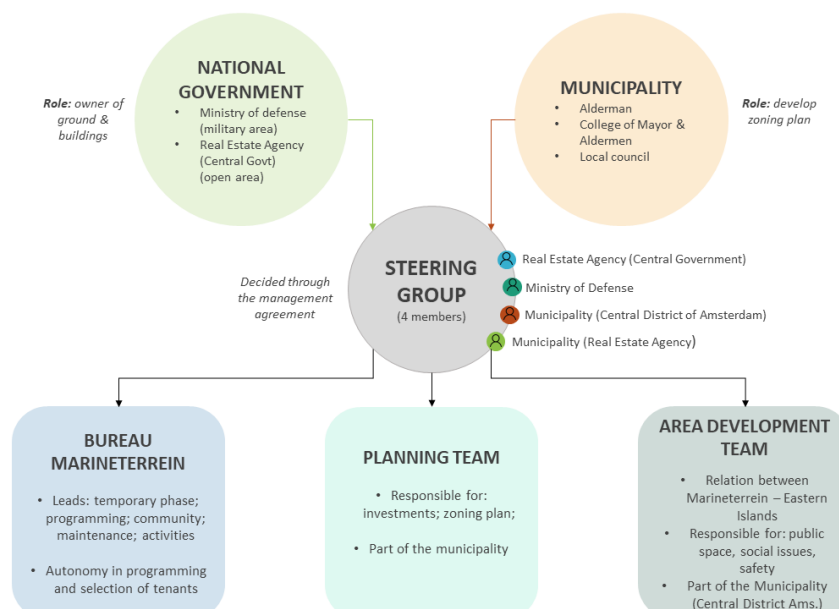
*"I have a very broad mandate, I can do almost anything except giving way too much money or organize a foundation or a limited company... and besides that, I'm completely free in the tenants I choose, in the contracts I sign, in the content... These kinds of projects don't go very smoothly, easily, it's always a bumpy road. So we sort of, are the continuous factor in the development, while they [the government and the city] meanwhile are in a complex situation of coming to an agreement." – Liesbeth Jansen, director Bureau Marineterrein.*

After 2017, the transformation would then enter a **second phase** (2017-2027) – still characterized by temporary exploitation and experimentation, however also starting to better define the concept, the area and the zoning plan. After 2027, it was hoped that the transformation would be definitive and that most buildings would be assigned definitive functions.

*"In the beginning... there was no zoning plan, so for every need in the city, everyone said 'oh! Marineterrein!'. It took us so much time to fight this, 'no you should not make the Marineterrein the dumping ground to put whatever you don't elsewhere have space for'. People have realised that, it's not on that level anymore. And of course, the government is much less politically influenced than the city. The city, you notice very well the periods of elections." – Liesbeth Jansen, director Bureau Marineterrein.*

While the regulatory context was very special, which allowed the area to be developed in a slow, organic way, it is worth mentioning that another key success factor was that the **creative civil servants** working on this area had courage to try something different in the governance process.

*"It needs guts to do this, but I think decision-making in the future should be like this, because it's kind of old fashioned to do it the way we are used to do normally. Because who are we, civil servants and municipality, to decide what's good and working for a long time? Because normally, we make plans, and then 10 years later, we realize the plans Then you're always behind. Then you always make plans that are outdated at the time you realize them. So, I think it's necessary to do it this way."- Marlene Rienstra, municipality of Amsterdam.*



Picture 14. Management model Marineterrein

## 11 Financial Model

The initial budget for Marineterrein was 6.5 million euro, made available by the national government and the municipality. This budget was used for several infrastructure investments (such as a bridge, a boardwalk, the renovation of building 027E in the context of the EU presidency) and for starting up the organisation Bureau Marineterrein.

However, soon after the buildings started being rented out, the rent was enough to cover all the management and exploitation costs. An important factor to take into account is that Bureau Marineterrein does not pay any rent in turn.

*"If you rent out cheaply, you can be accused of "irregular subsidy", that you subsidize people in a way that is not legit, so we really had to ask for market value. They were very surprised that we managed to do that. So the income we had is higher than their expectations. So we could also draw some bigger projects like the board walk and the bridge and... but the exploitation and the maintenance we can also do ourselves from the rent." – Liesbeth Jansen, director Bureau Marineterrein.*

## 12 Communication

*"We have been very careful with our communication strategy (...) as in we actually chose not to have one, or to have a very sober one. So, the website was also not meant to create interest, because we first wanted some time to define our values before we would come out of the closet." – Anikka Fulop, project assistant Bureau Marineterrein Amsterdam.*

The first step of defining the communication strategy for Marineterrein was positioning – assessing what are the real values and strengths of the site, and how these are different in the context of the city. In the first instance, the communication was focused on the commissioners, the city and the government, to have a very transparent process.

Moreover, at the beginning of the process, all eyes were on Marineterrein. Having so many stakeholders with various interests at the beginning was a process that needed to be managed carefully until the values were clear.

Currently, after selecting the community members and defining the programme, the communication has become more specific and more focused on general public and presenting the developments happening on site. Most of the news items come from the community members themselves. Important milestones in raising the popularity of the site were the opening of the (still unofficial) swimming area and the opening of the Codam school – inaugurated by the Queen of the Netherlands.

An important part of the communication coming from Bureau Marineterrein is **business to business**: start-ups, companies, educational institutes, universities who could test solutions on site or engage with the community. Another important target group is the **local neighbourhood**:

*"We organise regular meetings with the local neighbourhood. And currently the summer camp is taking place, for young people from the neighbourhood. These activities are really important for showing what we are doing. It costs an incredible amount of money and time, but they yield so much more. I believe so much more in these kinds of activities. The*

*communications so the newspaper and so on, they follow." – Jacqueline Verheugen, communication Bureau Marineterrein.*

When it comes to the **general public**, many people in Amsterdam do not yet know about the area or about the activities happening on site.

*"The general public just really doesn't know anything about Marineterrein, some think it's still a military area. The message follows after years, this also happened at Westergasfabriek. And since we have only been working on it for a few years now, I think that those types of processes are always slower than you think." –Jacqueline Verheugen, communication Bureau Marineterrein.*

The main communication channels for Marineterrein are the [website](#), monthly general newsletter, community newsletter, a magazine, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#).



Picture 15. Marineterrein magazine. Photo by Alina Tomescu.

## 13 Impact

Marineterrein is currently in a period where the community has settled in and the cross-fertilization in the area is starting to develop more and more, which is giving hints of the wider impact expected to develop in the coming years on the neighbourhood and city, and maybe even at the national or international level.

For Amsterdam, at the moment Marineterrein added an important green and blue recreation space, where people can swim or relax, which was missing in the busy



centre area. Moreover, it improved the accessibility in the area by adding a boardwalk and a bridge connecting the area to the rest of the city.

From an innovation perspective, there are many ideas currently being developed, tested or implemented which will influence the way the area develops and also many future policies for Amsterdam: from blue-green roofs to self-driving boats and vehicles.

*"The blue-green roof initiative, that became a big European project. So there are now more than a thousand square meters in the city who will get such roofs and which will also measure other parameters in turn. The goal is that all the interesting developments from here also go to other cities." – Jacqueline Verheugen, communication Bureau Marineterrein.*

Another issue which will impact the development and the city is the housing problem in Amsterdam, which currently adds a lot of pressure to the development. How that will take shape in the coming years is not yet known.

For the neighbourhood, the impact is already more important than initially estimated. While it used to be perceived as one of the poorest and least educated neighbourhoods in the centre of Amsterdam, with many young school drop-outs, people in the neighbourhood see an important connection for the future with community members such as Codam, which could offer a second chance for the young people with social issues in the neighbourhood.

*"We always thought it was important [to connect to the neighbourhood], but the national government was not too enthusiastic about that. They were thinking about really the highest quality of innovation hub, and 3 years ago they did not involve social exchange or social return on innovation. (...) But I think there is much more awareness right now of the importance of being connected. Also, for AMS and for NEMO [community members], it is an important ambition to not only keep the knowledge at the highest level, but to share and involve citizens." – Liesbeth Jansen, director Bureau Marineterrein.*

Other ideas for a future relationship between Marineterrein and the neighbourhood are currently being explored, from a neighbourhood contract to organising a lab with free activities for children living nearby.

A note is to be made about the difference between planned and achieved impact. Since the Ministry of Defence decided to remain on a larger part of the territory than initially foreseen, the project ambitions have to be re-evaluated. Dealing with a much smaller terrain is seen as a challenge in achieving the initial impact, and it of course depends very much on the way the relationship between the public and the military area.

*"I think this counts for all of us... we love this place so much, it's so amazing to be able to work for this, in such a nice place with so much green and so many nice people. Sometimes it's very stressful, because a lot of things are happening at the same time. But I think we all do it for a higher purpose, for the social interest. And together with all the people here, also in the neighbourhood. We all want it to be a nice place here and not everyone has the same idea, but in the end it starts to take shape. If we can leave something behind for the next generation, for people who are about to take over again, that would be beautiful." – Jacqueline Verheugen, communication Bureau Marineterrein.*



## 14 Interviewees

- Anikka Fulop – project assistant Bureau Marineterrein.
- David Giron – director Codam.
- Jacqueline Verheugen – communication and community building Bureau Marineterrein.
- Jeroen Verhulst – local resident and secretary of [neighbourhood organisation 1018](#).
- Koen Vollaers – founder Pension Homeland.
- Liesbeth Jansen – director Bureau Marineterrein.
- Lisa Stamm – communication Codam.
- Marlene Rienstra – project manager at the municipality of Amsterdam for Marineterrein.
- Michiel Buchel – director NEMO Science Museum.

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