



Professional approach to prestigious new project – ‘De Zaat’

Autodesk Buzzsaw optimises project management

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Project summary

A new village with 970 dwellings is appearing on the banks of the Schelde, in the Flemish town of Temse. Its location is that of the disused Boelwerf – an old shipyard and piece of industrial history. The ‘De Zaat’ project will take more than ten years to complete and it is being undertaken by the development association ‘Nieuw Temse nv’.

Unfortunately, the Boelwerf experienced the same fate as so many European shipyards, it went into receivership in 1994, but today this lovely spot is being revived. A new residential area is appearing on an 80-acre site together with a KMO zone (an area for small and medium-sized businesses).

Boelwerf revived

The residential part of this project covers 28 hectares and is being developed by ‘Nieuw Temse’. The shareholders in this syndicate are two contractors, Cordeel and Aertsen, each with 25 per cent of shares, and ING Real Estate Development, with 50 per cent. Griet Trekels, project development manager for ING is jointly at the helm of this prestigious project.

“With such an ambitious project it is important to lay down proper rules from the start,” says Trekels, “so we began with a master plan or ‘visual quality plan’ for the site. This contained many regulations designed to protect the quality of life and amenities: for example, all the apartment buildings must have a view of the water, green areas and quality architecture.

“We started halfway through 2003 and began with the layout of the infrastructure, such as car parks, green areas and roads. We wanted to ensure that the first inhabitants didn’t move onto a ‘building site’. The work on the infrastructure lasted until the beginning of 2005. Now we have begun phase 1 of the project. During this phase we will complete three buildings and we start a new one every six months.”

Managing complexity

Such a large scale project requires all hands on deck. The central team consists of six people at management level, three for practical co-ordination, one person who guides the materials buyers, an estate agent at the location and naturally all those involved on the construction site, that is to say each project has its own architect, engineer and dedicated technicians.

Trekels: “We completed the first three buildings without Autodesk Buzzsaw. And that was only just manageable. Communication was traditionally via email, cd-rom, fax and telephone. Every report from every meeting had to be emailed to all parties, and then they had to continuously update these in order to be working on the latest versions. Informing everyone of the most recent state of affairs took up almost all of my time.

“The greatest risk is the use of incorrect versions of plans. There is always someone who has not seen an email or hasn’t printed off a plan. And that’s when mistakes on



the construction site are unavoidable. We therefore had an urgent need for unique information which would be available to everyone at all times."

Ease of use first and foremost

Ease of use was an absolute necessity when looking for a solution. "We have to deal with many different users from contractors to estate agents", says Trekels. "Therefore it was very important that any solution we chose had to be intuitive. In our sector, people simply don't have the time to immerse themselves in instruction manuals. Autodesk Buzzsaw had the highest score.

"The interface is very recognisable and you understand all the functions without having to think about it. Anyone who is used to a Microsoft environment learns how to use the package as they go along. The application supports various types of user in their different roles. You can also install different levels of user 'rights'. We also chose Autodesk Buzzsaw because of confidence in the continuity of the market leader. And the list of recommendations for Autodesk Buzzsaw was very convincing."

Autodesk reseller C3A stepped in for the setup of the system. Trekels: "During the start up, a lot of information had to be loaded onto the operating system, but it went well. We just handed over our input on spreadsheets. We can now complete all the accompanying elements ourselves, including the management of user rights."

C3A was also responsible for the training of the partners in the project. Since the middle of 2006 all the partners have worked together via Autodesk Buzzsaw.

Professionalism

This solution fulfils all expectations: "Everyone can get on really well. The right information is always available to us at any time," says Trekels. Working with Autodesk Buzzsaw brings an element of professionalism into the management of the project.

"Everyone uses the same version and is up to date with the latest arrangements. People can find the most up to date documents which are relevant to them and new

people can join in immediately. This is important; on a project like this you always have a certain turnover of personnel.

"New working partners who join discover that the project is very well co-ordinated from the beginning. That immediately makes a good impression. We have also set up the user rights so that whoever wants to can see the overall context of the project. That is a motivating factor: colleagues feel that they are involved in a prestigious project.

"Personally I find the Notification Manager especially handy," he continues. "I can see straight away what has changed on a daily basis. I don't have to search through all the plans and documents. This makes the monitoring task for project leaders a whole lot simpler.

"The commercial people also make use of Autodesk Buzzsaw. The operating system contains the most recent sales tax records, the sales plans which show which apartments already have a buyer, sales agreements and marketing material.

Autodesk Buzzsaw ensures professionalism. It speaks for itself that communication has been a lot easier since we started using the solution. It is not some superfluous luxury, especially as the project becomes more and more complex.

"As project developer it takes away a source of stress for me. Previously a lot of time was spent on the re-sending of documents. I was constantly being telephoned by people asking me to re-send this, that or the other. At one time I did almost nothing else. Now, the users no longer depend on me being in the office. Whether it's the weekend or the evening, everyone has access to the documents they need, whenever they need them."

Each new project at De Zaat now goes straight into Autodesk Buzzsaw. There are 30 to 35 in total. How ING Real Estate Development's other large-scale projects can benefit from the professionalism brought by working with Autodesk Buzzsaw is due to be evaluated in the future.

For more information

To learn more visit us on the web at www.autodesk.co.uk/buzzsaw

