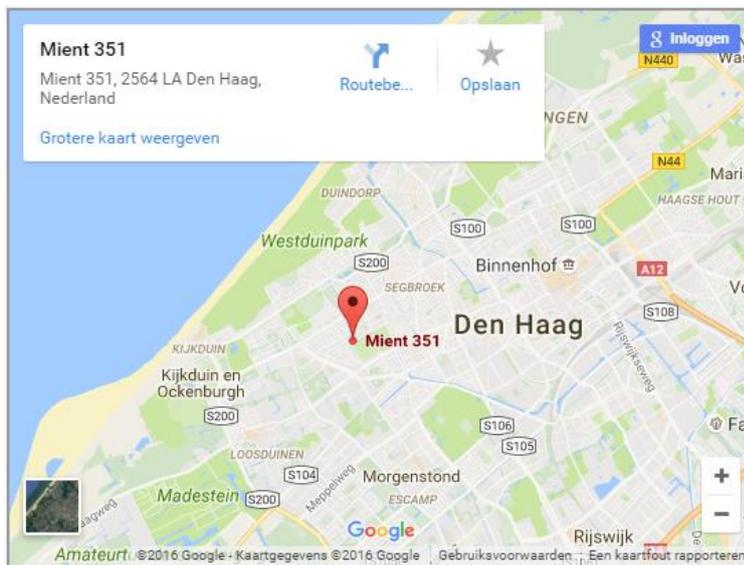


## Groene Mient (The Netherlands)

### Introduction:

The Groene Mient project is a collective self-organised housing complex in The Hague, the Netherlands that will develop around 33 residential units. The Groene Mient project has developed a



beautiful plot located on the area called the Mient in Vruchtenbuurt district of The Hague. The name Groene Mient is inspired by the Old Dutch word 'mient' meaning meadow. The project started the municipality offered to the group (which was restructured significantly afterwards) an old school area (7,400 m<sup>2</sup>) in the western part of The Hague. At that time some CSO members gave input to the zoning plan of the area. That same small group developed a

definition of user needs, and completed a 10 step plan for selecting the new CSO members. The project included a housing cooperative that would have provided rental units for some part of the future inhabitants.

### Motivation:

The real motivation for starting the Groene Mient project was to create energy neutral and self-sufficient houses. This was achieved by making use of solar panels, heat pumps, renewable power and smart balance ventilation. Groene Mient built houses following the high standards set up by the Dutch building regulation. The project was also motivated by a strong community spirit to build a long term and friendly environment.

### Community development process:

Through a long process of meeting, the Groene Mient project had succeeded in attracting 33 households. There had been few changes in the membership but the interest was always huge. The

project benefited from diverse talents and skills of their members which complement their lack of knowledge in certain areas such as design and construction. The project unfortunately got into financial troubles thus the whole project was terminated and was reborn in late 2012 without the co-ownership of this cooperative. After a long process of community development, the negotiations with the municipality started again. In November 2013 the municipality set a time-schedule for the development of the area. At the same time the municipality gave an indication on the price for the area and an investment-schedule for the group. In January 2014 a community builder was contracted, while in April 2014 the architectbureau AKFV was chosen after a selection process by the groups. The group also selected two other advisers, a constructor and an installation/building physics adviser. The schedule of the project foresees that a contractor will be chosen after the 2015 summer holidays and the homes to be delivered by the end of 2016. The role played by the facilitator was important for the success of the project.

### Some issues during the development process:

In the concept design stage, the group's expectations were revised due to the fact that architect presented the first design and the municipality changed the urban plan of the site. The initial plan and expectations were no longer appropriate for the new group that had a different composition than the previous one. For instance, the selection of plot location gave an unexpectedly problems



for the architect. Another issue was the discrepancy between the original zoning plan and the expectation of the group. The original zoning plan (valid till April 2013) aimed to separate the complex plot into small pieces in order to ensure that it will at least be

partly purchased. This zoning plan did not fit to the requirements of the CSO community which definitely wanted to have a common garden. Thus the zoning plan was discussed to be modified resulting in bigger pieces of building complexes. The new zoning plan is expected to allow 60% of the area to be turned into a garden and it also results in reorientation of the buildings. The compromise was however that the houses must be built alongside the already existing street in order to be aligned with the other residential units. Parking was also an issue of the detailed plan as it is not allowed outside but only inside the complex. The municipality did not have any experience with ecologically sensitive groups before, which required special planning solutions and the elaboration

process became more complicated. As a result, the whole permission process cause a serious time pressure as according to the original obligations as 100% of the plot must be paid by the beginning of July and the construction should start late summer-early autumn 2015. In order to accomplish that, a bank loan is needed, which requires valid zoning plans and building permits. It is possible that the deadlines of the process must be renegotiated.

**Critical information/tools for the project:**

- a. Financial monitoring tool
- b. Lean planning tool
- c. Measure tool for the sustainability in all stages of the design proces
- d. Objective information about formation a building team of professionals
- e. Explaining on an easy way building technics to people who have got no idea how this works. Especially the influence of physical properties

**Lessons learned:**

Reflecting on what has happened, it is important not to go into details especially in the early stage of the project. Many owners/members did not acquire the knowledge until they were confronted with the subject. This could create a false idea or misconception and over expectation regarding the projects. Another issue was related to the lack of knowledge on how to deal with CSO housing project. In the case of the Groene Mient project, the municipality of The Hague does not have any experience with CSO housing (many Dutch cities do, but not The Hague) as there were no relevant projects in this field in the last 15 years. Thus the regulations were not appropriate for CSO needs. The municipality should be aware that developing a site for a CSO housing project is different from a regular development with one developing party. In fact, the CSO housing project requires more flexibility for integrated design with a lot of freedom for the urban subdivision.