Gemeente Amsterdam

Summary of the draft Preliminary Design Brief

Plein ’40-’45



Soon to be even more the vibrant centre of Geuzenveld, Slotermeer

Renewal of Plein ’40-’45

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A special square

Plein ’40-’45

This is a summary of the draft Preliminary Design Brief (concept Nota van Uitgangspunten) for Plein ’40-’45. Design principles are the key points we use as a basis when creating a design. We drew up the principles for the new layout of the square by listening to residents, visitors, market traders and other business owners. The brief also includes other plans we have to make the square more vibrant, attractive, safer, greener and more inviting. A welcoming place for everyone, both during the day and in the evening.

Plein ’40-’45 has been a special place for years. Five days a week, the largest market in Nieuw-West is held here. The shopping centre also attracts many visitors every day. This square is the second memorial square in Amsterdam. There are also special events, such as Remembrance Day and the Liberation Festival on 4 and 5 May.

These events take place around the Vrijheidscarillon. The square is also a meeting place where people go for a chat or simply to enjoy the atmosphere.
That is not to say everything is going well. Plein ’40-’45 is in urgent need of renewal. Residents and business owners are worried about safety and the state of the square. There are problems, but also opportunities to improve it. Because we want Plein ’40-’45 to become even more the vibrant centre of Geuzenveld, Slotermeer.

A square for remembrance and gathering



The market as a driving force





An empty square

Why does Plein ’40-’45 need renewal?

Plein ’40-’45 has everything it takes to become a welcoming square, but it is not quite there yet. The paving, furnishings and greenery need replacing. The renewal of the square offers a good opportunity to strengthen the market and shopping centre as well, and to tackle a number of broader issues. Think of the following matters.

Too few benches and too little greenery

The square is mostly paved, with very little greenery (and shade) from trees and plants. This means it can get very hot in summer. The square is not climate-proof, meaning it is not ready for hot summers and heavy downpours. The square also has too few benches where you can sit quietly together. Women, young people and children in particular miss places like that.

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It feels unsafe

In the evening, there is little to do on the square itself. It can be quiet and deserted. It does not always feel safe. There are dark corners where people can hide. Many people also feel uncomfortable along closed, dark facades at ground floor level. It feels deserted. They miss “eyes on the street” - people who can see when something happens. Like in the alley by the Action shop, behind the shopping centre near the parking garage, or by the cycle path behind the Blue Square Hotel. We have also heard from some women that they sometimes feel they are being watched in an unpleasant way by the male crowd sitting at the restaurants on Slotermeerlaan. There is a lot of activity there in the evening. The market is generally seen as safe and pleasant. Only on Saturdays is it too busy for some people.

A lot of litter on the street



After a busy market day, there is often a lot of waste left on the square. It can blow through the entire neighbourhood. Visitors to the hospitality venues on Slotermeerlaan also cause litter, in addition to commercial waste that is sometimes not disposed of properly. It is getting busier, which means more waste. Clearing up is sometimes difficult because of things in the way, such as bicycles, advertising signs and terraces. The waste point at Joop van Weezelhof next to the market is outdated and has a rat problem.

A public toilet is needed



There is also no (clean and easily accessible) public toilet. That is actually strange, when you consider how many market visitors, shoppers and event-goers come to the square. It makes the square less welcoming and does not encourage people to stay a bit longer.

The Vrijheidscarillon is hard to see



The Vrijheidscarillon is a monument with a carillon. It commemorates the liberation of the Netherlands in the Second World War – which is how the square got its name. It currently stands behind a row of market stalls five days a week and is therefore hard to see. The Vrijheidscarillon and the square belong together, but it does not get the attention it deserves.

Traffic: too busy and unsafe



The cycle path runs straight across the square. Many visitors find this unsafe. This is mainly due to the high speed of electric bicycles and the winding curve in the cycle path. Cars and vans also drive on the cycle path, even though they are not allowed there. Loading and unloading is not properly organised. On busy days, visitors to cafes and restaurants cause parking nuisance. Residents also complain about cars hooting. For pedestrians, there is sometimes too little space in areas with terraces on both sides, advertising signs and parked bicycles.

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A new square: what do residents, visitors and business owners want?

What should a new Plein ’40-’45 look like? That is the question we put to local residents, visitors and business owners. During the conversations, people could have their say and share their wishes. And also describe what their dream square looks like.

In 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2025, there were extensive discussions with residents, visitors, market traders and other business owners about the renewal of Plein ’40-’45.
We asked certain groups about their wishes, such as women and girls, young boys and LGBTIQ+ people. Everything they shared was used for the Preliminary Design Brief. The conversations gave the municipality a good picture of how people use, value and experience the square, and what changes they would like to see.

Relaxation alongside the Waterkom





Bart:
“To me, Plein ’40-’45 means coming home. For me, it represents where we live, but also the liveliness from the morning market to the evening restaurants. That is what makes it such a lovely neighbourhood.”

Janette:
“To me, Plein ’40-’45 means: a community, the neighbourhood, home.”

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Ahmet:
"Plein '40-'45 is a place where everyone feels at home and where there is something for everyone. It is so wonderful to be here, that you can meet all different cultures and backgrounds here. It is very warm-hearted and you can feel that from every side. I am very happy with it and for me it really feels like coming home."

Offer at the market





Peter:
"Plein '40-'45 is a busy focal point, a chaotic and relaxed crossroads of all kinds of spices and clothes."

Offer at the market



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Mohamed Ismael:
"To me, Plein '40-'45 is more than a market or a place. It is a living square where commerce, connection and responsibility come together. A place where collaboration gives direction to progress. It shows what happens when residents, users, business owners and the government work together."



Fatima Zohra:
"To me, Plein '40-'45 is the beating heart and soul of the neighbourhood."

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What were the conversations about?

During these conversations, all sorts of topics came up. Residents see the square as an important meeting place in the neighbourhood. However, they are concerned about nuisance from waste, noise, traffic and a lack of enforcement. Almost everyone wants a public toilet, more greenery and better lighting.

The market is currently very well attended and is a lively, safe and pleasant place. Market traders are worried that changes will lead to fewer visitors or the disappearance of the market. They think it is important that the market stays the same size as it is now. They also want less trouble from rain, wind and heat.

Women and girls also want:
- Better play areas for young children.
- More seating and spaces where you can meet each other.
- An attractive square where they feel welcome and safe in the evening too.

Young boys miss having their own place on or near the square. They are often sent away when they gather in groups to relax.

What residents, (market) traders and visitors think could be improved:

- Tackling dark spots on the square where people feel unsafe, especially in the evening.
- The existing cycle path across the square creates unsafe situations due to the high speed of electric bicycles.
- The market traders see opportunities to improve the market. For example, the market could have a more open feel, so that you can also walk onto the market more easily from the Vrijheidscarillon side.
- A more diverse range of products at the market and in the shops.
- People also came up with ideas for organising activities around the Vrijheidscarillon; this would require a stage, lighting, benches and an information board.
- Finally, the Waterkom (the water next to the Tuinstadhuis) is valued by many visitors as a pleasant place to sit for a while. It could be used much better, though some local residents are worried about noise nuisance.
- The parking garage on the square is not always used well and is hard to find.

Your dream square



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What do we want?

Thanks to all the conversations and feedback from residents, (market) traders and visitors, we have a clear picture of the ideal square:

“A welcoming, green and vibrant square, with room for a successful daily market, social gatherings, remembrance and socio-cultural activities – both during the day and in the evening. The centre of Geuzenveld and Slotermeer where residents and visitors feel welcome.”

How are we going to do this?

To achieve this, we are redesigning the square. In doing so, we are working from the design principles on the next page. We have sufficient funding to carry out all of these points.

But the new layout of Plein ’40-’45 is not enough. That is why we have further ambitions. For these, we do need more funding and other organisations. Think, for example, of the owners of the buildings around the square.

A welcoming place must meet five criteria:

1. A sense of home

A welcoming place is a place where you feel at home and welcome. Where people come together and meet each other. A place that also feels a bit ‘yours’. A public toilet should not be missing there.

2. Care

At a welcoming place, people look after each other and the space that belongs to everyone. The square must be well designed for people who care for someone else, accompany children or need care themselves. For example, a place where people with a wheelchair or pushchair can get around easily.

3. Safety

A place is only welcoming when everyone feels they can be themselves there. Gender, sexuality, age, level of education, cultural background, whether you have a large or small budget, or a disability - none of that should matter.

4. Accessibility

A place is only welcoming when you can get there and leave comfortably. Walking routes to and from Plein ’40-’45 must be clear, well lit, accessible and have “eyes on the street”.

5. Diversity

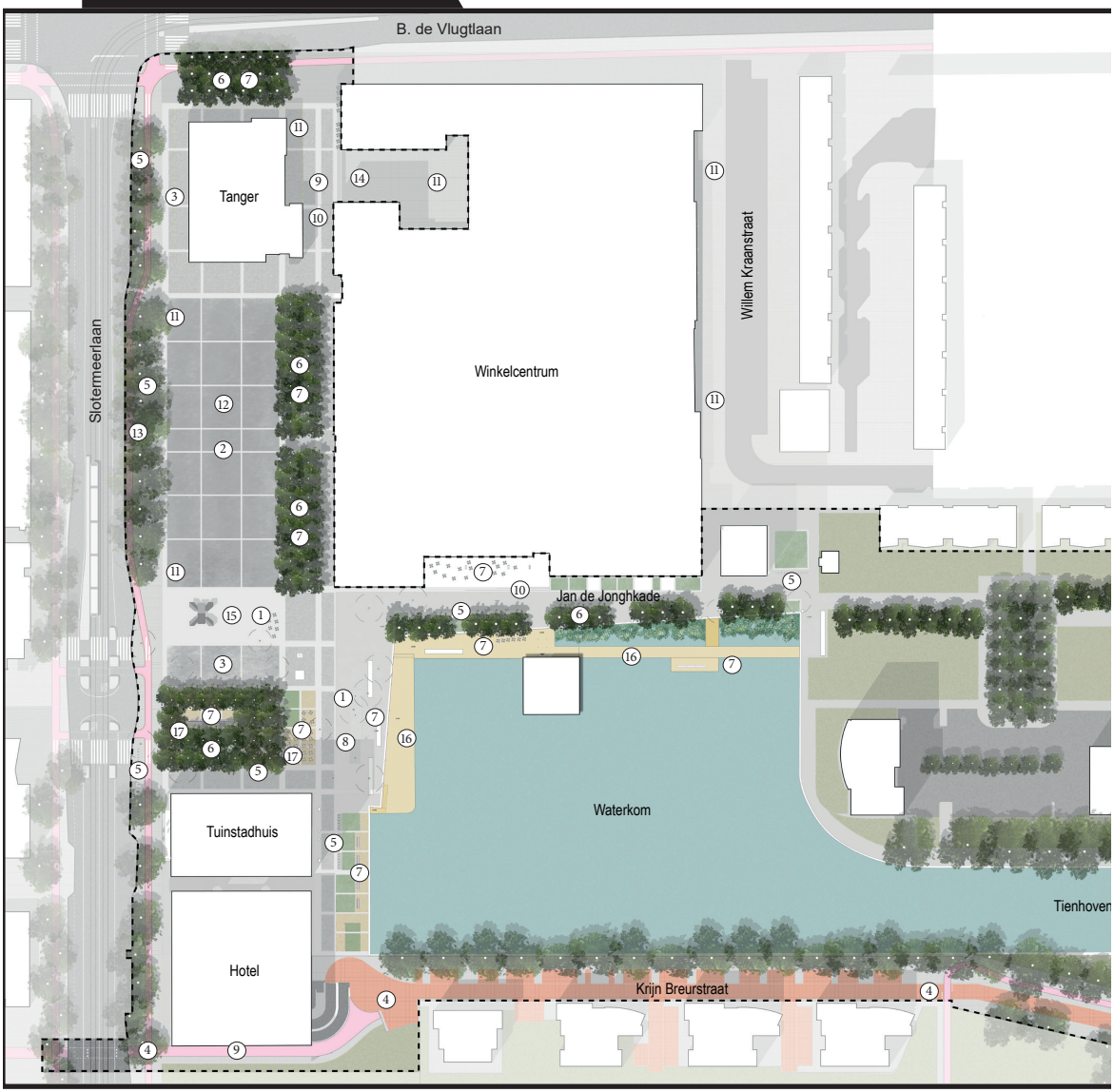
A welcoming Plein ’40-’45 must offer space for all sorts of different groups, so that everyone feels at home on the square.

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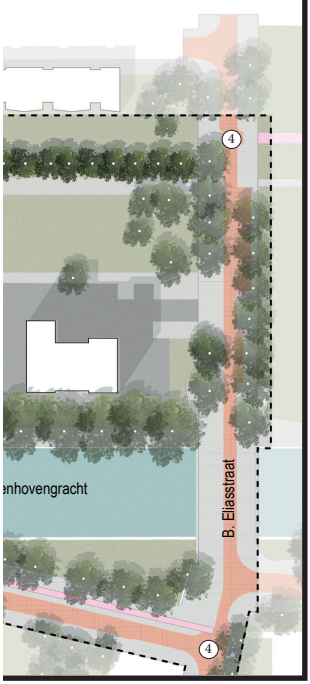
Design principles for the redevelopment of Plein ’40-’45

This map shows the main design principles we are using when creating a design.

Draft plan map with design principles



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1. Space for events
2. 150 market stalls
3. Investigating whether some market stalls can be placed along the Tanger building and around the Vrijheidscarillon
4. Through cycle route no longer across the square, but via Burgemeester Eliasstraat and Krijn Breurstraat
5. Square accessible by bicycle. Bicycle parking at the entrances to the square
6. More trees, plants and flowers, and therefore more cool spots
7. More places to sit
8. More opportunities for play and exercise (for example water jets from the ground)
9. Better lighting and improved visibility
10. Fully accessible for everyone, including with pushchairs and wheelchairs
11. Safe loading and unloading by the market and shopkeepers
12. A lively square, also in the evening and when there is no market
13. Safe walking and cycling along the Slotermeerlaan
14. Tackling nuisance from rats and parking (Joop van Weezelhof)
15. Vrijheidscarillon more visible
16. New wooden decking
17. A dedicated space for teenage girls and a dedicated space for young boys

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What else are we doing?

In addition to the renewal of Plein ’40-’45, more will be happening. For this, we do depend on other parties. Here and on the following pages is an overview.

The market as the driving force of Plein ’40-’45

The market is one of the most important pillars of Plein ’40-’45. With 150 stalls, it is one of the best-attended markets in Amsterdam. However, the market (and the shopping centre) could offer a greater mix of different products.

The main reason for renewal is that the population will grow in the coming years: around 3,000 new homes will be built in the area. This is a great opportunity for the market and shopping centre to attract new target groups. The market could, for example, sell more regional products or try out new stalls to see which new products catch on and which do not.

Furthermore, more variety is also possible in the range of shops. In particular, organic, local and slightly more expensive products are missing, while the hospitality offering is not inviting for all groups either. Women and LGBTIQ+ people in particular experience some hospitality venues as not very welcoming, which reduces the overall sense of welcome.

To help the market function better, an additional exit has been built. We are also making clear agreements about the layout and when loading and unloading takes place. A new layout in 2024 has already created wider walkways, better visibility and a calmer atmosphere. As a result, the overall appearance has noticeably improved.

The market during the day



The market in the morning



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The fight against waste

Business owners, the market and the municipality have been trying for years to get the waste situation under control.

All sorts of things have been tried to prevent light plastic litter from blowing across the square. Waste bags have been handed out daily, ten wheelie bins have been placed for visitors, brooms have been made available to market traders, and traders have been spoken to when the waste volume got very large. There is more supervision on Saturdays, and recently an electric litter vacuum (Glutton) has been brought in. This has helped enormously in reducing litter. The situation has improved, but there is still room for improvement.

The recycling centre at the Joop van Weezelhof



The electric street vacuum Glutton



That is why we want:

1. Wheelie bins at the market

We are placing wheelie bins at the market so that traders can dispose of all waste during market hours. We are also using the electric litter vacuum so that waste near the stalls does not spread once the stalls have been cleared away.

2. A better recycling centre

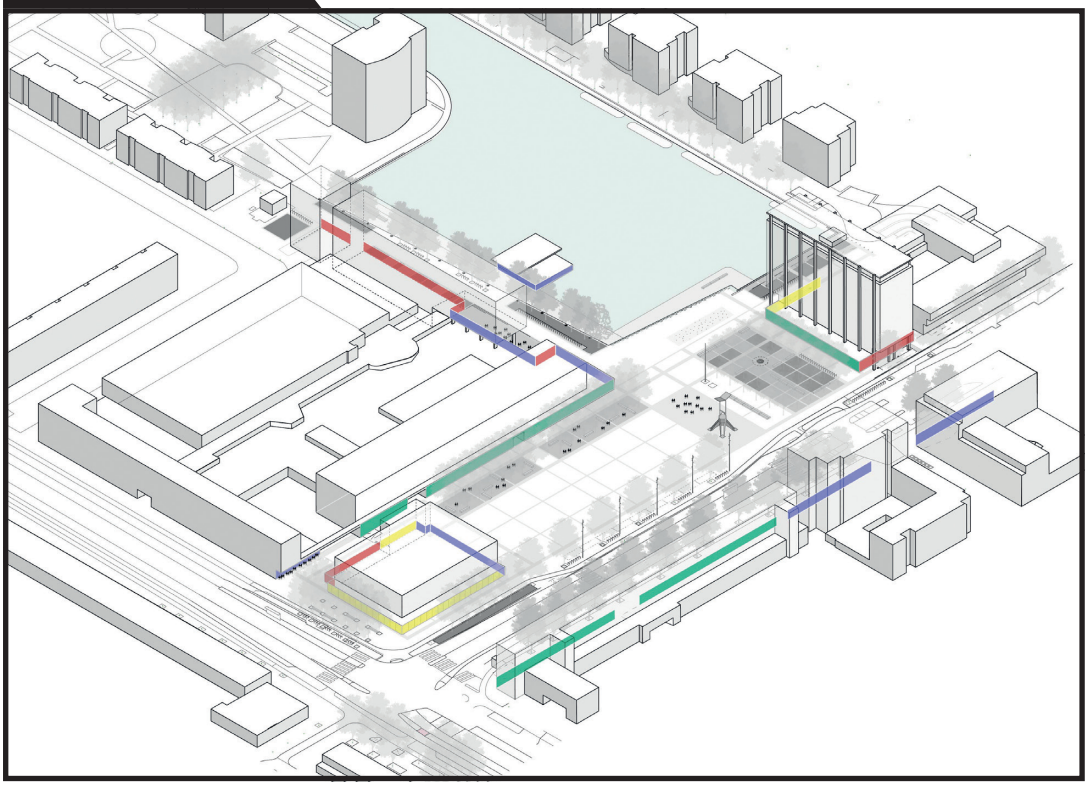
We are improving the recycling centre at Joop van Weezelhof and tackling the rat problem. We are improving drainage, sealing the wheelie bins better or replacing them. We are also making clear agreements about who does what. We are also looking further ahead and thinking about how to better set up the recycling centre.

3. Enforcement

We are going to enforce more strictly against the dumping of commercial waste in bins intended for residents.

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Plinth strategy



Closed plinths
Plinths that will not be opened for technical or spatial reasons.

New open plinths
These plinths are currently closed. Our ambition is to give them a function that creates more vibrancy and safety on the square.

Strengthening existing open plinths
These plinths are currently open. Our ambition is to give them a new function that creates more vibrancy and safety on the square.

Retaining existing open plinths
These plinths will stay as they are now.



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Opportunity for more liveliness: open plinths and housing on the square

It is not just a new layout that determines whether Plein ’40-’45 will be a success; the buildings around it are just as important.

Buildings can increase the liveliness of the square by activating their “plinths”. A plinth is the ground floor of a building. Some buildings have closed plinths and therefore do not seem to belong to the square and the market. Or the shops are only open during the day and not in the evening. And it is precisely those dark, closed and "dead" plinths where nothing happens that make many women and girls feel unsafe. They miss eyes on the street.

The big wish is therefore to make these closed plinths ‘open’ and accessible, especially outside shopping hours. This could be done by opening a gym there, a community centre or a cafe or restaurant with a terrace. Ideally, the hospitality venues on Slotermeerlaan would in time move into the plinths on the square. This would not only create more liveliness on the square, but also reduce nuisance for residents behind Slotermeerlaan.

Attractive buildings

Besides the plinths, we also want to make building entrances more attractive. For example, by connecting them better to the square. The entrances would then be clearly visible and accessible to everyone. This can be complemented with greenery, benches and clear signs showing the way. So everyone can find everything easily.

Finally, more eyes on the street could be created by building additional homes in or on top of existing buildings. We are in discussions with the building owners to see what is possible.

Lively plinth



A plinth with little liveliness



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You must feel safe

Women and girls say the square feels safe when the market is on. There is activity then and enough people around. But in the evening, they often feel unsafe.

That is why we want:

More eyes on the street
A mixed crowd (women and men) keeps an eye on what is happening in the street. Activity during the day and in the evening (for example, through hospitality venues) creates more safety. We want as few quiet, deserted or dark zones without supervision as possible.

Adequate and pleasant lighting
Lighting must be even and warm throughout, without large differences between dark and light.

Improved sightlines
Good visibility, open spaces and clear walking routes are extremely important for a greater sense of safety. Things that block the view, such as the cafe pavilion, pillars, (dark) corners and bends, reduce visibility and that does not feel good. The police are not happy with the current layout of the square either. This is due to the many hiding spots (for example, behind the pavilion) and the large number of entrances and exits to the surrounding neighbourhoods. All of this makes it difficult to keep things calm during disturbances at larger gatherings (demonstrations, spontaneous public celebrations, for example during football matches).

Increased informal safety
It helps when there are neighbourhood mothers, market supervisors or kiosk owners on the square.

Safe in the evening too



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More cultural events, more social interaction

The more cultural events and things to do, the more social interaction.

That is why various events have been organised on Plein ’40-’45 in recent years, ranging from an iftar and a Tulip Festival to a Panna Knock Out, Safety Day, Women’s Resilience United and the Winter Event. These events clearly created more liveliness on the square and the neighbourhood felt involved.

A public toilet is a *must*

Part of the Preliminary Design Brief is that we are going to provide a public toilet. First, we will look at whether we can open up existing toilets in the area. We are investigating how we can make the existing public toilet in the Community Centre (*Huis van de Wijk*) *De Honingraat more accessible*. Later, we will look for something on the ground floor of the buildings around the square, such as the Tuinstadhuis, Tanger building or a retail unit. We would rather not place separate structures on the square: this way we keep the square open, clear and safe.

That is why we want to:

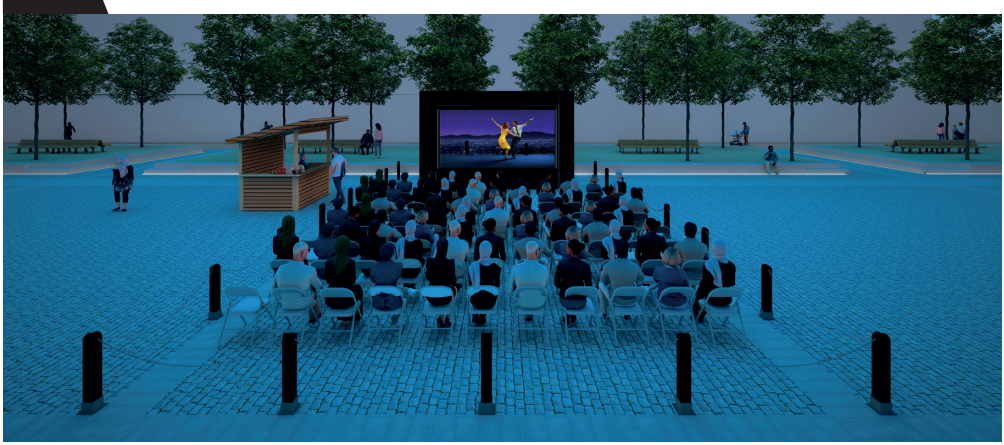
1. Create a plan setting out what events will take place up to 2030, who does what and how they will be funded.

2. Include water and power points, storage space, a public toilet and, if possible, a stage in the new layout. In addition to a space for events and performances, there should also be something for children to do sports and play.

3. Involve local residents and social organisations more in the programming - i.e. what is on offer.

4. We want to give the activities currently taking place in the Glazen Huis a permanent place on the ground floor of the Tuinstadhuis.

Event



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Making what is already good even better

Plein ’40-’45 has everything it takes to become even more that vibrant and welcoming centre of the neighbourhood. It is already a place to meet, thanks to the market, the shops and the hospitality venues.

The renewal of the square offers a great opportunity to strengthen these qualities:

- The market is currently successful and attracts many visitors from the neighbourhood and beyond every day. In the new design, the market will remain an important feature of the square. The product range could be a bit more varied, though.
- Shops with both affordable and more expensive goods. By keeping the types of shops that are already there and adding other types, the shopping area becomes attractive to more people.
- There are many people on the square when the market is on. By making the square lively in the evening too, this space will be used even better. This also increases the feeling of safety. The balance with liveability and preventing nuisance is important here.
- Plein ’40-’45 is a place for everyday use as well as for special moments, social gatherings and remembrance. Room for the market and room for other things. That is what makes it a valuable and pleasant place.

We have already started on a number of improvements:

- The lighting around the square has been adjusted in several places after reports from people who felt unsafe.
- The construction of a new exit on Slotermeerlaan has improved road safety during the setting up and taking down of the market.
- Four speed bumps and a zebra crossing have been installed on Slotermeerlaan to improve road safety.
- Urgent maintenance in front of the Tuinstadhuis: the trees have been given more space, the paving has been repaired and more benches have been added.
- The Waterkom has been cleared of boats that were not allowed to be moored there.
- An electric vacuum cleaner is being used to keep the square cleaner.

These steps have already made things look better. They also contribute to more pleasant and safer use of the square.

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Square layout in zones

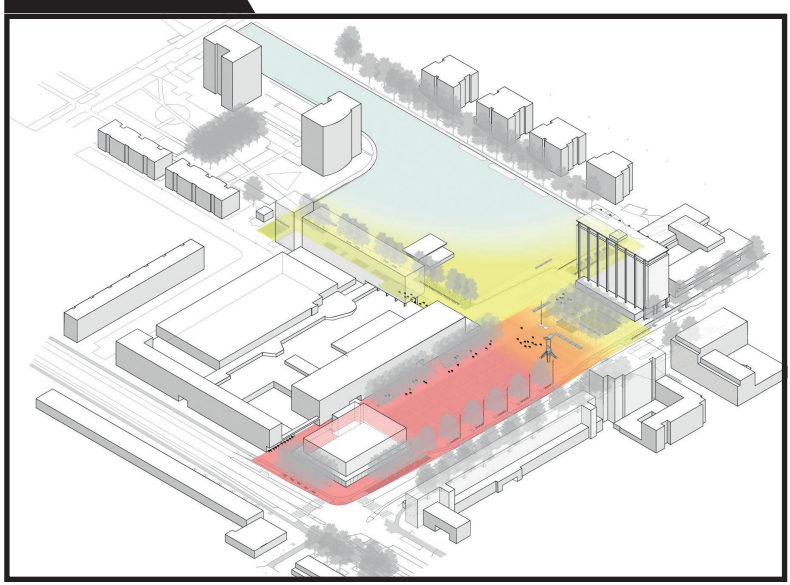
All sorts of things come together on Plein ’40-’45. Sometimes at the same time, sometimes spread out over the day. But where one person comes for the bustle, another wants to sit quietly. Where one person comes for culture, another just wants to shop. To make sure that socialising, relaxing and shopping can coexist without getting in each other’s way, we are dividing the square into three zones. This division will help us make design choices later on.

Red zone
The red zone is the vibrant core, consisting of the central square and the area around the Tanger building. This is where trade and social interaction come together. These functions can reinforce each other, but can also clash. Think, for example, of the flow of pedestrians, cyclists and market traffic. During the day it is busy, but in the evening it is still very quiet. We want to change that.

Orange zone
The orange zone is a ‘transition zone’ between the busy red zone and the calm yellow zone. The area starts around the Vrijheidscarillon in front of the Tuinstadhuis and extends to the water of the Burgemeester van Tienhovengracht. In the orange zone, remembrance, relaxation and liveliness come together. Around the Vrijheids-carillon, there could be space for cultural events if the cycle path and the pavilion are relocated.

Yellow zone
The yellow zone in front of the Tuin-stadhuis and on the square side of the water is intended for relaxation, calm, socialising and cultural events. In this zone, comfort, accessibility and a sense of calm are particularly important, precisely because different groups of people come here to spend time together.

Zoning of the square



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What happens next?

We will use the Preliminary Design Brief to create a design for what the square will look like.

At that stage, we will also look at what everything will cost. If the District Executive Board gives its approval, construction can begin. During the construction work, we want the market to continue as normally as possible. We will work out a plan for that.

How to respond?

Online via amsterdam.nl/plein4045
By e-mail via *plein4045@amsterdam.nl*
By letter (mail it or hand it in at the front desk)
Attn. John-Paul Zigenhorn
Plein ’40-’45 no. 1
1064 SW Amsterdam
PO Box 2003

Everyone can respond to the plan from *30 March to 6 May 2026*. All responses will be sent along with the brief to the City District Committee.

The District Executive Board is expected to adopt the final Preliminary Design Brief in June 2026.

Contact? Want to know more?

Integral programme manager
Meret Muntinga
Phone: 06 22 43 04 35
Construction area manager
John-Paul Zigenhorn
Phone: 06 38 68 70 61

www.amsterdam.nl/plein4045

Plein ’40-’45

Want to know more?
Scan the QR code.

2026/2027

Design and preparation of works

2028

Start of the new layout of Plein ’40-’45

2030

New layout completed