

Introduction

The old brewery Carlsberg in the centre of Copenhagen is undergoing a radical change into a diverse and vibrant city quarter with life 24 hours a day.

By Lars Holten, Vice President, Carlsberg A/S Properties

In 2006 Carlsberg decided to move the production of beer from Copenhagen to Fredericia 200 km west of the capital. More than 160 years of brewing had come to an end, and the door opened for a totally new usage of the site that lies in the heart of Copenhagen and spans an area of more than 330,000 square meters (80 acres). The site's history and location presents a clear opportunity to create a new city quarter which will arouse international attention and attract visitors from all over the world.

Carlsberg decided to invite both citizens and experts to submit ideas in an international ideas competition for the design of the new Carlsberg. The intention was to create a diverse and vibrant city quarter with life 24 hours a day. Sustainability, variety and innovation were keywords from the very beginning, and it was important for Carlsberg that the old brewery's unique historical heritage would be part of the identity of the new town quarter.

A plan for the future

In May 2007 the small Danish architectural practice "Entasis" won the international ideas competition in front of 220 other proposals. Their plan "Our Spaces" is based on the cellar plans of Carlsberg, which is a truly unique idea, since the cellars were originally excavated for production purposes only. In this way the past is represented in the plan for the future town, where irregular lines and sequences give the town a sense of a labyrinthic, charming, old city quarter. Entasis' plan emphasizes the spaces, that people share. This is not a place for individual prestige buildings struggling for attention. Urban space is essential.

For the town's squares and street sequences, Entasis adds a plan for nine tall, slim characteristic towers between 50 and 120 meters high. The towers will stand as markers for the town's most important squares and will build on the capital city's familiar skyline and inject new contents into brewer Carl Jacobsens's old slogan for Copenhagen as "The city with the noble towers". Seen from the centre of the city, Carlsberg's skyline on top of Valby Hill will appear distinctive and conspicuous.

Multifunctional and green

In Carlsberg each square will have its own individual character so the town's citizens and visitors, at any time of the day, can find the proper surroundings to suit their needs, whether it be sun or shade, interaction with other people or peace and quiet.

In the base of the buildings there will be shops, cultural activities, service and education – in other words all the extroverted activities – which are a natural part of the dialogue with the streets and the squares. On the buildings' upper, more sunny floors, there will be housing and offices for small businesses. A total of 600,000 m² will be built; 45% for housing, 45% for business and shops and 10% for sports, culture, art and various institutions.

The two onsite private gardens of Carlsberg's founders will both be opened to the public. Three additional urban gardens are laid out as well. Lots of trees in 25 larger and smaller urban spaces and along the streets will ensure Carlsberg becoming a "green" city.

Public transportation

A finely chopped net of bicycle paths crisscrossing the area will offer cyclists fast and safe connections. Along the railway a new bicycle path - the Carlsberg Route - is constructed giving cyclists between the suburban district of Valby and the City of Copenhagen, a fast connection via Carlsberg.

Public transportation to and from the area is ensured through the construction of a new and modern commuter railway station - a station that will be among the five busiest in Denmark, when the area of Carlsberg is fully developed.

The area holds the possibility for construction of 4.500 parking spaces. These will primarily be situated in underground car parks, whereas parking above ground will be kept at an absolute minimum.

Carlsberg remains on the area

The vast majority of Carlsberg's historical premises, including the Elephant Gate, will be preserved. In all, approx. 15% of the future building mass will be preserved, baring reference to the 160 year long history of the brewery.

The company of Carlsberg, including the Visitors Centre, Museum, Research Centre and the Jacobsen Microbrewery, will remain active on site. The Carlsberg Corporate Headquarters will also continue to be situated in the area.

Sustainable ambitions

The Carlsberg development will be the very first in Denmark in which all new buildings are constructed as low-energy buildings, in order to ensure a sustainable city and to meet the ambition of CO₂-neutrality. Environmental, social and economical sustainability are important factors for Carlsberg. This clear ambition applies to buildings, traffic services and use of the areas. The goals include people living active urban lives, providing good economy in the area on the basis of social diversity and special care of the environment.

Breaking new ground

Carlsberg town will not be completed for another 15-20, perhaps 25 years, and from the very beginning, Carlsberg has been aware of the fact, that this way of development is breaking new ground. People living in Copenhagen have strong feelings towards this particular area, and subsequently their interest in the future of the area is enormous. Carlsberg wants to acknowledge this fact by involving all stakeholders in the project. Starting from the competition, where both professionals and non-professionals were invited, continuing through meetings with stakeholders, dialogue-meetings and numerous presentations for various groups of people, Carlsberg A/S Properties has been open to suggestions. Our website www.carlsbergbyen.com has been monitoring and contributing to this as well.

We knew from the very beginning, that if we were to hope for other people's involvement in the development of the new city in Copenhagen, we needed to invite them into the work. And to listen carefully to what they said. Carlsberg had been a private area for 160 years, now a whole new era was about to begin.

Room for everyone

But this project is not only about communicating a city. More than anything it is a wish to develop a city – or a society for that matter – with room for everyone. In total, 3.000 homes are built - all varying in size, shape and form of ownership - hereby ensuring homes fitting all age and income groups.

To support and ensure diversity, Carlsberg will construct 300 decentralized affordable homes for all income groups. The City of Carlsberg is going to contribute to and support a society, where people with different backgrounds will be able to live peacefully side by side and find themselves at home in a multifunctional, dense, modern city, that lends elements from the old city, that we all like so much: We want to be able to shop next to our apartment, to meet with friends on the city square and to be able to go to work within a walking distance. In our opinion, this kind of a multi-purpose city will appeal not only to our generation, but also to future generations.