



## Upper City Transformations: A New Strategy for High-density Development

### Introduction

This chapter is based on the work of Hulshof Architects.<sup>1</sup> The practice started working in the city of Rotterdam in the beginning of the 1980s when social housing improvement was highly subsidized and organized by the city. Projects were complex, involving a mixture of renovation, restoration and new building, and the process included developing scenarios and a decision-making process in which the current inhabitants played a major role. Indeed, one of the key commitments of the practice is to enable users to take part in the planning process, and to awaken them to their role in the urban environment and a sustainable society.

After a period of significant change in the Dutch housing programme, the improvement of social housing in the big cities stopped after a dramatic policy change in 1992. Today, transforming the cities, in order to increase density and improve the image and quality of poor neighbourhoods, is a major concern (VROM, 2001a). The practice concentrated on urban areas searching for improvement, with a concern for the environment through involvement in special programmes for sustainable development in the city of Rotterdam.