

CityChlor Final Conference May 16 and 17, 2013 Ghent, Belgium

Site visit: the Waalse Krook

In the middle of Ghent lies the Waalse Krook. The area has been in industrial use for centuries. In the Middle Ages, tanners settled here. In 1824, the city established a gas factory on the site. The production of gas released tar and cyanides that polluted soil and groundwater. The result is a polluted area of 3000 m³ in the heart of the city. Given its strategic location, the site is however a promising lever for redevelopment of the whole area.

That is why the city of Ghent, the Ghent University, the province of Eastern-Flanders and the Interdisciplinary Institute for Broadband Technology (IBBT) established the partnership Waalse Krook. By 2015, they want to bring the area back to life. The project includes attractive squares and quays, inspiring architecture and bridges for cyclists and pedestrians over the river Scheldt. A new building will house the city library. A former indoor circus will accommodate a center for new media, offices, shops and six houses. On top of this, there are also major works on the sewage systems necessary on the site.

But we're not there yet. A large-scale remediation will have to be executed: polluted soil will be excavated, groundwater will be pumped up and treated. Tuning the remediation to the new plans for the site, will make the redevelopment significantly more efficient. This is why the different principals agreed to appoint a single contractor for as well the remediation, the sewage works as the construction works. Nuisance will be limited, works will be faster and costs will be lower. This process of integrated remediation requires intensive consultation before the works can start, but this largely pays off.

The remediation started this winter and will be finished in the summer of 2013. The site visit gives a unique opportunity to see the works and to learn about the process of integration of different disciplines in a single project.



Photo: The site with demolished buildings before the start of the works.



Photo: The planned new layout of the Waalse Krook site.

For more information visit the website of the Waalse Krook (<http://www.dewaalsekrook.be/>)(in Dutch only).