

## Visit Report Monday October 3<sup>rd</sup>: Hudson Yards

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The second excursion of the first day of the Study Tour lead us to the Hudson Yards. This enormous area development project is located at an old shunting terrain in the Western part of Manhattan. This area is being redeveloped into real estate. The new complex will feature a total of five skyscrapers alongside numerous smaller buildings.

At the project location we got a presentation by Joseph Schwed. He is Vice President of the real estate company which is developing the entire project, called Related. His focus in the Hudson Yards project was Construction Safety which he was able to tell us a great deal about. Before I go into that however I'll provide some more information about the project.

The total area of the Hudson Yards is 28 acres, on this area a sum exceeding \$20 billion will be invested to develop the area. Half of the newly created space will be filled with office space of numerous big companies. Furthermore, about a third will be filled with residential area. All of this will mostly be catered to the millennial work force, but definitely to the richer segment of them as prices of apartment's range from \$1,2 million to \$30 million. The original destination for the area was very different to the final designs, as it was planned to be developed for New York's bid for the 2008 Olympics. However, New York did not get to host the Olympics and around 2012 construction started on the Hudson Yards project, with plans to complete construction in 2024. When completed this "city within a city" will be among the most luxurious areas in New York. Residents can manage all aspects from their daily life from their phone such as registering visitors to their complex and making an appointment at the spa.

Being focused on safety in the construction process Joseph Schwed was able to tell us about safety aspects in American construction projects, which are a lot stricter than in Europe. This is partly due to American claim culture. Even though construction is divided over multiple contractors Related manages their own safety inspections and provide separate safety managers for things such as steel and cranes. This ensures that every incident, even those as small as first-aid incidents, is being reported. If contractors do not live up to set standards, they are fined or they get a cut-back on their bonus. Also all of the workers, which typically is a number of over 3000, have to take a daily drug test and will not be allowed to work at Hudson Yards if they test positive. Safety measures go so far that a "pedestrian safety managers" is present at the construction site who redirects construction personnel and bystanders so that chances of people getting injured by the construction process are reduced to the absolute minimum.

From our Dutch perspective these safety measures might seem preposterous and excessive. However, as explained at the excursion, these safety measures might be the difference between the project being profitable or not. Because an incident could result in huge claims for Related the cost of these measures is worth it to reduce the risk of incidents.

All in all this excursion did not only teach us a lot about one of the largest construction projects in the world but also provided as with an insight in the American claim culture and the effects of this culture in construction projects.