

The New Dutch Waterline

Revitalisation of a hidden landscape



**OUR
BEST KEPT
SECRET**

DUTCH NOMINATION LANDSCAPE AWARD
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE 4TH EDITION 2014-2015

THE NEW DUTCH WATERLINE

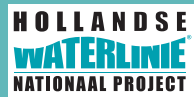
Revitalisation of a hidden landscape

This brochure highlights several examples of the transformation of the New Dutch Waterline.



COLOPHON

This brochure was commissioned by the Board of the New Dutch Waterline on the occasion of the 4th Edition of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe 2014 - 2015.



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PHOTO COVER Fort Honswijk
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INTRODUCTION

The New Dutch Waterline is a large-scale military defence system designed in 1815 by order of King Willem I, to protect the economical and financial heart of the Netherlands. The concept of enabling controlled inundation through sophisticated landscape engineering originates from the 12th century. During the Second World War the concept of a waterline as a defensive device proved to be useless and was abandoned, leaving an extensive ensemble of cultural and natural heritage behind. The consolidation, protection and revitalization of this unique cultural landscape, consisting of 60 fortresses, 5 fortified towns and over 1500 smaller waterworks, all located in the central part of the country, was announced by the government as a National Project in 1999.

The projects aims at the realisation of the following three goals:

1. Redevelop the New Dutch Waterline as one recognisable landscape enhancing visibility and accessibility.
2. Enclose the New Dutch Waterline as a national monument in the minds, hearts and hands of owners, visitors, inhabitants and experts.
3. Support a socially and economically sustainable exploitation of the New Dutch Waterline.

With a joint investment of over 200 million euro during the last ten years the New Dutch Waterline has been transformed from 'the best kept secret of the Netherlands' to a vibrant public domain: 85 kilometres of continuous accessibility. The positive effect on the local and regional economy as well as on the spatial quality is incontestable. By preservation through development, a sustainable future has been ensured for this military landscape that is now starring on the Dutch tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage.

The landscape that was once engineered to protect us, is now hosting contemporary facilities that emphasize and enhance its unique character. In close co-operation with owners and entrepreneurs a variety of new uses has been introduced in the fortresses, ranging from conference facilities, Bed & Breakfast and museums to fancy restaurants. Present-day functions as water management, agriculture and nature have been incorporated on the scale of the landscape. The legacy of the Dutch military history has become valuable public space, adding a highly appreciated identity to the region and is a truly unique landscape.

The nomination for the European Landscape Award is part of the celebration of 200 years New Dutch Waterline.

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FORT BIJ TIENHOVEN

In 1990 it was decided to hand *Fort bij Tienhoven* back to nature. The entrance bridge was removed. The buildings were sealed, except for some openings for bats. This fortress shows what happens after 25 years of neglect. Nature has beaten the military structure, it slowly but surely erases the buildings. As the adjacent fortresses of *Kijkuit* and *Spion* have a similar architecture, the loss of Fort bij Tienhoven is accepted.

Around 2008 some maintenance of the vegetation was started, mainly to improve the visibility of the ruins.



FORT BIJ TIENHOVEN

LOCATION Tienhoven

WEBSITE www.fort-tienhoven.123website.nl

PHOTO RIGHT Marlies Bouten



FORT AAN DE KLOP

LOCATION Utrecht

WEBSITE www.fortaandeklop.com

FORT AAN DE KLOP

A bomb-free shelter in the city of Utrecht has been transformed into a welcoming place. **Fort aan de Klop** is situated on an island. Crossing the bridge, one enters a completely different world. It is green and quiet, tortoises swim in the moat and if you're lucky you can see a kingfisher or owl. The fortress has been equipped for festivities and conferences. You can stay the night or have a drink while the kids play at the fortified site. Once a safe haven for soldiers, now a most comfortable place for anyone who visits.



FORT DE BILT

On the former execution grounds of **Fort de Bilt** a *Remembrance centre for the Future* is developed. Both children and adults are informed how to promote peace. An interactive exhibition is installed about prejudice, teasing, cultural diversity and resistance during the second World War. A commemoration of the victims is held annually at **Fort de Bilt**.



FORT DE BILT

LOCATION Utrecht

WEBSITE www.vredeseducatie.nl



WERK AAN DE GROENEWEG

LOCATION Tull en 't Waal

DESIGN REDscape

PHOTO LEFT Herman Kraaijkamp

PHOTO RIGHT Your Captain luchtfotografie /
Staatsbosbeheer

WERK AAN DE GROENEWEG

Werk aan de Groeneweg is a defensive trench and bunker system dating from 1918. Over 10 ha in size, the area is redesigned for nature and recreation as part of a larger military landscape belonging to the Lek access, a complex of forts, works and bunkersystems. Unique for this site is the range and variety of bunkers, 36 in total, peppered throughout the site.

At first glimpse the work appears like a deserted golf course, covered in fruit trees, nettles and salixes. Only after going around to the far side of the site it becomes clear what this place actually is: a beautifully restored military defense complex. The park with its unique military history is also well known for its superb wildlife and ecology and collection of traditional orchard trees.



WERK AAN 'T SPOEL

Fort Werk aan 't Spoel is a national monument dating from 1794. The former military earthwork integrates both new and historical elements such as the bunkers, the bomb-proof buildings, old inundation locks, the new fort house and the amphitheatre. The design takes its inspiration from the forts rich past without historicizing it. The fort forms an attractive site for a wide variety of indoor and outdoor. As such, it forms an example of a new type of public domain and has become one of the major attractions in the New Dutch Waterline.

The municipality of Culemborg and a local civil group worked closely together to transform the derelict fort.



WERK AAN 'T SPOEL

LOCATION Culemborg

WEBSITE www.werkaanhetspoel.nl

DESIGN RAAAF| Atelier de Lyon

PHOTOS Rob 't Hart



BUNKER 599

LOCATION Culemborg

DESIGN RAAAF| Atelier de Lyon

PHOTO LEFT Sander Booms

PHOTO RIGHT Allard Bovenberg

BUNKER 599

Bunker 599 near Culemborg, a reinforced-concrete bunker from 1940, has been split in two. It acts as a framed viewpoint for passers-by: pedestrians, cyclists and from the Amsterdam – Maastricht highway. There is no meaning here other than stopping to stare, opening a way through the sometimes impenetrable memories of war to a future of broader horizons. A seemingly indestructible bunker with monumental status is sliced open. The design thereby opens up the minuscule interior of one of 700 New Dutch Waterline bunkers. The insides of which are normally cut off from view completely. In addition, a long wooden boardwalk cuts through the extremely heavy construction. It leads visitors to a flooded area and to the footpaths of the adjacent natural reserve. The pier and the piles supporting it remind them that the water surrounding them is not caused by the removal of sand but rather is a shallow water plain characteristic of the inundations in times of war.



FORT VUREN

Hardly visible from the outside, but on the inside **Fort Vuren** has been turned into a surprisingly comfortable place to stay. The once cold and damp buildings have been equipped with floor heating (based on renewable geothermal energy) and high quality facilities in the guestrooms. Modern design and heritage have been merged.

Visitors can order lovely food in the restaurant while enjoying the overwhelming peace and quiet. Meanwhile the conditions for bats are optimised, a new *bat-hotel* is created.



FORT VUREN

LOCATION Vuren

WEBSITE www.fortvuren.nl

PHOTOS Ben Spee



LINIEWACHT

LOCATION Province of Gelderland

WEBSITE www.liniewacht.nl

PHOTO LEFT Annie Welbie

PHOTO RIGHT Wiegert Steen

LINIEWACHT

For the daily activities on the fortresses and the maintenance of both built heritage and the surrounding landscape, the New Dutch Waterline strongly relies on the input of volunteers. The ***Liniewacht*** (Defence Line Guards) is one of the volunteer groups. They are responsible for maintenance of several bunkers and the vegetation along the *Diefdijk*. At the same time they improve the conditions for bats and perform annual bat surveys. Bunkers once built as protection for people, are now of great importance to bats.

The Liniewacht is a joint initiative of *Stichting Landschapsbeheer Gelderland* and the *Zoogdiervereniging*.



