

Fort Uitermeer

Integrated landscape and urban development plan for Fort Uitermeer



Client: PFC2 Envelopment in collaboration with Bridges 2000
 Project: 2006 in collaboration with Jaco Woltje (architect).
 Budget: undisclosed.
 Status: closed competition for the Province of North Holland, 2e prize, NL

Fort Uitermeer forms part of the New Dutch Water Line (a defence line built in 1840) and is unique due to its strategic and picturesque location on the river Vecht. The grounds of the fort have been discarded and partially destroyed and a new impulse is urgently required to give it a new lease of life. The fort is to receive this impulse in the form of a hotel with apartments and a restaurant and health centre which are to be integrated in the landscape of the fort. The historical context of the New Dutch Water Line forms the guiding design principles for the landscape of the fort. These principles include emphasising the inaccessibility of the fort, the connection of the fort to landscape apparatus of the defence Line (access corridors and weaponry sight lines), and recreating the vistas to the surrounding lands from the fort. Finally the rich and layered histories of the fort, which includes traces of several other forts will be integrated into the new design.

All of these ideas will be used to rediscover the potential of the fort rather than literally restoring it to create an interesting and varied new landscape. The New Dutch Water line will re live for the user as they pass through the terrain of the fort and continue to walk along the dikes that marked the old defence routes. The design emphasises the restructuring of certain landscape elements (mostly erased) such as the moat, the access corridors, the bastions and the forest. The moat around the fort is to be re-excavated, to create an imposing entrance. The access corridors will be accentuated and continued in the form of an allee that will link the fort to its surroundings. New bastions are to be created (along the historic contours) to make the island recognisable as a fort and reinstate the experience of commanding views to the surroundings. New walkways are to trace the contours of the older forts and traverse the bastions to create varied and interesting walkways with spectacular vistas to the surroundings. The design of the entrance route to the hotel and visitor centre will gradually open up to provide an unfolding spatial experience giving glimpses of different facets of the fort's history and composition. Finally the forest is to be carefully restructured to create more variation in composition and provide a stable ecological system. Visitors of all sorts whether from the hotel, health centre, walkers or just passers-by can enjoy the new experience of the fort. Our ambition is that Fort Uitermeer will once again become a green oasis where the visitor can wander through its grounds and enjoy the spectacular vistas to the surroundings.



1. oude schans met omzwaaiplein (1625)
2. nieuwe schans (1673)
3. ronde fort (1850)
4. fort na 1950 met plofhuizen

