

# Making of the Beemster

## Development vision for Beemster (UNESCO), NL



Client: Municipality Beemster, Provincie Noord Holland, Environmental Federation.  
 Project: 2005 in collaboration with Bureau Venhuizen (main contractor), Marinke Steenhuis (cultural historian)  
 Budget: unknown  
 Status: completed and approved 2006

A first impression of the Beemster would lead one to assume that it is a quiet, relatively static landscape in a rural setting. This impression is deceptive. The Beemster polder has reached an important moment in its history. Economic changes in the agricultural sector, the necessity for new housing and the requirement to create more water storage is forcing spatial transformations which will have a direct impact on its landscape. These processes have social as well as spatial consequences for life in the Beemster.

The types of changes are diverse ranging from large scale sudden changes to small scale slower changes. The nature of the task which lies ahead is not so much what changes will happen but how these changes are to occur and the qualitative solutions that are required to service them. Central to these dynamics is the role of cultural history in the Beemster and how it can be used to protect its landscape inheritance and UNESCO status, while at the same time enabling it to develop and respond to the current needs of its inhabitants.



### Conclusions and recommendations

Although we never spoke to anyone who thought the Beemster polder was ugly ( everyone extolled the virtues of its landscape) , the unanimity was less perceptible during the discussion about conservation and development. The Beemster building-kit offers the people of the Beemster a set of guidelines that permit development but protect the intrinsic quality of the Beemster polder. The building-kit is an instrument for future spatial development. It contains guidelines about the specific building blocks of the Beemster, such as farm allotments, allotment organization, buildings, waterways, and plot structures. The Beemster 'building kit' delivers a framework that ensures development as well as protecting those elements of the Beemster that make it what it is!

