

Masterplan White House

Urban design for housing in an existing villa and garden in Hilversum



Client: Developer
Project: 1996 – 1998 (in dienst van Bureau Alle Hoesper)
Realisation Budget: 5 million Euro
Status: completed 2002

Reusing the past

The White House and its gardens are a protected monument in the district of Hilversum, an area famous for its collection of beautiful villas and gardens. The villa was formally used as an army training camp and sold to a developer in the 1990's. As the villa (White House) was in disrepair, a source of investment was required which could rehabilitate the building to its former condition as well as maintain the qualities of the villa and its scenic surroundings. To achieve this, a design proposal was conceived to insert a number of houses into the site without damaging its essential qualities.

A shared space

After carrying out an analysis of the villa and its gardens, a spatial framework was developed to identify the essential characteristics and areas which were not to be disturbed or encroached upon by the new housing, thus respecting the historical value of the site. A concept was developed in which the houses could be built in the remaining areas of the site which had already been disturbed, such as where the barrack buildings had formally stood. The houses were then designed in a very compact format with views to the villa gardens, but with a limited amount of private outdoor space for the new dwellers. To compensate the small private outdoor space, the existing villa gardens were opened up for general use as a shared garden for the new house owners.

Living in a villa garden

The plan was completed after construction of the houses by Bart Duvekot architects in 2001. The houses remain within a stringently allocated area to protect trees and their root systems. A floating deck system was applied as a stipulation of the municipality of Hilversum to protect the existing trees and their roots. The concept of reusing the past to incorporate new uses has proved a success and brought the White House from a dilapidated state into a well used contemporary living area.

