

# OPENING NATIONAL WATERLINE MUSEUM FORT BIJ VECHTEN

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On Thursday the 8th of October, the [National Waterline Museum](#) opened its doors to the public. Mariëtte Pennarts, the cultural ambassador for the province of Utrecht said that the new museum and landscape design at the Fort bij Vechten "is an important, cultural highlight for 2015."

The two hundred year old fortress is part of the New Dutch Waterline, an 85km long military defense line that was nominated for UNESCO World Heritage listing in 1995. Following the master plan designed by West 8 together with Rapp+Rapp (Christian Rapp) in collaboration with Jonathan Penne Architecten (Penne Hangelbroek), the fortress was reinstated as National Waterline Museum. Architect, [Anne Hotrop](#) designed the new pavilion, a replica of the original bunkers located underneath the grassed structure of the fortress.

The Fort is an ingenious system of inundation zones, bastions and walled cities that was built in the nineteenth century. In wartime a 3,5km long strip of land could be flooded as a defense mechanism. After many years of neglect, the overgrown fortress became home to numerous rare and endangered plant and animal species. Today, various Dutch government bodies are in charge of carefully conserving, restoring and rejuvenating this magnificent part of the Dutch landscape. In 2006 the province of Utrecht commissioned West 8 and [Rapp+Rapp Architects](#) to help guide the rehabilitation process at Fort bij Vechten.

The design restores an 80m wide and 450m long band to its original barren state circa 1880. This design intervention, which stretches across the site, is clearly visible, not only from the sky, but also from the roof of the fortress.

The sheer size of the fortress has been brought to the fore by an 'at grade', 1.5m wide entrance pathway which dissects the 6m high defense mounds. To reach the entrance of the new outdoor museum visitors are led across an elegant canal bridge and through a narrow cross section of the defense mound. It is an exciting route that eventually leads to a patio and the centerpiece of the museum's collection: a 50m long model of the Waterline, that visitors can flood themselves.

On October 10th-11th, the fortress celebrated its opening with a series of festive activities and extended opening hours. Children were able to take a flying fox over the 75 meter long and a local ecologist explained to visitors the wildlife that lives on the roof of the fortress.

more information: [Fort bij Vechten - National Waterline Museum](#)