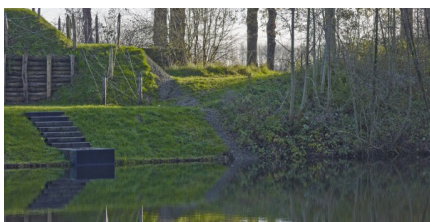


# FORT BIJ VECHTEN - NATIONAL WATERLINE MUSEUM

2006-2015, Houten, The Netherlands





Fort bij Vechten constructed between 1867 and 1870, is one of the 46 fortresses that make up the Nieuwe Hollandse Waterlinie, a 85km long and 3-5km wide, military defense line which was made up of an ingenious system of inundation zones, bastions and walled cities.

Since 1995, the entire 42,000ha area has been nominated for UNESCO World Heritage listing, and since 2005, the Linie is declared Dutch National Monument. Fort Vechten, owned by the Forestry Department, is included in this refurbishment program and since 2006 the fortress, consisting of military barracks and ammunition storage buildings, was slowly being restored and a new National Waterlinie Museum was constructed.

After many years of neglect, the grassed structure – all the buildings taking up 10% of the site are buried - was completely overgrown. West 8 and Rapp+Rapp Architects won the competition commissioned by Utrecht Province in 2006. Since then, together with Rapp+Rapp (Christian Rapp) in collaboration with Jonathan Penne Architecten (Penne Hangelbroek), West 8 has helped guiding the process of rehabilitation and construction.

The site is surrounded by a wide moat and as a result of its isolation, the site now hosts numerous rare and endangered plant and animal species. Besides the restoration of buildings and museum construction works, part of the 17ha earthen bastion has also been brought back into its original state.

To help with the interpretive storytelling, West 8 has proposed to introduce an 80m wide band across the site in which the fort would be brought back into its original barren state. Also, 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. One of the highlights inside the museum is the 50 metre long open air replica of the entire New Dutch Waterline, which can be inundated by visitors.

For more information on the project visit: [The Making of Fort bij Vechten](#), [Fort Vechten | Waterline Museum](#) and [Hollandse Waterlinie](#) or the latest article by The Atlantic City Lab: [How a Defensive Moat Became a Top Tourist Attraction](#).

client

Province of Utrecht

partners

Rapp + Rapp (Christian Rapp) in collaboration with Jonathan Penne Architecten (Penne Hangelbroek), Bunker Q, K2, Parklaan and Anne Holtrop

awards

NRP Gulden Feniks Award 2016 in category Area Transformation for Fort Bij Vechten, the Netherlands (2016);

team

Christian Dobrick, Adriaan Geuze, Freek Boerwinkel, Maarten Buijs, Perry Maas, Katharina Posselt, Kees Schoot