

Jury's Report

on the Dutch sites in

Almere, Amsterdam, Groningen and Nijmegen

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Part 1: Sites + awarded entries

THE JURY:

Alex van de Beld
Jaap van den Bout
Ilse Castermans
Yttje Feddes
Maarten Hajer
André Kempe (D)
Herman Meijer
Cora Nauta
Christine de Ruijter (B)
Maarten Schmitt
Pieter Uyttenhove (B)
Peter Wilson (AU)

Onix, architect
Palmboom & van den Bout, urban designer
CIMKA, architect (winner European 6 and 7 Rotterdam)
Feddes/Olthof, landscape architect
University of Amsterdam, professor of Management & Policy at the department of political science
Atelier Kempe Thill, architect (winner European 5 Rotterdam)
GroenLinks politician, former alderman in Rotterdam (social services and inner city regeneration)
Kristal, client
awg, architect
municipality of The Hague, urban designer
University of Gent, professor of Architecture and Urban Design
BOLLES+WILSON, architect

ADJUDICATION DATES:

13 September 2007
14 and 15 September 2007
30 November + 1 December 2007
2 December 2007

site visits Amsterdam, Almere and Groningen
site visit Nijmegen + 1st stage adjudication > selection 20%
international Towns and Juries Forum in Catania
definitive selection of winning entries

This report was written by Olof Koekebakker, the most important parts are translated by Sarah-Jane Jaeggi-Woodhouse

City: Groningen
Site: Woonschepenhaven
Population: 200,000
Study area: approx. 15 ha
Intervention area: approx. 3 ha (+ 2 ha harbour water)



The city of Groningen, capital of the province of Groningen, situated in the north-east of the Netherlands, is the urban centre for a European region, one that also comprises parts of Germany and for some aspects it extends to the Randstad conurbation, the metropolitan western area of the Netherlands. The city of Groningen – together with the neighbouring (smaller) provincial capital, Assen – has been designated a national urban hub. This is a task that Groningen, despite its own relatively modest size, is keen to assume within the context of more than nine centuries of urbanisation, densification and concentration.

The study area lies in a development zone on both sides of the Eemskanaal, a canal that links the city with Delfzijl seaport. The European site is centrally-situated in the study area. The industrial zone between the city and the countryside is currently undergoing a transformation from mono-functional activities to urban multi-functionality. This transformation is determined by the demand for urban environments and opportunities for attractive urban housing. In addition there is a need to create a street-safe and attractive recreation route to the largest suburban expansion of the city under construction: Meerstad. Both living on the water and living on land number among the attractive modes of living along the route from the town centre to the Meerstad urban extension. Small-scale business locations are possible and desirable, coupled to the urban route and the nautical atmosphere of the harbour.

In this zone a new relationship between the city centre and the development area must be reflected in the design. The connection route will be situated south of the Eemskanaal. The study area lies between the Eemskanaal and this route and between the water hub of Eemskanaal, Van Starckenborchkanaal and Winschoterdiep, and the ring road round the city. Both housing and (large scale) urban, regional and even peripheral functions can be accommodated in the development zone that is more than two kilometres in length. In the study area approximately 500 housing units will be built in various atmospheres, densities and typologies.

The intervention area is practically in the centre of the development zone amidst the other strongly-contrasting intervention areas. In the north-easterly quadrant of the water hub, a twenty-floor-high landmark-like building is envisaged and to the west of the canal junction, urban medium-rise complexes are planned. Around the houseboat harbour, however, a more densely-developed harbour district is preferred, but one where the height is restricted to 3 or 4 layers, with occasional exceptions.

With the restructuring of the existing houseboat harbour the number of houseboats should be reduced and 150 to 200 housing units added. These units are partly for the benefit of the houseboat occupants who wish to live on land and partly as a financial basis for the restructuring of the harbour. Public routes are planned along both the intervention and/or study areas as part of the communal public quality of the city as



its building density increases: collective space should be created in addition to the private programme.

THE JURY ON THE SITE

During the visit to the site the jury became aware of the need to consider the future of the houseboats and their occupants as an important key condition in the redevelopment of the area. This was therefore a guiding theme when adjudicating the entries. The prize-winner demonstrates that it is possible to focus on the extraordinary character of the houseboat harbour to create an area that will attract people seeking an alternative to average, new-build housing. Of the remaining plans, only one has sufficient qualities to merit a runner-up prize. However, a majority of the jury is of the opinion that this proposal would prove so detrimental to the houseboat occupants that this entry can only be awarded a special mention.

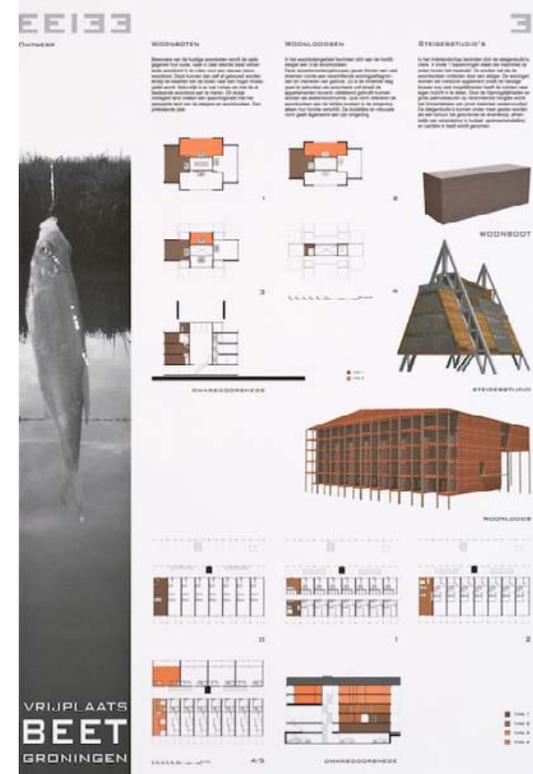
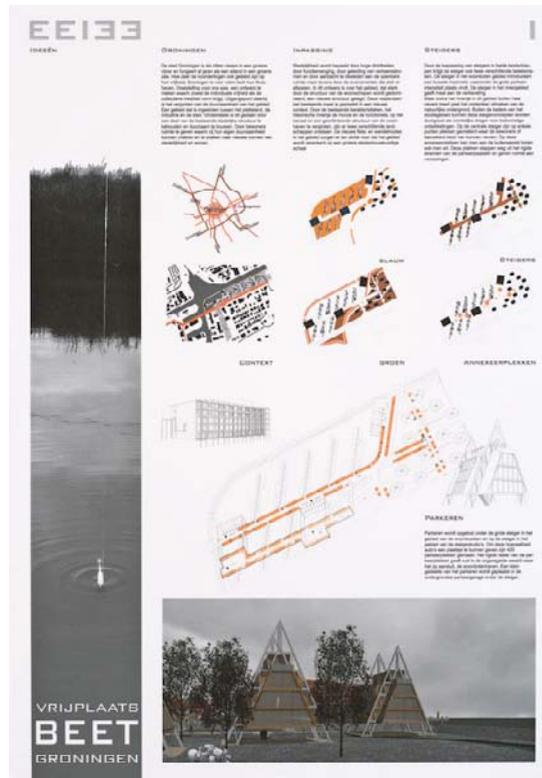


Prize-winner
EE 133
Vrijplaats Beet (Refuge I've got a bite)

The plan distinguishes two “landscapes”: the houseboat area and the area of the river Hunze. A scaffolding system is introduced in both areas. This creates a second ground level in the houseboat area. In the Hunze area it forms the basis for the parcelisation. The proposal embraces the free culture that has developed here over the years. There are three housing types: houseboats (the existing houseboats could be replaced by new shells), apartment buildings - “housing sheds”, and raised wharf studios.

JURY ASSESSMENT

Better than the other entrants, the designers have succeeded in creating an unforced relationship between the houseboats and the new-build housing. The architecture – in particular that of the “housing sheds” – is not only well conceived, thanks to its striking appearance it will also appeal to a public that is attracted to the atmosphere of the houseboats. Moreover, the concept is sufficiently flexible to be adapted to the requirements of the client (such as a higher density, or leaving the nuisance zone undeveloped). Also the way in which the grid of the parking spaces is deployed to give the area structure deserves appreciation. The only aspect that the jury as a whole is not enthusiastic about is the design of the “wharf studios”.



Nynke Rixt Jukema (NL 1979)
Jasper van Zellingen (NL 1977)