

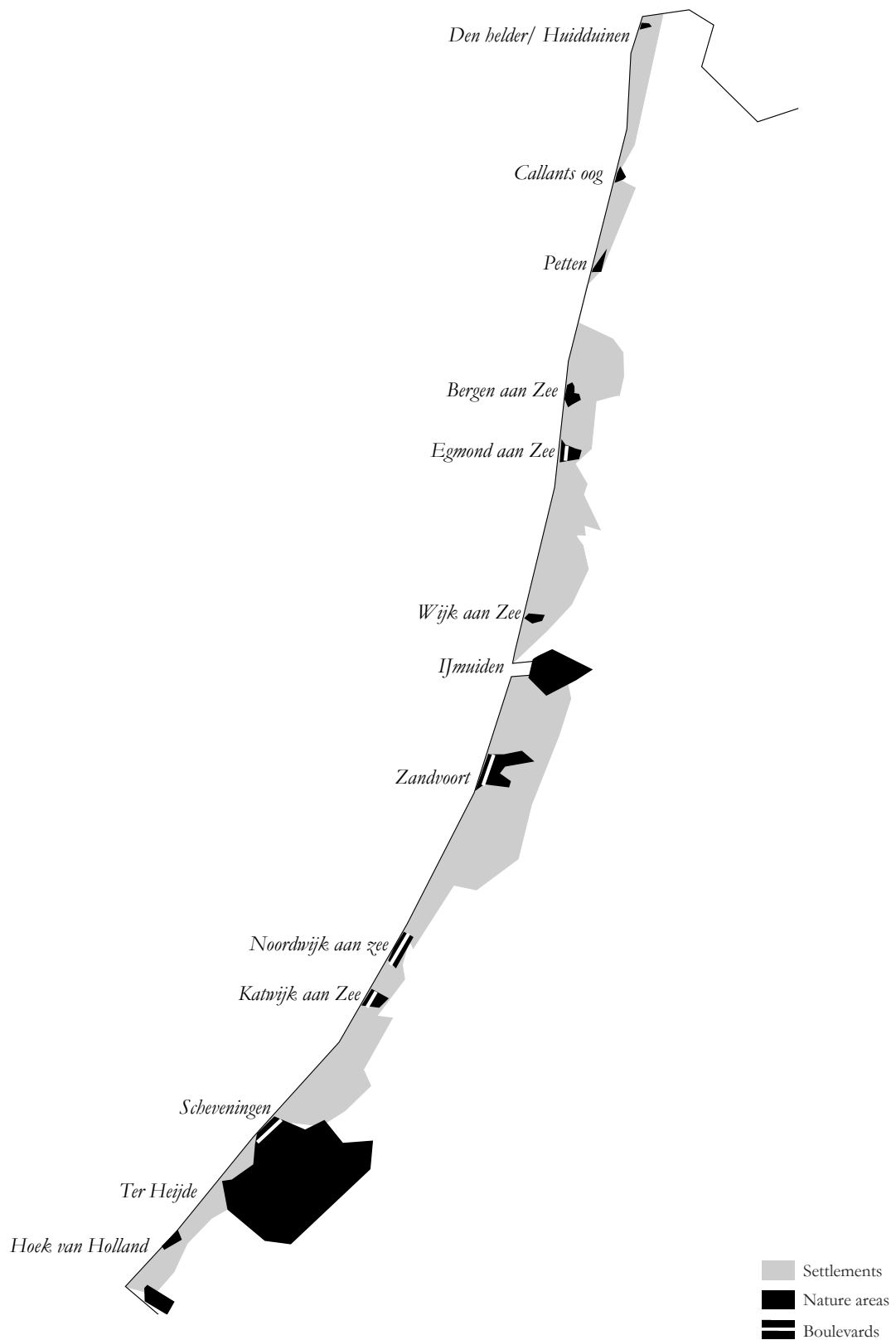
Place-identity of the Holland Coast

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Abstract:

The Dutch coast is facing many changes shortly to keep up with the increase in tourism, wind farms, housing, and sea-level rise. To preserve the coastal place-identity under these changes, it is important to research what elements constitute the place-identity of the Holland Coast. Place-Identity, in this paper, is defined as a combination of landscape features, build features and the space these feature result in. The history of the landscape is described. The history of coastal settlements is explored along defining moments that impact how these places look today and the type of buildings that came to be. Through analysis of historic and present-day photos, the architectural identity is formulated, based on three themes. Firstly, the positioning in the landscape, secondly an elaboration on the transition between inside and outside, and thirdly a focus on materials that come from nature, like wood and brick, materials that show natural forces, like textiles, and bright colours and reflect the abundance of sunlight associated with the coast. This theory is validated by seeing these elements protected by the aesthetics regulations (Welstands normen) of several municipalities.

Keywords: Place-identity, Holland Coast, History, Seaside,



The face of the coast; coastal settlements, nature areas and boulevard

1. *Introduction*

My fascination is the Dutch coastal landscape. I grew up in the small village of Wijk aan Zee which whole existence throughout history has been defined by its position on the coast. Initially, it started out as a small fishing village, first mentioned around 1200 CE. At the end of the 19th century, it got in fashion as a seaside resort. Many middle-class families spend a week on the coast as a yearly holiday. During the second world war, the village became part of the Atlantic Wall and was evacuated. After the war tourism did not return in the same numbers. On top of that tourism changed from long stay to day recreation. Longer holidays were spent in warmer countries as travelling got cheaper. Local guest houses and hotels were replaced by restaurants and cafés. The steel factory of Velsen Noord did well and expanded, surrounding the village on the south and east side. At the end of the last century, the village got more and more popular as part of the Randstad. It started housing those who worked in the bigger cities but loved the sea in their spare time, opening up the community. All eras of this rich history left their traces still visible in the present. When entering the village there is no doubt of it being a seaside village.

As climate change progresses the coastline is transformed in a fortress to defend us from the sea-level rise. But as local tourism gains popularity again so does the seaside. What characteristics distinguish seaside architecture from architecture at other places? How is this related to the distinct landscape features of the Holland Coast? What experiences and spaces are created by the combination of these landscape elements and building features? Glimpsing forward to the design project ahead; how could these experiences be enhanced? With these questions, I started out my research.

The Dutch coast is a prime holiday destination for both domestic as well as international tourism. One-fifth of touristic overnight stays in the Netherlands are at the Dutch coast (de Pater, 2013) With hospitality industry as a main source of revenue it is important to protect the elements that travellers find appealing while respecting the wishes and customs on the locals living here. Architecture is seen as a means to make the landscape experience-able and is therefore essential. Furthermore, if the landscape is the reason people visit the coast, how can, taking a bit of the landscape away to build a building enhance the experience of the landscape?

The coast is doubtlessly going to change a lot in the coming decades. As an architect, our field of influence is limited to shaping physical interventions. What spatial elements and configurations provide this sense of place in seaside towns? With the number of changes that the coast is awaiting in the coming decades, it is important to know what elements need to be preserved or recreated to prevent loss of place-identity. Thus, this research concerns itself with the genius loci of the coastal towns, the spirit of the place, that what remains the same through decades and even centuries of change.

Research questions

People feel a need to belong and our build environment is essential herein. (Allen, 2020) Communities identify with their means of survival. (Peng et al, 2020) Therefore, for seaside places aside from the residents, it is also important to look at what tourists want, since they are economically essential for many seaside towns to sustain themselves. Travellers want to experience authentic places (Hosper, 2011) and at the current pace, our coast risks losing authenticity on one hand by large scale interventions that do not respect the scale but on the other hand preserving and rebuilding as we used to build in the heyday of these places would be inauthentic to our current society.

In the future, as climate consciousness grows, a rise in domestic tourism is expected. The Holland Coast has historically always been a key holiday destination. How could the coast deal with higher numbers of tourists while preserving local identity? To find out, it is essential to define elements that create a sense of place-identity at the Holland Coast to understand what limits there are to future developments as well as what possibilities there are for growth that does not compromise the place-identity. What elements enhance the identity of contemporary and maybe more importantly possible future seaside places. This is translated into the following research question:

What are the natural, built, and spatial elements that form the core of the identity of the Holland Coast?

Relevance

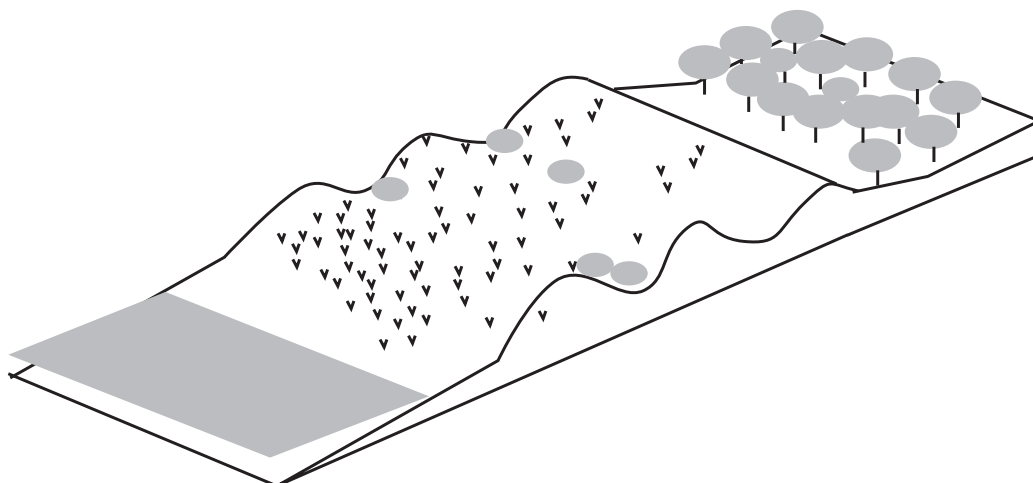
The question of the identity of the places we design has always been prominent in the field of architecture. Since the modernists disregard for place-specific architecture backfired by creating undesired buildings rather than timeless ones we have gotten more and more aware of the importance of this issue. There has a lot of theory been written about the application of the genius loci in architecture. From a professional viewpoint, the research presented can be seen as an application of these theories. From a social viewpoint this research aids in protecting the valuable aspects of the coast and its community, while exploring what developments could be permitted within the formulated identity.

Relation to design

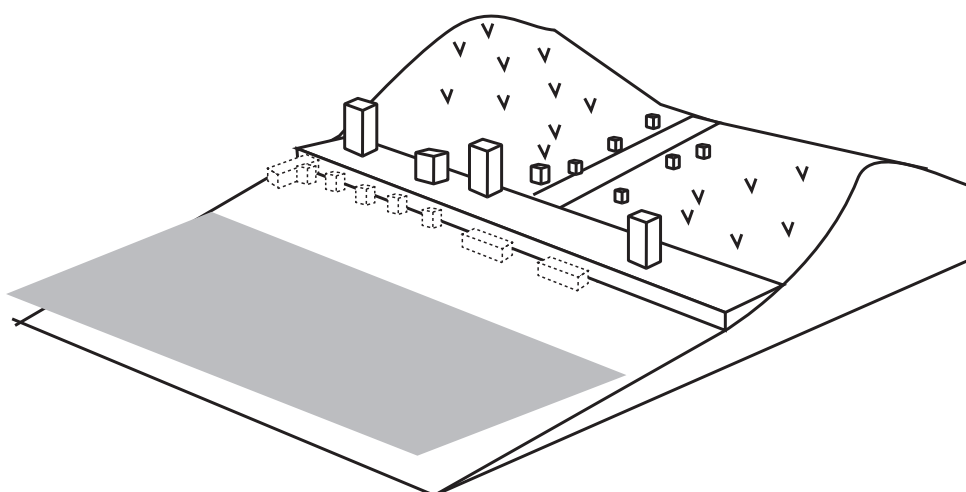
In my design, I would like to experiment with the boundaries of the coastal identity as defined in this paper and to test the results in an application. The buildings I design should represent the coastal identity through and through. From the rich history of the area to the landscape features that shape it to the type of spaces atmospheres and emotions, typically encountered here. ‘Architecture means to visualize the genius loci, and the task of the architect is to create meaningful places, hereby he helps man to dwell.’ (Norberg-Schulz, 1980)

2. *Contents*

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Landscape



Buildings



Spatial outcome

2. Method

This research is executed as a combination of literature research, case study research and map analysis. The theoretical framework in which this research is placed is that of place-identity, authenticity, and the genius loci. To research a coastal place-identity, it is essential to explore what identity means. Identity had been tied to many different concepts. It is in the dictionary defined as a distinguishing character or a sameness of essential or generic character in different instances. (Merriam-Webster.com, 2020)

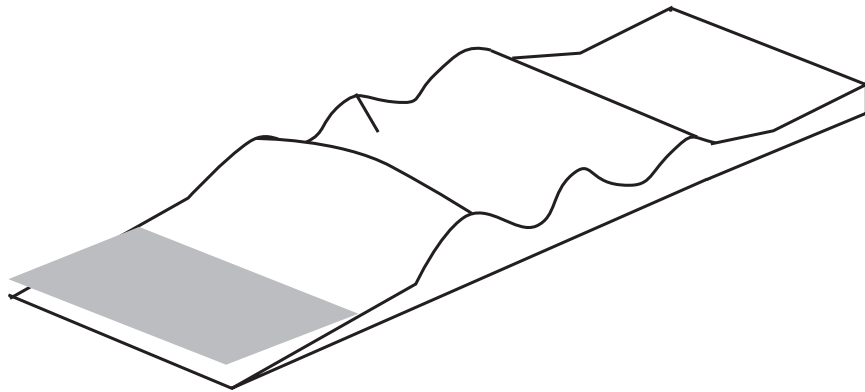
In the contemporary context of place-identity, the genius loci often refers to a location's distinctive atmosphere. These atmospheres are enticing and have developed over time and therefore can convey a rightness and unity. They are the result of a process of centuries and therefore cannot easily be reproduced. (Vogler & Vittori, 2006) According to this, place-identity is the result of the narrative of change of a certain place over time. Within this narrative, place-identity is the sameness over time and space. (Gilles, 1994) While society as a whole has changed immensely over the past centuries, some elements in buildings remain prevalent. The resulting atmosphere is expressed in the phenomenology of the place; the experiences, and all that can be sensed, heard, touched, tasted, felt, as well as all that can be perceived, known, understood and so on from the site.

This research is split up in three categories: the landscape, the buildings, and the space. First, we look at the history of the landscape to see how it came to be. The landscape is the foundation of the built. The history of the landscape is thus divided into the natural landscape, shaped by forces of nature and the cultural landscape, shaped by human interventions.

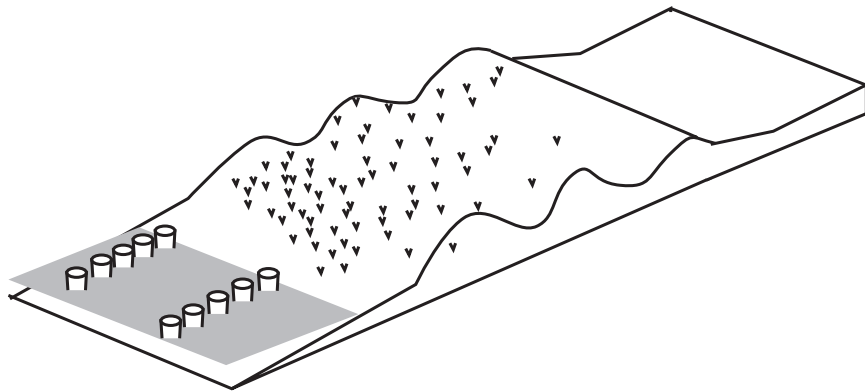
Then we continue the historical exploration into the domain of the built. Within distinguishing periods in the development of the seaside, iconic buildings are studied to discover area-specific design elements. For this research, buildings that are assigned cultural property, well-pictured, put on postcards, or often mentioned are presumed iconic. Photos from these buildings are collected and repeatedly found elements are presumed area specific. A few examples are shown wherein these elements are highlighted. In the end, overarching themes are distilled from these elements. A Subcategory from the built is the temporary buildings usually built on the beach. These are also discussed, as they are very endemic to the Dutch coast.

Finally, the spatial characteristics that follow from the previous two themes are looked at in a different light. In this section atmospheric associations with the coast will be shortly presented. They assist in creating the perceived coastal atmosphere.

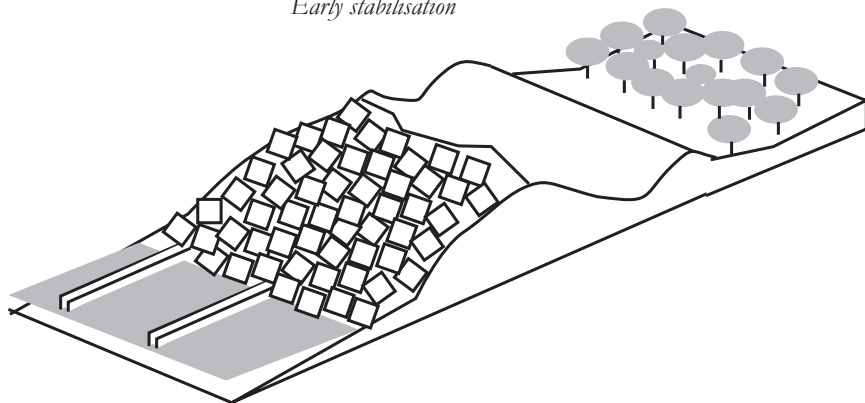
In the conclusion, these findings will be summarized in a theory to answer the main question of this research. This will also be the place for reflection on the limitations of this research as well as suggestions for further research.



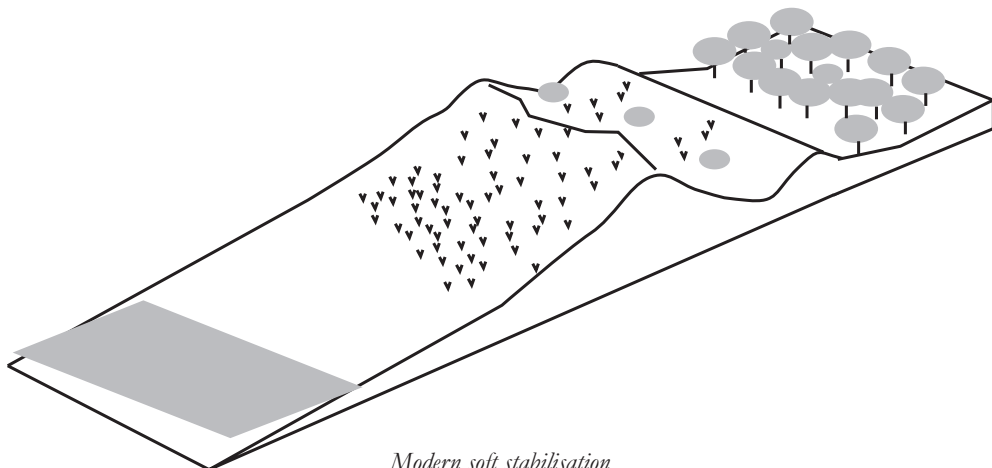
Young dunes



Early stabilisation



Later stabilisation



Modern soft stabilisation

3. History of the landscape

This chapter will provide a short history of the establishment of the landscape features that enabled early settlers. The base of the dunes as we know them have been shaped by natural processes over the last millennia. The shapes have been stabilised and fine-tuned by human interventions over the last centuries. Thus, this story is divided into three periods. In the first period, water was the main carrier of sediments. The second period builds upon the remains of the first period with deposits carried by the wind. The last period described the human interventions as well as uses of the area that guided these interventions.

1. Water

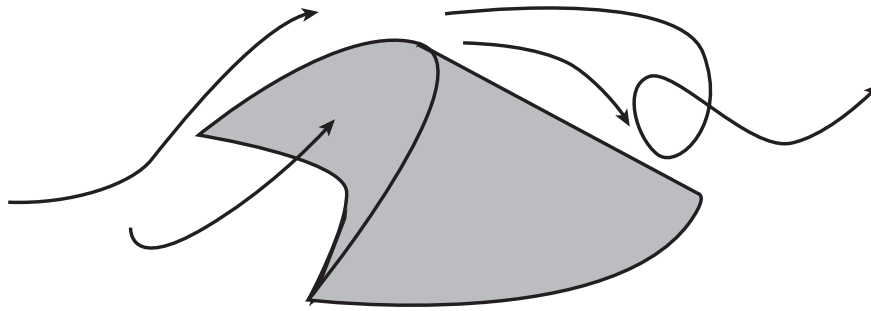
It all started around 11.000 years ago when the Last Glacial Period ended, and the Holocene began. The start of this period is characterised by an increase in the temperatures causing the icecaps to melt. The sea levels rose rapidly, and large quantities of sand were moved around by the strong currents thus caused. Beach ridges were shaped and reshaped as the coastline slowly moved land inwards. Between the beach ridges, sea inlets regularly allowed the salty water to flush over the hinterland. (Roep et al, 1991)

The situation got more stable when the sea level rise slowed down from 6000 BCE on. Many of the sea inlets silted up. Up until then, the coast was eroding and the coastline moved landwards. The closure of the inlets caused the sedimentation deposits that were previously spread out over the hinterland to move the coastline out seaward. These ridges are the old dunes. The previously salty marshes behind the sand ridges slowly turned fresh and slowly the main vegetation became peat. (Roep et al, 1991)

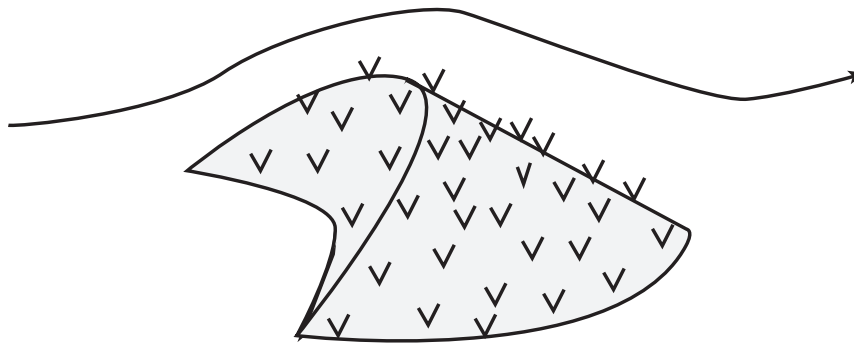
2. Wind

Around 1000 CE the next period starts. The sea deposits created beaches in front of the ridges. The wind took charge and blew the sand around allowing it to settle at the more stable old dunes evening out the hills and hollows. Human deforestation may have aided in the destabilisation. During the 12th century, the area was flattened out. During the 13th century, small dunes were formed. These were called loopduinen (walking dunes) as they moved land inward during the centuries following. These dunes were characteristic for nutrient-poor soils where plants could not grow to stabilise the areas.

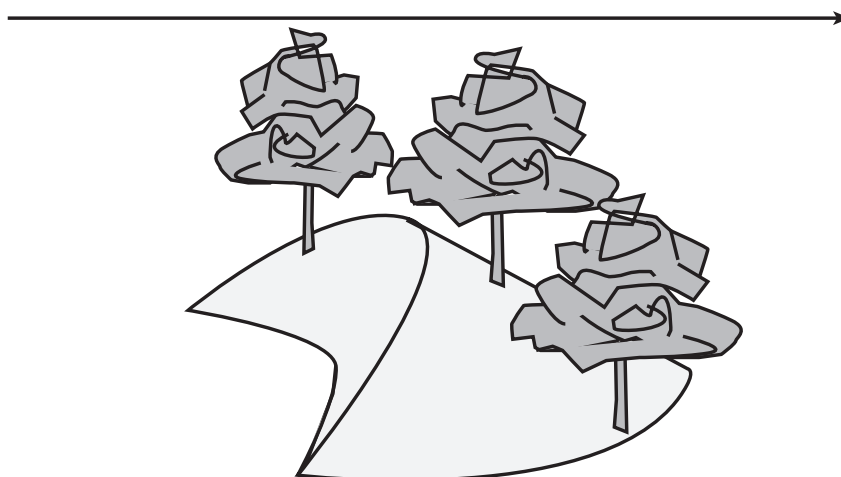
From 1400 CE until 1600 CE large scale sand drifts produced a rapid increase in height of the dune area. The new dunes were half-moon shapes. At the windward side, sand was blown away and settled again at the leeward side. In slightly more nutrient areas natural plant growth of pioneering species helped tremendously in stabilising the new dunes. (Bakker et al, 1981)



Half-moon dunes



Stabilisation by Helm grass



Stabilisation with Scots pines

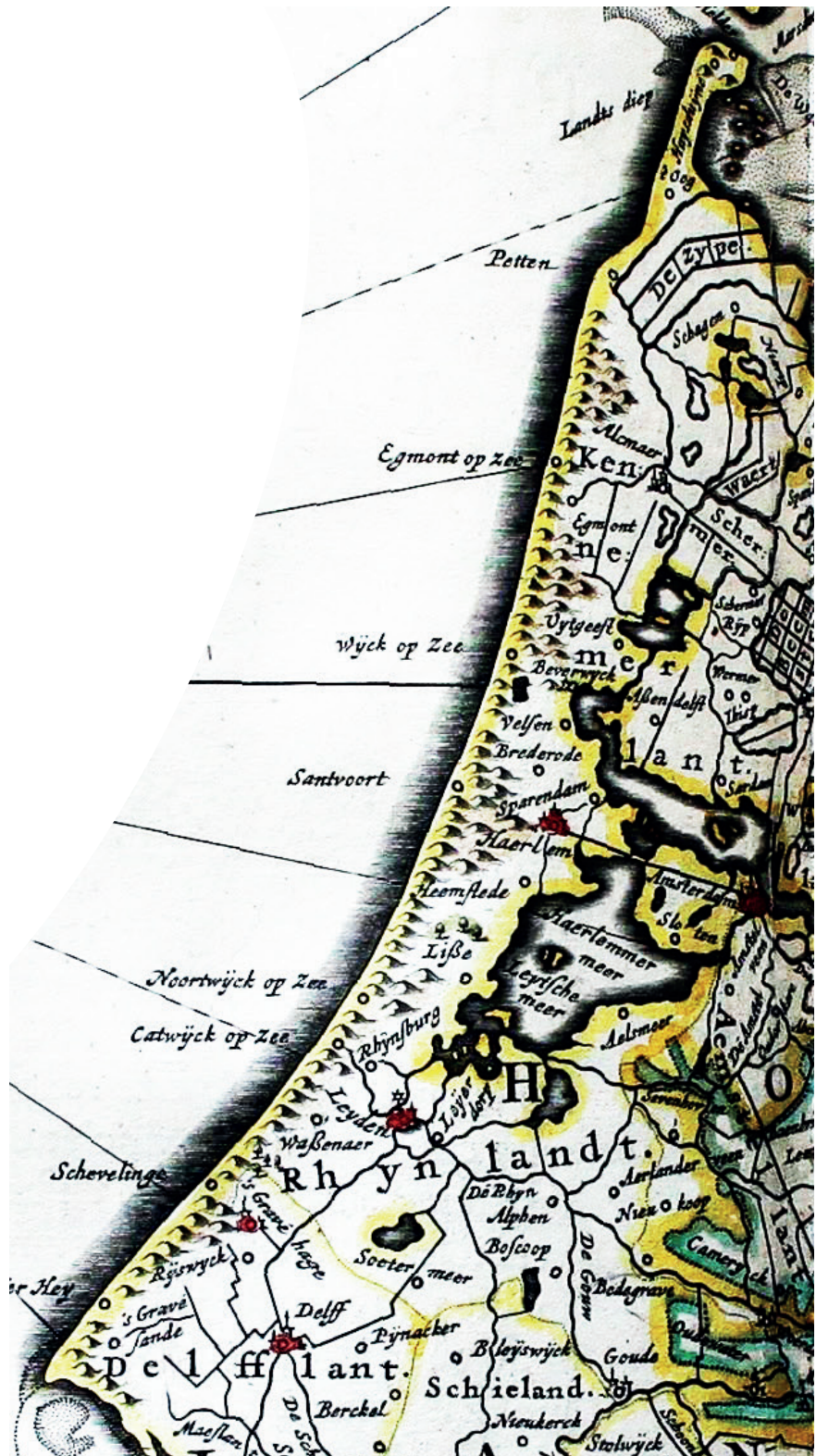
3. Man

During the 16th century, the Dutch coastal villagers started actively intervening in the dune landscape to take control of their surrounding. Villagers were encouraged to plant helm grass to stabilise the dunes. This was initially done to prevent houses from literally being lost to the sand. As intense sandstorms were prevalent in the 16th century. During the begin of the 20th century, the face of the coastal region changed immensely due to mass afforestation aimed at stabilising the sandy areas. Initially, oaks and birch trees proved to do quite well in this new habitat. In the 19th century, coniferous trees were planted in large scale to further stabilise the dunes (van Steijn, 1933). Although these species were not native to the area, they have grown into our image of the seaside landscape. When looking at the place identity of the seaside landscape these non-native species are now inherently part of it.

Dunes in the north presented other problems. Natural sand erosion repeatedly caused flooding in the villages of Petten and Callantsoog. This part of the coast has been stabilised with rows of stakes perpendicular to the coastline around 1500. Despite these interventions in 1625 about 100 houses were washed away again. During the 18th century, the Hondsbossche seawall was constructed to prevent more disasters. Since then the hinterland has been safe. (Jelles, 1968)

In recent years, this part of the water defences was once again the weakest link in the coastline. Unlike earlier dike enforcements that focussed on hard measures, a soft approach was taken and a new dune landscape was built in front of the old sea dike. This intervention uses once again natural materials and plants to provide safety against flooding while creating an attractive landscape designed by ARCADIS landscape architects.

The coastline was not only trouble there were also benefits for this area. Already since 1500, cattle have been grazing here. For the well to do, the nature on the coastline was used as a hunting ground. The water in the dunes has also been long known for its quality. Initially, this was used locally for the production of beer, paper and bleaching. In the 19th century, this water extraction grew to provide for the city of Amsterdam and more inland locations. During the 1930s the quantity of natural potable water in the dunes decreased deterioratingly, and shortly after river water started to be brought to the dunes for infiltration. These practices have long been protecting these areas from buildings.



4. History of seaside

Archaeological finds have shown that the Dutch coastline has been inhabited since the early bronze age. The earliest settlers were concentrated near river mouths. Traces of Roman settlements have been found along the coast over the years. The first settlements build their houses on the stable sand ridges along the shore. The soil between the ridges where sand, peat and clay mixed proved highly fertile and allowed for agriculture. Furthermore, the villages' location near the sea allowed for a fishing industry giving the early villagers plenty of methods to sustain themselves.

Many of the coastal communities thus started as fishers' villages. These villages would trade with the hinterland. They were often directly linked to places in the hinterland with roads perpendicular to the shoreline. These villages often had the appendix "aan zee" in the name translating to at the sea. Up until today, the infrastructure network is still characterised by these main east-west connections. Although there are many bicycle lanes throughout the dunes area from north to south, connecting the different seaside places.

During medieval times, a shift takes place in these coastal communities. Some villages near-natural estuaries build a harbour and can continue to grow, while many smaller villages that relied on the flat-bottomed fishers' boats that had to be pulled on to the beach fell behind in development.

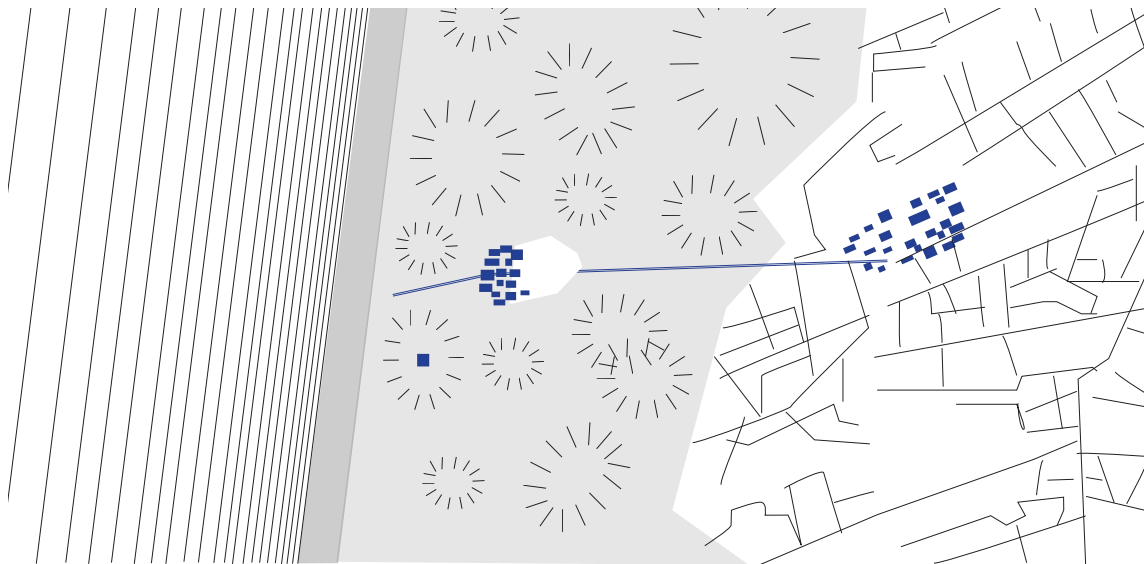
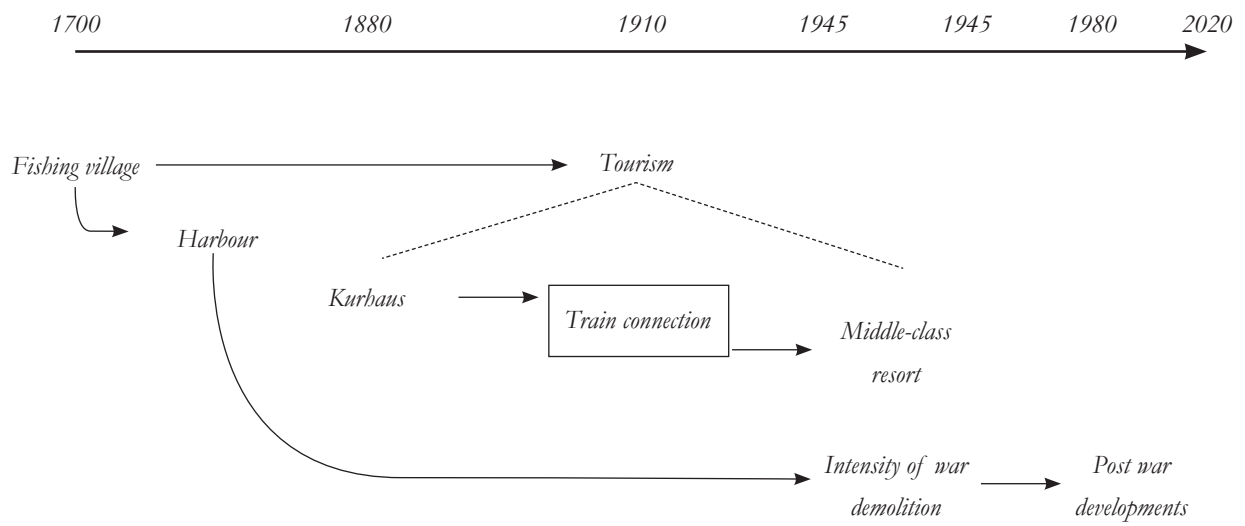


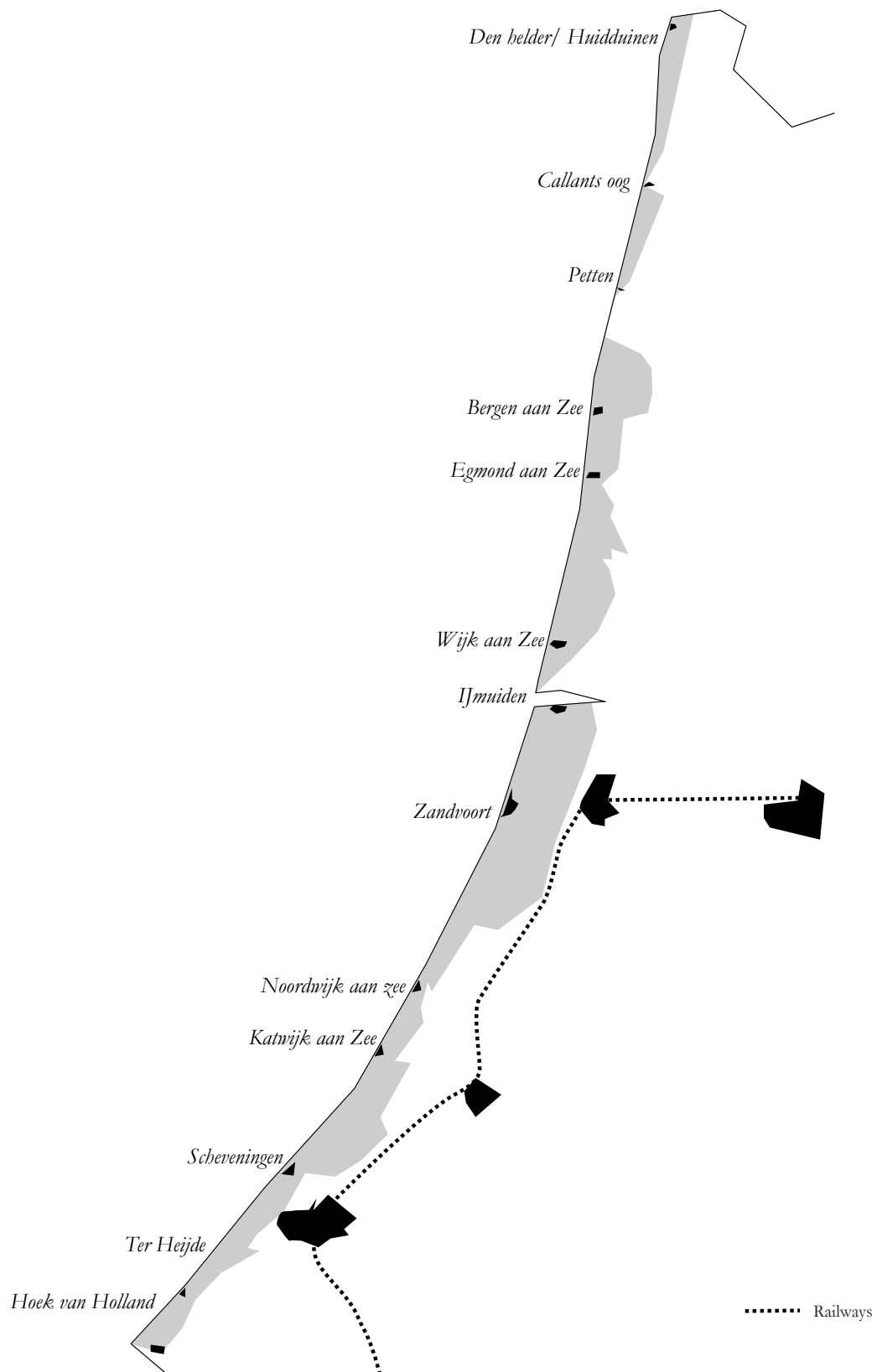
Diagram of medieval village



Although the landscape of the shoreline between Hoek van Holland and Den Helder started quite homogeneous. The different developments of the seaside settlements have created the diverse coastline we see today. These developments have been influenced by a few major factors. Most started quite equal to medieval seaside villages. Some became grand seaside resorts for the elite, others remained smaller and more family-oriented. When looking at the history of this area as a whole a few factors stand out as determinative for the future of a place, the kind of buildings that would be built there, distinct building features and prevailing programme. Although it is hard to say whether this is indeed causation or correlation.

The development of coastal communities can be summarised in the following diagram. Fisher villages that had no harbour could no longer compete with larger ships that needed a harbour. Harbours were built at places where there was a natural water connection to the sea, or where a drainage canal proved necessary. During the 18th century, many villagers moved from small villages to harbour areas for work. Villages left behind needed a new source of revenue to sustain life. This for most turned out to be tourism. The “discovery” of a place as a potential seaside resort was often pure luck. Some, like Scheveningen, Noordwijk and Zandvoort, located close to the bigger cities of Leiden and The Hague aimed for international allure and were quite early well connected by rail to the hinterland. These places developed boulevards with grand Kurhauses.

Other towns like Wijk aan Zee and Egmond aan Zee grew in the first half of the 20th century and became more attractive to the middle class. These were connected with tramlines to cities with train stations. During the second world war the whole coastal zone was fortified, harbour areas got extra fortifications and often got more damaged. After the second world war, there was a third wave of coastal development focussed on car accessible towns with enough space for holiday parks. Places like Callantsoog and Petten where there was less beach, gained appeal for their tranquillity and family-oriented holiday homes. Some previously non-existent places like Julianadorp aan Zee were fully created from these holiday home parks. In this chapter, I will go into the architectural characteristics of the different building types that were exemplary in the development of the coast.



Seaside resorts and elite tourism

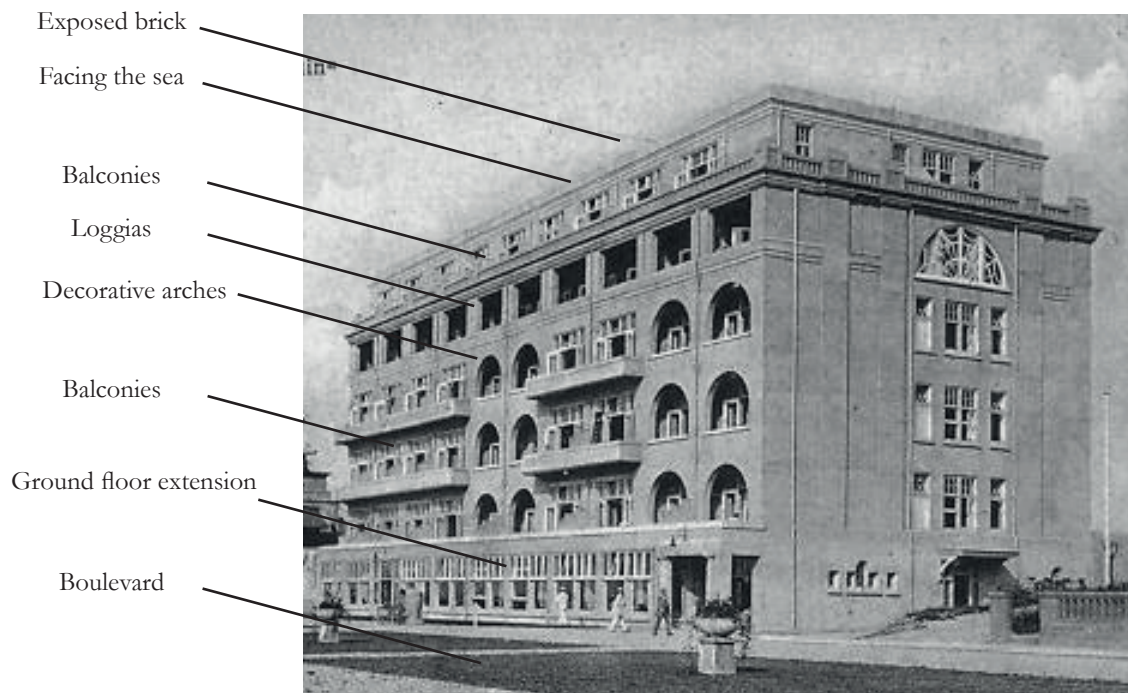
During the 19th century, something started to change. Sea bathing for health became fashionable. It was thought to have therapeutic or medicinal benefits. This caused an increase in seaside holidays with well-being in mind. A new building type was introduced to the seaside. Where there were initially only fishing villages, now bathhouses and Kurhauses were built along the coastline.

The most accessible seaside settlements developed first. Scheveningen, Noordwijk aan Zee, Katwijk aan Zee and Zandvoort built seaside boulevards to accommodate the new facilities, reaching out along the coast from the fishing village. These cities especially were well connected to the larger area, as the first Dutch train line connected Amsterdam, Haarlem, Leiden, Den Haag, and Rotterdam to Utrecht, which was connected by rail to Germany. German tourists already knew their way to the Dutch coast in the late 19th century.

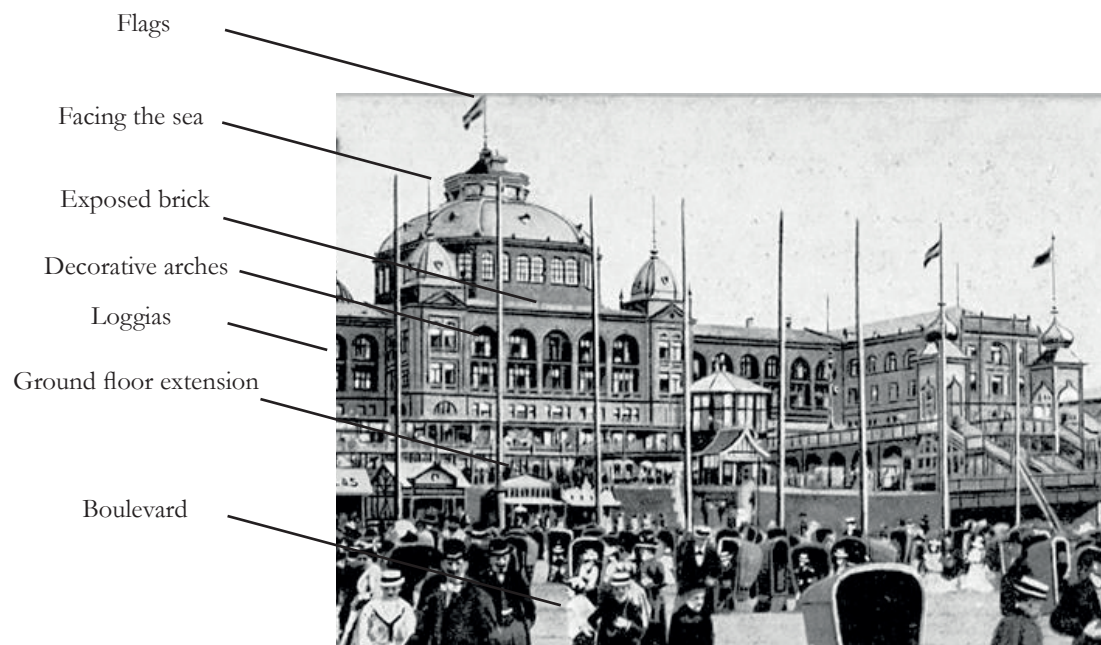
The new boulevard type seen at these early seaside resorts marked a change in our attitude towards the sea. Fishing villages were well acquainted with the danger the sea could pose. They build mainly on the higher areas in the dunes. These new boulevards engaged in a frontal confrontation with the sea. (Berndsen, et al, 1985) Some areas of the beach were designated for recreational use.

Scheveningen was one of the earliest to dive head-first into this new venture. It was located closest to one of the larger cities with a railway connection. In 1820 the first Dutch bathing machines were acquired by the municipality of Scheveningen. These were little horse-drawn carriages changed the image of the beach in the summer months. However soon year-round interventions followed with the building of Kurhauses, that catered to the well to do that lived in the country seats typical of the coastal area. They contained fresh seawater baths for their guests to bathe in. The social status of their guests was reflected in the luxurious ornamented designs.

Different seaside cities at the time competed with each other, trying to have the best facilities and most allure to get the most visitors. The Netherlands did not have as much history with coastal resorts as Germany or Belgium and often looked at its neighbours for inspiration and guests. However, these places of inspiration had grown over a larger time and had their amusement facilities spread over different buildings. Here in the Netherlands, these were often combined. Making the multifunctional seaside hotel (curing, bathing, staying, cultural and social events) a typical Dutch type. Another interesting case of international inspiration is the pier of Scheveningen. As mentioned earlier, Scheveningen at the time was at the top among seaside resorts. The amusement pier build here was a typical British invention positioned in the Dutch context. (De Pater & Sintobin, 2013)



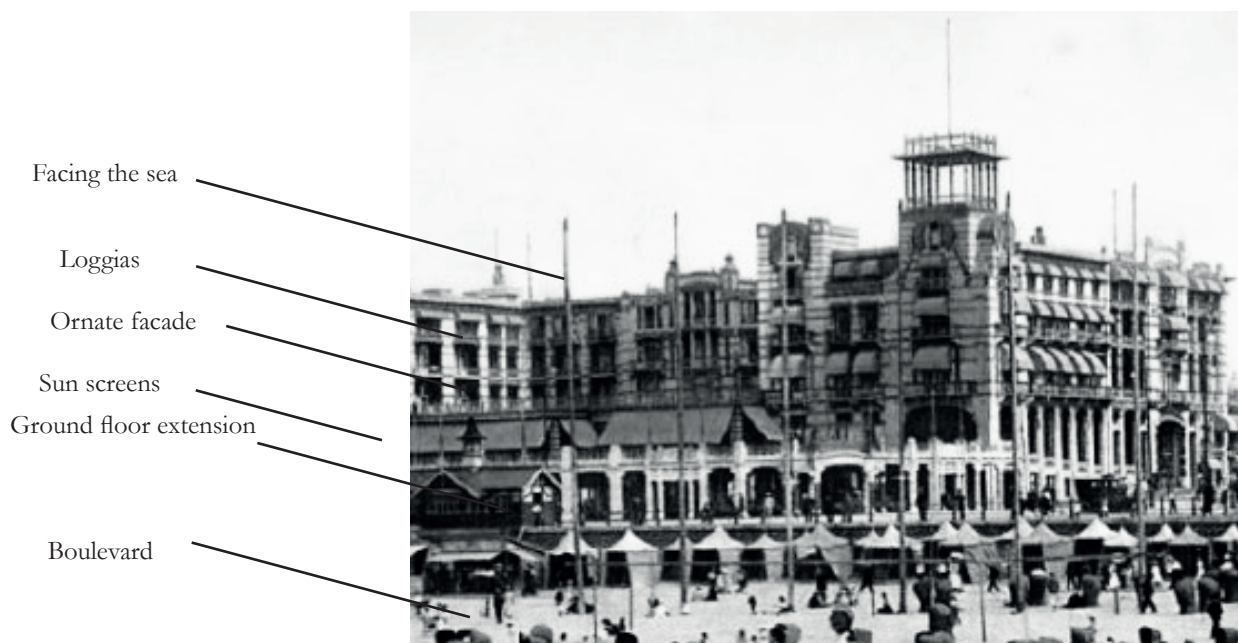
2. Kurhaus, Huis ter Duin, Noordwijk, n.d..



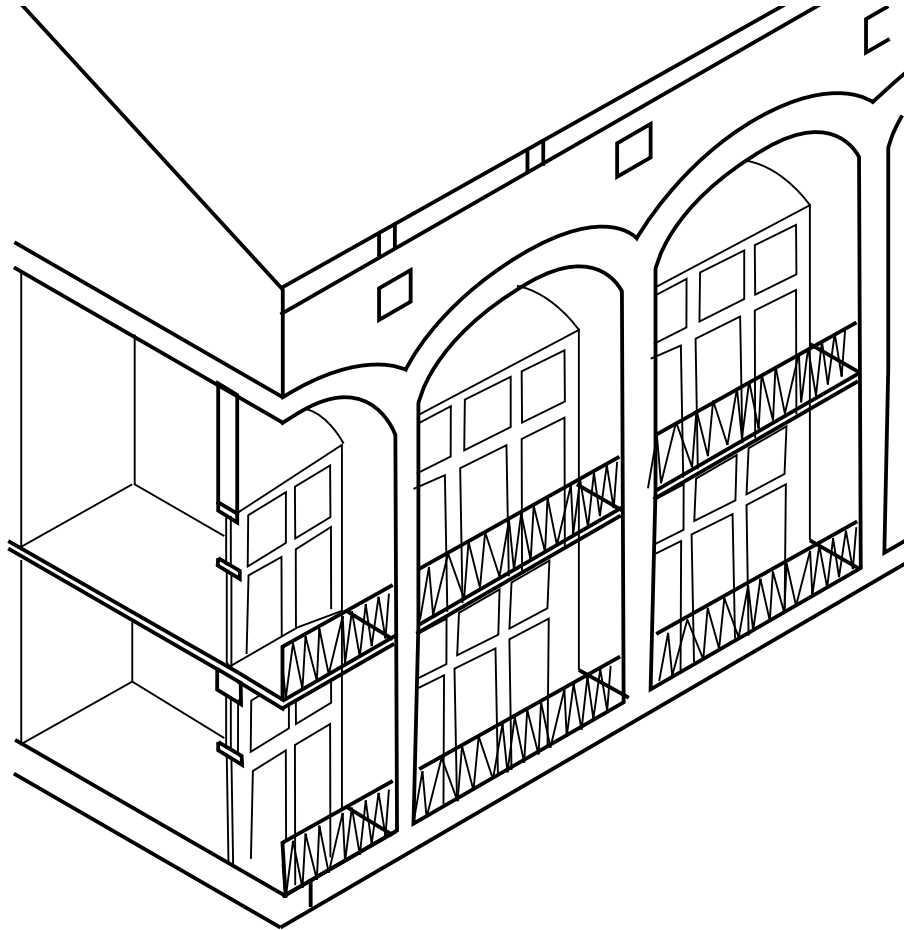
3. Kurhaus, Scheveningen, 1880.



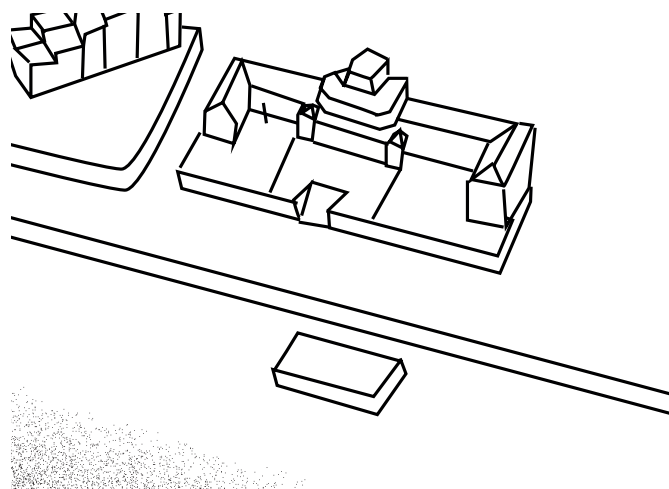
4. *Grand-Hotel, Zandvoort, 1900.*



5. *Palace Hotel, Scheveningen, 1880.*



Balconies, Kurhauses Scheveningen

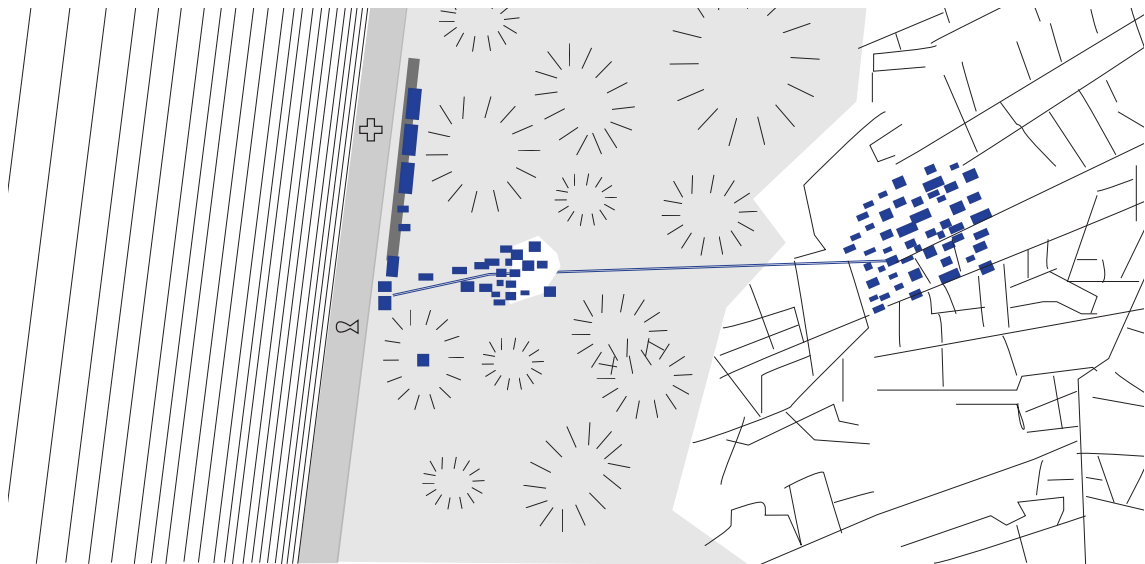


Positioning Kurhaus Scheveningen

Kurhauses

Kurhauses are situated on a boulevard, along the seaside away from the historic fisher villages. The ground floor extends onto the boulevard. Here the restaurant is located. The restaurant is typically designed with all round windows providing a wide panorama-like view of the seaside horizon. They had their own designated beach area.

The rooms are designed to provide most access to the refreshing seaside air. This building type is characterised by a very open facade facing the seaside. The facade is filled with balconies, loggias or bay windows. These shelter the guest from rain and wind so even in bad weather the fresh seaside air can be consumed.



white plaster

Decorative
elements

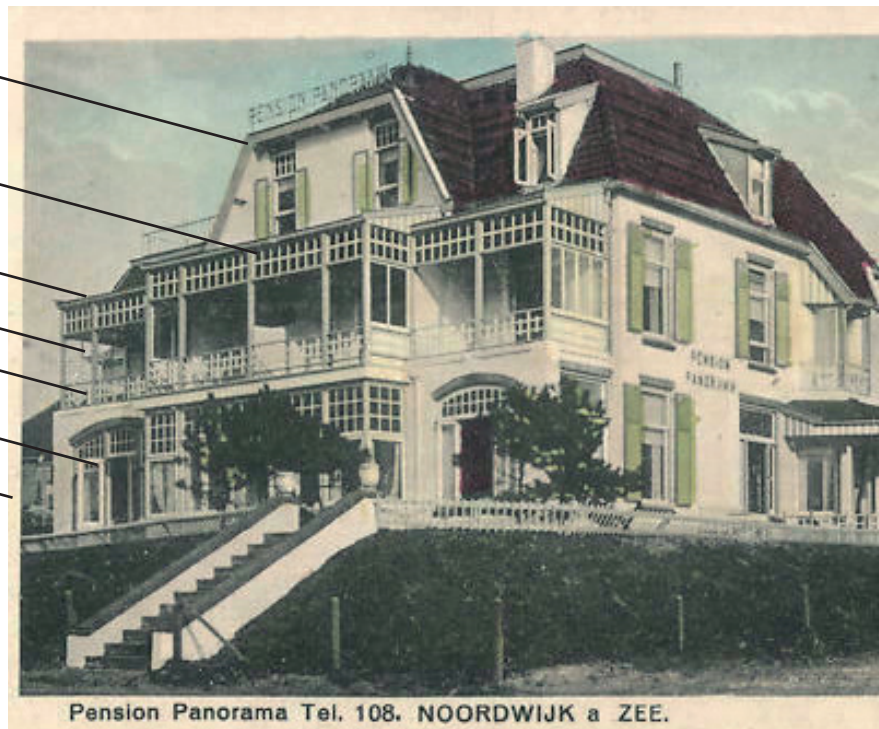
Wood balcony
structure

Balconies

White painted

Open facade

Dune relief



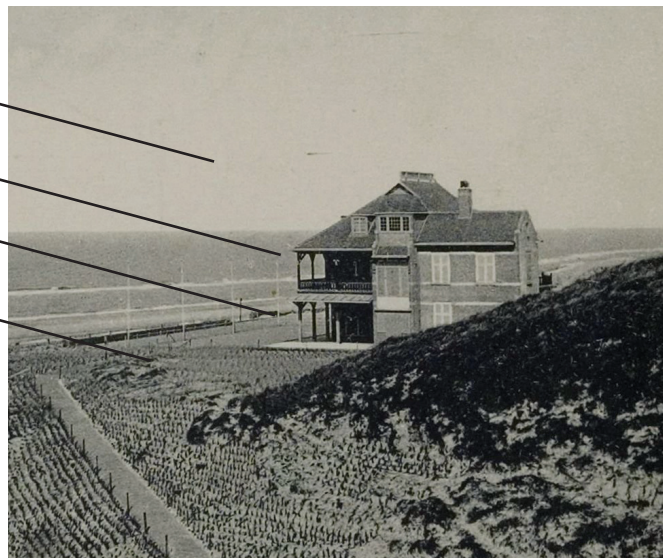
6. Pension Panorama Noordwijk aan zee, n.d..

Facing the sea

Wood balcony structure

Exposed brick

dune relief



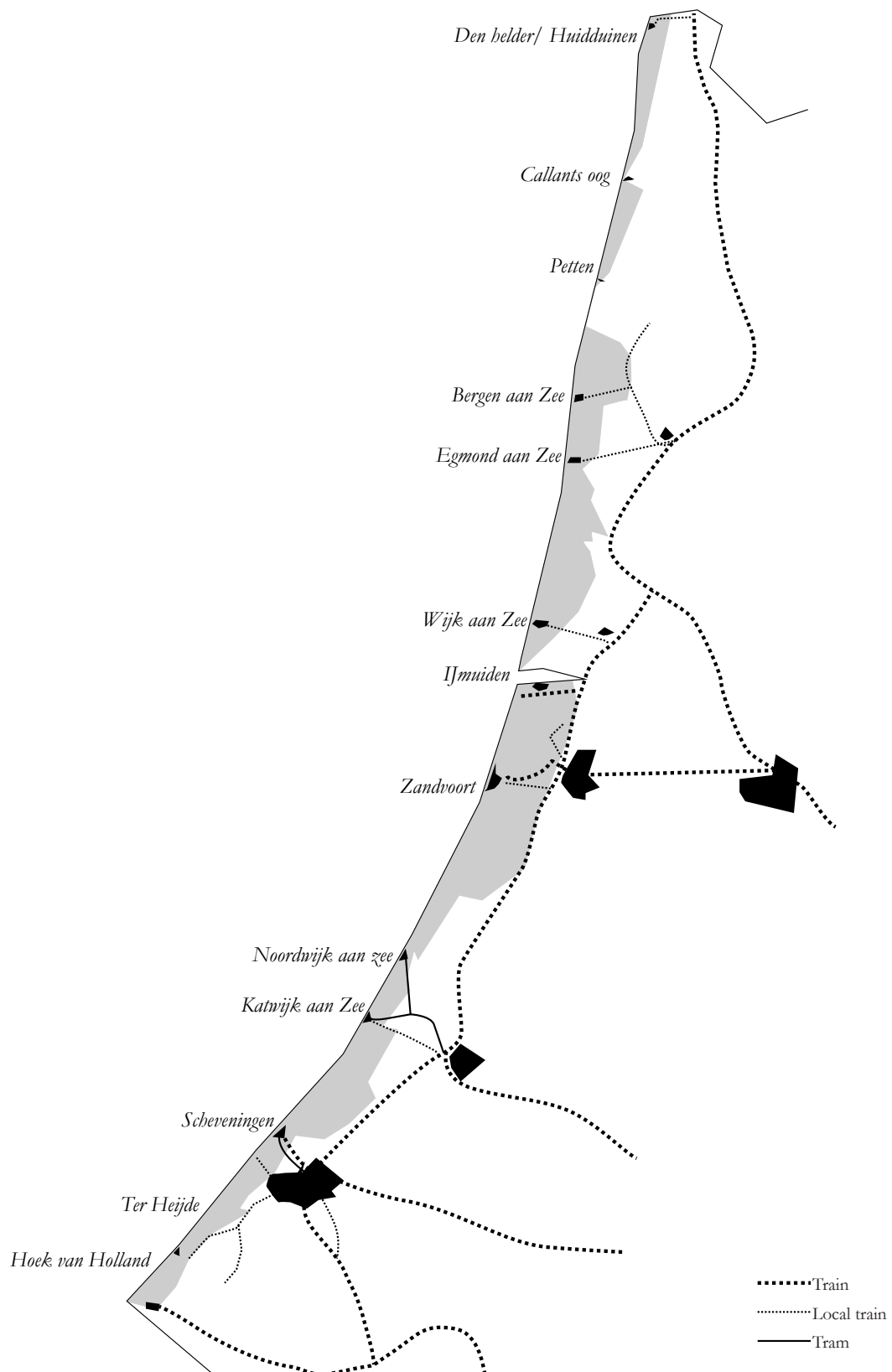
7. Hotel Dependence, Wijk aan Zee, 1900.



8. Hotel Pool Star, Noordwijk an Zee, n.d..



9. Bad hotel Zeebad, Huisduinen, 1930.



Seaside holidays

During the beginning of the 20th century the coast gained interest in the eyes of the middle class. The expansion of the railway network made more of the coast accessible for summer holidays. The coast was still visited for the healthy fresh air that stood in stark contrast with the polluted city air. However, now the visits were more for enjoyment and pleasure than for improved health. This sparked the boom of smaller bath hotels that were more family oriented. These buildings were a lot smaller than the Kurhauses and respected the scale of the fisher villages more. Towns like Wijk aan Zee, Egmond aan Zee and Bergen aan Zee started growing rapidly at this time.

The Bath hotels

Often built in brick with wooden verandas painted white, in cities they are situated further down the boulevard or in smaller seaside towns on a dune top providing a good view of the seaside. The rooms are smaller than in the Kurhauses but still have access to the outside with balconies and bay windows. Sometimes the balconies are shared. It is over all a lot less luxurious, but the main design principles remain the same, seaside visitors want to experience the outdoors. All windows are directed to the sea. Flags on the building highlight the fresh wind.



Hotel Dependence, Wijk aan Zee, 1900



10. Villas in Noordwijk aan Zee, 1940



11. Villas in Wijk aan Zee, 1920.

Non-commercial seaside building types

The buildings discussed so far are all designed to sell and experience. Their building characteristics might solely reflect whatever sells best. Therefore, two other building types of a more functional programme, but nevertheless just as native to our coastal landscape, will be looked at. First the villa's built in the beginning of the 20th century, and second the children's colonies build from the end of the 19th century to half of the 20th century.

Villa's in the Dunes

As the wealth of the middle class increased during the end of the 19th century many sought to get a second home at the seaside. Many of the coastal villages were shortly after the first building boom of hotels and bathhouses further expanded and adorned by villas. These were built outside of the historic village centres and so expanding the villages. They were often carefully positioned in the landscape on little dunes tops, or against larger dune ridges to increase the grandeur and provide the resident with a lovely view over the rolling landscape.



12. Villas in Noordwijk aan Zee, 1940.

Exposed brick

Open facade

Balconies

White painted
woodwork



13. Kinderkolonie Kerdijk, Egmond aan Zee, n.d..

Open facade

Exposed brick

Balconies

White painted
woodwork



14. Emma Kinderhuis, Wijk aan Zee, 1950.

The Children's colonies

Between 1880 and 1950 many impoverished children had holidays at the coast to strengthen at “kinder colony” houses. These houses were built embodying the fusion between the holidays as well as the healthcare features of the seaside. These buildings are located further away from the beach but on walking distance. They contain shared rooms and holidays spent here would be spent outside.

The designs are more functional and less ornate. The main structure is built in brick and the wooden window frames and railings are painted white. Big balconies allowed for enjoyment of fresh air if the weather was warm. Most of these kinderkolonies were located at the seashore.



15. Kinderkolonie, Zeehuis, Bergen aan Zee, 1905.

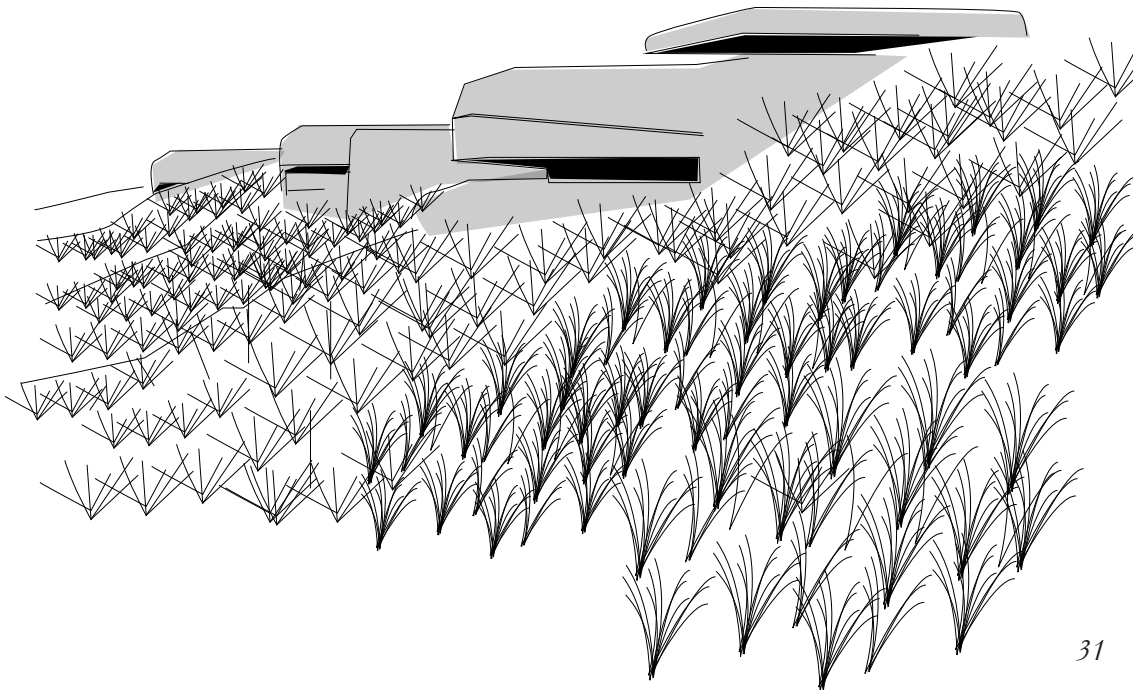


WW2

During the second world war the Dutch coast became a prime element of the Atlantic Wall; A structure of defence fortifications built by the Germans, between 1942 and 1944, spanning from the south west of France to the north west of Norway. Although the Netherlands initially declared a neutral stance, in 1940 it was invaded and came under Nazi German occupation. Initially a 'velvet glove' approach was applied; repression and economic extraction were kept at a minimum as attempts were made to win the population for the new ideology.

This changed as the German forces were defeated at the east front and needed a larger contribution from occupied territory. As the war progressed and threats of an Allied invasion grew the Dutch coastline was transformed in a series defences and fortifications. The fortifications on the Holland coast are placed around strategically important points. The harbour of Hook van Holland, Scheveningen, Katwijk, IJmuiden and Den Helder. The airport of Bergen aan zee was also heavily fortified.

The coastal zone was twice evacuated while the Atlantic Wall was built. First in 1942 and again in 1943. Many of the historic hotels in characteristic style that were not inhabited by soldiers were vandalised during the war or demolished in order to build bunkers in their place. Others that were used by soldiers were often left ready for demolition after the war. Many of the bunkers still remain today.





16. Bunkers, Scheveningen, n.d..



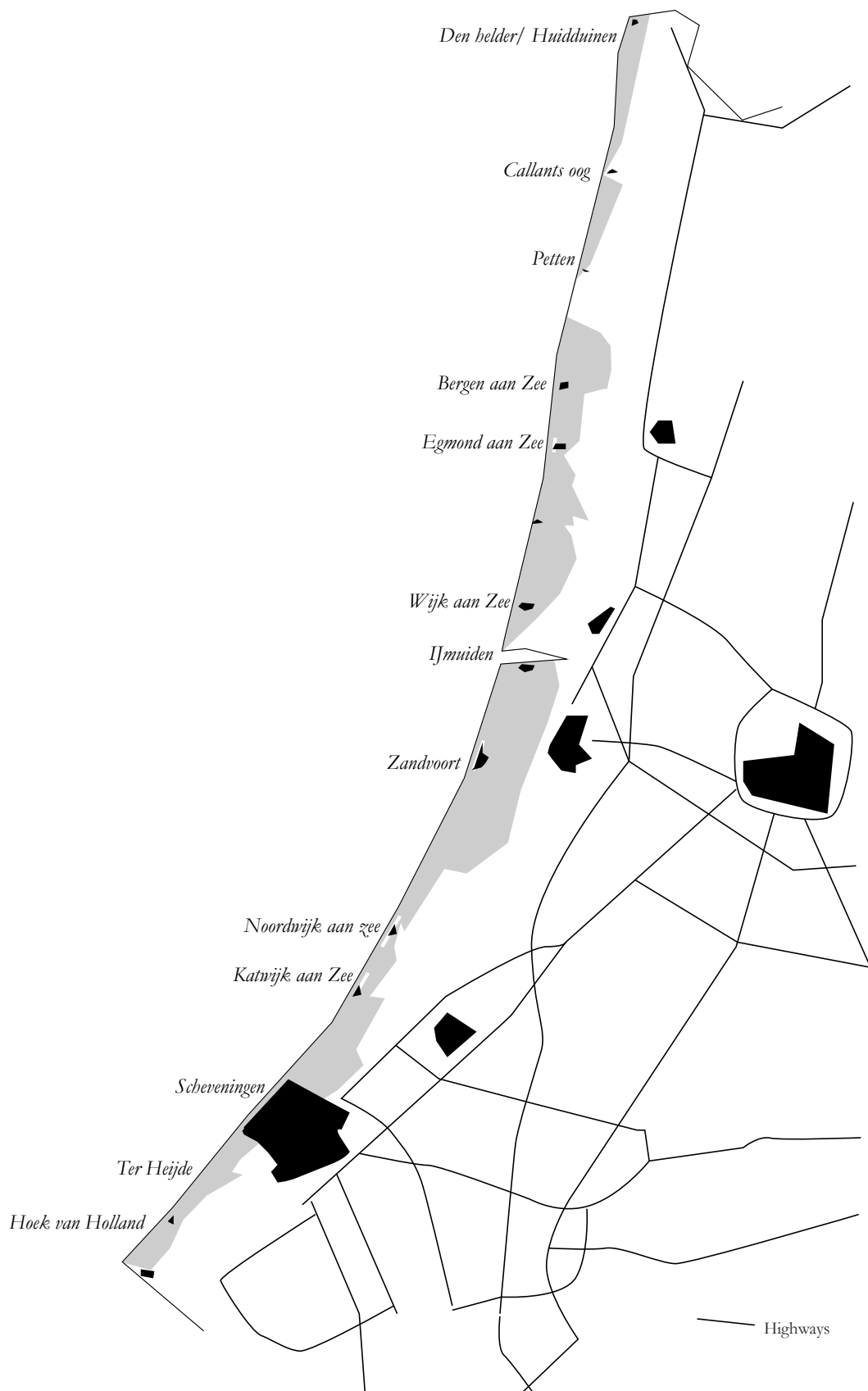
17. Bunkers Ijmuiden, n.d..

The Bunkers

Unlike the earlier discussed building types, the bunkers had a more direct relation to the landscape. They were artfully positioned into the landscape to remain hidden. Most were oriented on the sea as this was the side from where enemies were expected.

They are constructed from concrete. Thick walls provide safety in case of bombings. A series of standard designs is used to construct the fortifications. The interior spaces of the bunkers are within the dunes, Often devoid of natural light.





Post war developments

After the Second world war seaside tourism did not return to previous heights. The affordability of holidays abroad led to a sharp decrease in local tourism. Many of the old ornate hotels were demolished after the war. Some were replaced by new ones but these new hotels, more functionally designed. Healthcare facilities that remained at the seaside expanded, but the increase in harbour industries surrounding IJmuiden en Hoek van Holland reduced the air quality significantly

Meanwhile the old seaside towns like Scheveningen and Zandvoort became the domain of day trips. To avoid the collapse of the old seaside town a shift was made towards models of recreational towns, meaning bigger clusters of recreational facilities. This new type of seaside resort aimed for a year-round attraction. Plenty of things to do regardless of the weather. This new type of tourism needed less hotels. Many of the demolished hotels were thus replaced by typical reconstruction housing project varying in scale over the different seaside towns.

Where before the war a handful of larger bathing towns catered to most of the tourist. After the war, the rise of the automobile allowed the smaller seaside towns that did not yet have a solid connection to the hinterland to develop further. The tourist that did come wanted to stay at cheap camp ground found home in places like Julianadorp aan zee, that grew clusters of holiday home parks. The holiday homes at the seaside contain small home in spacious setting, located on walking distance to the beach. The houses are small but all necessities are present. Holidays at the seaside are spent outside so the limited indoor area is not a problem



19. Holiday homes for rent in Julianadorp, 1950.



20. Post-war housing on Boulevard Katwijk, 2020.

Post-war Housing

Katwijk aan Zee had been hardest hit during the war and after the war. The whole seaside boulevard has been replaced by reconstruction architecture, leaving little to no trace of its past. At this time architecture at the seaside takes shape as three stories high with balconies facing the sea.

The buildings look quite like reconstruction architecture elsewhere. However, some building elements hint at its location. Sunscreens form a feature in the less ornate façades. The scale of the buildings is comparable to that of the bath hotels. Windowsills and roof edging are white of referring back to the more intricate white wooden verandas of the bath hotels.

The buildings built in later decades are steadily growing in scale, from bigger apartment blocks to more sculptural apartment “hills”. Some respect the convention of facing the sea, while others show orientation more characteristic of reconstruction architecture in general.

Facing the Sea

Balconies

Open facade

Commercial
plint

Boulevard



21. Apartment blocks, Noordwijk, 1982.

Not
Facing the Sea

Commercial
plint

Boulevard



22. Apartment blocks, Scheveningen, build 1956

Balconies

Facing the Sea

Beach acces

Dune relief



23. *Hotel Atlantic, Kijkduin, 1982.*



Facing the Sea

Balconies

Exposed brick

Open facade

Sun screens

Ground floor extension

Boulevard

24. *Hotel Bouves, Zandvoort, 1950.*



25. *Hotel Noordzee, Katwijk, 1960.*

The new seaside hotels

The post-war seaside hotels still focus on outdoor living and the view of the seaside. The scale of the hotels is larger and once again feature big ground floor extensions with seaside views. Transparent railings make the most of the seaside view. The hotel rooms are all directed to the seaside and flags become more and more prominent as a seaside feature. The materialisation remains modest, exposed brickwork and neutral colours.



26. *Museum Beelden aan Zee, Wim Quist, 1994.*



27. *Museum Beelden aan Zee, Wim Quist, 1994.*

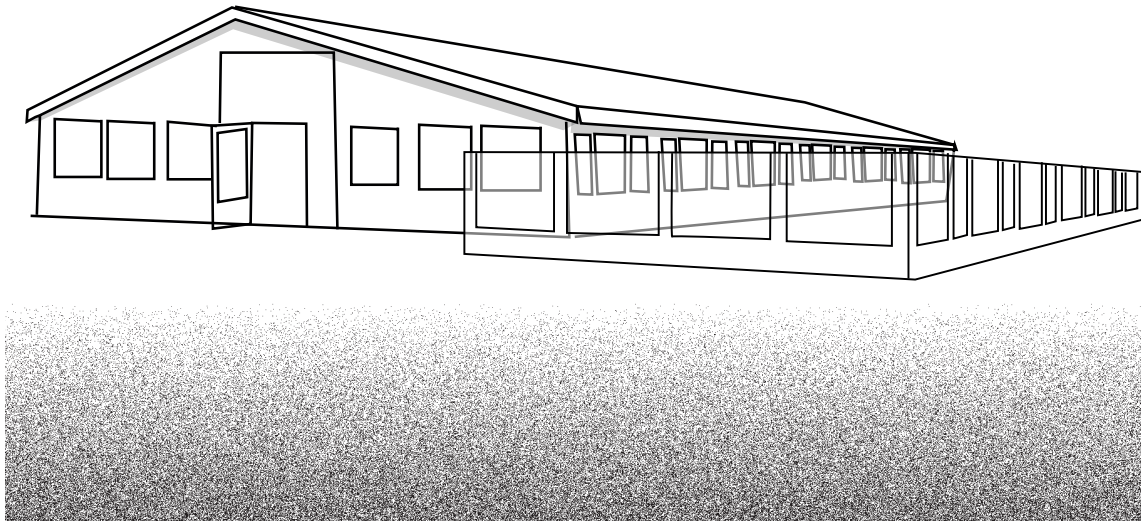


28. *Parking garage, Katwijk aan Zee, Royal Haskoning BV, 2016.*

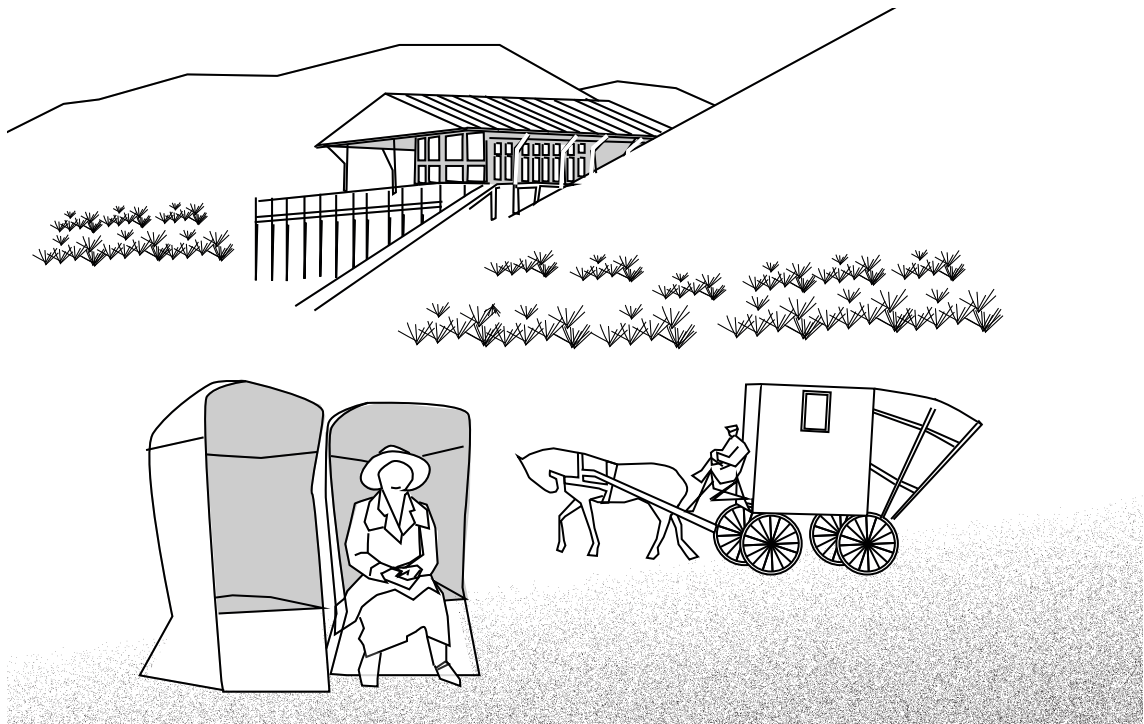
Contemporary coastal architecture

These two pieces of contemporary coastal architecture form a category on their own. The focus lies on emulating some parts of the coastal landscape. The parking garage in Katwijk aan Zee is hidden under an artificial hilly dune landscape. Where it peaks out the curves of the dunes highlight the synergy of architecture and nature.

Museum Beelden aan Zee engages differently with the curves of the natural landscape. The plan of the building is based on two circles. Roof lights accentuate this shape in one circle in the other the curve takes shape as a ramp leading higher up in the exterior exhibition area. The straight exhibition space connecting the two circles features a panorama-like view of the dunes, carefully concealing the human interventions. The integration of the exterior and interior exhibits makes the connection between inside and outside feel natural and essential. The flowing shapes of both these buildings are constructed in concrete.



Beach Pavilion, generic, 2020



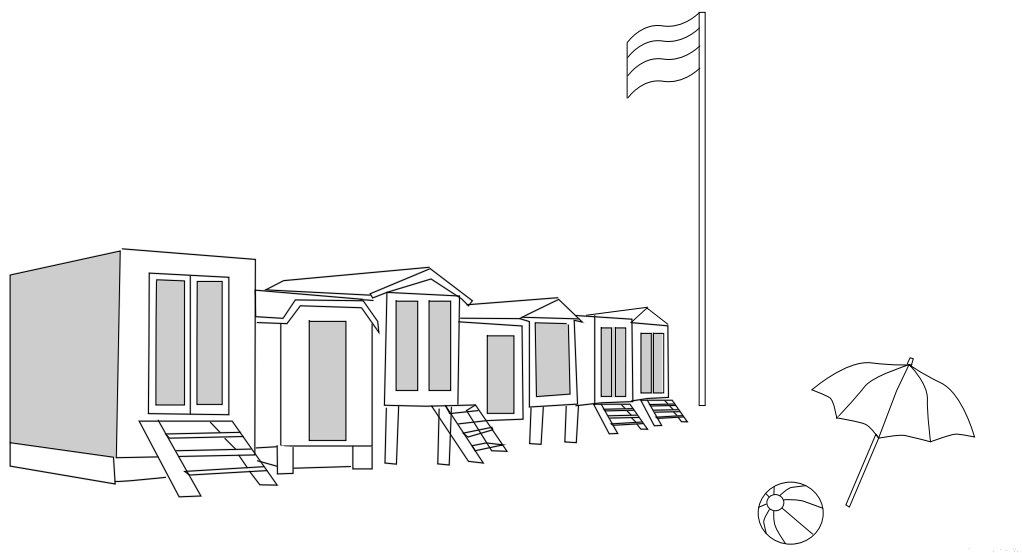
Seasonal Structures

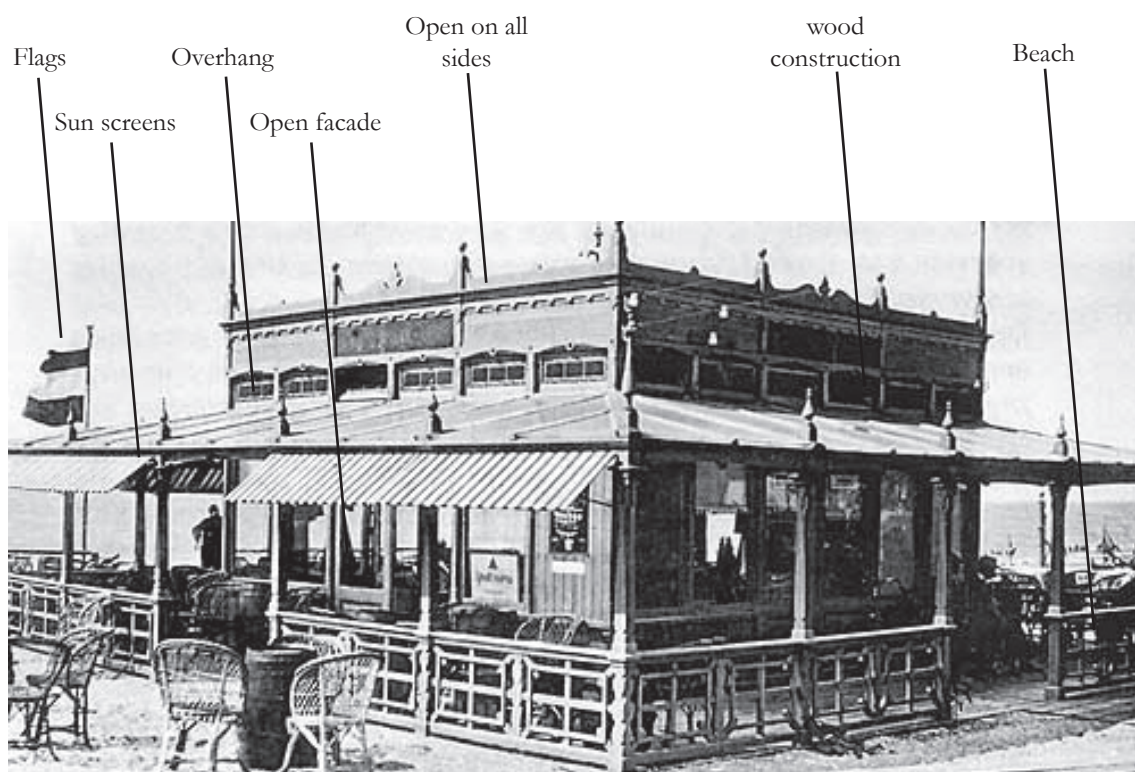
Since the fifties more and more seasonal structures are built every year on the beaches. Traditionally beach pavilions were built in between the dunes to be safe in case of a storm. Nowadays they are put on the beach during the summer months. These structures form an interesting architectural category. As they are moved twice a year the constructions must be more durable as well as deconstructable. From a sustainability point of view these structures rate high on these points. As these structures often change between the seasons, rather than analysing specific examples, we will look at the guidelines for these structures as presented in the aesthetics regulations (welstands normen) of several coastal municipalities.

Temporal structures at the beach are restricted. Generally, only allowed between April and October. Beach pavilions need to have:

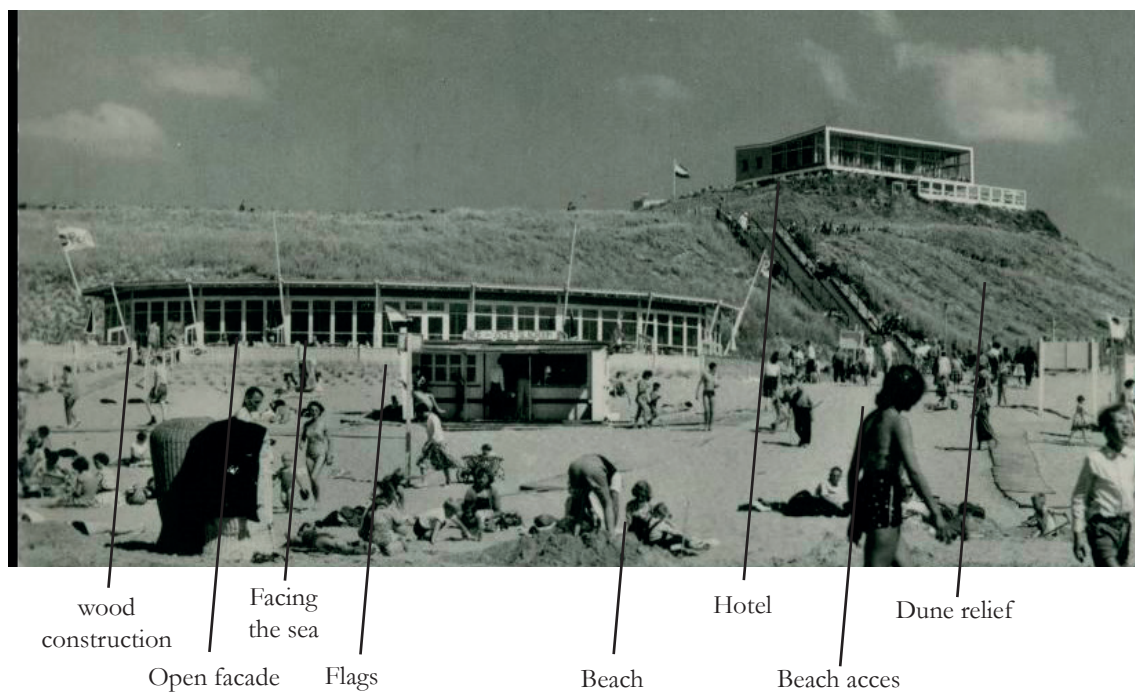
- Articulated façade
- Build from natural materials
- Natural colours
- Distinct appearance different from neighbours
- Focus on intricate detailing

Other guidelines aiding in the experience of the landscape are those that protect the nature reserves surrounding the coastal towns limiting their expansion. While these are often in place to protect the water filtration area, the nature reserves as well as biodiversity they also help in accentuating the coastal destinations as a little island in the landscape.

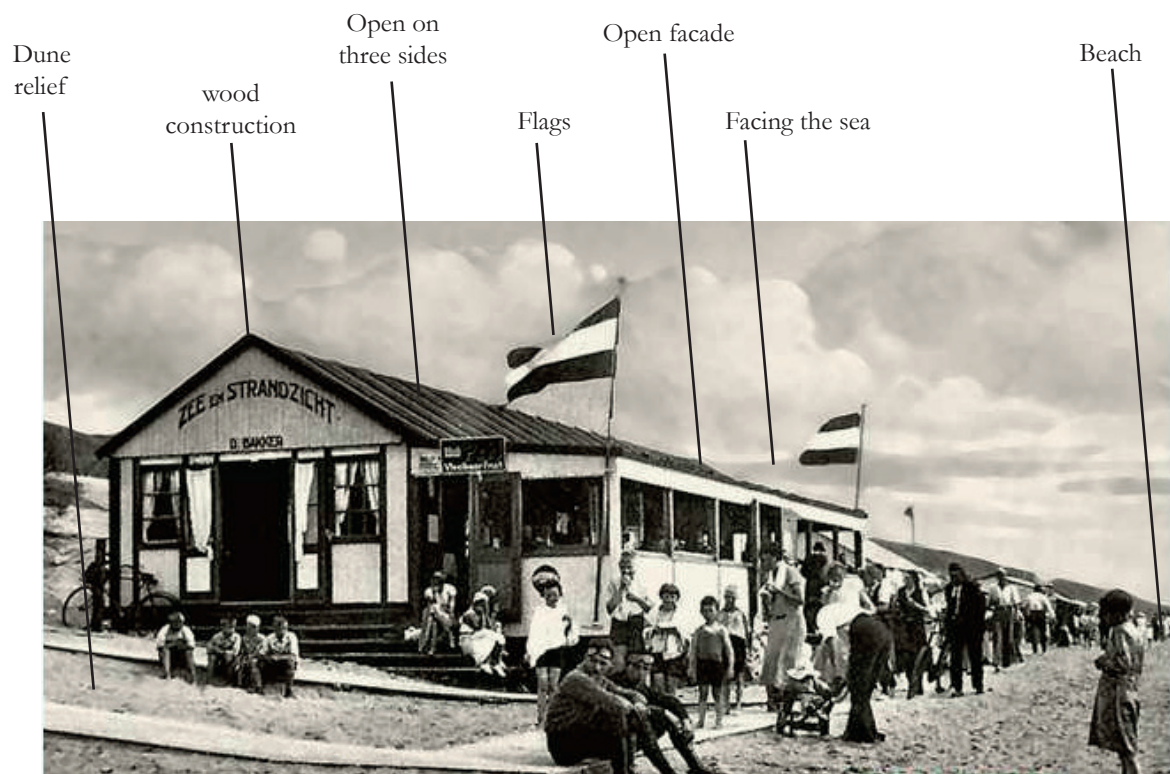




29. Zandvoort, 1900.



30. Wijk aan Zee, 1960.



31. *Castricum, 1935.*



32. *IJmuiden, 1965.*

Summary seaside architecture characteristics

Having looked at a whole range of typical seaside buildings, a few elements are reoccurring al throughout the history of our seaside. From Kurhauses to bath hotels to children's colonies, villas, post-war housing, and contemporary interventions each building has its own reason for existing at the seaside when it did. Together they illustrate a continuity of our coastal identity. The elements on their own are not essential nor, unique to our seaside identity. Many of these elements are frequently seen in any built environment. However, the increased occurrence of many of these elements is typical for our seaside. Therefore, it is more useful to merge these elements in overarching themes that can be used in a design process. There are three main themes:

1. Facing the sea

The seaside has as very unique landscape and our seaside architecture engages with the relief, or the border of the land.

2. Acknowledging Nature

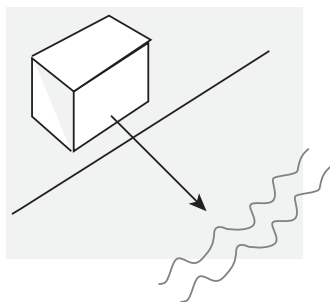
The Natural world is acknowledged by a predominant prevalence of natural materials: brick and wood, and neutral colours, and flags that highlight the sunny and windy weather. Maybe these elements have been associating with the coast from the nostalgic feelings of touristic experiences at time when these materials are the norm. Nevertheless, they are now thoroughly engrained in our image of the seaside.

3. Connecting inside and outside

The history of the coast has had strong reasons to focus on the connection between inside and outside. Nowadays, while more and more hours are spent inside this connection is maybe even more valued. The seaside air may not be a clean anymore as it used to be, tourists still visit go here to enjoy nature. The threshold is elongated and the transition between outside and inside is mitigated.

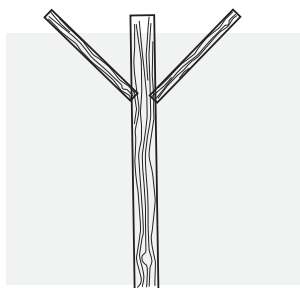
There is one cathegry that shows a disregard for most of these elements. The examples of comtemporany coastal architectecture and in some aspects the bunkers have a different relation with the landscape. Hiding in the landscape. Using the flowing shapes of the dunes as inspiration for the experieeces they create.

Facing the sea



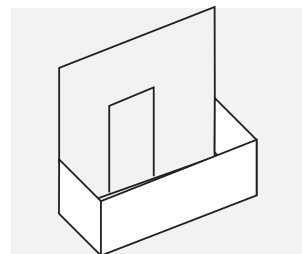
Facing the sea

*Acknowledging
nature*

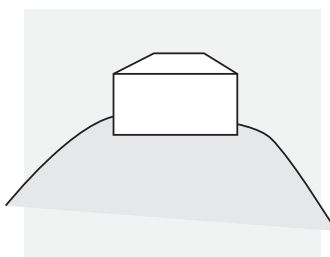


Wood

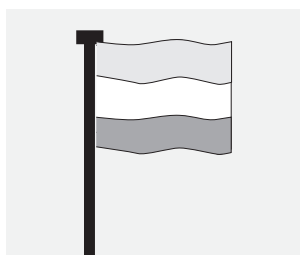
Connect outside -inside



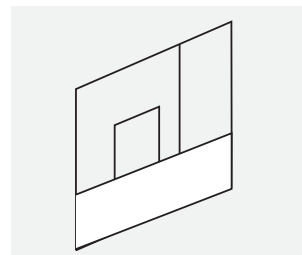
Balconies



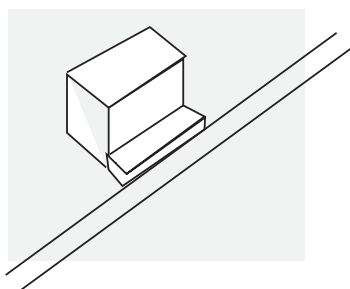
On high point



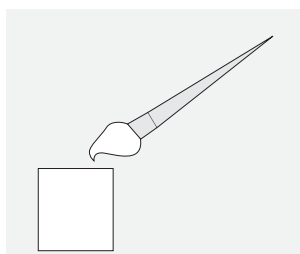
Flags



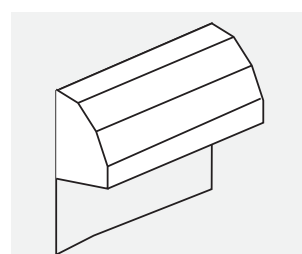
Loggias



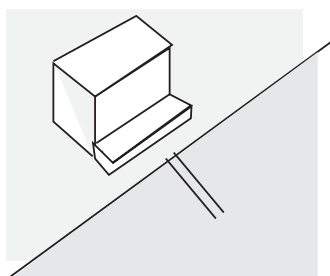
Ground-floor extension



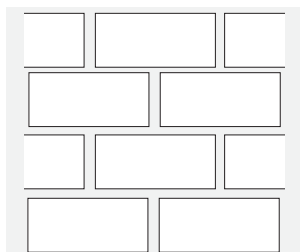
White paint/plaster



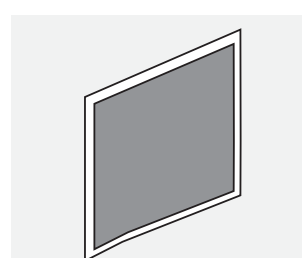
Sun screens



Beach access



Exposed brick



Large Windows

3. Spatial identity

The spatial identity of the coast is unique because of the wide open horizon that can be seen from the beach. This spatial quality is enhanced by the boulevard typology present in urban seaside setting. In villages it is present due to lack of high-rise. Often one can see the surrounding dunes in seaside villages. The meadows traditionally used for village cattle help to preserve this historic villages-cape.

The Tourist Gaze

“...Tourism involves going away to search for visual experiences that we normally do not see at home or at work. The main activity of tourists is ‘gazing at signs’: they look at particular features of a place, such as a famous cathedral, beautiful landscape or another attraction. (City Branding and the Tourist Gaze - Gert-Jan Hospers)

The visual experiences of the coast that cannot be easily experience at home. In order to analyse what features tourists, enjoy, the top 24 pictures are collected tagged for each coastal town and analysed for landscape specific features. Using location hashtags on the picture website Flickr.com.

Tourists still come for the landscape. Buildings that are photographed are mainly building that are native to this landscape like lighthouses, beach houses, beach pavilions and occasional bunkers that refer to the role of our coast in the Atlantic wall. In the more urbanised seaside towns, some iconic buildings are photographed but these are rarities among the many pictures focussed on landscape features.

Half of the photographs in the sample emphasises the large horizon taking up more than half of the photograph. These photos are often taken during sun set or sun rise or when there are beautiful clear blue skies, or charming clouds.

Atmospheric associations

The last element in my search towards a Holland Coast Identity is formed by the atmospheric associations with the Dutch coast. These associations are not unambiguous. Neefjes et al, (2010) summarises the Dutch coastal atmospheric associations as follows. The sea is peaceful and calming but also dangerous and scary. Our struggle with sea has been inherited down for centuries. The Dutch Coast is often associated with Health and Freedom. Enhanced by the wide-open spaces and wide horizon, briny winds, sun, and pristine quality of the landscape. From the exclusive Kurhauses of the 19th century to the healthcare facilities and holiday colonies of the 20th century to our current sports focussed elements and the typical Dutch “Uitwaaien” (going out in windy weather to clear one’s head). Health seems deeply intertwined with the coasts. The coast used to be the edge of society where fishing communities lived rough lives. In our times this is expressed in subcultures and alternative events taking place at the seaside. Lastly the sea has always been prominent in art signifying its importance in our national culture.



3. Conclusion

Coastal identity seems very strongly tied with its history, as with the experience of the landscape. The landscape is often presumed quite wild however a symbiosis takes place. The beaches are supplied with extra sand which is distributed along the coast by natural forces. The flora and fauna of the coast also shows this symbiosis as native species are joined by exotic ones that have by now grown into our image of the seaside nature. The rustic looking Scottish Highlander appears quite at home in our landscape and fits the roughness associated with our seaside.

Buildings have to take a position in the relief of the landscape reflecting on their relation to the forces of nature. By bravely facing the sea or finding safety on higher ground. In architecture this has resulted in an extended threshold that mitigates the difference between outdoor and indoor. Although nature has often proven itself to be dangerous here it is also a joy to experience. Balconies, Loggias, and pergola constructions, sunscreens, windscreens, the architectural elements used to create this effect are plenty. The relation with nature is further enhanced by a focus on natural materials and natural colours.

Since tourist and recreational sector are still the main income source for these regions, strict guidelines regarding visual coherence and historic atmosphere are in place in most coastal towns. These measures stabilise the cities in a certain time frame, preventing modernisation. In my design project I would like to experiment with these elements of seaside identity, and work on building that enhance the experience of the landscape and the nostalgic feelings that come with outdated building types while allowing for more contemporary uses that fit the residents and tourists that visit the coast nowadays.

This research is very limited in scope for it only focusses on a small area and the materials for architectural research has mostly been limited to tourism. Although tourists are vital for this landscape, more attention should be spent to investigate the coastal identity from the perspective of the local resident. Nevertheless, this research illustrates methods of researching spatial identity.



33. Zandvoort Beach, 1960.

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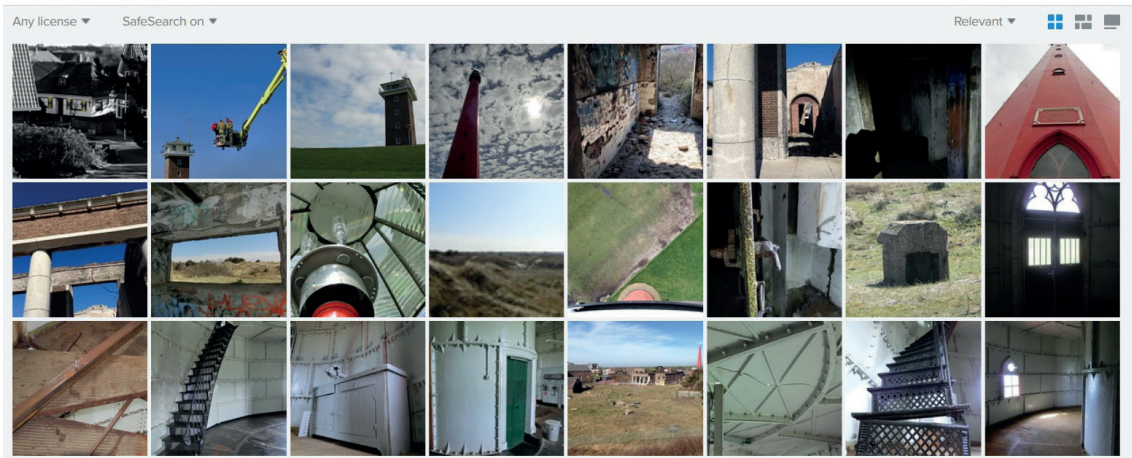
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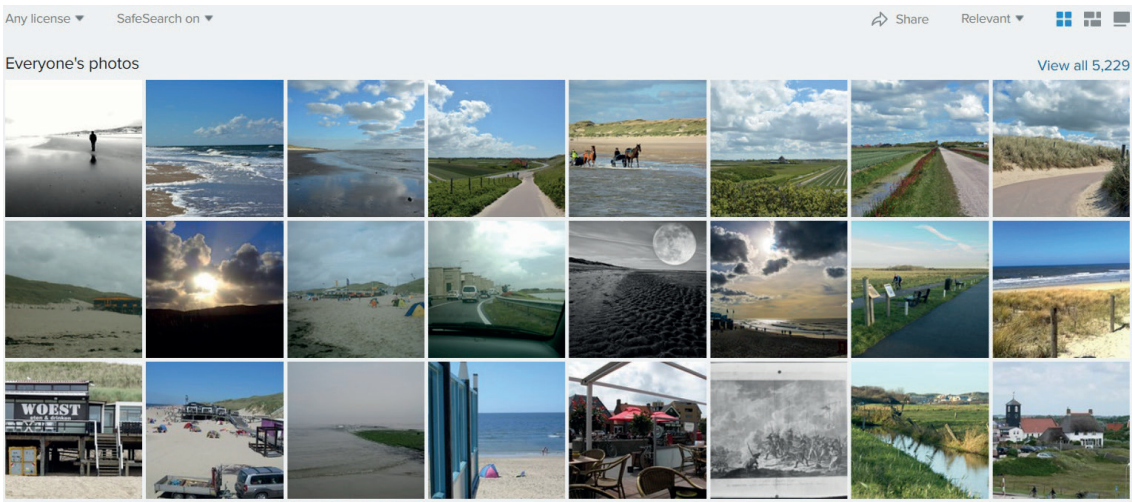
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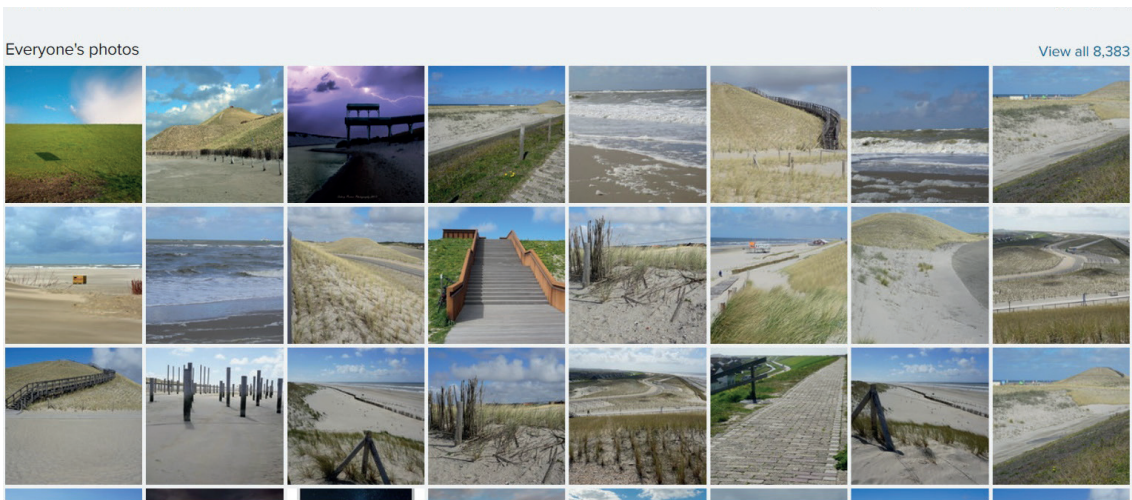
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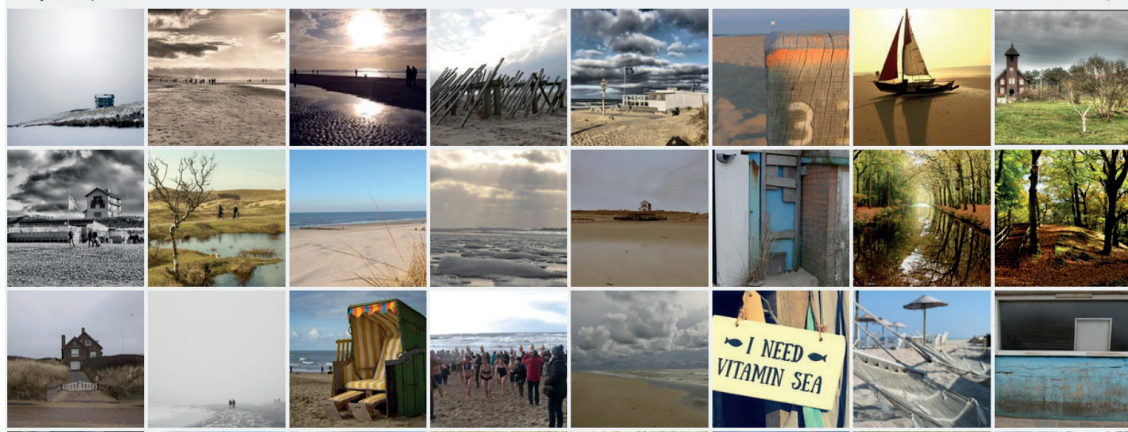
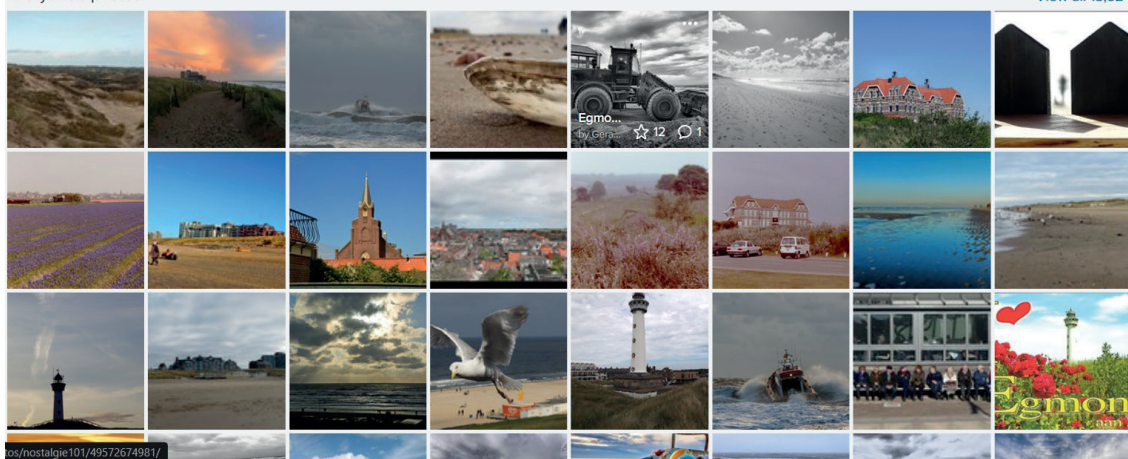
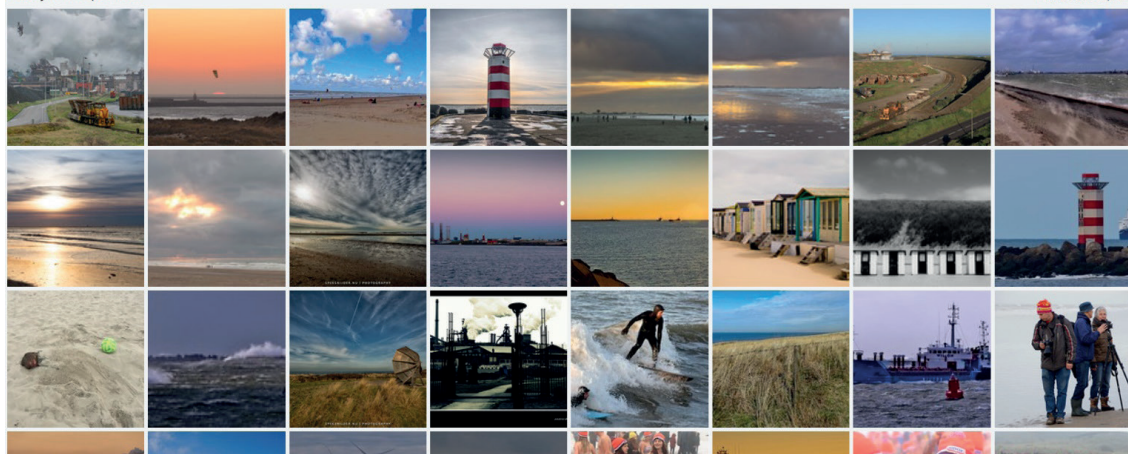
Huisduinen



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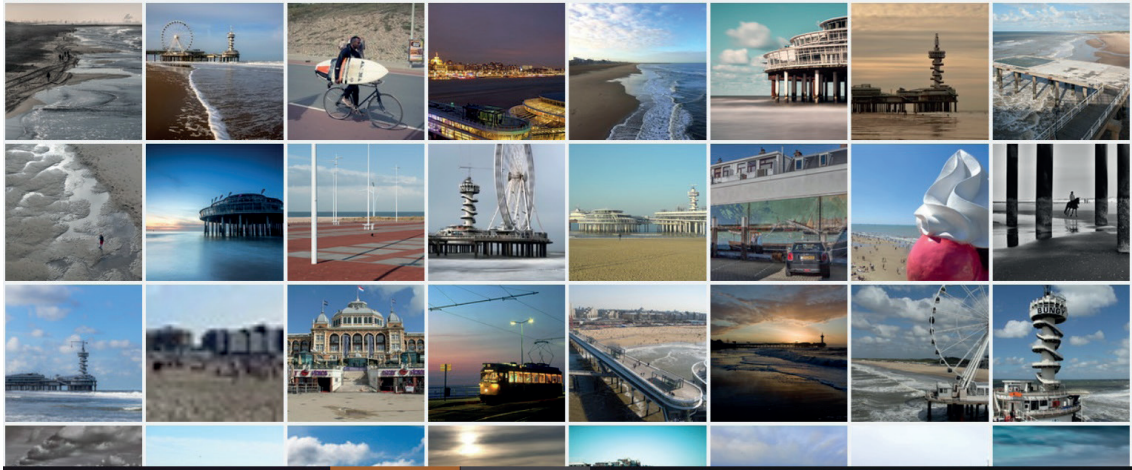


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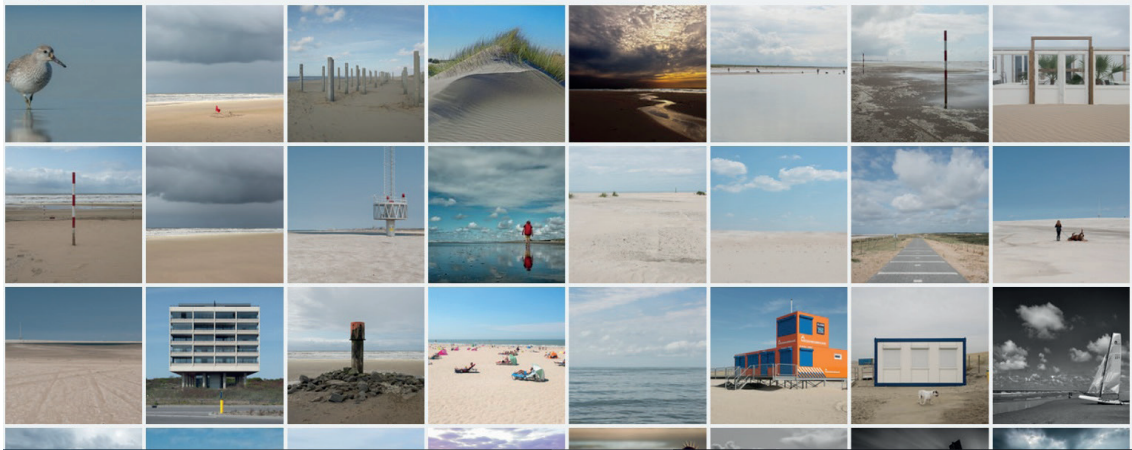
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Wijk aan Zee

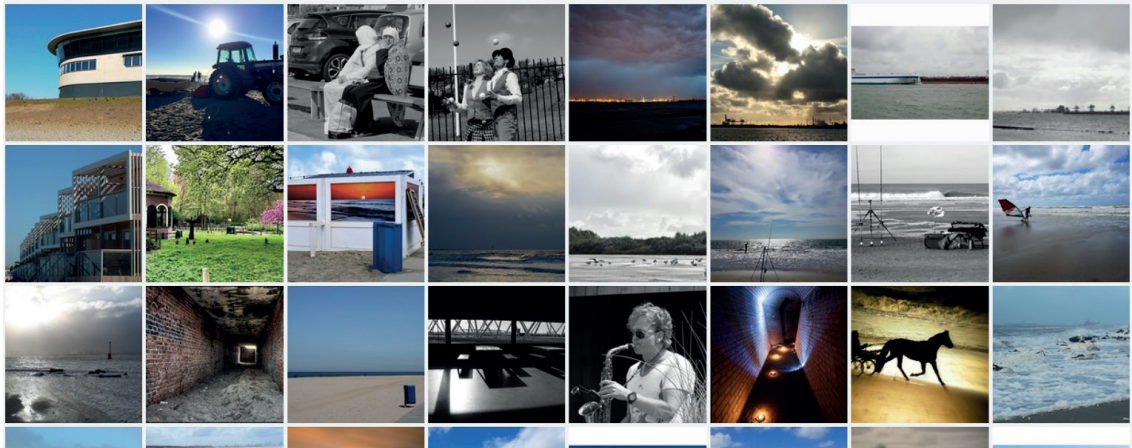
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