

Award ceremony, 23.06.2023 at SCHLOSS DYCK / JÜCHEN

### **Laudation for category: Climate mitigation measures in parks and gardens**

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#### **Winner:**

**“Zuidpolder Landscape Park“ (Barendrecht, NL), Arcadis Landscape architecture and Urbanism**

#### **Intro**

Nowadays, everyone is talking about the climate crisis. Meanwhile, even local politicians pronounce for instance the term „sponge city“ without accident. In the face of drought and flooding, sustainable water management in parks and gardens is becoming a crucial point. For the great climate threads to come for our landscapes and cities, we need landmark projects, since we all learned:

climate mitigation is not anymore a problem of cognition, but of implementation.

Our neighbors from the Netherlands have been dealing with water as a central planning issue for a while now. As landscape architecture students in the 90s in Berlin, we often looked enviously to Holland - keyword "Oranje Landscap" - and admired how naturally and confidently landscape architects tackled large projects, very often with water as a central aspect, and transformed them into fascinating works of contemporary landscape architecture.

This is what this award category „**Climate mitigation measures**“ is all about:

how can we find and award role models of gardens and landscapes that combine the necessities of climate mitigation with engineering solutions and fascinating offers for the people, that also are valuable for biodiversity?

**In one word: well-designed, sustainable „green infrastructure“ in the best of senses!**

And I may add: the project, we're talking about here was conceived, planned and built long before the heavy weather impacts our European Cities, landscapes, and gardens suffered since 2018.

#### **Context**

The built urban area in the Rotterdam agglomeration has grown rapidly over recent decades. To improve water quality and the recreational and ecological values of the water systems, the municipality and Arcadis have developed the landscape park Zuidpolder Barendrecht. Around 110 hectares of agricultural land between Barendrecht and the “Oude Maas” river have therefore been transformed into a contemporary landscape park with (clean) water storage.

The Zuidpolder, part of a larger “Blauwe Verbinding” project, has three main functions:

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- Firstly, the storage of clean water for the urban water system. The area provides many opportunities for temporary water collection. It forms a kind of water reservoir for its surroundings. In wet periods, the water is collected and buffered.
- Secondly, providing attractive spaces for recreational boating and for the cycling and walking route between the Zuiderpark and the Waaltje waterway. The east-west connection guarantees maximum variety, because the plots are oriented in a north-south direction and all have their own destination.
- Thirdly, the Zuidpolder is also an important connection route, linking different areas and creating an ecological connection between green spaces in the urban area and (future) nature areas in IJsselmonde.

### Concept

Together, these functions result in a convincing design by Arcadis for an attractive new but also somehow traditional landscape mitigating climate effects and enhancing biodiversity. Thanks to its sophisticated water system, clean water will be stored during periods of high water, so that water levels in canals in the urban area can be maintained during drier times.

An increasing number of visitors use the landscape park for canoeing, cycling, walking, roller skating, and horse riding. Here they can escape from the dense city with its often-extreme temperatures, enjoy the animals at De Kleine Duiker petting farm and find a rest at the Theehuys Polderzicht.

Finally, nature has also benefited from the development. Many farmland, water, and woodland birds have found a habitat here, and rare plants such as the European yellow rattle and the Southern marsh orchid.

### Appraisal

This concept has deeply impressed the jury with its at-one-time complex structural elegance and enchanting perspectives: At a short distance, you can see a strip of forest, flowering grassland, and reed belt as a kind of backdrop landscape.

As a perfect example, the Zuidpolder proves that Landscape architecture is a key discipline in the transformation process that is so urgently needed in times of climate crisis.

The convincing linkage of technical, ecological, and social aspects results in a clear and functional design that develops high esthetical quality and an inviting urban leisure area.

On behalf of EGHN I would like to congratulate **Zuidpolder Landscape Park** with this award.

We ask **John Boon** on stage to receive the award in the category

**Climate mitigation measures in parks and gardens.**

Congratulations!