

Plan Tide, Dordrecht, the Netherlands



At the border between the Biesbosch nature reserve and the city of Dordrecht is a residential project that lies outside of the dike-protected area. Here the tidal currents are allowed to come up close to the houses.

The ‘unpoldering’ of the existing polder and its return to a tidal landscape has created the conditions necessary for the formation of new natural areas. A closed soil balance was applied, and the homes are built on pilings. The area is designed in such a way as to provide water catchment despite the ebb and flow of the tides.



Plan Tide, the transition area between Wantij (Neap Tide) Park and the adjacent residential neighbourhoods, has brought the area once again under the direct influence of the tides; the polder has been ‘given back to nature’. Ebb and flow again have free reign and in large part determine the residential experience. It is this constant tidal movement that gives this area its character. Reedlands, withy woodlands, thickets and marshy forests are interspersed with large surfaces of open water and dominate the landscape. The free-standing location of the dikes emphasises the contrast between the openness of the city and the dense plant growth on the side of the tidal shores. By means of a system of channels and creeks, the newly constructed water is carried to the wall of green at the edge of Wantij

Urban green-blue grids

Park. The context of this landscape is continued by large ecological elements such as natural shores, islands and soft- and hardwood zones.

At the border between urban and natural landscapes, where land and water meet, a unique residential environment has developed – unique not only for Dordrecht but for the wide surroundings. It is a characteristic residential environment in which nature, housing and recreation coalesce. The gradients and transitions made with the help of water, soil and geographic relief ensure a diversity of ‘landscapes’. The approach of having the natural landscape be the central determinant of plans for the area has proven successful in creating an optimal integration between housing and nature, along with an attractive and sustainable living environment. Residents feel as if they are on holiday every day in their own community, and over time nature has made a home for itself as well. The newest residents of the Plan Tide are a beaver family who have lately settled here from the Biesbosch.

