

# ESTATE LANDSCAPES IN THE NETHERLANDS

'VAST SWATHES OF THE COUNTRYSIDE  
WERE COVERED WITH COUNTRY HOUSES'

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## THE COUNTRY HOUSE ESTATE: AN INTRODUCTION

In the extensive literature on country house estates it is the individual houses and gardens that receive by far the most attention. In the last decade this has been supplemented by growing interest in the relation between country houses and their surroundings. This article aims to go a step further and to focus on the concept of the 'estate landscape'.<sup>1</sup> It is a relatively new concept and not so easy to define.

The Nederlandse Kastelenstichting (Dutch Castles Foundation) defines a country house as: 'every residence, often with garden and park and outbuildings, established by the owner with a view to spending varying periods of time in the countryside', adding that: 'The aim of this establishment was to enable the users to enjoy peace and quiet and the rural surroundings. At the same time it served as a status symbol and offered the possibility of presiding over any industrial, agricultural and forestry activities connected with the estate.'<sup>2</sup> What is missing from this definition is the investment motivation. In Amsterdam, just as previously in Venice, high-risk investments in trade and shipping gradually made way for more secure investments in property and (in Amsterdam) in shares.<sup>3</sup>

Defined in this way, country houses constitute a link between town and country. The initiative lay with a town dweller keen to spend part of the year outside the town. This means that, formally speaking, we cannot use the term 'country house' for houses in rural areas that were the occupants' main residence, such as the manor houses that were at the centre of landed estates and were occupied all year long.<sup>4</sup> Yet the dividing line is not always clear, especially after more and more houses built originally as country retreats came to be permanently occupied over the course of the nineteenth century. This was facilitated by greater physical comfort (heating) and faster transport connections. Perhaps we are defeating our own purpose if the term 'country house' can no longer be applied to those houses. The definition could also encompass the many ex-urban allotment-style complexes whose owners occasionally spend more than a day there. In practice they are not referred to as 'country houses', but the borderline is nevertheless blurred (fig. 1).

Nowadays 'country house' is the generic term for a rural residence with landscaped garden, but it only started to be used in the course of the eighteenth century and did not become a standard expression until the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Up until then, many different

terms had been in use for the permanent or occasional rural residences of city dwellers. Martin van den Broeke describes a tour of Zuid-Beveland in 1774 during which the travellers visited a succession of acquaintances in their summer residences, which were variously referred to by terms like *lusthof*, *lustplaats*, *landhoeve*, *lusthoeve*, *zomerverblijfplaats*, *hofstede*, *hoeve*, *huis* and even *boerenhoeve*.<sup>6</sup> Many of those terms convey the attraction that the seemingly uncomplicated rural life held for city dwellers. At the same time they make life more difficult for historians: the different terms overlap, and their meanings changed over time. The objects themselves were extremely diverse: in size alone they ranged from the vast country estates of the Stadholders, comparable to foreign stately homes, to the modest gardens of the lower middle classes.<sup>7</sup> For example, a term like 'hofstede' (lit. homestead), could apply equally to a farmhouse with a *herenkamer* ('elegant quarters' – a dedicated 'room' for the landowner and his family) and to a large country house.<sup>8</sup>

A country house could be part of a landed estate that also comprised agricultural land and woods. Such landed estates commanded an income that safeguarded their continued existence. By contrast, a country house was first and foremost a 'place of consumption' and while it usually generated some income, additional funds were always needed. The owner of a country house depended on income from other sources, such as commerce, industry, mining, colonial exploitation or considerable inherited wealth.<sup>9</sup> In practice the transition from country house to landed estate was fluid because many country houses, for instance along the Vecht, had begun life as a farmhouse to which a *herenkamer* or a manor house had been added. Alongside the resulting country house, the farm continued to operate and to provide income.

Country houses can be seen as individual objects, comprising a house with adjoining gardens. They can also be described in relation to their wider context, as part of a landed estate or in conjunction with the surrounding landscape. In the latter case we might look, for example, at avenues and visual axes. In the international literature the term used for this is 'estate landscape',<sup>10</sup> which corresponds to the Dutch term 'country house landscape' or, in the terminology used by the provinces of Utrecht and Zuid-Holland, 'country house biotope'.<sup>11</sup>

However, none of these terms does justice to the situation, encountered nowhere more sublimely than in the Netherlands, of a landscape characterized by a continuous series of country houses.<sup>12</sup> This is why I prefer to refer to such a landscape – the theme of this essay – in the plural in Dutch, literally 'estates landscape'.<sup>13</sup> This can be defined as a series of adjacent

◀ 1. Section of Amsterdam street plan by J. Blaeu, 1649. It shows the modest middle-class gardens just outside the city fortifications. They came about when one of the typical strip-shaped meadows was subdivided, creating a central lane flanked by gardens (Utrecht University Library)



2. Map of Walcheren by D.W.C. and A. Hattinga (1749-1750) (Zeeuws Archief)

country house estates that together form a landscape-architectural ensemble.<sup>14</sup> Within such a series the individual country house or landed estate may be linked by roads and visual axes, or have a common origin. I will discuss a few examples below.

Growing interest in such ‘estate landscapes’ has spawned a plethora of new terms. The province of Utrecht talks about a country house estate zone, Zuid-Holland about a landed estate zone (somewhat confusing since in many cases it refers to country houses). Because the country houses in such zones usually lie along a road or water, the term ‘belt of country estates’ is particularly apt.<sup>15</sup> Yet another term is ‘country house estates network’, introduced by the landscape architect Dominique Blom.<sup>16</sup>

Such ribbons have also been recognized in the past, when they were referred to as *lustwarande* (plea-

sure grounds),<sup>17</sup> or, alluding to the pastoral ideal landscape of the ancient Greeks, as *Arcadia*.<sup>18</sup> The term *lustwarande* is interesting. The term *warande* has been used since the late Middle Ages to refer to game parks, which is to say, private hunting grounds. More specifically, a *warande* (warren) was a game reserve where smaller animals, like rabbits, were kept. Such hunting grounds were characterized by a varied, ‘park-like’ landscape that also had aesthetic value.<sup>19</sup> To judge from an early instance of the term *lustwarande* – in the eighteenth-century book series *Tegenwoordige Staat der Vereenigde Nederlanden* (Current state of the United Netherlands), where it referred to the environs of the Honselaarsdijk country house estate near Naaldwijk – it would appear that the association with hunting still existed.<sup>20</sup>

With all these terms we need to remember that the

areas concerned have a longer history and that country houses simply add a new layer to a landscape that was already cultivated. In many cases it is the older agricultural layer that wins out in the end when farms outlive the country houses. The Beemster Polder acquired World Heritage status based on the original agricultural layout that is still clearly visible. Here the estate landscape represented a short-lived historical phase that barely rated a mention in the nomination for World Heritage status.<sup>21</sup>

The rest of this article focuses on two periods, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, characterized by geometric garden designs and by a preference for flat land, and the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, characterized by landscape gardens and a preference for the more undulating sandy areas.

#### FROM COUNTRY HOUSE TO ESTATE LANDSCAPE

Quite a lot has been written about the possible reasons for building country houses in particular locations. Some country houses have their origins in an older family property, perhaps consisting of a medieval castle or manor house, or just a farm. Others were built by the owner of an adjoining industrial enterprise. Just outside Utrecht, for example, Rotsoord stood next to a brickworks and Zijdebalen beside a silk factory. In the case of city dwellers' country houses, the distance the owner was prepared to travel between their rural and urban residences was an important factor.<sup>22</sup> Concentrations of country houses tended to arise wherever an attractive landscape coincided with easy accessibility from a nearby town.

That not every town or city gave rise to a lot of country houses had to do with the nature of the urban population concerned: the chief prerequisite was a reasonably large elite with sufficient financial resources to be able to afford a country house. Another requirement was the existence of a social milieu in which the members of this elite encouraged one another to buy or build a house in the countryside. In other countries there were similar concentrations around important urban centres of trade and industry as well as around the large courts of early modern centralist states.

The Dutch provinces of Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht occupy a singular position, both nationally and internationally, owing to the large number of country house estates (fig. 2). Prosperity was certainly not fairly distributed among the inhabitants of these northern provinces, but even so, the group of people able to afford a country house was exceptionally large. Roel Mulder has produced an overview of the proportion of country house owners per income bracket in 1742. Of the Amsterdammers with an annual income between 4000 and 7000 guilders, over a quarter already owned a country house, for those with an income

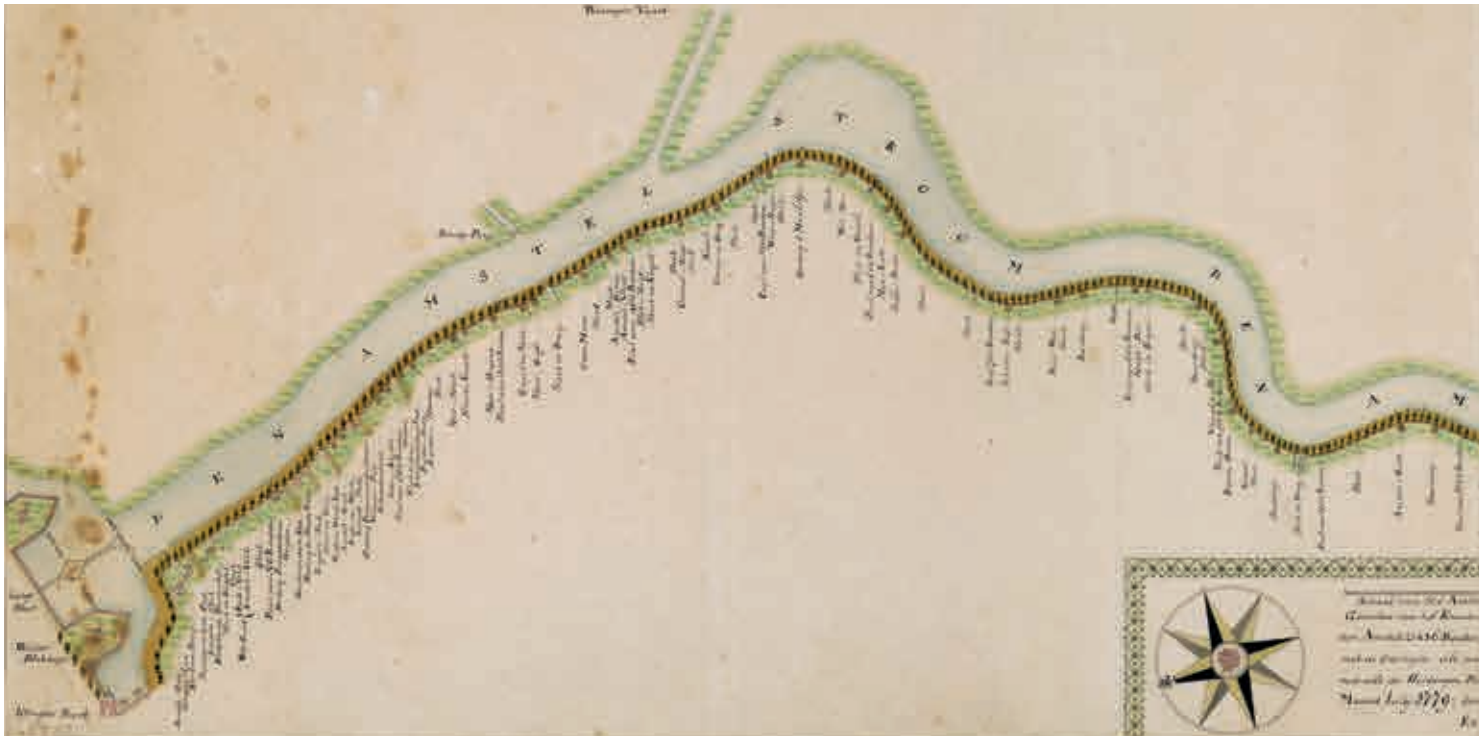
above 7000 guilders the figure was two thirds (fig. 3).<sup>23</sup> The country houses themselves were relatively modest, especially in comparison with those in France and later in England.<sup>24</sup> On the island of Walcheren alone there were over fifty country houses in around 1680, a number that had grown to over 130 by the middle of the eighteenth century. Most belonged to residents of the cities of Middelburg, Vlissingen and, to a lesser degree, Veere.<sup>25</sup> Marc Glaudemans estimated, based on a cartographic study, that at the beginning of the eighteenth century there were over five hundred country houses around Amsterdam.<sup>26</sup> He provided the following breakdown:

• Immediate vicinity of Amsterdam	100
• Watergraafsmeer	130
• Haarlem and its surroundings	105
• Amstel, Gein, Angstel, Vecht, Bijlmermeer	150
• 's-Graveland	26
Total	511

Owing to the preference for accessibility by water, the requirement for a reasonable distance from the city, and the attractiveness of 'border' zones like the inner edge of the dunes where the flat farming land bordered the hunting grounds in the uncultivated dunes, the numerous country houses were concentrated in several ribbons. As far as is known, the ribbons of country houses in the low-lying parts of the Netherlands are unique in the world.

Many such ribbons began with a small number of houses with gardens, to which more and more were added over time. One could argue that country house owners are like modern-day tourists who explain their reasons for visiting a Spanish coastal resort by saying that they are attracted by the beach, the weather or even the beautiful landscape, when they are actually drawn by the presence of other tourists. Diaries kept by country house owners reveal the endless to and fro of intensive interaction among local country house owning city dwellers. Besides, the concentration of country houses and landed estates was not without practical advantages. The presence of other country houses increased the high aesthetic value of the landscape. And it was also easier to find competent household staff.<sup>27</sup>

Yet this is not the whole story either. In several instances concentrations of country houses can be traced back to family connections, to the deliberate development of country estate landscapes or, in a few cases, to the unifying effects of the activities of a single



3. Map of Amsteldijk with country houses, between the Utrechtse Poort and the Groote Loopveld (now Ouderkerkerlaan) by E. Florijn, 1779 (Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

garden designer.<sup>28</sup> I look at a few of these in the following sections.

Contemporary observers had already noted the phenomenon of the country estate landscape. In the eighteenth century there was a market for picture books with titles like *Verscheyde gesigten van de vermaarde rievier de buyten Amstel* [Various views of the famous outer Amstel river] (one of the earliest, published in late 1715), *De zegepralende Vecht* [The triumphal Vecht] (1719), *Het verheerlykt Watergraef- of Diemer-Meer* [The sublime Watergraaf or Diemer Lake] (1725)<sup>29</sup> and *Amstel's Lustwarande, Rhynlants fraaiste gezichten* [Amstel's pleasure grounds, Rhineland's finest views] (1732). An excellent example is *Het zegenpralant Kennemerlant* [Triumphal Kennemerland] (c. 1730), containing a general map and engravings of the individual country estates, 'all drawn from life down to the smallest detail and with utmost attentiveness by H. De Leth in the year 1728, and without omitting the merest dot on any building or garden decoration'.<sup>30</sup> Christian Bertram made an interesting observation in relation to today's province of Noord-Holland, noting that such picture books only appeared after the country houses and accompanying gardens had been rebuilt on a large scale in the period 1700-1730.<sup>31</sup>

In the twentieth century country house estates became the object of historical research. Since then a great many historical publications have appeared, most of which are devoted to a single estate. Nevertheless, even early on a few authors ventured onto the

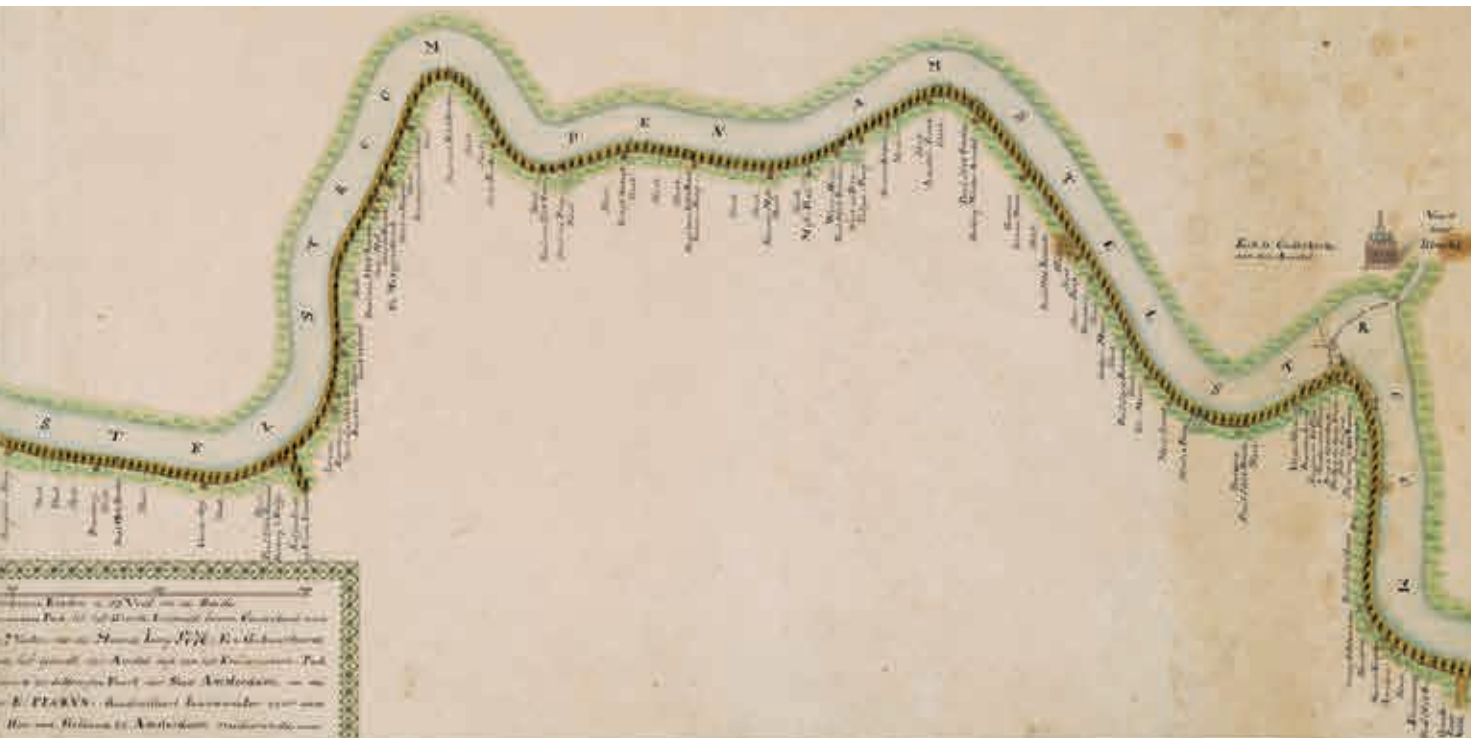
regional scale. One such is Remmet van Luttermvelt who wrote about the country houses lining the river Vecht and about the Stichtse Lustwarande.<sup>32</sup>

Interest in the regional approach appears to have increased during the 1970s.<sup>33</sup> An important pioneer was Henri van der Wyck whose 1970s maps accentuated the linear and planar elements of the various country house estates in the area. In 1977 he published maps of the Stichtse Lustwarande and Kennemerland, followed two years later by a similar map of the eastern Veluwezoom.<sup>34</sup> The maps reveal that the country house estates in these regions formed an almost continuous area and that various individual country houses were linked by avenues. As such, Van der Wyck went further than earlier authors by thinking not in terms of areas with a large number of country house estates, but in terms of a coherent whole. This thematic issue of the Bulletin is much indebted to Van der Wyck.

In the following sections several Dutch estate landscapes from the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are described.

#### ESTATE LANDSCAPES FROM THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Although there were certainly predecessors, the heyday of the country house estates we see today in the Netherlands began in the seventeenth century.<sup>35</sup> A number of these estates have their origins in medieval castles or knights' manors, sometimes because the



aristocratic owners moved with their times, sometimes also because urban grandees were looking not just for a place in the country but also for noble status and allure.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, the seventeenth-century country houses were also a new phenomenon. They were, as the name suggests, houses built by the urban elite out of a need to spend part of their time in the countryside. These country houses were scattered across the country, but a few areas were particularly popular (fig. 4).

Most country houses were situated along navigable waterways, within a thirty kilometre radius of a town or city.<sup>37</sup> That made it possible to move from town house to country house within the space of a day. The banks of these waterways were usually lined by many country houses, which no doubt simplified the task of cultivating the necessary social contacts. Important waterways included rivers like the Amstel and the Vecht. For Amsterdam the IJ, an inlet that continued as far inland as Velzen and Beverwijk, was also important. The combined effects of the impoldering of the IJ (the IJ polders, c. 1872), urbanization and new infrastructure rendered the original orientation of the country houses around Velzen completely unrecognizable.<sup>38</sup>

In the middle of the seventeenth century, the natural waterways were supplemented by a network of barge canals. One ran from Amsterdam along the Watergraafsmeer to Diemerbrug where it branched into canals to Muiden and via the river Gaasp to Weesp.

Another route to the Vecht ran via the Amstel to Ouderkerk and from there via the Holendrecht river to Abcoude, and then over the Angstel and via the Nieuwe Wetering to Nieuwersluis on the Vecht.<sup>39</sup> The distribution of country houses indicates that this last connection was the most important. The river Vecht itself was incorporated into the network of barge canals with the construction of a towpath in the years 1626-1628 (figs. 5 and 6).<sup>40</sup>

It should be noted that the literature places undue emphasis on water transport. For short distances in particular, coaches were also used. A map of the country houses around Leiden, for example, clearly shows that they stood along roads as well as along the Oude Rijn (where Leiderdorp was described by a foreign traveller in 1660 as having 'more palaces than farmhouses') and the barge canals.<sup>41</sup> Some of the country houses around The Hague were built along the river Vliet, but here, too, many were built along rural roads, especially after the main roads leading out of the city had been paved in the course of the seventeenth century.<sup>42</sup> In Zeeland the journey from town to country house appears to have been primarily over land. The preference, of course, was for roads that were passable for most of year thanks to their siting on dikes and alluvial ridges.<sup>43</sup>

The large seventeenth-century reclamation projects were financed by the same merchants and patricians who also built country houses. The investors were allotted farmland in the new polders and so were



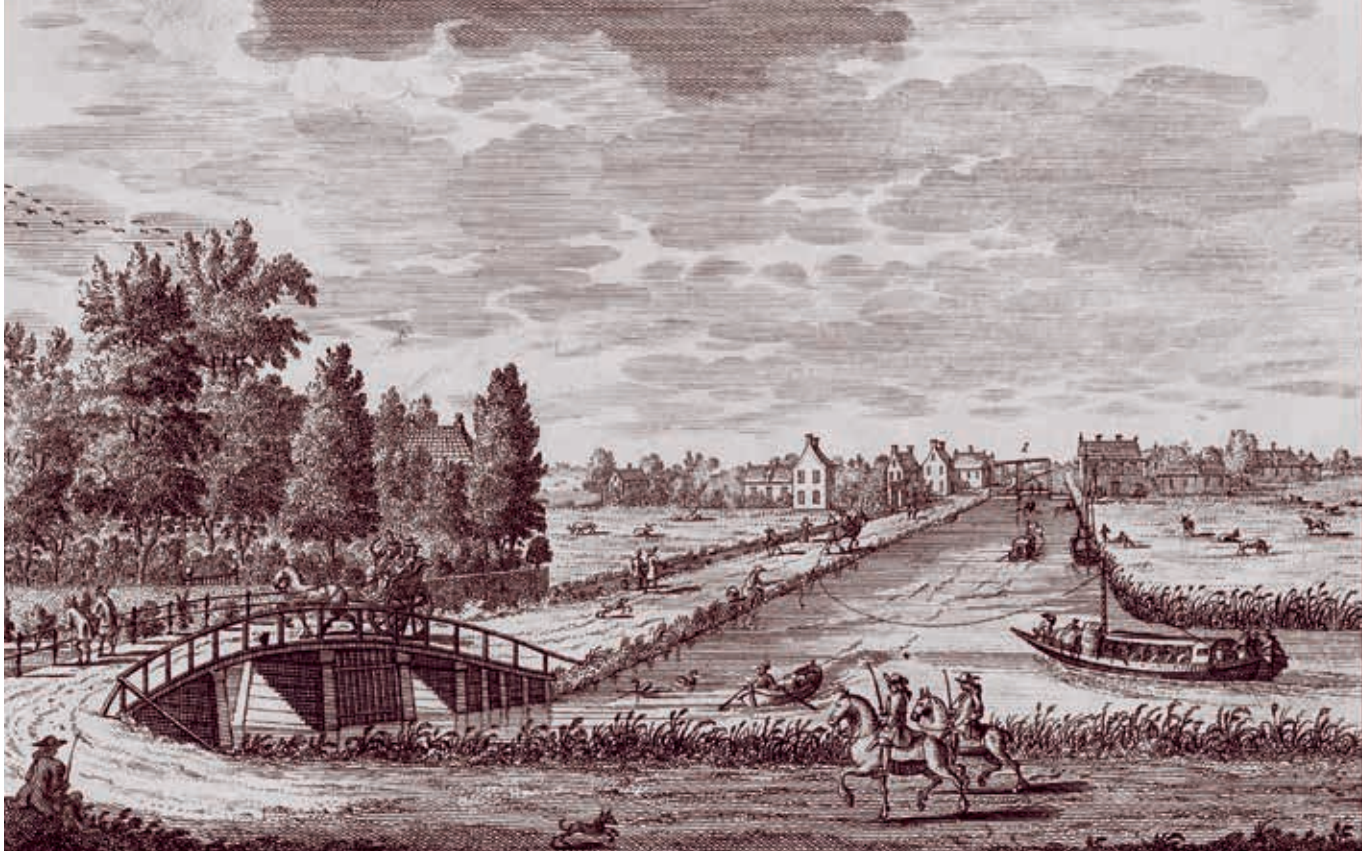
in a position to augment the farmhouse with a *herenkamer* and later a manor house.

Finally there were the edges of the higher sandy grounds, such as the dunes and the glacial ridge of the Gooi and the Veluwe. Although these higher areas themselves were deemed less attractive than the rich peat and clay landscapes, they did offer opportunities for hunting, a pleasurable form of networking comparable to the game of golf today. On the edge of both the Gooi ('s-Graveland) and the dunes (Elsout, Groenendaal) sand was mined.<sup>44</sup> This yielded income, a flat piece of land and a water connection (a canal was needed to transport the sand) and thus a good basis for a country house estate.

The growing number of country house estates also demonstrates the size and wealth of the urban elites. In the province of Holland, Amsterdam was far and away the wealthiest city in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and that was reflected in the enormous number of country houses within easy reach of this city.<sup>45</sup> There was a second large concentration around the administrative centre of The Hague. Substantial numbers of country house were also to be found around cities like Haarlem,<sup>46</sup> Leiden,<sup>47</sup> Delft, Rotterdam,<sup>48</sup> and Dordrecht.<sup>49</sup> The various estate landscapes overlapped. Amsterdam's influence reached as far as Utrecht and the country houses around Haarlem were within Amsterdam's sphere of influence. Interestingly, many of the country houses in Heemstede, close to Haarlem, were originally built by locals, but in the 1630s were bought by Amsterdammers and later combined to create larger country house estates.<sup>50</sup> In Zuid-Holland the influence of The Hague and Delft merged in Westland.<sup>51</sup>

Along the river Vecht, too, the affluent Amsterdam elite edged out that of Utrecht, even as far as the gates of Utrecht.<sup>52</sup> Utrecht's upper classes subsequently turned their attention to the eastern side of the city, around De Bilt for example, where a number of former monastery landholdings had become available. The Sint-Laurens abbey in Oostbroek, founded in 1121, had owned a substantial number of largely contiguous parcels of land, which were worked by a network of monastery farms (*uithoven*). When the the monastery of Our Lady (better known as the Vrouwenklooster) was split off from the abbey, several of the outlying farms went with it. After the Reformation the monasteries had been closed down and their possessions turned over to the States of Utrecht. Between 1640 and 1680 they sold most of the buildings and lands to

4. Map of a section of Noord-Kennemerland by H. De Leth, 1728. The country houses around Velsen lay in an arc along the western end of the IJ (Wijkmeer) and were all linked to that lake by a short canal (Noord-Hollands Archief)



5. View from the Watergraafsmeer Ringdijk looking east to the Diemerbrug by D. Stopendaal, 1725 (Stadsarchief Amsterdam)



6. The construction of barge canals in low-lying parts of the Netherlands began around 1630. By 1665 they formed an interconnected network (Ton Markus, Faculty of Geosciences Utrecht)





7. Country houses on the northern side of Utrecht that had their origins in former monasteries and accompanying farms, marked on the manuscript-topographic map of c. 1840. The coloured area in the middle is today's Utrecht Science Park (Ton Markus, Faculty of Geosciences Utrecht)



the regional elite who over time transformed the huge farms and parcels of land into country house estates. Sint-Laurens gave rise to the landed estate of Oostbroek, the Vrouwenklooster to 't Klooster, also known as Koelenberg. The outlying farms formed the nucleus of estates like Houdringe, Beerschoten and Vollenhoven in De Bilt and Nienoord near Bunnik (fig. 7).<sup>53</sup>

Comparable developments occurred around Arnhem, where the local elite managed to acquire the lands of the Mariëborn monastery and to establish a series of country houses on it.<sup>54</sup> In Zeeland the church-owned estates were disposed of with even greater dispatch, between 1576 and 1578, and there too we find several country estates on former ecclesiastical lands.<sup>55</sup>

There are a few known cases in which a group of contiguous country house estates were developed in

parallel. One of the finest, albeit unfinished, examples of such a planned country house estate landscape is along the road from Utrecht to Amersfoort, the 'wegh der weegen' or 'road of roads'. Its designer was the architect of Amsterdam's town hall, Jacob van Campen, who had evidently been influenced by Italian treatises. Everard Meyster even compared the road to the Via Appia near Rome. Construction, probably at the initiative of the City of Amersfoort, began in 1647 but did not really get going until 1652, by which time the original plan for the road had been supplemented with plots for country houses. The road and the country house plots, seventeen on either side, were marked out on the ground. The road was to be as much as sixty metres wide and its verges were to be planted by the owners of the adjoining land (fig. 8). The project was not a great success; in the end just a few houses were built.<sup>56</sup>



8. The Amersfoortseweweg in the second edition of the Nieuwe kaart van den Lande van Utrecht, by B. du Roy, 1743 (Utrecht University Library)

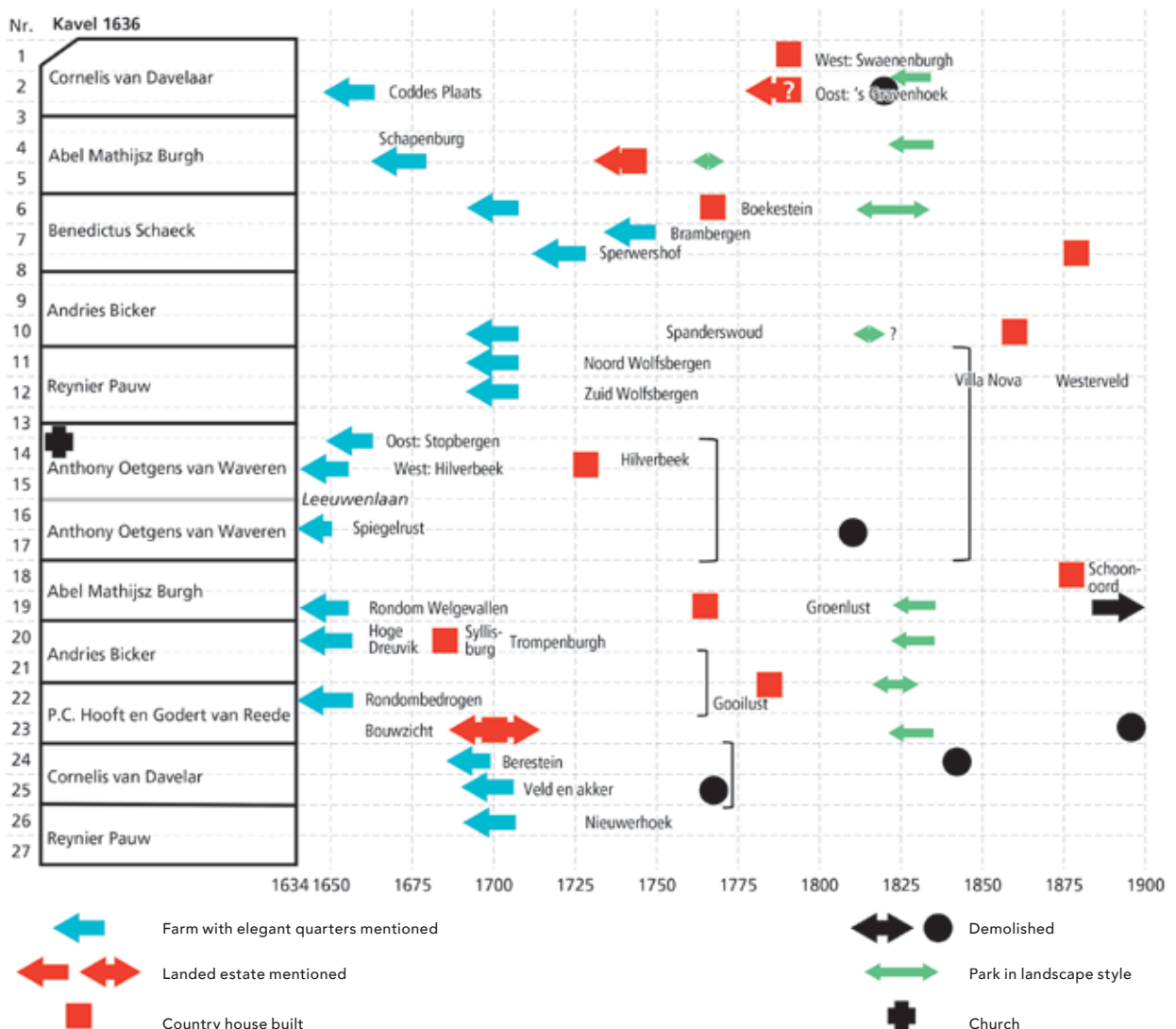
Another interesting example of planned development is 's-Graveland, on the western side of the Gooi. In 1625 the States General granted a number of Amsterdam patricians a patent to mine sand here. In 1634 the area was divided into 27 plots, which were raffled among the participants. The sand mining took off a few years later, after the construction of a canal, the 's-Gravelandsevaart (1638), which enabled the sand to be transported to Amsterdam. The canal had two branches: a southern one through Horstermeer, used primarily for transporting sand, and a northern branch connecting with the Vecht at Uitermeer. A canal boat service to Amsterdam opened on the latter as early as 1644.<sup>57</sup> Most of the sand would have been removed in the early years, but the area was never fully exploited.<sup>58</sup>

The removal of sand left behind a flat landscape suitable for farming but also for the layout of geometrical gardens. Most plots reappear later as country house estates. As with the impoldering, we may well

wonder whether this was not the intention all along. If we draw up a timeline of the development of this area it becomes clear that the first 'manors', often farms with a *herenkamer*, appeared soon after the cessation of sand mining (fig. 9).<sup>59</sup> It would appear that the sand miners had plans early on, if not from the outset, to prepare the area for farming, with farms-plus-*herenkamers*, once the sand mining had finished (fig. 10). The construction of genuine manor houses started much later and over an extended period of time.

The best known estate landscape in the Netherlands is that bordering the river Vecht (fig. 11). Interestingly, although it was an Amsterdam affair, construction of this string of country houses started on the northern side of the city of Utrecht. The hides and leather merchant Jan Jacobsz. Bal (1541-1624) had purchased the Gouden Hoeff farm in Maarssen as early as 1608. Later, in an allusion to his trade, Bal styled himself Huydecoper ('hide buyer'). In the four following decades he and his son Joan (1625-1704) bought up

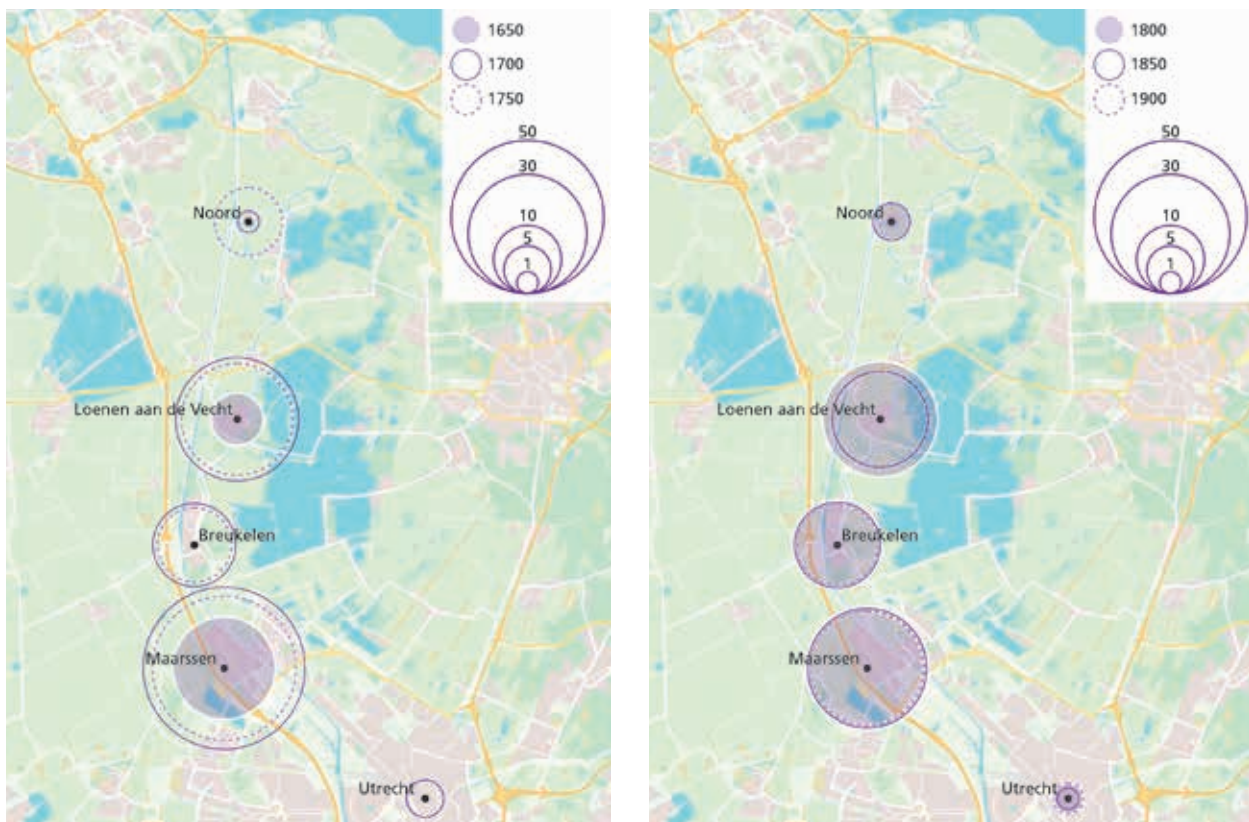
9. The development of 's-Graveland country houses in timelines (Ton Markus, Faculty of Geosciences Utrecht)





10. Brambergen in 's-Graveland is still a fine example of a farm with *herenkamer*, 1963 (photo G.J. Dukker, Cultural Heritage Agency)

11. Development of country house estates along the Vecht (Ton Markus, Faculty of Geosciences Utrecht)





J. COVENA en C. MORTIER  
 en AMSTERDAM.  
 AMEN der LUSTHOVEN  
 verhoef, de N<sup>o</sup> 1. Brouden vrommen  
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AD. N. O. AMAL. L. A. F. A. R. M.  
D. MAILORIVA VICTORY  
MAILORIA MAIORENA  
T. I. I. P. C.

Amstel Landt gevonden in Loender Sloot  
in het Jaer 1667

Den Amstel

N B U R G H S

Loender sloot

H o l l a n t s c h e

C E R E G H T

S P u i l d e l e r

R e g e r i n g

o u d o y e r

L O E N D E R V E E N



◀ 12. Map of Loenen showing an unbroken line of country house estates, copper engraving by C.C. van Bloemswaerd, 1727 (Utrecht University Library)

more land in this area. In 1629, the son, who later called himself Joan Huydecoper van Maarsveen, expanded the Gouden Hoeff into the Goudestein country house estate. A lot of the land bought by the Huydecopers was subsequently subdivided and sold in lots for the construction of country houses. The succession of country houses built on this land enhanced the prestige of the existing estates.<sup>60</sup>

Starting from the oldest nucleus at Maarsse, the ribbon of country house estates along the Vecht was extended and densified. The highest density, consisting of an unbroken series of country house estates, occurred in Maarsse, Breukelen and Loenen. Further north the construction of country houses started later, was less compact, and the houses tended to be demolished sooner, an indication that concentration served to reinforce and perpetuate itself (fig. 12).

With respect to drained lakes like the Beemster, the Watergraafsmeer and the Purmer, it is often assumed that the construction of country houses commenced soon after reclamation or was even part of the reclamation planning.<sup>61</sup> But that was certainly not true in every case. In the Beemster construction began fairly quickly and by 1640, a generation after reclamation (1618-1621), there were already 52 ‘manors’, of which twenty were year-round residences and the rest were occupied only in the summer months. That number remained stable until the middle of the eighteenth century. In the course of the subsequent eighty years all the country houses disappeared.<sup>62</sup>

In other polders, construction was slower to take

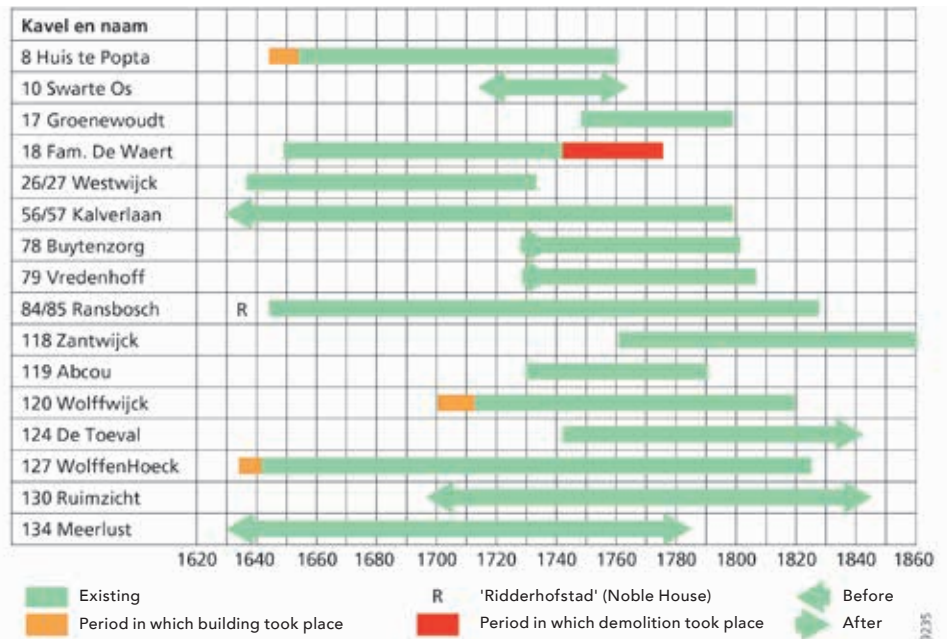
off. In the Watergraafsmeer, drained in 1629, manors and country houses were built during the seventeenth century, but the big breakthrough did not occur until after 1700. Glaudemans notes that ‘at a certain moment’ there were 50 manors, 31 country houses and 52 (mostly public) pleasure gardens, of which only 14 dated from before 1700 and only three of those from before 1651.<sup>63</sup>

It recently became possible to chart a gradual development in the Purmer as well (fig. 13).<sup>64</sup> In the years immediately after the draining of the Purmer lake in 1622, two country houses and a *ridderhofstad* were built, although there were probably already a few farmhouses with *herenkamers*. By 1700 there were eight country houses, after which the number gradually grew until the peak of 14 was reached in the middle of the eighteenth century. There followed a gradual decline until by the middle of the nineteenth century just one remained.

In Zeeland the best-known country house estates were on Walcheren. An unbroken series of estates developed along the inner edge of the dunes. They continued in an arc via Middelburg to Vlissingen.<sup>65</sup> On the island of Schouwen-Duiveland country houses were built by the urban elite of Zierikzee, with a notable concentration around Noordgouwe, a village which at its high point boasted over thirty country houses and was accordingly once dubbed the Noord-Gouws Arcadia (fig. 14). Here, too, the concentration grew stronger over time: the seven remaining country estates lie in close proximity to one another.<sup>66</sup>

In the various representative areas discussed above, we repeatedly see a growth in the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries. After a high point in the middle of the eighteenth century

13. The country house estates in the Purmer polder in timelines (Ton Markus, Faculty of Geosciences Utrecht)





14. The country house estates around Noordgouwe (Ton Markus, Faculty of Geosciences Utrecht)

there follows a long period of decline and demolition. Particularly large numbers of country houses were demolished at the beginning of the nineteenth century after which agriculture reclaimed the polders and the riverbanks.<sup>67</sup>

#### ESTATE LANDSCAPES OF THE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

By the time country house construction picked up again in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, landscape preferences had changed. The undulating sandy areas, long viewed rather negatively, were now regarded as attractive. They were also easier to lay out in the landscape style, which was the predominant type of garden design in the nineteenth century. A family like the Huydecopers, previously encountered in the Vecht region, had invested in country houses near Zeist at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>68</sup> In this period, the new owners of country houses still came from the big cities. In the southern part of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug they were bankers, industrialists and ex-colonials.<sup>69</sup>

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the accessibility of this area and the southern part of the Veluwezoom was improved by railway lines, later supplemented with a dense network of tramways and with highways. The construction of the railway line from Amsterdam to Arnhem via Utrecht and Drieber-

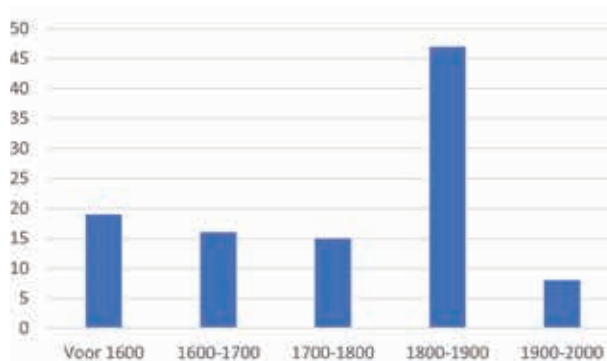
gen-Zeist created the possibility of daily travel to and from Amsterdam. In a short space of time an unbroken series of country houses and landed estates sprang up on southern edge of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, before long dubbed the Stichtse Lustwarande. A similar series was located on the southern Veluwezoom (fig. 15). This area was already home to medieval castles, partly connected with hunting in the Veluwe, partly with the local nobility. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries some of the castles had been converted into country houses and new country houses had been built. In the nineteenth century a dense and in some places an unbroken succession of country houses and landed estates emerged here.

The sandy landscapes also offered new possibilities. For a long time the extensive heathlands had been essential for farming on sandy soils, as pasture for the cattle and sheep that provided the manure and sods with which the fertility of the farmlands was gradually improved. With the arrival of alternative fertilizers, like Chilean nitrate, the agricultural sector's demand for heathlands began to decline in the nineteenth century. Municipalities started to sell off pieces of heath and farmers' organizations (*marken*) worked towards the distribution of the heathlands. However, the farmers had neither the fertilizer nor the money to develop or afforest their new land. In these circumstances wealthy city dwellers were able to buy large tracts of land for a modest price and in so doing acquire large landholder status.

#### THE DECLINE OF ESTATE LANDSCAPES

Most of the literature on country houses pertains to the periods of creation, growth and heyday. The gradual disappearance of estate landscapes has received much less attention. This is certainly true of the question why some of these landscapes survived better than others. Yet this phase, too, has its own distinct geography. Of the estate landscapes that developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, quite a few remain in parts of the Vecht region and 's-Graveland,

15. Landed estates and country house estates of the Zuidelijke Veluwezoom, based on Storms-Smeets 2011





for example, whereas those in the polders and in Zeeland have all but vanished.

The reasons for these differences are still unclear. Explanations have been advanced for each individual country house and for each estate landscape, such as the disappearance of the Stadholder's court in 1795 in relation to the area around The Hague.<sup>70</sup> Many country estates located on the edge of cities were swallowed up by urban expansion schemes once Dutch cities started to grow again around 1860. The results were not always negative; many country estates were integrated into urban development plans as municipal parks. One example concerns the surviving country estates along the river Amstel. They no longer form a continuous estate landscape, but the biggest gaps had already opened up before the middle of the nineteenth century.

Another reason that is sometimes advanced is the changing fashion in garden design: the switch from geometric to landscape style triggered a corresponding shift in preference from the flat and prosperous farming areas to the wilder landscapes of the glacial ridges.<sup>71</sup> That was certainly an important factor for the new country houses and landed estates, but it does not adequately explain the various developments in the old estate landscapes. We need to remember that the landscape style was introduced to the Netherlands as early as 1770 and for the first fifty years was adopted chiefly in existing, often geometrically designed country house estates. Ponds were dug and the resulting spoil was used to create hills. In 's-Graveland there is a certain irony in this: the estate landscape once formed by levelling the outskirts of the Gooi to produce a flat landscape, was now being dug up again in order to create an undulating landscape. As a result, the country house estates were once again logically aligned with the Gooi, which became a popular place to live in the nineteenth century.

Nevertheless, the general tendency to demolish indicates that we should not focus too much on the motives of individual groups of owners but look instead for more structural changes. The worsening economic situation in the Dutch Republic in the final decades of the eighteenth century was certainly one of the main causes. By the same token, the second half of the eighteenth century was a period of prosperity in agriculture, which increased the competition for land.

It would be interesting to chart the chronology of demolition more precisely. There is an impression that the demolition of country houses in Zeeland was already well advanced in the second half of the eighteenth century, whereas around cities like Amsterdam and The Hague, which hung onto their prosperity a little longer, there was still a lot of demolition in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The high point

of the demolition of country house estates in the Beemster and along the Vecht was in the first decade of the nineteenth century. The same held for the Purmer, but there the demolition had already started in the eighteenth century.<sup>72</sup> In Kennermerland the small-scale country house culture disappeared to make way in part for much bigger estates. It is possible that the competition from farming on the fertile clay soils of the polders and Zeeland was somewhat stronger than in the peat regions.

More of the nineteenth-century estates appear to have survived. The financial crisis of the 1930s may have put an end to the construction of new country houses, but the existing ones, and especially the accompanying landscape style parks, were highly valued by lovers of both culture and nature. *Natuurmonumenten* (the Dutch Society for the Preservation of Nature Monuments), *Staatsbosbeheer* (the National Forest Service), and provincial landscape organizations, in particular those of Gelderland and Utrecht, acted as a safety net when private owners could no longer cope on their own. The leafy park-like surroundings also made it attractive to 'subdivide' former country house estates for the construction of villas. This put the *Stichtse Lustwarande* and the southern *Veluwezoom* within the reach of the upper middle class, without unduly disrupting the green character of the area. Later on the country house estates became popular with companies wanting to convey an aura of prestige. The repercussions were not always benign: if the company failed, the estate was poorly maintained, if it prospered, more and more of the park was gobbled up by new buildings and car parks. The same occurred with country house estates that were turned into healthcare facilities.<sup>73</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In the past the Netherlands possessed several areas with a high density of country house estates. By drawing up detailed timelines for several of these estate landscapes, it has been possible to demonstrate that many concentrations of country house estates evolved gradually rather than according to any plan. In many cases this was a cumulative process: new country houses were attracted by the presence of older ones. There are, however, examples of groups of country house estates that exhibited coherence from the outset, the best example being the construction of the *Amersfoortseweg* with adjoining plots already earmarked for country house development. Important estate landscapes originated in the seventeenth century and reached their high point in the middle of the eighteenth century. The most extensive estate landscape formed a wide circle around Amsterdam, others around the other big cities and on *Walcheren*. Most

were readily accessible by water, but overland transport was more important than often assumed. After the middle of the eighteenth century there followed a long period of decline, with large-scale demolition concentrated around 1800. Subsequently, new estate landscapes evolved but, in this instance, mainly on the periphery of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and the southern Veluwe and accessed by railway lines and highways.

It is mainly the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century estate landscapes that are of international importance. Some are still clearly discernible. The finest examples are that along the Vecht and that of 's-Graveland.

Estate landscapes call for a regional approach, which has gradually been taking shape in recent years. The interest in – and protection of – country house estates has undergone an evolution that has seen more

and more attention being paid to the major clusters. Whereas attention was initially directed at the houses, since the 1970s onwards there has been a growing interest in the accompanying gardens and parks. Even then Van der Wijck was already writing about the need to look further – at the country house estates in their surroundings and at groups of country house estates. It took until the twenty-first century for this to filter through into policies for country house biotopes and country house zones respectively. The term 'estates landscapes', which has been steadily gaining currency in recent years, makes it clear that research and protection need to go a step further by focusing on cohesive groups of country house estates, which should be viewed as a single landscape ensemble.<sup>74</sup> It is these cohesive estate landscapes rather than individual country house estates that are the repositories of landscape quality.

#### NOTES

- 1 The quotation in the title comes from J. Huizinga, *Nederland's beschaving in de zeventiende eeuw. Een schets*, Haarlem 1941, 174.
- 2 www.kastelen.nl/kastelen-nieuws-nks.php under 15-11-2019 (accessed 22 July 2021).
- 3 Y. Kuiper, 'Onderzoek naar de buitenplaats in de Gouden Eeuw. Een vogelvluchtperspectief', in: Y.B. Kuiper and B. Olde Meierink (eds.), *Buitenplaatsen in de Gouden Eeuw. De rijkdom van het buitenleven in de Republiek*, Hilversum 2015, 12-41, 17; F. Vogelzang, 'Buitenplaatsen als exportproduct? Een relatie tussen Italië, de Zuidelijke Nederlanden en de Republiek', *Kasteel & Buitenplaats* 16 (2014) 47, 3-8; F. Vogelzang, 'Het nuttige en het aangename. Buitenplaatsen als investering?', *Kasteel & Buitenplaats* 17 (2015), 48, 3-8. Nevertheless, the role of investment in agricultural land needs to be fully investigated: most country house estates in the Northern Provinces were built in the period 1650-1750, when such investments were actually less lucrative because of the low prices for agricultural products.
- 4 Vogelzang 2014 (note 3).
- 5 M. van den Broeke (ed.), *Buitenplaatsen in het Westland. Met smaak en tot voordeel aangelegd*, Heemstede 2018, 14-15.
- 6 M. van den Broeke with S. den Haan, *Buitenplaatsen in Noordgouwe. Hofsteden, luthoven en landhuizen*, Delft 2014, 12.
- 7 J.D.H. Harten, 'Stedelijke invloeden op het Hollandse landschap in de 16de, 17de en 18de eeuw', *Holland* 10 (1978), 114-134, 118-119.
- 8 M. van den Broeke, *'Het pryeeel van Zeeland'. Buitenplaatsen op Walcheren 1600-1820*, Hilversum 2016, 27-28. Christian Bertram uses the term 'hofstede' for a house with garden outside the town centre. He regards the term 'country house' as more specific: a 'hofstede' that is used by a city dweller as a summer residence that is designed for recreation. C. Bertram, 'Groenendaal als cultuurhistorische schatkamer. Buitenplaatsen tussen Heemstede en De Glip, 1600-1913', in: *Groenendaal, van buitenplaats tot wandelbos*, Heemstede 2013, 69-119, 70.
- 9 Raw materials extraction, for example, included sand mining, which features elsewhere in this article. Along the Oude Rijn there was also a connection between country houses and clay extraction: G. van Oosterom, 'Deftige wonen aan de Oude Rijn. De rol van kleiwinning op de ontwikkeling van een vergeten buitenplaatslandschap', *Het Nederlands Landschap. Tijdschrift voor Landschapsgeschiedenis* 34 (2016) 1, 12-21.
- 10 J. Finch and K. Giles, *Estate landscapes. Design, improvement and power in the post-medieval landscape*, Woodbridge 2007; J. Finch, K. Dyrmann and M. Frausing (eds.), *Estate landscapes in northern Europe*, Aarhus 2019, 13-14.
- 11 G.A. Verschuure-Stuip, 'De buitenplaats-biotop of landgoedbiotop. Nieuwe allianties in de bescherming van buitenplaatsen en landgoederen (Zuid-Holland en Utrecht)', *Vitruvius* no. 33 (2015), 18-23. In both provinces the biotope is an instrument for protecting coherent estate landscapes.
- 12 H. Ronnes, *Bij nader inzien, de Nederlandse buitenplaatsen. Tussen herinnering, vergetelheid en ongemak*, Groningen 2019, 4-5.
- 13 Van der Wyck used the singular form, although the plural has recently been gaining traction in Dutch scholarship. See for example: B. Olde Meierink, 'Buitenplaatslandschappen', *Kasteel & Buitenplaats* 19 (2017) 58, 22-29; S. Nijhuis, 'GIS-toepassingen in onderzoek naar buitenplaatsenlandschappen', *Bulletin KNOB* 115 (2016) 3, 147-164; G. Verschuure-Stuip with H. Renes, 'Hollandse buitenplaatsenlandschappen. Buitenplaatsen en hun relatie met het landschap (1609-1672)', in: Kuiper and Olde Meierink 2015 (note 3), 42-65.
- 14 Verschuure-Stuip and Renes 2015 (note 13), 50. A country houses landscape differs from a landed estates landscape because the latter, in which house and garden are surrounded by the estate's farms, fields and woods, is by its very nature distributed across the landscape. Whereas in a country houses landscape the sense of coherence is chiefly evoked by the unbroken succession of houses and gardens, in a landed estates landscape that role is fulfilled by the parks, woods and estate farms.
- 15 Olde Meierink 2017 (note 13).
- 16 D. Blom, 'Buiten in een stadslandschap. "Welk een moed om op zoo groote schaal bosch en park aan te leggen"', in: *Buitenplaatsen. Jaarboek Monumentenzorg 1998*, Zwolle/Zeist 1998, 84-95.
- 17 Olde Meierink 2017 (note 13); F. Vogelzang, 'De zoektocht naar de Stichtse Lustwarande', *Oud-Utrecht* 94 (2021) 4, 9-13. The wandering clergyman Jacobus Craandijk applied the term *lustwarande* to the area around Wassenaar, to Walcheren and to the southern Utrechtse Heuvelrug; J. Craandijk, *Wandelingen door Nederland met pen en potlood*, vols. 5, Haarlem 1880, and 6, Haarlem 1882.
- 18 E. Storms-Smeets (ed.), *Gelders Arcadië. Atlas van een buitenplaatsenlandschap, Utrecht 2011*; A. Loosjes Pz., *Hollands Arkadia, of Wandelingen in de Omstreeken van Haarlem*, Haarlem 1805; R.J. Ligthelm, *De Kralingse buitenplaatsen van de 16e tot de 21e eeuw. Een vergeten Arcadië*, Woudrichem 2020; C. Bertram, *Noord-Hollands Arcadia. Ruim 400 Noord-Hollandse buitenplaatsen in tekeningen, prenten en kaarten uit de*

- Provinciale Atlas Noord-Holland*, Alphen aan den Rijn 2005; M. Glaudemans, *Amsterdams Arcadia. De ontdekking van het achterland*, Nijmegen 2000.
- 19 H. Renes, 'Wildparken. Landschappen van jacht en wildbeheer in internationaal perspectief', in: Y. Kuiper et al. (eds.), *De jacht. Een cultuurgeschiedenis van jager, dier en landschap*, Hilversum 2021, 216-246.
- 20 Jan de Marre used the term *lustwaranden* in 1740 for the environment of Batavia; A. Zuiderweg, "'Lustwaranden van aanminnelijken zwier". Bataviase thuynen', *Cascade* 19 (2010) 1, 23-34. A few years later the *Tegenwoordige Staat* described the surroundings of Honse-laarsdijk as follows: 'The *Lustwaranden* around this Hof are very fair. As well as a large game preserve, aviary and orange-ry, there are fine avenues and woods [Dreeven en Lustbosschen] ...'; *Tegenwoordige Staat der Verenigde Nederlanden* 6 (1746), 595. In the latter description the hunting landscapes are still mentioned first, but in Batavia the description applies mainly to the gardens around the city.
- 21 whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/899.pdf.
- 22 Olde Meierink 2017 (note 13).
- 23 R. Mulder, *Op afbraak. De sloop van buitenplaatsen in de periode 1780-1830*, Utrecht 2006 (PhD thesis Language and Cultural Studies), 9.
- 24 Glaudemans 2000 (note 18), 74.
- 25 Van den Broeke 2016 (note 8), 34, 400.
- 26 Glaudemans 2000 (note 18), 184. Today there are still 552 officially recognized country house estates remaining: R.W.C. Dessing, *De Amsterdamse buitenplaatsen. Een vergeten stadsgeschiedenis*, Utrecht 2015, 7.
- 27 A study of the oldest land register of Amby, a village near Maastricht with a series of country houses, revealed that a striking number of gardeners lived in the village: H. Renes, 'De terrassen aan de oostzijde van Maastricht. Mens en landschap in Amby, Heer en Heugem', in: G.D. Majoor et al. (eds.), *Natuurlijk Maastricht. Compacte stad in een weids landschap*, Maastricht 2020, 98-115.
- 28 See for example R. van der Laarse, 'Amsterdam en Oranje. De politieke cultuur van kasteel en buitenplaats in Hollands Gouden Eeuw', in: Kuiper and Olde Meierink 2015 (note 3), 68-95. For clusters of country houses dominated by a single architect, see E. van der Laan-Meijer, *Het handschrift van L.P. Roodbaard. Ontwerpprincipes van Noord-Nederlandse landschapsparken tot 1850*, in preparation.
- 29 Bertram 2005 (note 18), 7.
- 30 H. de Leth (drawings) and M. Brouërius van Nidek (text), *Het zegenpralant Kennemerlant, vertoont in veele heerelyke gezichten van deszelfs voornaemste lustplaezen, adelyke huizen, dorp- en stede-gebouwen*, Amsterdam 1629.
- 31 Bertram 2005 (note 18), 7.
- 32 R. van Luttervelt, *De buitenplaatsen aan de Vecht*, Lochem 1948; R. van Luttervelt, *De Stichtse Lustwarande*, Amsterdam 1949.
- 33 H. Tromp and J. Six, *De buitenplaatsen van 's-Graveland*, Zeist 1975.
- 34 H.W.M. van der Wyck, 'Voorstellen tot inventarisatie en classificatie ter bescherming van buitenplaatsen en historische landschappen', *Groen* 33 (1977) 2, 41-50; H.W.M. van der Wyck, 'Het historische landschap van de oostelijke Veluwezoom en Rosendael', in G.G.[L.] Steur et al. (eds.), *Acht zwerfstenen uit het Gelders landschap*, Arnhem 1979, 71-116, esp. 72 (map) and 76 (the term 'buitenplaatsenlandschap'). The map was part of a never completed atlas.
- 35 Predecessors include the concentrations of mini-estates around the bishop of Utrecht's centre of power: J. van Doesburg et al., 'Kastelen in middeleeuwse veenontginningen', *Tijdschrift voor Historische Geografie* 2 (2017) 4, 212-230. See also Vogelzang 2014 (note 3) and R. Meischke, 'Buitenverblijven van Amsterdammers voor 1625', *Jaarboek van het Genootschap Amstelodamum* 70 (1978), 82-106.
- 36 R.E. de Bruin, 'Leven als een edelman. Kasteelbezit van Utrechtse burgers en patriciërs, 1600-1850', *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht*, 2009, 67-108.
- 37 Glaudemans 2000 (note 18), 58.
- 38 J. van Geest and R. Sierksma (eds.), *Verloren Uitzicht. Bloei en teloorgang van het Wijkermeer*, Amsterdam 2002.
- 39 Glaudemans 2000 (note 18), 91.
- 40 J. Schuyf, 'De Huydecopers als projectontwikkelaars in Maarssen', in: J.E. Abrahamse et al. (eds.), *Het landschap beschreven*, Hilversum 2021, 169-176, 171.
- 41 H. Rijken, *De Leidse Lustwarande; de geschiedenis van de tuinkunst op kastelen en buitenplaatsen rond Leiden, 1600-1800*, Leiden 2005; S. Schama, *Overvloed en onbehagen. De Nederlandse cultuur in de Gouden Eeuw*, Amsterdam 1988, 298.
- 42 Van den Broeke 2018 (note 5), 21.
- 43 Van den Broeke and Den Haan 2014 (note 6), 10-11.
- 44 A.G. van der Steur, 'De afzanding van de Hollandse binnenduinen in de 17e eeuw', *Contactblad Regionale en Locale Geschiedenis* 1 (1968) 58-62; Bertram 2013 (note 8), 69-73.
- 45 Glaudemans 2000 (note 18); Ronnes 2019 (note 12), 20.
- 46 A. Neuteboom, *De Haarlemse buitenplaats in het stadsbeeld, toen en nu* (MA thesis VU, Amsterdam 2019)
- 47 Rijken 2005 (note 43).
- 48 R.J. Ligthelm, *De Kralingse buitenplaatsen van de 16e tot de 21e eeuw. Een vergeten Arcadië?*, Woudrichem 2020.
- 49 C.J. van Rossum, 'De voornaemste vermaaken der Dordtenaaren'. Een studie naar de opkomst en neergang van de buitenverblijven op het Eiland van Dordrecht (1600-1832), *Beneden-Leeuwen* 2017.
- 50 Bertram 2013 (note 8), 75-77, 79, 82.
- 51 Van den Broeke 2018 (note 5), 22.
- The map of Kruius (1712) shows some one hundred country houses in Westland, fifty of which are mentioned by name: Van den Broeke 2018 (note 5), 35.
- 52 De Bruin 2009 (note 37).
- 53 J.D.H. Harten, 'Landhuizen en buitenplaatsen', in: J.D.H. Harten et al. (eds.), *De tuin van Utrecht. Geschiedenis en waarden van het landschap in het land-inrichtingsgebied Groenraven-Oost*, Utrecht 1992, 43-68; H.M. van den Berg, 'De plaats waarop gij woont had gewijde bestemming. Buitenplaatsen op het terrein van middeleeuwse kloosters', in: W. Denslagen et al. (eds.), *Bouwkunst. Studies in vriendschap voor Kees Peeters*, Amsterdam 1993, 63-75; H.M.J. Tromp, *Buitenplaatsen bij De Bilt. Vollenhoven, Houdringe en Beerschoten*, Zeist 1980; H. Renes, 'De Uithof vóór De Uithof', *Oud-Utrecht* 84 (2011), 35-39. In addition to the named estates, Sandwijck in De Bilt was founded on land that had belonged to the Oostbroek abbey: H.M.J. Tromp, *Sandwijck bij De Bilt*, Zeist 1980.
- 54 E. Storms-Smeets, 'Gelders Arcadië. Landgoederen en buitenplaatsen', in: Storms-Smeets 2011 (note 18), 32-39, 33.
- 55 Van den Broeke 2016 (note 8), 60-67; H.M. van den Berg 1993 (note 57).
- 56 J.E. Abrahamse, "'Wegh der weegen." Ontwerp en aanleg van de Amersfoortseweg. Een zeventiende-eeuws landinrichtingsproject door Jacob van Campen', *Flehite, Historisch Jaarboek voor Amersfoort en Omstreken* 7 (2006), 73-97; J.E. Abrahamse and R. Blijdenstijn, *Wegh der weegen. De ontwikkeling van de Amersfoortseweg 1647-2010*, Utrecht/Amsterdam 2010; J.E. Abrahamse, 'A Roman road in the Dutch Republic. Jacob van Campen's "Via Appia" in the countryside of Utrecht', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 70 (2011) 4, 442-465.
- 57 Olde Meierink 2017 (note 13); J.D.H. Harten, 'De genese van het Gooise cultuurlandschap', *K.N.A.G. Geografisch Tijdschrift* 10 (1976), 93-116; J.D.H. Harten, 'De Nederlandse buitenplaatsen', *Historisch-Geografisch Tijdschrift* 16 (1998), 178-187; U.M. Mehrrens, 's-Graveland en zijn buitenplaatsen', Zeist 1985.
- 58 J.L. Kloosterhuis, 'Zandaafgraving in het Gooi', *Boor en Spade* 8 (1955), 126-131.
- 59 Regarding the problems surrounding the term 'hofstede', see note 8. In 's-Graveland we assume that the 'hofsteden' from the first phase of construction were farms with *herenkamers*.
- 60 Schuyf 2021 (note 42); J. Simonis, J. Kottman and H. van Bemmel (eds.), *Elsenburg, de verdwenen buitenplaats. Het ontstaan van het buitenleven aan de Vecht*, Hilversum 2020.
- 61 Van der Laarse 2015 (note 29), 80.
- 62 K. Bossaers, 'Buitenplaatsen in de Beemster', *De Nieuwe Schouwshuit. Tijdschrift van het Historisch Genootschap Beemster* 6 (November 2008), 17-20. A number of 'plaijsirhuijsen' (pleasure houses) were already listed in the 1633 land tax regis-

- ter (*verponding*): C.L. Nijst and L. den Boon, *Geluk in de Beemster. Onderzoek naar buitenplaatsen, eendenkooien en molengangen*, Alkmaar 2012. Katja W.J.M. Bossaers used to maintain a website with detailed information on country house estates in the Beemster. Since her death in 2019, however, the website has disappeared.
- 63 Glaudemans 2000 (note 18), 81-90.
- 64 H. Renes, 'Water en buitenplaatsen', in: C. Gietman et al. (eds.), *Huis en habitus; over kastelen, buitenplaatsen en notabele levensvormen*, Hilversum 2017, 98-113. The information on the Purmer is based on the book *Buitenplaatsen in de Purmer. Investeren en buiten leven in een Noord-Hollandse polder*, by C. Boschma-Aarnoudse, Wormerveer 2015.
- 65 Van den Broeke 2016 (note 8), with a general map showing 139 country houses on the inside cover.
- 66 Van den Broeke and Den Haan 2014 (note 6); M. van den Broeke, 'Buitenplaatsen in Noordgouwe, 1820-1940. Notabele levensvormen van het Zierikzeese patriciaat', in: C. Gietman et al. (eds.), *Huis en habitus. Over kastelen, buitenplaatsen en notabele levensvormen*, Hilversum 2017, 269-283.
- 67 Mulder 2006 (note 23); R. Mulder, 'Herfsttij der buitenplaatsen', *Jaarboekje van het Oudheidkundig Genootschap 'Niftarlake'* (2006), 39-56.
- 68 R. Blijdenstein [Blijdenstijn], 'Negen-tiende- en vroeg twintigste-eeuws tuin-stijlen in zuid-oost Utrecht', in: K.M. Veenland-Heineman (eds.), *Tuin & park. Historische buitenplaatsen in de provincie Utrecht*, Utrecht 1992, 43-58.
- 69 Vogelzang 2021 (note 17), 11.
- 70 Van den Broeke 2018 (note 5), 41-44.
- 71 See for example Olde Meierink 2017 (note 13).
- 72 Mulder 2006 (note 23).
- 73 See, for example, Bertram 2005 (note 18), 8-9.
- 74 G. Verschuure-Stuip, *Welgelegen. Analyse van Hollandse buitenplaatsen in hun landschappen (1630-1730)*, Delft 2019, 41-60.

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## ESTATE LANDSCAPES IN THE NETHERLANDS

### 'VAST SWATHES OF THE COUNTRYSIDE WERE COVERED WITH COUNTRY HOUSES'

HANS RENES

In the past, country house research was mainly concerned with individual houses and gardens. Yet, as early as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, so many country houses were being built around the major cities that they came to define the landscape. Genuine estate landscapes took shape along several rivers (Amstel, Vecht), along the inner edge of coastal dunes, and on newly reclaimed land. In the middle of the seventeenth century, the rivers were augmented with a network of barge canals and soon they too were lined by a belt of country houses. The greatest density of country houses was to be found around Amsterdam, but other big cities in the provinces of Holland and Zeeland had their fair share as well. Access was mostly by water, but in some areas, especially in Zeeland, country roads performed this role. The majority of country houses were built on or next to a farm, which generally continued to exist and, in many cases, survived the country house.

In a few areas, the evolving density of country houses has been traced in a detailed chronological record. In most cases it reveals progressive growth towards a high point in the first half of the eighteenth century, after which a gradual decline sets in. However, in a number of areas growth was much more rapid, in particular along the River Vecht.

Sustained growth was followed by decline. In the final decade of the eighteenth century and the first

decade of the nineteenth, large numbers of country houses were demolished and in many instances the land reverted to agriculture production. It appears that the decline set in earlier in Zeeland than in Holland, but regional differences in decline are not yet entirely clear.

The second quarter of the nineteenth century saw the construction of a new generation of country houses, especially in the undulating sandy areas of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and the southern part of the Veluwezoom, where railway lines provided access. The owners of this new crop of country houses laid out their gardens in the English landscape style. They also bought up vast, neighbouring heathlands from local councils or farmers and planted them with trees. As a result, these country houses are quite different in character from those of the earlier period.

In the past the concentrations of country houses dominated the landscape and even today, wherever they have survived to a substantial degree they continue to represent an important landscape quality. As such, protection and management should not be confined to individual country houses but should extend to groups of country houses and their interrelationships (in the form of visual axes, for example). In recent years, a number of provinces have already set a good example by formulating policies for country house biotopes and linear estate landscapes.