

David Zuiderhoek

Local Heroes #11
David Zuiderhoek
1911-1993

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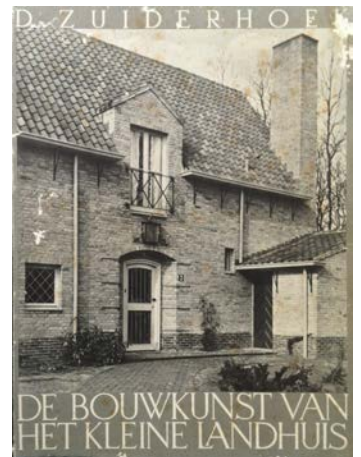
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My first memories of 'high-rise buildings' go back to my infancy. Then I was allowed to go to a colleague in Amersfoort with my mother. The colleague lived high up in an apartment, close to the Amsterdam-Amersfoort railway line. From her house there was a fantastic view. The flat, a building of 'only' five storeys with a lectern roof, turns out - as I now know - to be a building of David Zuiderhoek.

In my hometown of Baarn, there are also a few buildings designed by Zuiderhoek, including a school, a (former) church, and a hospital. Zuiderhoek mainly worked during the reconstruction period. Buildings from this period are a current topic now, as they have undergone economic depreciation. A work by Zuiderhoek has been included in the architecture yearbook 2011/12 due to a major renovation. This was one of his best-known projects, the then-innovative office for DHV in Amersfoort.

Who was this Zuiderhoek and what did he create? Spread over a variety of sources, there appears to be some information, but a full overview of his work is not available. We could start an overview, but the work is too extensive to be covered for our purposes. Is Zuiderhoek a 'Local Hero'? Of course, that depends on the definition, but since the majority of his work, and the best examples of them are in the middle of the Netherlands, they are relatively unknown. Therefore, I will consider him a Local Hero.

David Zuiderhoek (sometimes also called Daan or Dick) was born in Amsterdam in 1911 as the son of a tax official and evangelist. Many of his family members worked in construction, which could explain his career choice. His grandfather and uncle, for example, were well-known Amsterdam contractors, and were involved in the construction of the Concertgebouw. Zuiderhoek started working as a draftsman and supervisor, while studying in the evening. At the beginning of 1938 he obtained his HBO (Higher Education in Architecture) diploma while working for the architect R. A. Eschauzier in 's-Gravenland, and took part at the Dutch Pavilion for the 1937 World Exhibition in Paris. During the war, Zuiderhoek went to work at the Granpré Molière, Verhagen and Kok office in Rotterdam. At the end of the war, Zuiderhoek worked at home in Delft on a series of designs for country homes and other residential projects. He did not only work on houses, but created exemplary urban plans and details as well. The designs are fairly traditional, in the spirit of the influential



Delft School (and Granpré Molière). In 1947, these designs were published in a substantial portfolio folder as a kind of model book, entitled "The Architecture of the Small Country House". Strangely enough, there is a photo of a house on the cover, the design of which was not in the collection. At the end of 1945, he became the city architect of Amersfoort, a position he held until the beginning of 1956. Dudok was hired as an advisor by the municipality for the urban planning aspects, but Dudok soon reported that Zuiderhoek can do the work well without him. Zuiderhoek can realize his own work for the first time in Amersfoort. Subsequently, he settled in Baarn, in the monumental villa of "Sparrenwoude", as an independent architect where his office will remain until 1984. From 1972 he was there as an association with ir. G. A. v.d. Peat. In addition to his work as a (city) architect and urban planner, he was a member of many committees and juries. From 1947-1964 he taught at the Academy of Architecture in Amsterdam. Among his talented students is Piet Blom, among others who, according to him, gave him his first assignment. He also wrote articles for the Bouekundige Weekblad, Forum, and so on. Strangely enough, he is often cited with the 'IR' title, while he did not study in Delft. It is said that he was asked to become a professor in Delft in the 1960s, but for unclear reasons he did not proceed. Zuiderhoek died in 1993, at almost 82 years old in Baarn.

Kerschoten, Apeldoorn
(1958)





Brickwork fragment, Bergkerk (1952), Amersfoort

The Sources.

Zuiderhoek donated his archive in 1986 to the predecessor of the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAI) where it is now located. The archive in NAI contains exactly a hundred works. If you search on the internet, you will encounter works that are not on the NAI's placement list. For example, I knew about twenty completed churches. There are only eleven on NAI's list, one that has not been realized. The NAI list contains a minor renovation (Nicolaaskerk 1972) but some of the most important churches (Bergkerk 1952 and Petrakerk 1960) are not listed. That can be explained at the Bergkerk in Amersfoort, that Zuiderhoek designed the building as a city architect. The explanation for Petrakerk in Veenendaal is less clear - perhaps Zuiderhoek did not find some work worth saving? There is nothing in the NAI archive about his work as a city architect. Only three smaller projects from the period before 1960 are on the NAI list (from 1947, 1950 and 1952).

Zaagmolenbrug, Amersfoort (1954)



Kohnstammschool, Amersfoort (1953)





Russisch Ereveld, Amersfoort



Bethlehemkerk, Hilversum (1963)



Ontmoetingskerk, Dieren (1968)

Zuiderhoek probably won his first major independent assignment while he was still employed in Amersfoort, which ultimately led to his resignation from the municipality. There were also rumors that the lost competition for the Amersfoort town hall contributed to his decision. At the beginning of 1956 he was awarded the contract for the urban design of the Kerschoten district in Apeldoorn. Ultimately, as an architect, he also realized 550 homes. Of this there is no trace in the NAI archive. H. Diddens has done an extensive study of this area, which has been published in book form. This study also included a chapter with the biography of Zuiderhoek.

The complete works

Zuiderhoek has realized a large number of buildings, including many homes and a few offices, but his work is much broader, as he designed the city flag of Amersfoort, the Russian Field of Honor (a military cemetery), a bridge, a scout house, schools, seniors' centers, as well as the once-famous Flevohof, an agricultural amusement park. Much of his work has since been demolished (including the Flevohof) - burned down or rebuilt unrecognizably. It is impossible here to give a complete overview of his work, so the choice is to highlight four important elements, namely: drive-in homes, offices (gardens), churches and urbanism. A lot of work was created in collaboration with others, for example with Arie Rooimans at the Public Works department in Amersfoort, but also (landscape) architects such as W. Meyer, Rob Boom, Hein Klarenbeek and Henk Klunder. Stylistically, his independent work can mainly be regarded as post-war modernism. In his time as a city architect, the work is closer to the Delft School with a great deal of attention to refined details. A lot of work has been done in masonry but in his later work a lot of (prefab) concrete is also common. He did not shy away from the big gestures. He would not be considered an ideological or stylistic pioneer, but he is someone who easily joined the front lines.



Socratesstraat, Apeldoorn (1968)



Drive-in Residences

The drive-in home as a type was first built in 1937 in the Van Dijkstraat in Amsterdam to a design by Stam, Van Tijen and Maaskant. Characteristic is the indoor garage for the valuable car on the ground floor, with living functions above. From his design for the Kerschoten district in Apeldoorn in 1956, Zuiderhoek knows the Aijemersbedrijf Bijhuis from Rijssen. Together with this contractor, he realized many homes, including drive-in homes. After the war, car ownership quickly increased. Zuiderhoek recognized the qualities of the home type with the garage and applied it to a large scale. Because the house is quite narrow, three storeys high with a flat roof, it dealt with the material and land in an economical manner. This was a logical choice due to the material scarcity and housing shortage at the time. In 1964, he realized the Wesselerbrink district in Enschede with Nijenhuis. The first plan included 794 drive-in homes in one type. Two years later, 900 more drive-in homes, and 150 homes for the elderly were added. These numbers appear astronomical in our time. This is one of the first large-scale applications of tunnel formwork in the Netherlands. The houses have continuous band frames and parapets of white vertical metal cladding. Only the closed end facades are provided with masonry. The houses have their garden to the east, south and west. Central to the home is the stairway, perpendicular to the building walls. The floors of relatively narrow but deep dwellings (4.55 x 11m) protrude slightly above the ground floor, making them appear to 'float'. Zuiderhoek builds the successful type through the country. Below are some more examples but the list is not complete.



Kruizemuntstraat, Apeldoorn (1966)



A few years after Enschede, Zuiderhoek in Apeldoorn is building an improved and modified variant of the drive-in home in the Mheen (1966) and Sprenkelaar (1968) neighbourhoods, which has now expanded to 366 homes. In Enschede, the ground floor both in the front and the back falls back slightly compared to the ground plane. In Apeldoorn, facades have become flat and the floor plan has been improved (for example, to include a larger bathroom). The difference in street profiles in Sprenkelaar and Mheen is striking. In Sprenkelaar, the dead-end streets wind through the orthogonal housing blocks. This means that the depth of the front garden varies. Since almost no one uses the garage for the car, the street in Mheen appears crowded. Sprenkelaar, on the other hand, has deeper front gardens so the cars remain on the property.

It is also striking that virtually no houses are left in their original state. The houses are now affectionately known as “the do-it-yourself houses”. Of course, one can easily convert a garage into a home office, practice room, bedroom, and so on. The facades of almost every home has changed over time, with every color imaginable. The only exception is the window strip, which seems to be so compelling that it is respected universally. For houses with east-facing gardens you can see balconies on the street side above the front door, and a variety of roof structures with flat and saddle roofs. If the facade colors vary sufficiently, this almost resembles an MVRDV design (consider the barcode-house). In a sense you can see these houses as a precursor to the ‘starter homes’, where you can add, at your own discretion, greenhouses, roof constructions, annexes, and so on, to a basic home.

Kloosterlaan, Hilversum
(1970)



Two years later, the design is carried over to Hilversum. In addition to small homes for the elderly, 198 drive-in homes are also being built in the Kerkelanden district. The architecture still looks fairly original, except for the vertical facade cladding, which has been reoriented horizontally. Elsewhere in Kerkelanden one can see a further development of the drive-in home (by a different architect, incidentally). The rigid strip construction is loosened there by creating staggering facades. The balconies, both front and rear, are an important addition, which means the location of the house is always optimal. One can also see that there is a need for this in the Zuiderhoek homes in Apeldoorn (some owner-occupied homes instead of renting in Hilversum) where balconies have been added afterwards.

Another year later in 1971, Zuiderhoek designed the urban development plan for the Rozendaal district in Leusden for 476 drive-in homes. The houses therein are designed by Henk Klunder. It is not known to what extent Zuiderhoek is involved in the housing design, but the evolution of the housing type is continued. The floor plans are more adaptable and the houses are individually recognizable, with a balcony both in front and behind. By making the facades out of washed gravel concrete, it is virtually impossible for residents to make modifications. As a result, although the homes here are also privately owned, the neighborhood still looks very cohesive. An exceptional neighborhood management also plays a role in its cohesion.



Rozendaal, Leusden (1971)





DHV (1971)

Office Gardens

In 1971, Zuiderhoek design an elongated office building on the Amaliaaan for PPI (Polygram) in Baarn. The building has an almost open-office floor plan, the “office garden”, which rose to follow the curvature of the street. The facades consisted of an interesting composition of prefab concrete elements. (The original entrance is no longer recognizable due to a renovation). Around the same time, the building for DHV in Amersfoort will also be ready. Here the influence of structuralism in the work of Zuiderhoek becomes visible through the hexagonal structure. Here too are huge floor areas without internal walls, with well-defined spaces created by the hexagon. A few years ago, this building was renovated, where the bronze parapets were replaced with entirely glass facades, so that the building appears even more powerful. It is a nice detail, and Zuiderhoek’s signature claustras can be seen at the garage entrance in the basement. We will revisit these claustras later.

Zuiderhoek’s last large building is a rather generic office built in 1980 for the cement industry in Den Bosch. Five connected rectangles, 2-3 storeys high form around a core. The white prefab concrete facade is particularly striking here, with very deep elements that create a strong play of lines, especially with sun and shade.



Interieur DHV, Amersfoort (foto SVP ca. 1971)





DHV, Amersfoort (foto SVP ca. 1971)



Centrum, Den Bosch (1980)



PPI, Baarn (1971)





Opstandingskerk, Dieren
(1962)

Churches

Zuiderhoek realized twenty churches, five in 1966 alone (a significant number). It is remarkable that, in the society that was then still a pillar, he received orders from reformed Catholic church boards.

The church assignments range from the modernization of an old building (Dieren-Opstandingskerk), the reconstruction of a medieval nave against an existing tower (Vleuten) to complete new construction. Two churches have since been demolished (De Lier and Apeldoorn-Opstandingskerk), and another has been converted into apartments (Baarn-Opstandingskerk). In general, most of the churches consist of a large brick main volume, usually with a flat roof, and the actual church hall. The church hall also consists of masonry, non-parallel walls (for the sake of acoustics) and usually one or two large window openings - which can be more accurately described as a complete stained glass facade. Low-rise buildings with secondary functions and a patio can be found around the church hall. The patio is often provided with a pergola on one side, so that the patio forms a beautiful transition from high to low spaces. There is almost always a freestanding tower. The towers vary considerably in appearance, sometimes elegant but also with an extraordinary girth (see Den Bosch for example). The tower, hall and low-rise often form an asymmetrical composition.

Bergkerk, Amersfoort
(1952)





Open hofkerk, Apeldoorn (1966)

The Resurrection Church in Baarn (1965) deviates from these characteristics in two respects. This building is originally symmetrical with a sharply bent slate roof. The roof was an urban planning response, as Zuiderhoek reportedly found the plot too small. By giving the building a low gutter, he hoped to manipulate the building's apparent size.

In this church, however, two other features are visible that bear the signature of Zuiderhoek: the end facade of sloping masonry surfaces, and the narrow window strips between them. This creates a beautiful indirect light. In other churches he creates a variation of this theme by making a zigzag wall (for example Apeldoorn Open Hofkerk and Gouda). The most striking are the 'claustras' - concrete elements with fairly random perforations, filled with glass which is often coloured. Whether these elements were at the time a standard product, or whether they were developed by Zuiderhoek is not known. The fact is that he used them quite often, and used it for the first time in the modernization of an old church in Dieren.

The horizontal walls in Baarn are made of these claustras, which largely shape the interior. However "are" should be replaced by "were" - in the nineties, the church was converted into apartments, where the interior was lost and the longitudinal facades were largely demolished.

Opstandingskerk, Baarn (source: Reliwiki, photo from J. van Nes, 1983)





'Claustra'

In 1952, Zuiderhoek realized the Bergkerk in Amersfoort, his first church, and this style is quite different from his later churches. The influences of the 'Delft School' are still clearly present here. Simple volumes, faint hoods, free-standing gutters and richly-detailed brickwork and a plastered interior. Many of the typological solutions, such as the often-used asymmetrical church hall, are already present.

Eleven years later, the Pauluskerk opened in Gouda. From the outside, it is a rather austere brick colossus with one huge stained-glass window, and an elegant tower in the pond at the front of the building. The crystal clear floor plan spatially involves the corridor area in the fairly introverted church hall (like Bergkerk), which nevertheless allows a view of the surroundings. The masonry inside is strewn with crosses created by an alternation of two heads, one indenting and one extending.

Not all churches are equally refined. The impression is that at certain moments the Zuiderhoek studio was so busy that not all buildings received their due attention. It would be interesting to bring all the Zuiderhoek churches together in a comparative study, based on a typological analysis.



Interior, Pauluskerk (1963)



Pauluskerk, Gouda (1963)





Soesterkwartier, Amersfoort

Urbanism

Within Zuiderhoek's urban development work, there are four projects that deserve our full attention. In chronological order: the Soesterkwartier in Amersfoort (1953), Kerschoten in Apeldoorn (1958) the Nessen in Bergen (1965) and Park Rozendaal in Leusden (1971).

In 1946, Zuiderhoek wrote the following about his own field in a piece about densification: "Experienced urban planners try to keep the growth of our villages and towns within certain jobs while maintaining as much natural beauty as possible, thoughtfully and artfully." The three elements mentioned are recognizable in his best work: natural beauty, thoughtfulness and artistry.

Because Amersfoort developed rather asymmetrically in relation to the old center before the war, Zuiderhoek developed the 'petal theory' for Amersfoort. Until recently, this idea led the way in the development of the city, resulting in neighbourhoods like the Soesterkwartier as one of such 'petals'.

The development of the Soesterkwartier started after the construction of the Amsterdam-Amersfoort railway line at the end of the 19th century, that limited the planning area on the south side. The northern border is formed by the road from Amersfoort to Soest. Particularly in the thirties, a lot of residential construction was realized. After the war, the westernmost part, now known as the tree district, was still undeveloped. Although there was a pre-war allotment plan, Zuiderhoek, along with Arie Roomans, made a new plan based on the garden city concept.

Individual rows of houses grouped in open building blocks. The area lies at the bottom of the Utrecht ridge and runs towards the river Eem. The 2-meter height difference is visible in the longitudinal profiles. The seven street profiles are terminated on the north side with the first high-rise building in Amersfoort, composed to elegant double-porch apartments under a gabled roof - these are the same flats mentioned in the introduction. It is striking that in the north-south streets, the street lighting was originally attached to the facades of the houses, and the front-gardens were collectively managed as lawns, giving them a spacious appearance. This image has been weakened



Soesterkwartier, green center (1953)





Soesterkwartier High-rise
(1953)

by an increase in car ownership and the collapse of shared front gardens. In the westernmost portion of the neighborhood, homes have been reoriented by a ninety-degree turn, and here we find the smallest homes. The neighborhood is bordered on three sides by spacious green areas, which include rainwater collection points and facilities such as schools. The center is created by the axis of Plataanstraat and the Dreef. This creates a beautiful green space in the neighborhood along a linear water feature. A space that, viewed from the city, is bordered by the only portico apartment on the western edge. The architecture of the low-rise building is quite traditional, but very well cared for, a visible influence of Granpré Molière. A total of more than 800 homes have been realized in the post-war part of the Soesterkwartier. Just as in Amersfoort, a central green space in combination with water and alternating high/low rise form the neighborhood core in Apeldoorn. When Zuiderhoek was commissioned to design Kerschoten in early 1956, the area to the west of the center was largely undeveloped and used as agricultural land. A stream, the Leigraaf, curves westward towards the adjacent Het Loo palace.

The Zuiderhoek plan includes three large ponds, which are slightly lower due to the terrain profile, surrounded by park-like greenery. The ponds form the central axis of the plan and replace the stream. There are four residential towers in the park, on average 12-storeys high, designed by Ernest Groosman. In addition to the towers, around 300 low-rise homes for six L-shaped prototypes. Perpendicular to the two surrounding roads - Edisonlaan and Laan van Kerschoten - there are fifteen 3- to 4-storey apartments with porches, and around 250 houses. The low-rise buildings and portico houses have been designed by Zuiderhoek. West of the ponds, a shopping center is included in the plan. The western-most portion (the former ice rink) was the last addition to the plan area. Here, Willem van Tijen and Herman Haan designed an 11-floor seniors' home, a relative novelty in the late 1950s.



Soesterkwartier Low-rise
(1953)



The Soesterkwartier is primarily a working-class neighborhood, and with Kerschoten the emphasis was on a neighborhood for middle-class residents. De Nessen, for which Zuiderhoek draws up the urban development plan in 1965, is intended as a residential area for staff of the nearby Energy Research Center in Petten. The 243 residences were designed by architect Hein Klarenbeek. In Apeldoorn, the prototypes that make up the neighborhood are all different, while in Bergen they are almost identical. The tenth prototype is formed by an old homestead. The neighborhood has a very low density and a very green appearance. Every “Nes” (prototype) has square with nineteen connected low-rise houses, each with a garage. At the entrance of every street is an elegant split-level turret of four-stories and a little block of garages.



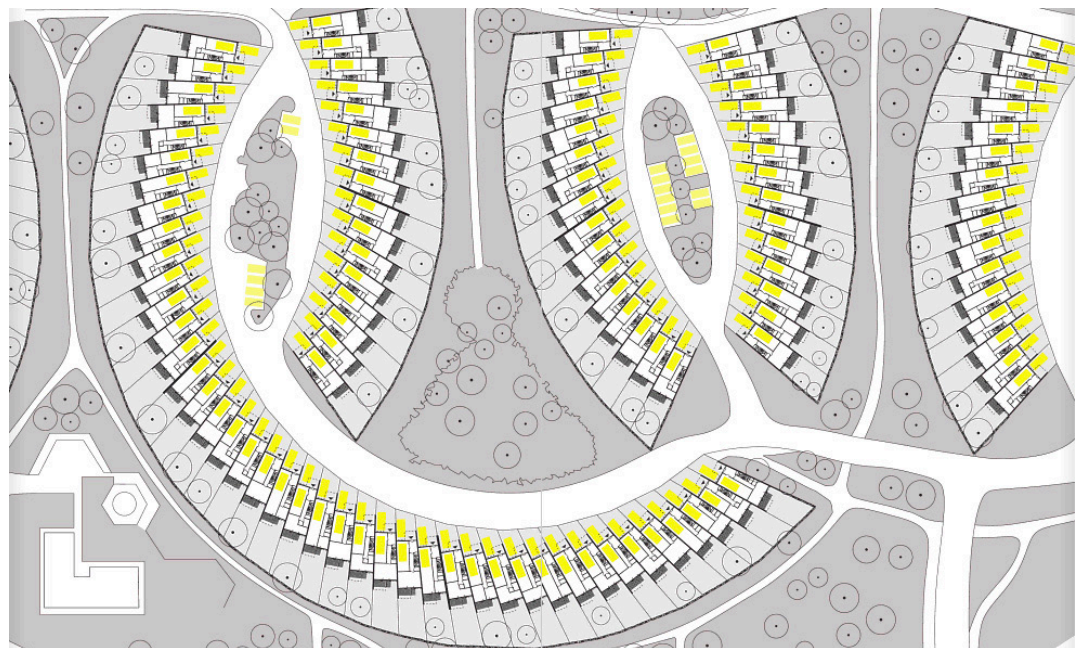
Kerschoten, Apeldoorn

The traffic-calmed landscaped squares in particular provide a pleasant living environment. Unlike the Soesterkwartier and Kerschoten, water features play no role here.



de Nessen, Bergen

The design for the Rozendaal district from 1971 has a density that is twice as large as the Nessen, and again feature landscaped squares, though there are many more cars here. Every home has a rear garden. However, in contrast to Bergen, most green space is managed collectively by the residents of the neighborhood. In addition, the residents also have their own swimming pool and tennis court. There is only one type of home in Leusden, designed by Henk Klunder. Drive-in homes are wedge-shaped and therefore merge into circular forms. Originally, the neighborhood would be twice as large, containing around a thousand homes. In the end, four hundred and seventy eight were achieved. Rozendaal is still a highly sought-after residential area within Leusden even after forty years.



Rozendaal, Leusden (image: Pocket book parking for the living environment, F. van Andel)





Rozendaal, Leusden (1971)

Epilogue

Zuiderhoek has left behind a varied body of work and has built an incredible amount. We should not that quantity says nothing about quality, and there are projects that are not worth the detour, but there are also buildings that are absolutely necessary. The architectural and urban design work from its early period has been refined, something that will decrease later on. For example, if you compare the Kohnstammschool in Amersfoort with the Collignyschool in Baarn, nothing is left of the elegance from Amersfoort in Baarn.

The development of Zuiderhoek is intriguing, since the romantic country houses from 1945 are no longer visible in the drive-in houses from 1964. Building is then transformed from craftsmanship into an industrial process, and then perhaps into the profession of the architect>

The careful handling of valuable buildings from the reconstruction period and that of Zuiderhoek in particular is very worthwhile. Often it is buildings or ensembles that nest in the collective memory, and are therefore of value for the place where they are. The 'new' office of DHV is a good example of dealing with this legacy. The original principles have been strengthened and the building has lost none of its power without being a restoration. For understanding and familiarity with Zuiderhoek's work in relation to his contemporaries, it would be worthwhile to work towards a complete monograph. Doing so would allow us to value the work of this relatively unknown multi-builder.





Oosterlichtkerk, Huizen
(1980)



Petrakerk, Veenendaal (1960)



Goede Herderkerk, Huizen (1967)



Thanks.

In addition to residents and managers of Zuiderhoek buildings that welcomed me enthusiastically, I would like to mention three people in particular who have been help in completing this project: Peter Doolaard and Johan Galjaard for sharing their knowledge and material about Zuiderhoek, and Henk Luijk for the layout. MH

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