

EXCURSIONS : BREVES NOTICES SUR LES
CHATEAUX ET LES JARDINS VISITES



SHORT INTRODUCTION

The aim of these excursions is to give some idea of Dutch architecture and gardening in the country from the 17th century until the present day.

Most of the houses which we will see were built or rebuilt about 1700. After a period during which work, trade and business were deemed the main occupations, the new generation got interested in luxury and pleasure. The development of the "Huis ten Bosch" clearly shows the difference between conceptions of life of the 17th and the 18th century people. Originally the house was quite austere. It was a sober brick house and its grandeur was mainly the result of the justness of the proportions, as is the case with many Dutch works of architecture. The house and the garden were two separate things, one had no access from the main storey to the garden for example. In 1734 two large wings and a sandstone front-pavilion were added. A staircase which was constructed at the back of the house formed a connection between house and garden. These additions and alterations changed the character of the house completely. In Dutch eyes it has been given a foreign appearance. This is not very surprising since the architect was a Frenchman, Daniel Marot (1661-1752). He was a refugee from France and has been the promoter of the new style, which is called by M.D. Ozinga in his book on Marot the "Dutch Louis XIV style". Marot came to Holland at the end of the 17th century when the time was ripe for an architect like him. He received many commissions and has strongly influenced the development of Dutch architecture, interior decoration and gardening especially. The first designs he made in Holland were probably destined for the castle of Zeist and the palace Het Loo. Most likely he made designs for the manor De Voorst (near Zutphen) and the castle Heemstede (near Utrecht) as well. The gardens of these houses had much in common. The accentuated continuation of the axis of the house and the symmetry of the lay-out were their main elements.

The summer-house and shellwork walls at Rosendaal and the additions to the "Huis ten Bosch" are examples of his later works.

Apart from these manors (Rosendaal, Middachten, Het Loo, Zeist, De Voorst etc.), the residences of the nobility who were friends of the stadtholder, some country-mansions were built by rich and distinguished merchants and regents to be used during the summer. In the provinces of Holland and Utrecht many manors were erected, sometimes on the spot of an older house. In some districts (Kennemerland west to Amsterdam, along the Vecht east to Amsterdam, around The Hague for example) the estates were laid one next to the other. Due to the expansion of the cities, the bulb-industry etc. most of these houses have

disappeared. Beeckesteyn, Het Manpad and Huis ten Donck were summer-residences of families from Amsterdam and Rotterdam respectively.

In the province of Overijssel a similar development took place. The houses Den Berg and the Aalshorst were built by a family from Zwolle. But since most of the Dutch noble families come from Overijssel and Gelderland the manors in these provinces generally belonged to noblemen. In the eastern part of the country relatively more houses has stood the tooth of ages than is the case in the west.

Although the lay-outs of the gardens which were planned in this period surely have been influenced by French gardening they were based on an old Dutch tradition as well. Canals and lanes formed the main elements and they were not very large. The garden of Het Loo rather large according to Dutch ideas was equivalent to the northern parterre of Versailles. Dutch people loved to decorate their gardens with flowers and dead material, staties, shell-work and spherical mirrors for instance.

During the course of the 18th century the building activity waned, partly due to the economical situation. As a result of this only a few rococo and early neo-classical buildings exist in the Netherlands. Romanticism got a slow start in this country and the greater part of the people altered their gardens in a natural style after the foundation of the "Royaume" in 1815. Most of these alterations were directed by members of the Zocher family who were both architects and landscape-architects. Three generations of this family have changed nearly every Dutch park of some importance.

At the end of the 19th century when copying the ancient styles had reached the period of the Dutch Baroque some gardens have been laid out in the manner of this period, such as Middachten and Weldam.

Due to the high cost of maintenance most parks and gardens are in bad condition now.

Most of the mansions we intend to visit are still private property. To find a solution for the present problems the owners have decided to establish the corporation "Castellum Nostrum". The purpose of Castellum Nostrum is to promote the preservation of private castles and historical houses and their grounds. By combining the interests of the owners, the corporation forms the appropriate interlocutor for the authorities and official bodies.

AALSHORST

La demeure actuelle et ses communs datent de 1720. La composition architecturale ressemble beaucoup à celle de Den Berg, mais les droits attachés à la propriété de Den Berg ne furent jamais accordés aux propriétaires d'Aalshorst. Nous ne connaissons rien sur l'histoire antérieure de la propriété.

A la fin du 18^{ème} siècle, la maison était la propriété d'une douarière de la famille de Famars. On conserve encore une carte de cette période qui montre le tracé des jardins. Dans l'axe de la maison se trouve un canal, à l'entrée et au fond de la propriété. Le canal qui traverse le fond de la propriété conserve son aspect originel, on avait tenté de masquer sa rigidité en lui donnant, devant, une apparence plus naturelle.

La maison et le petit jardin qui l'accompagne sont entourés par un canal. Sur le côté sud de la maison s'étendait un jardin de 2 hectares, qui était recoupé en petits compartiments et entouré d'un canal. C'est maintenant un potager. De l'autre côté, on trouvait un jardin semblable mais plus petit (1/2 hectare). on distingue encore des vestiges de son tracé, les canaux et les bassins.

A l'époque de Madame Rhijnvis Feith (1790-1878), le parc fut remanié et devint un parc paysager. La propriété appartient maintenant à une société à responsabilité limitée, dont les sociétaires sont les héritiers de Monsieur van Dedem. Monsieur van Dedem avait reçu la propriété en 1878, à la mort de sa tante, Madame Rhijnvis Feith. Entre autres choses, Monsieur van Dedem avait planté des arbres fruitiers et des espaliers. Le jardin de l'avant-cour fut tracé par son fils B.W. van Dedem. Cherchant une solution au problème du coût de l'entretien d'une telle propriété, les sociétaires ont commencé par dresser un inventaire des jardins (ainsi, S. van Dedem fit un plan du potager). Ils essayent de payer une partie des frais d'entretien et de réparation en cultivant des produits qui peuvent être vendus.

BEECKESTEYN

Le château actuel fut construit entre 1716 et 1721 par Jan Trip le jeune, dont le blason familial figure au-dessus de l'entrée avec celui de son épouse, Petronella W. van Hoorn. C'est à cette même époque qu'appartiennent aussi les dépendances, ainsi que le mur construit devant, avec ses soit-disant "théâtres". La mention 1719 figurait sur la vasque de la fontaine principale derrière le château, on peut en conclure que le jardin régulier fut créé à peu près à cette date.

Après la mort de Jan Trip, en 1721, Petronella van Hoorn se remaria avec L.A. Torck, propriétaire de Rosendaal. En 1742, le château fut acheté par la famille Boreel, et en 1772 Jacob Boreel l'agrandit en y ajoutant des pavillons de part et d'autre ainsi qu'une petite aile supplémentaire à l'arrière. C'est en cette même année que J.G. Michaël remania le jardin. Le plan qu'il établit - et que nous possédons encore - représente la première tentative faite par un hollandais pour créer un jardin paysager à l'anglaise; pourtant son projet se fondait visiblement encore sur une conception symétrique. Michaël étudia aussi les plans de plusieurs fabriques; sa chapelle de style gothique (transformée depuis en maison d'habitation) constitue la première manifestation du "Gothic Revival" aux Pays Bas.

Au cours de la première moitié du XXème siècle, le château a été laissé à l'abandon et, à la fin de la 2ème Guerre Mondiale, il se trouvait déjà bien délabré. En 1952, il fut racheté par la municipalité de Veisen. Les travaux de restauration, entrepris en 1959, furent poursuivis pendant dix ans; l'édifice est actuellement un musée, présentant du mobilier des 18ème et 19ème siècle.

Les architectes-paysagistes de la municipalité ont aménagé un jardin, en se fondant sur le plan dressé par Michaël, bien que celui-ci n'ait été que partiellement exécuté à l'époque. A gauche du château l'on trouve un jardin régulier, tandis qu'à droite est un jardin potager; les deux jardins sont entourés d'un mur au tracé ondulé. A l'arrière, on a restauré le bassin sec ainsi que la fontaine principale, qui étaient des éléments du premier jardin régulier.

A l'extrémité nord du parc, nous trouvons une impressionnante avenue bordée de rangées de chênes. Par contre, le parc paysager de Michaël, dont l'élément central était un vaste champ arable, n'a pas encore été restitué; le champ a

été transformé en pré. On discute encore de l'utilité de restaurer ou non ce qui était, somme toute, une oeuvre assez médiocre de Michaël.

Le domaine de Beeckesteyn étant un jardin public, les problèmes qu'il soulève sont différents de ceux que posent la plupart des autres châteaux que nous allons visiter. Le parc étant ouvert au public de nuit comme de jour, il n'est pas possible de placer les statues à une distance importante du château. Le parc couvre une superficie totale de 30 hectares. Son entretien est confié à un seul jardinier, qui se fait seconder lorsque le travail l'exige, par exemple, au moment de la plantation des oignons à fleurs. C'est Monsieur G. Jol, architecte-paysagiste de la ville de Velsen, qui a bien voulu accepter de nous le faire visiter.

DEN BERG

L'actuel château de Den Berg fut construit pour W.J. van Dedem (1655-1738) et sa femme G. van Deelen (1733), peu de temps après qu'ils aient acheté l'"Havezate" (demeure à laquelle sont attachés des droits particuliers) en 1703. Les armoiries de ces deux familles sont sculptées au fronton de la maison. On ne sait pas grand chose de l'histoire de cette maison. Un seul fait est sûr, elle fut construite à côté d'une maison plus ancienne. Cette dernière resta un alleu jusqu'en 1677, avant de devenir une propriété féodale de la province.

Le château n'a subi aucun changement, hormis sur la façade arrière où fut ajoutée une construction à trois côtés, avec une petite tour, dans la seconde moitié du 19ème siècle. Une partie du système des canaux et des allées a été conservé, comme le canal qui court parallèlement à la façade arrière et est relié au canal qui entoure la maison. L'allée carrossable qui coupe à travers une colline se poursuivait autrefois derrière le château.

L'avant-cour est délimitée par les deux communs et la grande porte, les arbres taillés en boule sont des Prunus. Les vases de grès que l'on voit sur les piliers de la porte sont ornés des armoiries des fondateurs.

Les terres de ce château couvrent 600 hectares. Le jardin de fleurs et le potager occupaient au moins 2 1/2 hectares, mais malheureusement il n'en reste rien.

Etant donné le coût élevé de l'entretien et des réparations - le seul curage du canal de 1 1/2 hectares, coûte à peu près 200.000 francs - il n'est plus possible d'assurer le bon entretien de la maison et des jardins.

DE WIERSSE, in the county of Zutphen, Gelderland, Netherlands

A garden of the first quarter of the 20th century developed from an 18th century pleasure ground by L.V. Gatacre.

1. 17th century origins (sketch plans I and II)

Since the end of the 15th century, possibly earlier, there has been a small landowner's house at de Wiersse, an estate which has varied in size between about 100 and 400 hectares, according to the fortunes of the owner and the division of inheritance. The shape and material of construction of the first house is unknown. The earliest 17th century plans show the house in a wooded rectangular enclosure (the north western quarter of the present garden), in a similar position to the present house, but to the north of the stream (the Baaksche Beek) - see sketch plan I. The eastern boundary of the enclosure was formed by a road, which survives in the present garden, as a broad walk, the principal, central, north-south axis - see sketch plan VI.

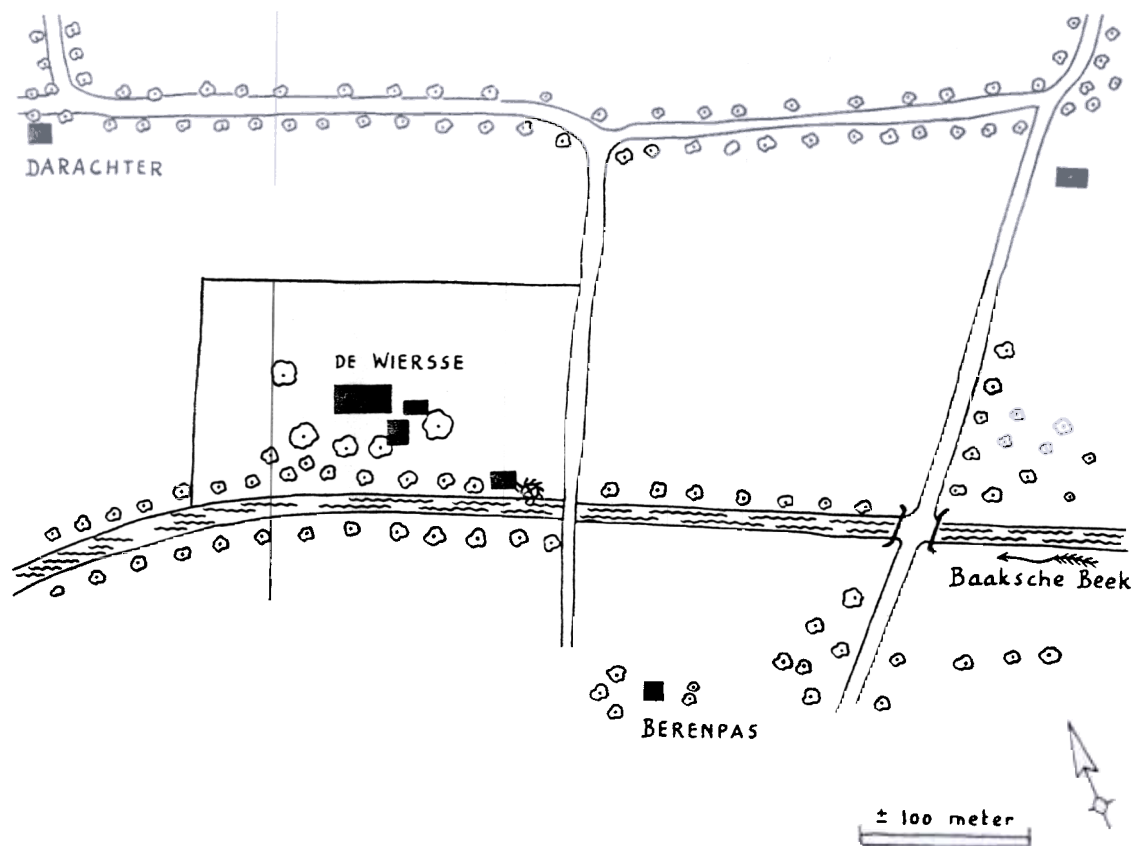
In the south-east corner of the enclosure was a water-powered corn mill. This appears to have ceased to work before 1833; but the miller's house survived until about 1920; its site is the mound close beside the bridge by which the broad walk now crosses the stream, in the very centre of the present garden. The mound is marked by a stone, commemorating W.E. Gatacre, the architect of the garden and park in its present form.

Three of the tenant farms closest to de Wiersse are still in the same position today : Berenpas (which can now be glimpsed through the gate at the south end of the brick walk lined by Irish yews, beside the present kitchen garden); Darachter (now de Tragter); and de Bokhorst (not named on the map, but occurring in the Verpondingskohier of 1649 as Buckhorst, and perhaps named "Bockslagh" in a 1651 map (sketch plan II) - the coppice to the east of the Bokhorst is still known as 'de Bergslege').

From Darachter ran a tree lined road, eastward, close beside the present avenue of Italian poplars, visible in the middle distance of the north view from the house.

If the map of 1651 in het Rijksarchief Gelderland (sketch plan I), and the copy made by the poet A.C.W. Staring, of a map bearing the same date (sketch plan II), are both accurate and correctly dated, then 1651 is the year in which the old house was pulled down, and a new house built to the south of the stream, in a similar wooded rectangular enclosure, where the present house now stands.

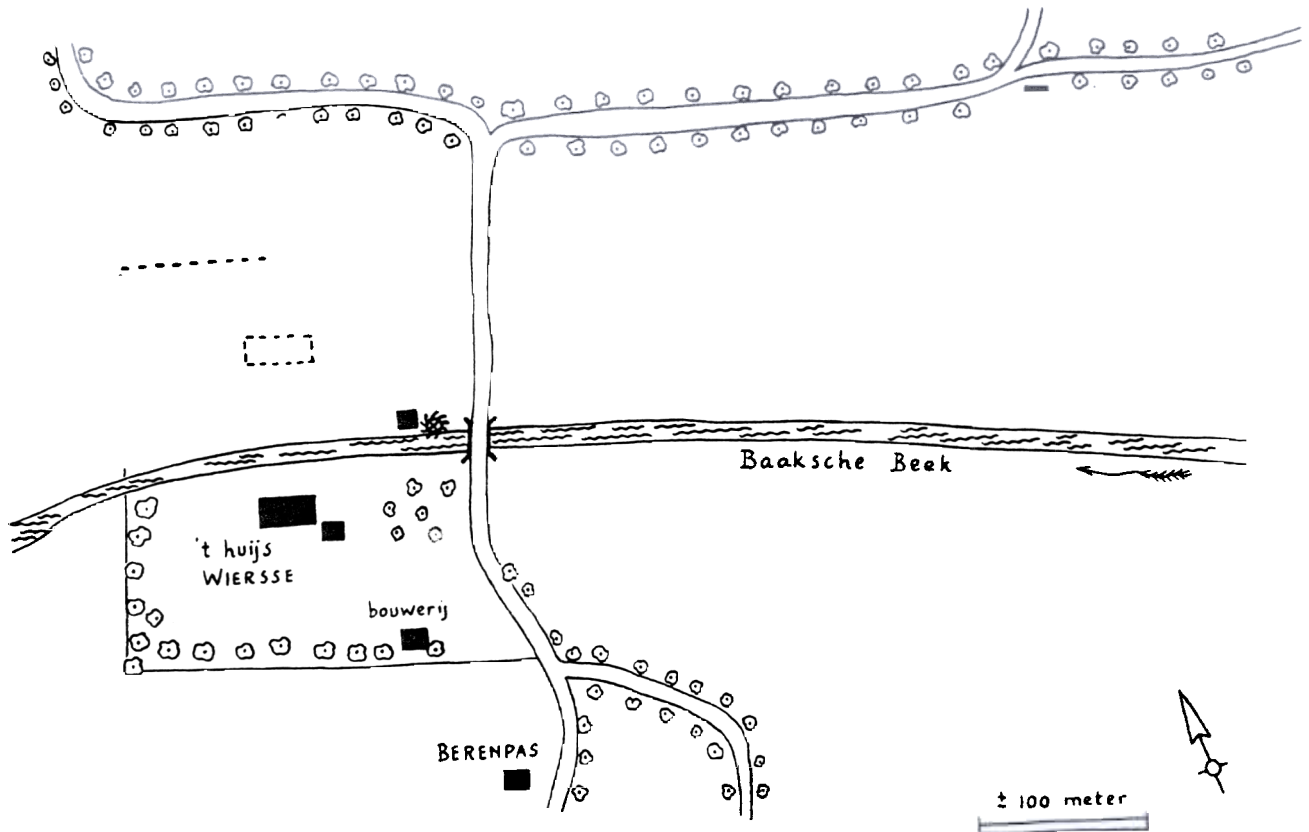
The mill and tenant farms continued in the positions they occupied at the beginning of the 17th century; but new farm buildings for the use of the house ('Bouwerij') are shown in the south-east corner of the enclosure, where



I 1621 & 1651 (Rijksarchief Gelderland, Alg. kaartenverzameling, Nos 164-166)

E.V.G Aug. '75

DE WIERSE



II 165 copie door Mr. A.C.W. Staring (Archief de Wiersse)

E.V.G. Aug. '75

DE WIERSSSE

the sunk garden is today. Thatched rooves for storing corn survived near by until 1833.

If the house was moved south of the stream in 1651, it seems unlikely that any very substantial building was done until after 1678, when de Wiersse came into the possession of ten Broeck, a notable of the county town of Zutphen. Ten Broeck's occupation closed a long period of legal battles and insolvencies. In 1724 his daughter married Adriaan Balthasar Valck, Burgemaster of Zutphen, whose heiress in turn married Ludolf van Heeckeren. The Heeckerens were a widely spread family, holding land in Gelderland since the middle ages, and in particular at Ruurlo, the next village and mill upstream.

The 1678 building probably consisted of the Northermost part of the present house, whose north east and north west wings perhaps then formed the gabled extremities of a one room deep, rectangular brick building, whose centre, and east end stood on the partly surviving vaulted cellars, and whose north face rose (as it still does) with a slight batter, out of the moat.

Part of the moat had been filled, probably early in the 19th century, and was excavated again in about 1922 when iron cannon balls and 17th century earthenware were found. A semi-circle of unexplained oak piles, not older than the 17th century, were also revealed on the east side of the house. In the 18th century, the house was extended southward, to form a T, and the character of the present fenestration was established. The first floor was always used as a principal floor and after the 18th century addition was built, the house was entered by external sandstone steps, on the south side.

In the interior only a little, very simple, late 18th and early 19th century plasterwork survives (principally in the present dining room) and one early 16th century flock-on-canvas chinoiserie wall covering (now in the entrance hall).