

Tony Fretton Architects - Housing in Den Helder

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The Monplein housing development by Tony Fretton Architects has been completed in Den Helder, Netherlands. Photo: Christian Richters

A 3,200-square-meter (34,000-square-foot) multiunit mixed-use residential development has been completed in Den Helder, Netherlands, on a site between two canals and overlooking a former Napoleonic naval yard.

Commissioned by Dutch developer Proper-Stok, the Monplein development comprises two- and three-story dwellings designed by [Tony Fretton Architects](#) with Geurst en Schulze Architecten in a full-city revitalization masterplan by [West 8](#).

The formerly vacant site is a single, irregularly shaped block that resembles a boot in plan. Units are arranged at the perimeter of the block, defining a series of private outdoor spaces in the center. On one side of the block, rows of narrow townhouses form unbroken walls onto the streetscape with a familiar Dutch residential scale and rhythm.



Rowhouses of the Monplein development. Photo: Christian Richters

On the block's other long side, larger separated dwellings form an alternating rhythm of solid and void. At the boot's bottom, a large five-sided open space is ringed by an array of mixed-use buildings.

The rowhouses designed by Tony Fretton Architects are abstracted versions of typical canal front and back houses with simple profiles, and tall windows and entry doors.



Courtyard entrances of the larger Monplein units. Photo: Christian Richters

Materials comprise wooden window frames in facades of white-painted or rose-hued brick. Discreet panels of Belgian marble are used in the lower portions of some elevations.

Inspired by the openness and energy that the practice observed in an earlier development they designed - De Prinsendam in Overhoeks, Amsterdam - where owners radically personalised their interiors, the houses are presented with unplanned interiors and carefully positioned service risers, fenestration and staircases that support a wide range of possible internal configurations.



Monplein housing units are finished in brick and Belgian marble. Photo: Christian Richters

Project Details and Credits

- **Location:** Den Helder, The Netherlands
- **Client:** Proper-Stok
- **Architects:** Tony Fretton Architects
- **Design team:** Tony Fretton, James McKinney, David Owen, Chris Snow, Chris Neve
- **Project Associate:** David Owen
- **Project Architect:** Chris Snow
- **Executive Architects:** Geurst en Schulze Architecten
- **Masterplan & landscaping:** West 8
- **Structural Engineers:** Ingenieursbureau Dijkhuis bv
- **Services Engineers:** Wolf Dikken adviseurs

- **Main Contractor:** Tuin Den Helder bv
- **Photographs:** Christian Richters



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