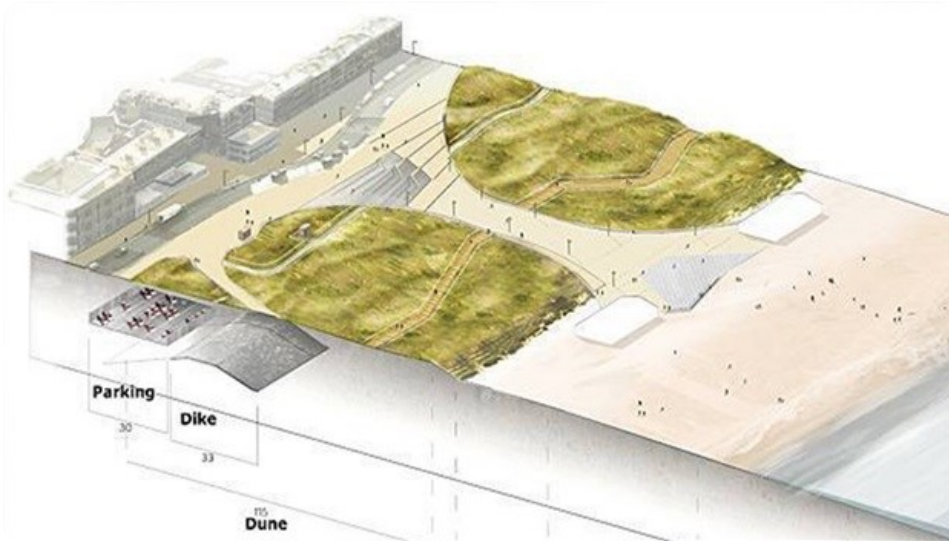


Dune covered carpark doubles as flood defence

Called an "exceptionally beautiful object" by the Royal institute of Dutch Architects, the Katwijk underground parking garage in Netherlands has received critical acclaim. Winner of the Best Dutch Building of the Year in 2016, the car park is not only able to house 650 cars, but also plays a critical role as a dike to protect the small town against future floods.

By James de Villiers 12 Jul 2016



When designers and architects were faced to find solutions to protect the 3,000 permanent citizens of Katwijk, they were left with two options: Either heighten the existing sand dunes or build a dike to protect against flooding. They quickly decided to construct a dike, similarly to what has been done in a nearby village of Noordwijk, that will reinforce the sand dunes. This in return will not disrupt the town's natural connection and view of the ocean.

Designed by Dutch architectural firm Royal HaskoningDHV, it was furthermore decided to construct a car park below the sand, after the dyke, to accommodate the thousands of tourists that make their way to Katwijk every year. Thereby integrating the building into the existing landscape, not only to disguise its bulk and give it an understated elegance, but also to contribute to the area's flood defences.



The underground parking level can be accessed by gently ramped roads. A cylindrical lift wrapped by a curvaceous staircase connects the carpark from the inside to the beach and boulevard. Brightly coloured signage is built into the ceiling to help

drivers navigate the 500-metre-long building and locate their car among the 650 parking spots.

Hanneke Groenteman, chairman of the committee selected the Best Dutch Building, said that the underground parking is ground-breaking. "Not only is it an exceptional building, but it also illustrates how the Netherlands have to be innovative in its approach when it comes to protecting our coastline for the future."

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