Two peninsulas in the eastern part of the Amsterdam docks, were to be exploited for water-related activities, as well as 2500 low-rise dwelling units, with a density of 100 units per hectare. For a new interpretation of the traditional Dutch canal house, West 8 suggested through their masterplan that new types of three-storey, ground-accessed houses deviating from the usual terraced house in being strongly oriented to the private realm by incorporating patios and roof gardens.

One example is from Marlies Rohmer Architects - Borneo Island (1997-2000). A block of dwellings that are arranged back-to-back around two collective courtyards, each of which measures 28 by 10 metres. The outer ring contains three-storey houses with kitchen-dining rooms at street level and ‘barn doors’ which can be opened in a variety of ways, so establishing a relation between the dwelling and the wide public footpath. The inner ring of dwellings, lining the courtyards, consist of two-storey studio apartments resting on an underground car park.
Aerial perspective
Concepts

The concept revolves around having linear parcels of single unit housing. The fundamental unit of Borneo Sporenburg is the single-family row house. To avoid monotonous visuals, typologies repeat in parcels of 5 - 12. To break up the parcels of single unit homes, dense apartment blocks intrude these strokes and create a more interesting movement both visually and physically. These apartment blocks create diversity and offer alternatives to the patio house living style. These superblocks also differ in orientation.
The Whale, Borneo Sporenburg

Designed by Frits van Dongen of de Architekten Cie and built in 2000, the project is located in Borneo- Sporenburg, a former harbor area in Amsterdam redeveloped to include 2500 low-rise dwelling units, with a density of 100 units per hectare.

One of the three immense sculptural blocks that interrupts the vast expanse of houses, it includes 214 apartments (150 social housing and 64 private housing for rent), 1,100 m² for business areas, and 179 underground parking spaces. Its design generates unique views and a great diversity of housing types, particularly in the lower and upper edges of the building.

With two sides of the building elevated, the lower floors receive sunlight coming in from under the building. Light and space have free access into the heart of the building, redefining the typology of the closed block: the inner area transforms the traditionally private domain into an almost public city garden.

The Whale

Project architect: de Architekten Cie
Location: Amsterdam, Netherlands
Year build: 2000
FAR 716%
Footprints: 5000 m²
Volume: 100.900 m³
Total floor area: 35.800 m²

Width: 50m
Lenght: 100m
Height: 36m
Floors: 12
Floor plan © cie.nl
Fasade drawing © cie.nl
**Borneo 12**

Project architect: MVRDV  
Year build: 1999  
**FAR 16%**  
Footprints: 40 m²  
Volume: 38 m³  
Total floor area: 160 m²  

Width: 2.5 m  
Depth: 16 m  
Height: 9.5 m  
Floors: 4

**Single family house**

The blocks do not have internal lung or gardens but the homes are back to back. Small courtyards are giving light and air to houses. On the roofs and gardens would be made when all blocks of three plants would be all the same height. Finally, mainly for economic reasons, few of them arrived in time to perform.

The two sides of each dwelling face public space. One, a canal, the other overlooking the street, allowing to optimize the entry of natural light, which also contributes to increasing the “spatiality” of interior spaces, creating the illusion of greater amplitude.

Section © MVRDV, https://www.mvrdv.nl/en/home
**Borneo 18**

Project architect: MVRDV  
Year build: 1999  
**FAR 26%**

Footprints: 67,2 m²  
Volume: 638,4 m³  
Total floor area: 268,8 m²  

Floors: 4  
Depth: 16 m  
Width: 4.2 m  
Height: 9.5 m

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**Single family house**

The blocks do not have internal lung or gardens but the homes are back to back. Small courtyards are giving light and air to houses. On the roofs and gardens would be made when all blocks of three plants would be all the same height. Finally, mainly for economic reasons, few of them arrived in time to perform.

The two sides of each dwelling face public space. One, a canal, the other outlookng the street, allowing to optimize the entry of natural light, which also contributes to increasing the “spatiality” of interior spaces, creating the illusion of greater amplitude.

Model of the house designed by MVRDV, https://www.mvrdv.nl/en/home