

3 Strengthen the identity and structure of the landscape

Identify those landscape features for inclusion in a scheme which contribute towards the unique character of a site. Particularly on greenfield sites, every effort should be made to work with the 'grain' of the land and incorporate existing features of the landscape into a scheme. Reviving historic features provides opportunities to enrich outdoor space and can include natural and man-made elements, from watercourses and streams to ancient field boundaries.

The intrinsic landscape characteristics for evaluation include topography; orientation; aspect and prospect; current landscape assets (trees, water, habitat etc) and liabilities; contaminated, despoiled and poorly drained land, unsightly structures; overhead lines and utility facilities.



Ecolonia's layout is centred on a reed-fringed pond, with buildings orientated to maximise solar gain



Highest density homes are located in the central area and enjoy a direct relationship with the water

<b>Ecolonia: A model of low-energy housing</b>	
Location	Ecolonia, Alphen aan den Rijn, The Netherlands
Promoter	NOVEM - Dutch Government Trust for Energy and the Environment
Design Team	Urban Designer / Masterplanner: Atelier Lucien Kroll, Brussels
Details	The Masterplan provides the framework for nine different architects, each given a particular design priority: <b>Energy</b> 1 Bakker, Boots, Van Haaren, Van der Donk, Schagen (high insulation) 2 J.P. Moehrlein, Groningen (solar energy) 3 Hopman bv, Delft (low embodied energy and in use) <b>Recycling</b> 4 BEAR architects, Gouda (economy of water and materials) 5 Alberts & van Huut, Amsterdam (durable materials) 6 Lindeman c.s., Cuijck (flexibility and adaptability) <b>Quality</b> 7 Vakgroep FAGO, Technical University, Eindhoven (acoustic insulation) 8 Peter van Gerwen, Amersfoort (health and safety) 9 Archi Service, s'Hertogenbosch (bio-ecology)
Developer	Bouwfonds Woningbouw Housing Association
Project	101 housing units (constructed between 1991-93) in groups of 8 to 18 buildings to foster a sense of community, each with different environmental design priorities (see above). A reed-fringed pond with bisecting canals forms the focal point.
Details	Ecolonia is heralded as the most important EU-funded low-energy housing demonstration project to date. The project is organised to develop a wide range of new technologies and housing designs, each focussed on different ecological aspects. These include the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use of rainwater;</li> <li>• use of passive and active solar energy;</li> <li>• energy saving strategies;</li> <li>• reduction in water consumption;</li> <li>• recyclability of building materials;</li> <li>• organic architecture;</li> <li>• durable materials;</li> <li>• flexible ground plans;</li> <li>• soundproofing;</li> <li>• healthy building materials.</li> </ul> The performance of buildings is subject to on-going testing, evaluation and monitoring.
Contact	Novem bv, Orderpoint Publications, PO Box 17, NL-6130 AA SITTARD Fax: 00 31 46 452 82 60