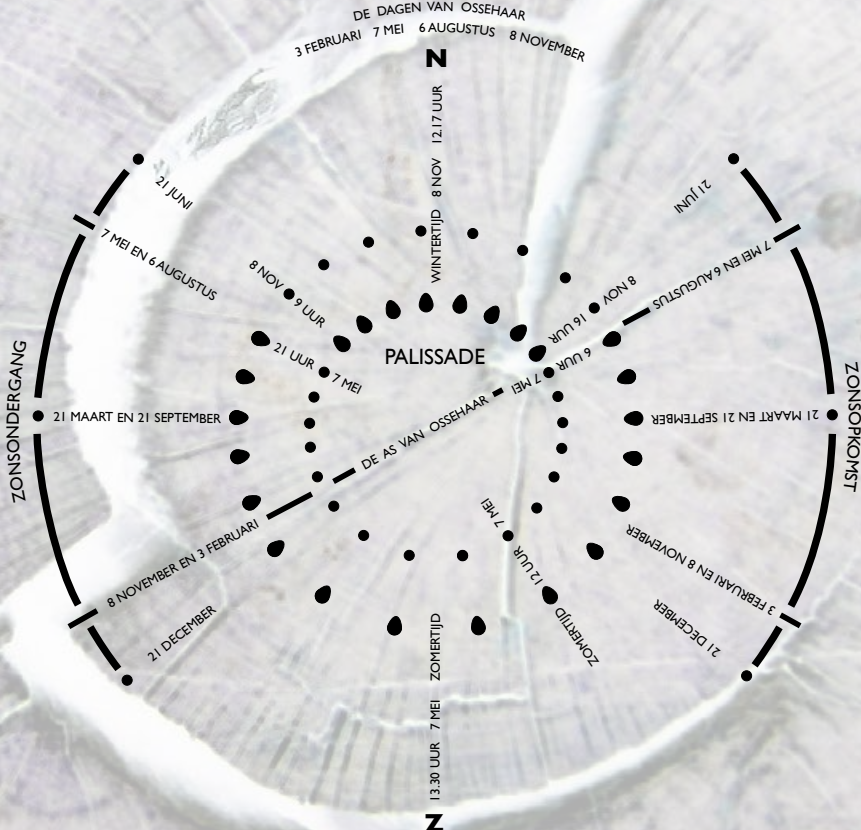


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PALISADE

A work of art commissioned by the municipal Coevorden



PAUL DE KORT

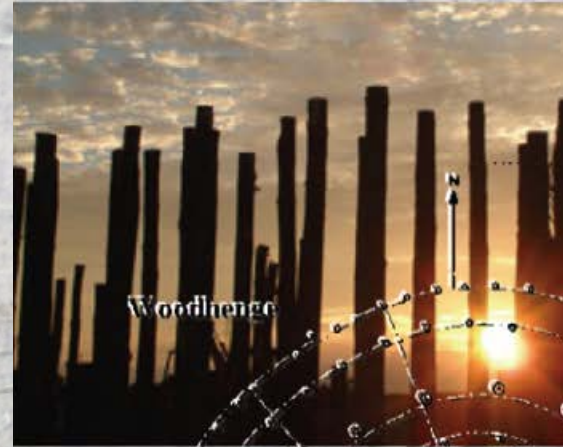
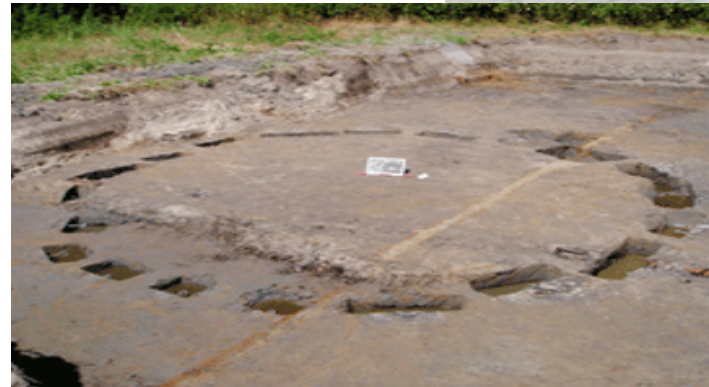
2010

GARLANDS OF POLES

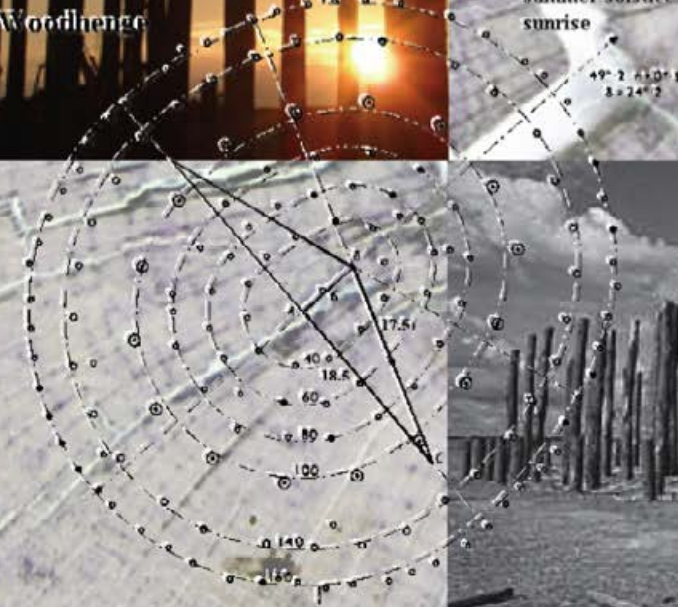
Traces were found of garlands of poles from the Bronze age (3000 – 1200 BC) south of Zwolle, not far from Coevorden.

These are supposed to be solar calendars. If we were to stand in the middle of the circle, we would be able to distinguish the place of the sun setting and rising over the different seasons from the different poles. A similar circle was found near Heiloo in Noord-Holland and near Amesbury in southern England. The design of these garlands bear a strong resemblance to the famous Stonehenge in southern England.

There is reason to assume that these garlands of poles were much more common in The Netherlands during the Bronze Age, perhaps there was even one on one of the sand ridges around Coevorden.



summer solstice
sunrise



COEVORDEN THROUGHOUT TIME

On the 26th of November 944, emperor Otto I of the Holy Roman Empire gifted the right of forest (the game law) in the Pagus Thriente (Drenthe) to bishop Balderik of Utrecht. Because of this, this region now fell under the rule of the diocese of Utrecht.

The first mention of the name Coevorden can be traced back to 1036, to the name Fredericus van Coevorden.

Ever since we can remember, Coevorden was strategically located on a sand ridge in the vast Boertanger marshlands. Travellers were forced to go through the castle town if they journeyed from The Netherlands to Germany or the other way around. This fact made Coevorden an interesting place for generals and merchants. They again attracted craftsman, scientists, and artists. Coevorden became a prosperous fortified town.

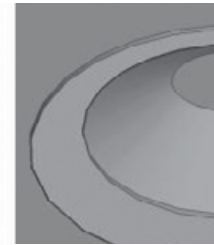
The rivers Loodiep, Drostendiep and Schoonebeekerdiep come together in the canals of Coevorden. The original paths of the rivers have probably been redirected because of military considerations, as the accompanying sketch suggests.



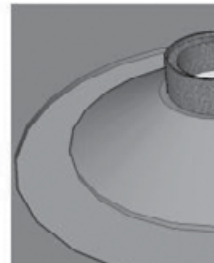
EVOLUTION FROM MOTTE-AND-BAILEY CASTLE TO FORTIFIED TOWN

Coevorden has a rich history as both an old fortified town and as a trading town, but it has also been the county capital of Drenthe for quite some time. The oldest topographical mention is that of 'Koevoorde' – a place where farmers drove their cows (koe) through the most fordable (voorde) place in the river – and dates back to 1148.

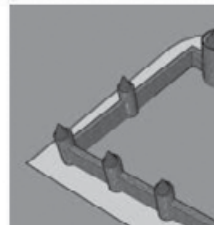
The early medieval birthplace of Coevorden is shaped by an artificial hill with a keep on top, or a castle with a palisade for a defence wall. The hill was constructed of the excess mud from the moat that was being dug around the building. This type of stronghold is called a motte-and-bailey castle. Motte-and-bailey castles were constructed in the 11th through 13th century to function as a powerbase of local and regional rulers. Sometimes, these motte-and-bailey castles transformed into fortified towns via actual castles. This is what happened in Coevorden.



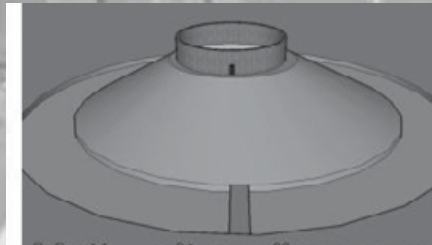
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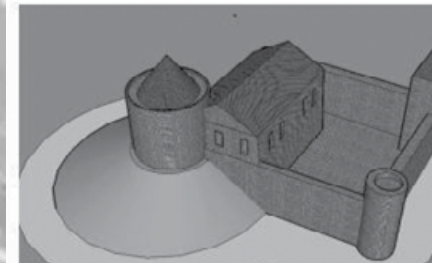
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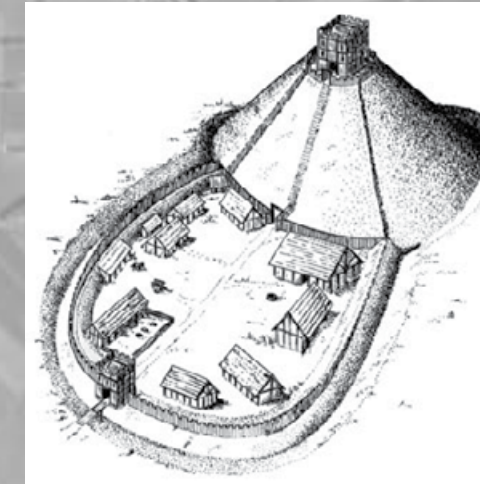
motte met pallisade



naar donjon met kasteel



van voorburcht naar vestingstad



de plattegrond van Coevorden als vestingstad

"MEETING BETWEEN TOWN AND LANDSCAPE"

The municipal Coevorden is developing the neighbourhood Ossehaar east of the city centre. We can see striking parallels between the start of Coevorden as a motte-and-bailey castle around 10 centuries ago and the recent development of this neighbourhood in the 21st century.

The planning of Ossehaar involves the creation of a hill on an old sand ridge (with mud from the surrounding canal). The hill is located on the opposite of Ossehaar, just like the medieval motte-and-bailey castle was situated on the opposite of the surrounding settlement of Koevoorde.

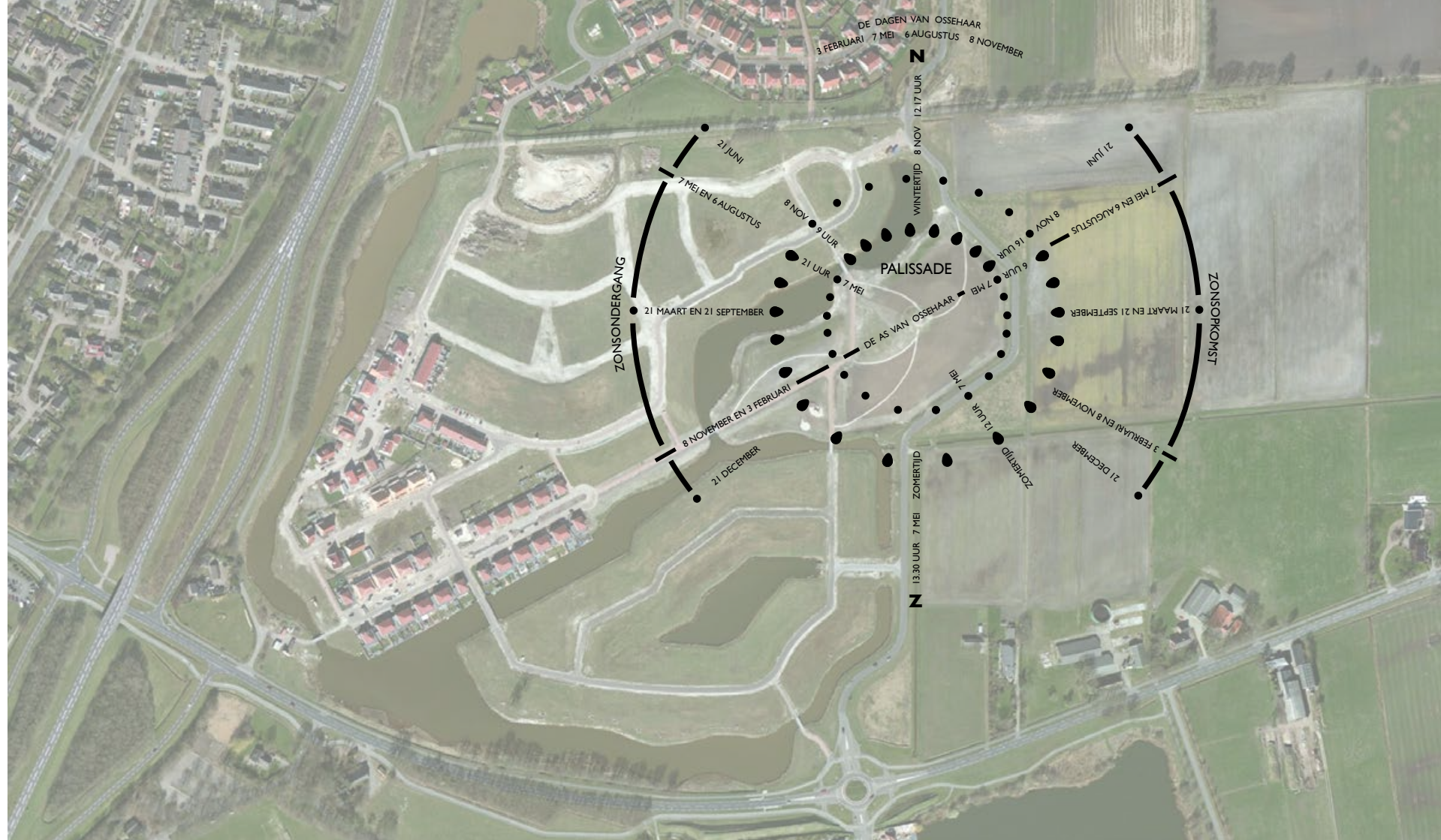
In the urban building plans of the district Ossehaar we can see a long line that connects the heart of the district with the top of the hill. However, from the top of the hill we can see a second, at least as prominent, line in the shape of a drainage ditch. It forms a straight line to the south! These two axes, 'the axis of the city' and 'the axis of the countryside', meet at the top of the hill.



THE FOUR QUARTERS OF OSSEHAAR

The hill is high enough to see the horizon everywhere you look from the top. You can catch the first rays of sun of the 21st of June slowly rising above the horizon, and the last rays disappear on the 21st of December. Because of the direction of the drainage ditch, we can mark the moment the sun shifts towards the south and reaches its highest peak in the sky.

The Axis of Ossehaar and the line of the drainage ditch cross each other on top of the hill at an angle of 62° . Because of this orientation, the Axis of Ossehaar marks four dates a year where we can see the sun rise or set in the extension of the axis. According to calculations, the sun rises on the 7th of May and the 6th of August and sets on the 8th of November and the 3rd of February in the extension of the axis. This way, the Axis of Ossehaar divides the year in four quarters that have shifted from our normal calendar. Four days of Ossehaar mark the start of every quarter. Four days to use as an incentive for special celebrations. Four days a year that, through happy coincidence, are intrinsically connected with the district Ossehaar.



MOTTE-AND-BAILEY CASTLE AND SUN TEMPLE

On top of the hill a double ring of oak poles is situated. The poles on the southern side are arranged in a way that on the 7th of May a shadow of a certain pole will coincide with a corresponding pole in the outer ring on the clock hours (summertime). The coinciding shadow then points to the central tree stump. The poles on the northern side are arranged in a way that on the 8th of November the shadows of the poles in the inner ring coincide with their corresponding poles in the outer ring on the clock hours (wintertime).

Outside the palisade is a line of smaller tree stumps to function as objects of defence for the motte-and-bailey castle. They are also points that point towards the places the sun sets and rises on the days of Ossehaar and during the seasonal changes.

PALISADE is a landmark and viewpoint. It reminds us of the history of Coevorden and informs us about the changing of the seasons and the annual shift of the sun across the sky. At the same time it has a social function. The four dates could be incentive to plan events. But it is also a place where you can retreat in more quiet moments, enjoying the sunrise, time slowing down.



PALISADE seen from the south
just before sunrise on 6th august 2010.



PALISADE seen from the north ca 12.40 uur wintertime, the sun exactly south.



Sunrise on 6 august 2010 at about six in the morning.



Sunset on 8 novembre 2010 at about five o'clock in the afternoon.

