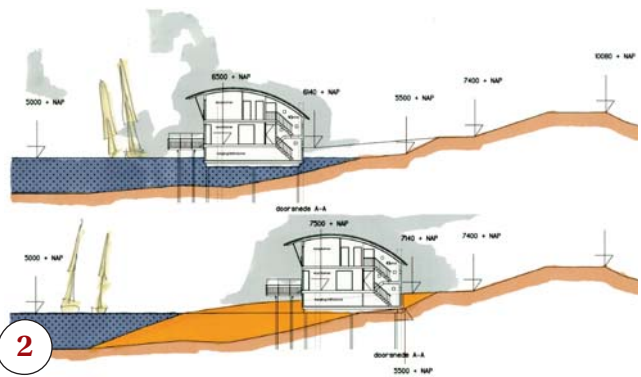


Backfill

A Rising Tide Lifts All Houses



With at least one-third of their country below sea level, the Dutch don't take the prospect of flooding lightly. But these days, the dual pressures of a growing population and limited space are forcing a re-evaluation throughout the Netherlands of land previously thought too wet or flood-prone for building. In the Maasbommel district, a string of 36 prototypical amphibious homes



provides a glimpse of possible future expansion (1). Built along the Maas River on hollow, buoyant concrete foundations, the wood-framed structures are designed to rise as high as 18 feet in floodwaters (2). Deeply embedded steel columns fortify the buildings against lateral movement (3). Another 14 homes are permanently afloat (4). Flexible water, sewer, and electrical hookups accommodate fluctuations in elevation.

The houses were designed by Factor Architecten and built by Dura Vermeer — just two of a growing number of Dutch firms keenly interested in a floatable future. — *Dave Holbrook*

