

From a petting farm in the Netherlands to a tow pound in New York, our tour of new and noteworthy projects begins here.

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Even Dutch farm animals benefit from avant-garde architecture. They pass through custom shutters, instead of traditional doors, at this petting-farm barn in the eastern town of Almere. (See following page.)

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70F
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Almere,
the Netherlands

Farm Fresh

A petting zoo in the Netherlands inspires a novel piece of architecture.

Many architects can claim to be residential specialists, but the Dutch firm 70F may be the only ones whose métier is homes for farm animals. Last October, the studio won a World Architecture Festival Award for a striking, tubular, wooden sheep stable in its hometown of Almere, the Netherlands. That year, 70F completed yet another barn in the same city—a petting farm that's attracting just as much attention but for a dramatically simpler design.

It might seem strange for Almere, with a population of some 200,000 people, to commission two livestock shelters in such short order, but there are actually a half dozen petting farms located throughout the city, with two more in the works. Most of the facilities were introduced in the 1970s and '80s. "They're for the entertainment of neighborhood children," says the architect Bas ten Brinke, who runs 70F with Carina Nilsson. "It's a well-known concept here."

70F's petting farm replaces one that burned down years ago. Because the budget was extremely tight—just \$215,000, almost all of it provided through donations—the architects reused the existing foundation and maintained the original footprint. "It's a very small building, which doesn't allow for a lot of sculptural definition," ten Brinke says of the 1,356-square-foot structure. So, rather than designing a curvaceous form like

"We decided to do nothing at all but to make it a very strong nothing at all."



At night, the structure is a pristine box. Locals are so fond of the glow that they requested that the lights be left on.

its earlier sheep stable, the architects reduced the design to its bare essentials. "We decided to do nothing at all but to make it a very strong nothing at all," ten Brinke says. "We wanted to create an absolute box."

A series of folding shutters for the animals—which include sheep, goats, chickens, rabbits, and a pig—and frameless doors for humans blend seamlessly into the larch cladding to reinforce the sense that the building is an uninterrupted cube. For now, farm volunteers operate the shutters manually, but when funding allows, they will open and close automatically in response to daylight sensors. Most of the interior is occupied by a double-height stable, with the top section slatted for ventilation. The remainder of the space holds restrooms, a storage room, a small office, and a hayloft.

Though many locals were initially skeptical about the contemporary design, they have been pleasantly surprised with the outcome. "As we were building, the workers sometimes forgot to turn off the lights, and the neighbors saw this lantern effect," ten Brinke says. Before long, residents were requesting that the lights remain on in the evenings. "This beacon is such a nice feature to have in a park, and it's really appreciated by everyone living around there," he says. "What a great way to bring modern architecture to the mainstream." ○



The shutter doors, which remain open during the day, will eventually operate automatically in response to daylight.