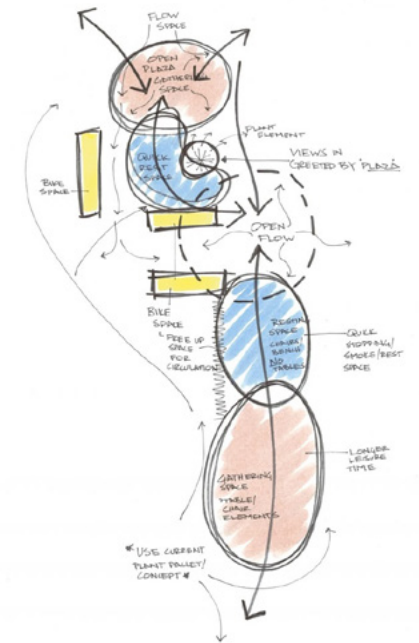


2 T I a G C T S
O U T R R i C K
2 R P E C T O U P H Y
5 P C H P E

"The city is art"

Aristotle summarises all the principles of urban planning, namely that a city should be built in such a way as to make people safe and happy at the same time. In order to realise the latter, urban planning should not be merely a technical question, but should in the most genuine and highest sense be a question of art. Camillo Sitte „Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen“, 1889, Wien.

Designers h a v e a vision for a space



To me, “design” means reinterpreting objects that are found around us, whether inherited from our ancestors, derived from our natural and built environment, or pulled from the politics of our time. A designer ... knows that even if inspirations arrive unconsciously, they are based on previous observations and lived experiences. Yasaman Esmaili, Interview for Madame Architect, August 24, 2021

Go for a walk,
spend time.

Look, listen,
smell, feel and
observe.

Get a first and a
second impres-
sion of
the place.

Talk to people,
invite them to
tell their stories.

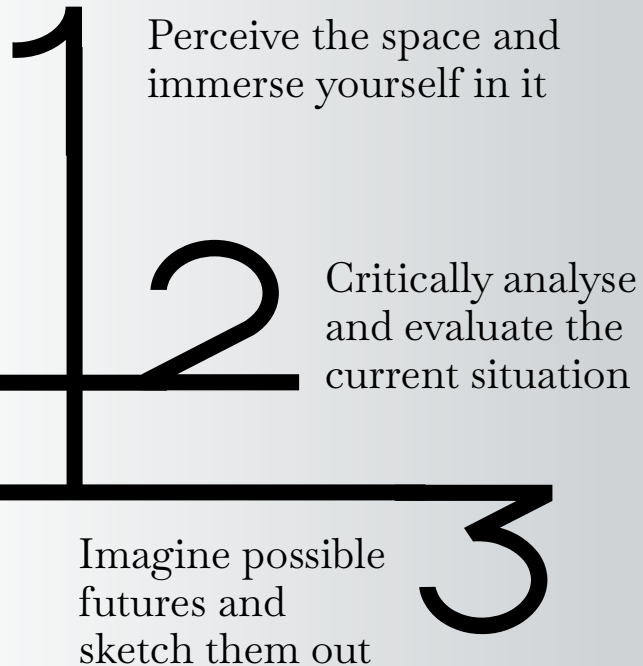
Urban design is
art – discover the
beauty of the
place.

Sketch big sights
and small de-
tails, note your
observations.

Remember, this is not an
audit, but an individual,
sketchy exploration.

Am I an expert? You are an
expert on your own
experience and have a lot to
tell, because everyone
experiences the space diffe-
rently.

Follow this three steps of exploration

- 
- 1 Perceive the space and immerse yourself in it
 - 2 Critically analyse and evaluate the current situation
 - 3 Imagine possible futures and sketch them out

Start exploring the space with atmospheric exploration ...

- Begin by walking slowly and attentively through the square. Let your pace be guided by curiosity.
- Observe the atmosphere: How does the space feel? What do you hear, smell, see, and sense?
- Pay attention to movement patterns, rhythms, pauses, and flows — of people, light, and air.
- What makes this place beautiful or distinctive to you? Which features seem to shape its identity?
- Note how your body feels in the space: safe, comfortable, inspired — or the opposite.
- Record your first impressions through sketches and written notes

... and prepare an overview of the plan

- Draw the site plan of the square
- Define geographical orientation (north, south)

Possible themes for your further explorations:

Choose one of the following themes from A to E that appeals to you, and explore the site along the theme with sketches and notes.

When the theme is fully explored, move on to another theme.

- A. Social Space / Usage of Space
- B. Architecture and Design
- C. Environment and climate
- D. Soft qualities (Acoustic, Olfactory)
- E. History and Context

A.

Social Space / Usage of Space

A1 Explore Users and Social Groups

- Who is present in the square? Consider age, origin, social status.
- Which groups dominate the space — and which might be missing or excluded?
- How inclusive is the space for children, seniors, people with disabilities, migrants, and queer individuals?

A2 Explore Activities and Temporal Patterns

- What kinds of activities take place? (e.g., resting, socializing, playing, working, protesting ...)
- How does usage change across different times of day, days of the week, or seasons?
- Are there signs of informal, spontaneous, or unintended uses (e.g., sleeping, street art, vandalism)?

A3 Explore Spatial Use and Perception

- What are the dominant functions: living, working, mobility, recreation?
- How accessible is the space for pedestrians? Are there barriers (e.g., roads, fences)?
- Where do people linger or avoid? Where do they feel exposed or safe?
- What traces of use are visible (e.g., desire paths, worn seating areas)?

A4 Explore Orientation, Ownership, and Atmosphere

- Is the space easy to navigate?
Are uses clearly structured and visually communicated?
- Which areas are commercialized — and which remain open for public use?
- How does the spatial design influence the feeling of integration or exclusion?
- Are there signs of ownership (e.g., fences, signs, markings)?

B.

Architecture and Design

B1 Scale and Spatial Impact

- What are the dimensions and volumes of the surrounding buildings?
- How do the buildings relate to human scale — do they feel overwhelming or welcoming?
- Are the blocks small and varied or large and repetitive?
- How do old and new buildings interact — through harmony, contrast, or fragmentation?

B2 Form, Rhythm, and Expression

- Are there rhythmic or playful design elements — through repetition or variation?
- Where do strong visual accents appear — and where is the design subdued?

B3 Materials and Façade Language

- Which materials are used — and how are they combined or contrasted?
- How do materials age, reflect light, or absorb sound?
- What is the structure and rhythm of the façades?

B4 Urban Furnishing

- Which urban furnishings are present — and how are they designed and placed (benches, bins, lights...)?

B5 Maintenance

- What is the visible condition of buildings and surfaces?
- How robust, maintained, and accessible are these elements?

C.

Environment and climate

C1 Light, Climate, and Weather Protection

- What are the light conditions during the day and at night?
- How does sunlight move through the space? Which areas receive direct sunlight — and when?
- Is the space protected or exposed to wind, rain, and heat? Are there natural or built elements offering shelter or shade?

C2 Thermal and Air Quality Aspects

- Are there areas that feel hot, cold, damp, or stuffy?
- Do materials (e.g., asphalt, stone, greenery) influence heat storage or cooling?
- How is the airflow — breezy or stagnant?

C3 Greenery and Biodiversity

- What types of greenery are present (trees, grass, vertical green walls, etc.)?
- Are there habitats for animals (e.g., birds, insects, small mammals)?
- Does the space promote ecological diversity or monoculture?

C.4 Water and Soil

- Are there visible systems for drainage, infiltration, or water retention?
- Are natural surfaces (e.g., soil, gravel) present — or is everything sealed?

D.

Soft qualities (Acoustic, Olfactory)

D1 Sound Layers and Sources

- What background sounds are constantly present? (e.g. traffic, machinery, murmurs)
- Can you identify distinctive “sound markers” that shape the space’s identity? (e.g. birds, church bells, trams)
- How does the space shape sound — through reflection, absorption, or amplification?
- Which sounds feel pleasant, disturbing, calming, energizing?

D2 Sense of touch and body perception

- How do odours influence your perception?
- Do certain odours dominate in certain areas?
- Do materials and surfaces invite you to touch them?
- Which of the senses - sight, hearing, smell, touch - dominates your experience of this place - and why?

E.

History and Context

E1 Traces of the Past

- Which physical elements refer to the history of the place (buildings, ruins, inscriptions, street names)?
- What are the visible historical layers or ruptures (e.g. war damage, stylistic shifts, empty lots)?

E2 Past Uses and Transformations

- What former uses shaped the place (e.g. market, industrial site)?
- How has the space changed over time — through planning, destruction, renewal, or informal transformation?

E3 Interpretation, Memory, and Conflicts

- How is the history of the place remembered? (e.g. plaques, art, rituals, events)
- How important is this history for the place’s current identity or atmosphere?
- Are there competing memories, silenced histories, or conflicts over how the past is interpreted?

There is no space in itself (ontologically); spaces are always imbued with meanings (phenomenologically).

- *Spaces are produced in social processes, and the perception of spaces is learned through social processes. For example, every child learns to navigate space, but at the same time, they learn the social rules and symbols associated with that space.*
- *It follows that the produced spaces, in turn, influence people's social behavior. They shape and channel behavior, evoke learned interpretations, or structure memory.*

Janine Schiller, ZHdK, 2025

Urbanity is the outcome of societal development processes, during which its elements unfold and its locally specific form can take shape. Each era, each society, and each city develops its own forms of urbanity. Depending on the respective concrete spatial-temporal situation, urbanity therefore manifests differently in each case. This applies fundamentally to all urban spaces: there is never a final state; urbanisation implies constant movement and change. In retrospect, it becomes clear that it is often precisely the unfinished, the ephemeral, and the unplanned that constitute the essence of the urban experience. Urbane Qualitäten - Ein Handbuch am Beispiel der Metropolitan-region Zürich, ETH Zürich, Research Collection 2016, p. 40

Es gibt keinen Raum an sich (onthologisch), den Räumen werden immer Bedeutungen zugeschrieben (phänomenologisch).

- *Räume werden in sozialen Abläufen produziert und die Wahrnehmung der Räume wird in sozialen Prozessen erlernt. Bspw. lernt jedes Kind, mit dem Raum umzugehen, es erlernt dabei aber gleichzeitig die sozialen Regeln und die Symbole des Raumes kennen.*
- *Daraus folgt, dass die produzierten Räume zurückwirken auf das soziale Verhalten der Menschen. Sie prägen und kanalisieren das Verhalten, sie erinnern an erlernte Interpretationen oder sie strukturieren die Erinnerung.*

Janine Schiller, ZHdK, 2025

Urbanität ist das Ergebnis gesellschaftlicher Entwicklungsprozesse, in deren Verlauf sich ihre Elemente entfalten und sich ihre lokal spezifische Gestalt herausbilden kann. Jede Epoche, jede Gesellschaft und jede Stadt entwickeln eigene Formen der Urbanität. Entsprechend der jeweiligen konkreten raum-zeitlichen Situation präsentiert sich Urbanität deshalb jeweils anders.

Das gilt grundsätzlich für alle urbanen Räume: Es gibt nie einen Endzustand, Urbanisierung bedeutet ständige Bewegung und Veränderung. Im Rückblick wird so deutlich, dass oft gerade das Unfertige, das Ephemere, das Ungeplante eigentlich das Wesentliche der städtischen Erfahrung ausmacht.

Urbane Qualitäten - Ein Handbuch am Beispiel der Metropolitan-region Zürich, ETH Zürich, Research Collection 2016, S. 40

1. CITY
TOUR

R	O	T
<hr/>		
T	E	R
<hr/>		
D	A	M
<hr/>		

ROUTE A

Rotterdam Centraal
Wijkpark Oude westen
West-kruiskade
Schouwburgplein
Lijnbaan
Poort Coolensingel ziekenhuis
Koopgoot
Origin Rotterdam

Markthal
Meent
Grote kerkplein
Timmerhuis
Stroveer speeltuin
Hofbogen
Waterplein (Benthemplein)
Rooftop garden



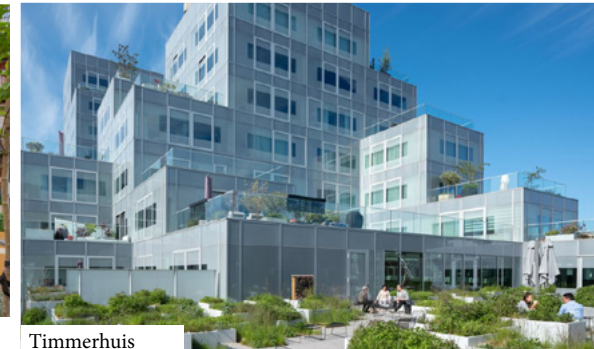
Rooftop garden



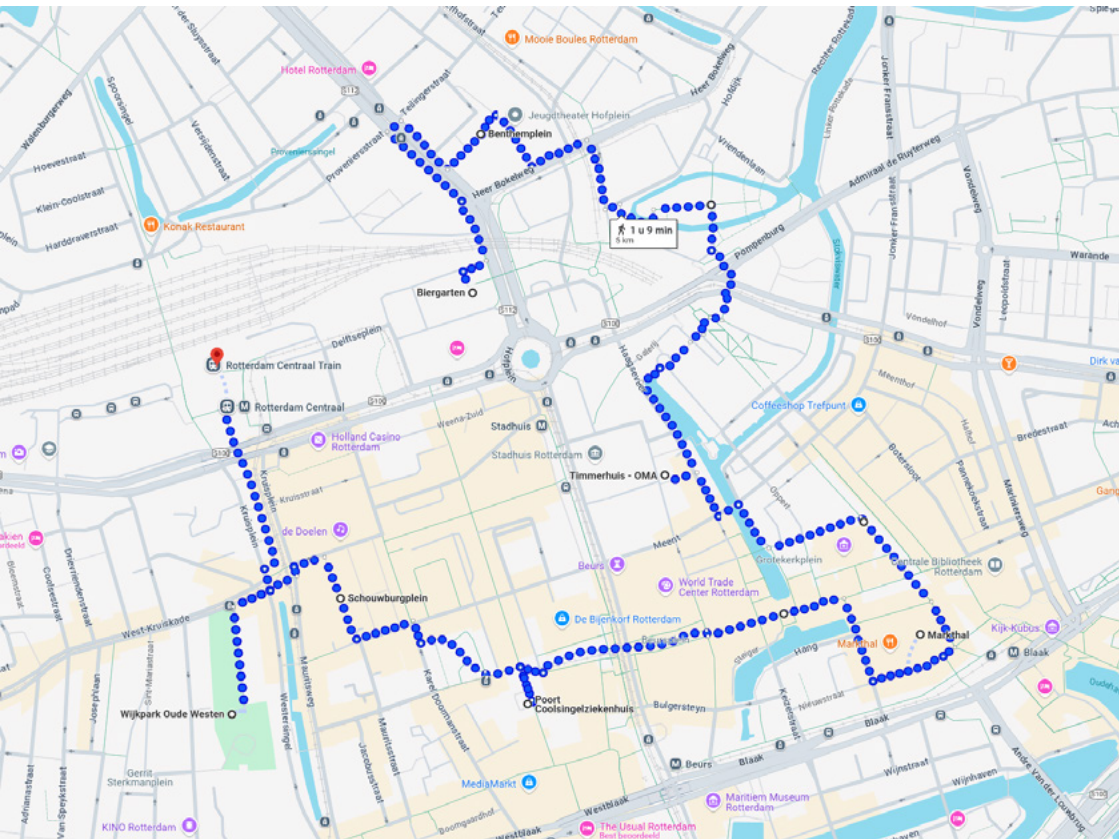
Hofbogen



Stroveer speeltuin



Timmerhuis



Waterplein



Rotterdam CS



Poort Coolensingel



Schouwburgplein



Out of the ashes of postwar Rotterdam, the Lijnbaan rose as

'a living room for the city'

– a revolutionary concept inspiring imitations from Warsaw to Stevenage.

Renate van der Zee ~ The Guardian

Lijnbaan

“It was a shopping centre on a human scale that gave you the feeling that while walking down the street, you moved from room to room.”

A decade after the historic centre of Rotterdam was largely destroyed by bombing during the German invasion of the Netherlands in May 1940, the city set about building a replacement.

The old centre had its faults: narrow streets, alleys and canals that hindered the passage of traffic. The postwar city council seized the opportunity to build a modern centre and straighten the street pattern. The idea was to give Rotterdammers “what they had, but improved and refined”, according to the architect Jo van den Broek, who embodied the optimistic spirit that ruled Rotterdam at the time.

When it opened in 1953, the Lijnbaan was the first purpose-built pedestrian street in Europe. It was a completely car-free zone – unheard of at the time.

“It was a pretty audacious concept,” says the architect Frans Hooykaas. “Initially, many shopkeepers didn’t want a business there, because they thought customers would avoid an area they couldn’t reach by car.”

In spite of the shopkeepers’ fears, the Lijnbaan proved a great success. It became a popular area not only for shopping but also for recreation. People came to take a stroll, gaze at the luxurious shop windows or sit on a terrace to watch the crowd and meet friends.

Renate van der Zee ~ The Guardian



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– 27 –



ORIGIN ROTTER DAM

WEST- KRUIS- KADE



BINNENROTTE

Where

Social Space / Usage of Space

Architecture and Design

Environment and climate

Soft qualities (Acoustic, Olfactory)

History and Context

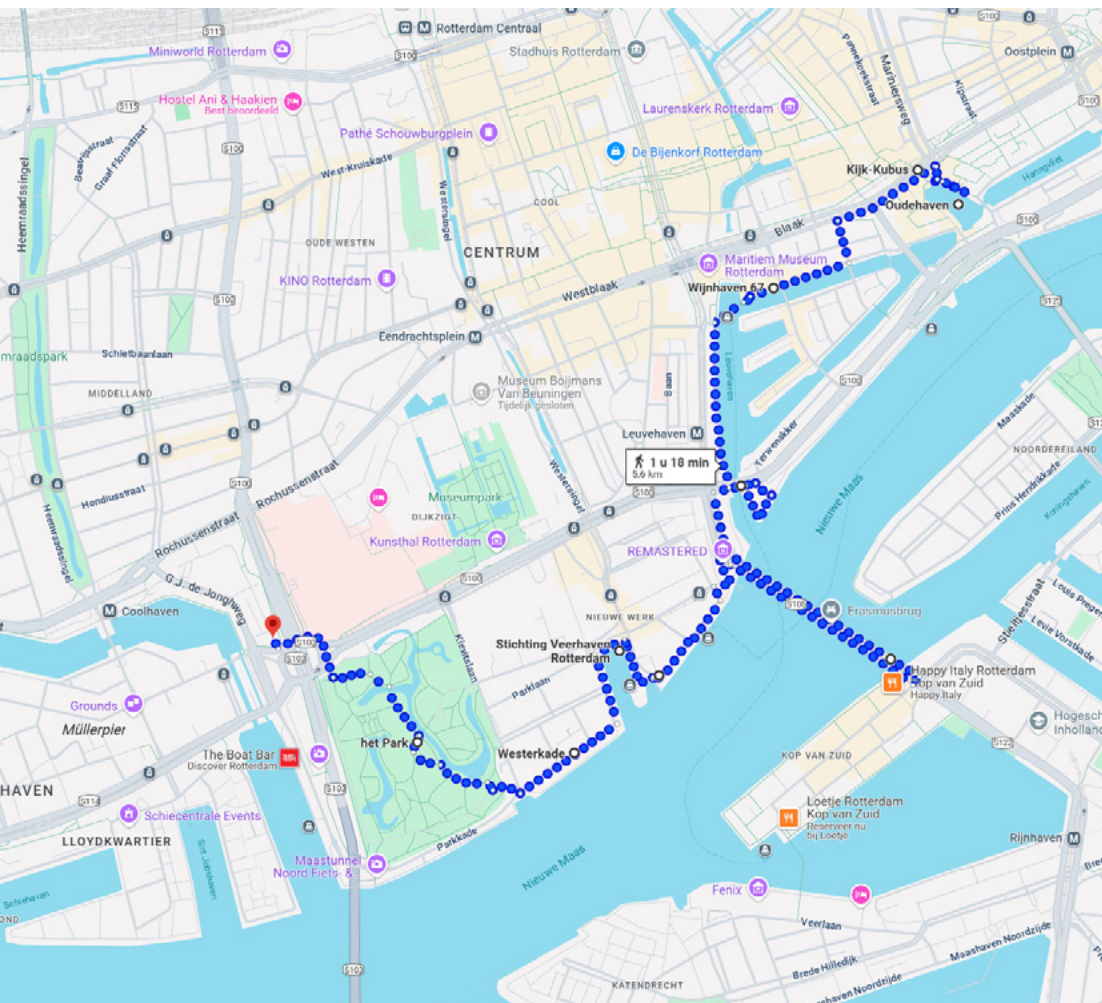
Comes together



ROUTE B

Little C
Het park
Westerkade
Veerhaven

Las palmas
Leuvehoofd
Kubuswoningen
Oudehaven





Giorgio de Chirico, *Mystery and melancholy of a street, girl with a hoop*, 1914