

**Catalogue**  
of Beauty

2020/2021  
**Urban Architecture** - Studio Bricolage

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The 'Catalogue of Beauty' is a collection of material and immaterial values that we found in Nijmegen during the research phase of the graduation project. As bricoleurs, we strived to look at our surroundings and find value in them, within both the city centre of Nijmegen and as well as the Molenpoort. The Catalogue is organised from the qualities of the urban scale, towards the scale of the site, emphasizing the material values of the Molenpoort. The collection appreciates the very specific character of the city of Nijmegen, as well as more universal qualities of the Molenpoort materiality.

By multiple site visits during which we explored, carefully observed the life in the city and photographed particular spots and activities, we were able to capture the identity of Nijmegen and Molenpoort and find their beauty in the everyday life of the inhabitants. We have, then, analysed them in detail in order to extract the specific characteristics and elements that add to the atmosphere of the location. The selected examples were represented through photos and analytically retraced so that to illustrate the beauty.

Our aim for the inventory is for it to become a base for decision making during the stages of the Urban Plan planning and the designs for our own proposals. It also becomes a valid tool functioning as a reminder of the particularities and specificities found on site and within the context of Nijmegen. It offers us a sensibility to the surroundings, a means by which we are able to find value in the everyday scenes within the city, the attitudes of its people, and the elements of the urban context which we find worth preserving or celebrating.

## Church as a beacon

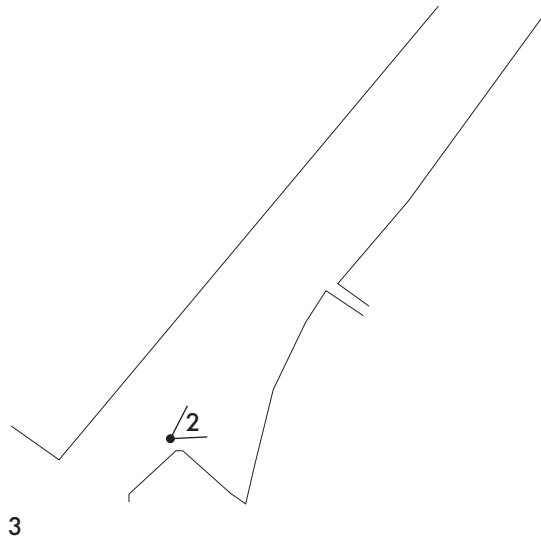


Molenstraat appears as well outlined due to the continuity of the street facades: on both sides the buildings are positioned parallel to the street. The similar height of the buildings further emphasizes the homogeneity of the street fronts, to which rises in contrast the church tower of St. Petrus Canisius. When approaching the historic centre of Nijmegen through Molenstraat, St. Petrus Canisius's campanile is distinguished almost immediately, functioning as a beacon that welcomes and attracts visitors. With the set-back of the church colonnade another urban setting is created which acts as a moment of break on Molenstraat, reflecting the importance of the spiritual place.



## Church as a beacon





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The street fronts of Molenstraat demonstrate the historical continuity and development of the city of Nijmegen. From the 1900s historic buildings, to the post-war reconstructions and the renovation of Molenpoort' facade.

## Tweede Walstraat



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The set-back of Molenpoort on Tweede Walstraat could be used to provide more space for the residents on the other side of the street. Preserving this extended public space would highlight the social housing and furthermore give it more value. It will offer a space to the housing on the opposing site, which is nowadays lacking, for the residents to enjoy it and for appropriation.

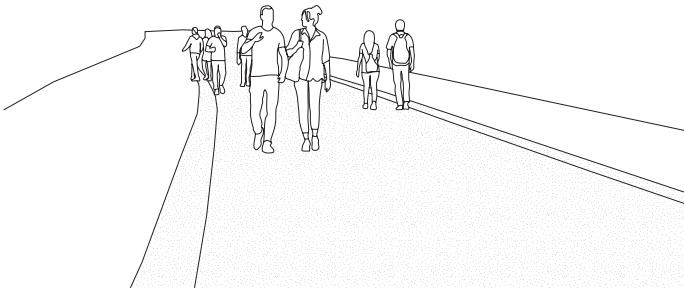
## 5 Set-back on Tweede Walstraat

## 6 Housing on Tweede Walstraat



# Lively streets





Molenstraat provides a mixture of speeds and flows with its urban setting, atmosphere and the varied choice of shops and hospitality functions. From strolling people, entering the shops or sitting in the many cafes, to walking and biking, and even higher speed of the motorbikes and delivery trucks. Compared to Tweede Waalstraat and other surrounding streets of the plot, the much more pedestrian-oriented Molenstraat feels more lively with its activated ground floor with commercial and hospitality program.

## Public spaces



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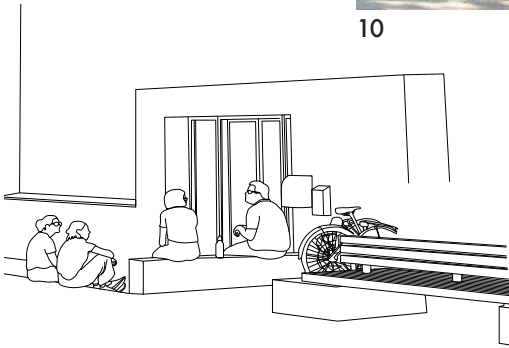
Throughout Nijmegen there are few public places which thanks to their urban setting form a favorable atmosphere for public life to develop. Such pockets of public spaces are valuable as urban interiors as they are inviting people to dwell and sit. For example, the small square on Molenstraat formed by the adjacent buildings, has been overtaken by bars and cafes and appears as a lively spot on the street.



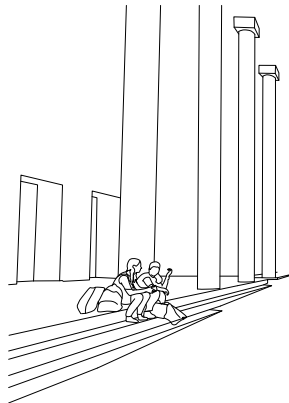
# Informal urban furniture



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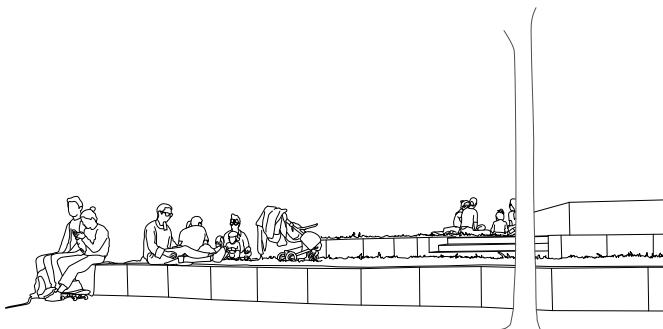


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Urban elements that are not necessarily designed for people to sit on them, provide unexpected settings for public life to unfold. Be it stairs, terraced landscapes or short walls, people will use them as meeting points, places to rest, or even play.

## Level changes



13

Steps, slopes, terraces and level changes in general, are characteristic of the unique morphology of Nijmegen. Compared to the flatness of the rest of the Netherlands, this city's conformation provides opportunities to explore the theme of heights in the urban fabric.

17

13 Benedenstad

14 Grotestraat

15 Stevenskerk



14



15

Scale of the city



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The urban morphology of the city is characterised by an intimate scale of the urban fabric: the narrow, meandering streets lead to small squares and courtyards, where small cafés and familiar scenes relate the urban scale to the human proportions.



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## Hidden treasures in the urban fabric



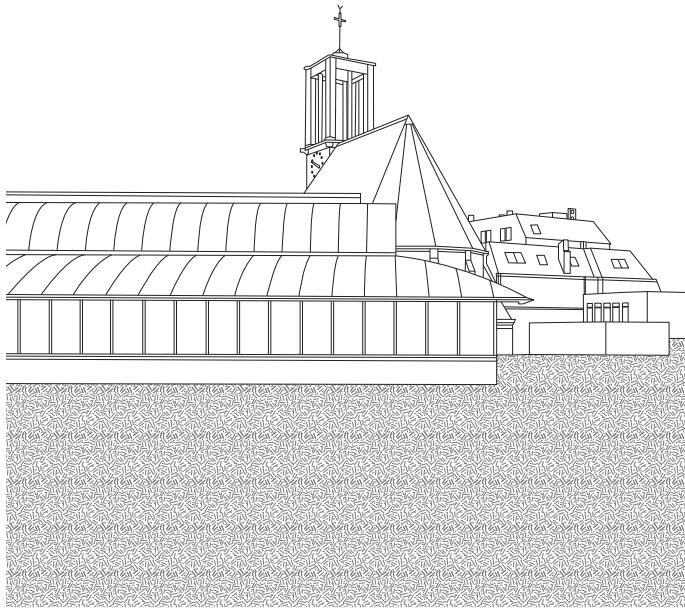
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The highly overbuilt urban environment of the plot hides few particular enclosed spaces. The most distinguished one is, without doubt, the garden of St Petrus Canisiuskerk, which is protected from the outer world by the high walls of Molenpoort. In this case, Molenpoort provides an opportunity for a quiet and secluded space in the busy and noisy environment of the city life. Another such hidden space from the outside is the patio accessible from passage from Tweede Walstraat, the only ground floor open space. It is used by the adjacent salsa school and the appropriation of it, creates a pleasant atmosphere for outdoor activities for the Salsa school.



# Rooftop views





Urban collage: From the roof parking of Molenpoort, the urban collage of different functions is easily perceivable. Shopping mall, parking, church and housing coexist, providing greater opportunities for social interaction and attraction of diverse users. The mixture of functions in such a constrained urban space has a latent potential of becoming an inclusive space reaching to a greater number and diversity of users.

## Rooftop views

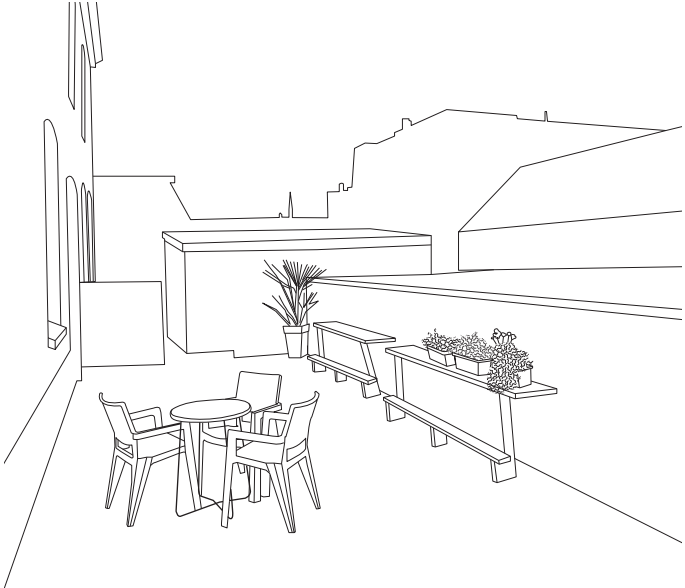


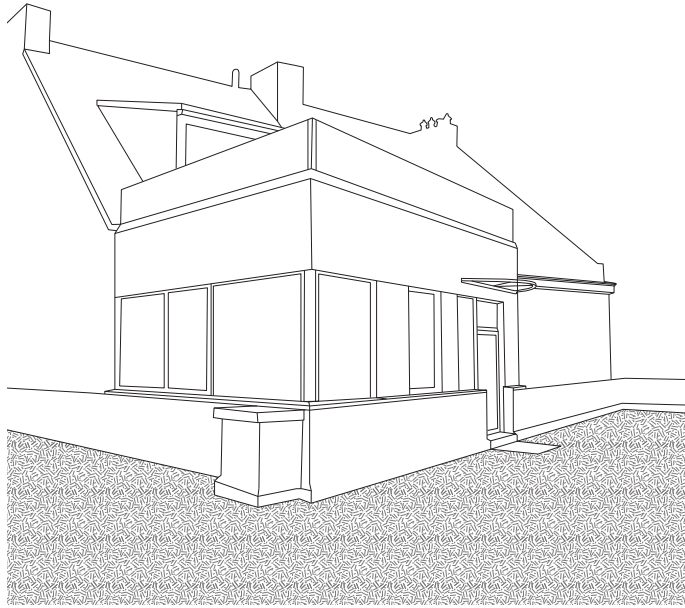
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The rooftop parking provides other unexpected and valued opportunities, such as the atypical view from close vicinity and from above of St Petrus Canisius' apse and its hidden garden. Therefore, we could say that Molenpoort functions not only as enclosing the space, but also provides a podium to enjoy the urban panoramas of the surrounding city.



# Appropriation of rooftops





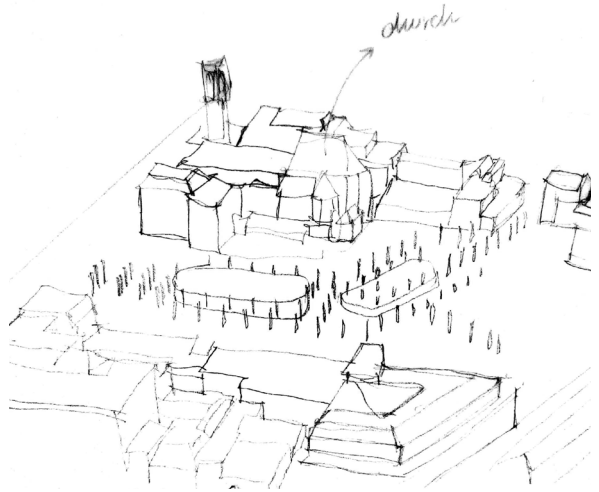
Hidden from the higher perimeter buildings facing the surrounding streets of the plot, is another distinct characteristic in which we found value - the use of rooftops. The lack of open spaces and ground floor resulted in people's use of backyards and terraces at higher levels for diverse functions. The layered back-spaces in the plot are appropriated as gardens, verandas or even in some particular cases the adjacent roofs provide entrance to housing. Through the use of greenery and furniture the residents managed to convert the otherwise simply accessible roofs into their back gardens that reflect their personality with this particular identity.

## Structure



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The Molenpoort shopping centre is seen of value in a structural and materials sense. The structure offers an open and flexible plan with opportunities for adaptive reuse of the building. Some of the secondary elements and materials - such as steel structures and glass windows - may be valuable and possible to reuse too.

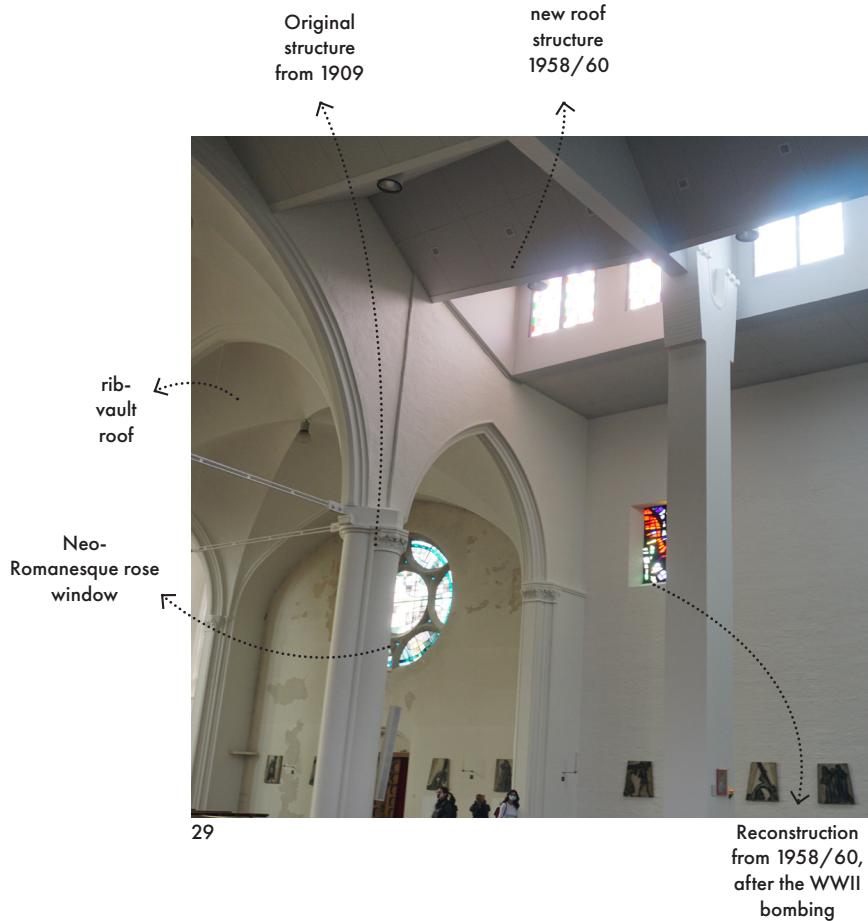


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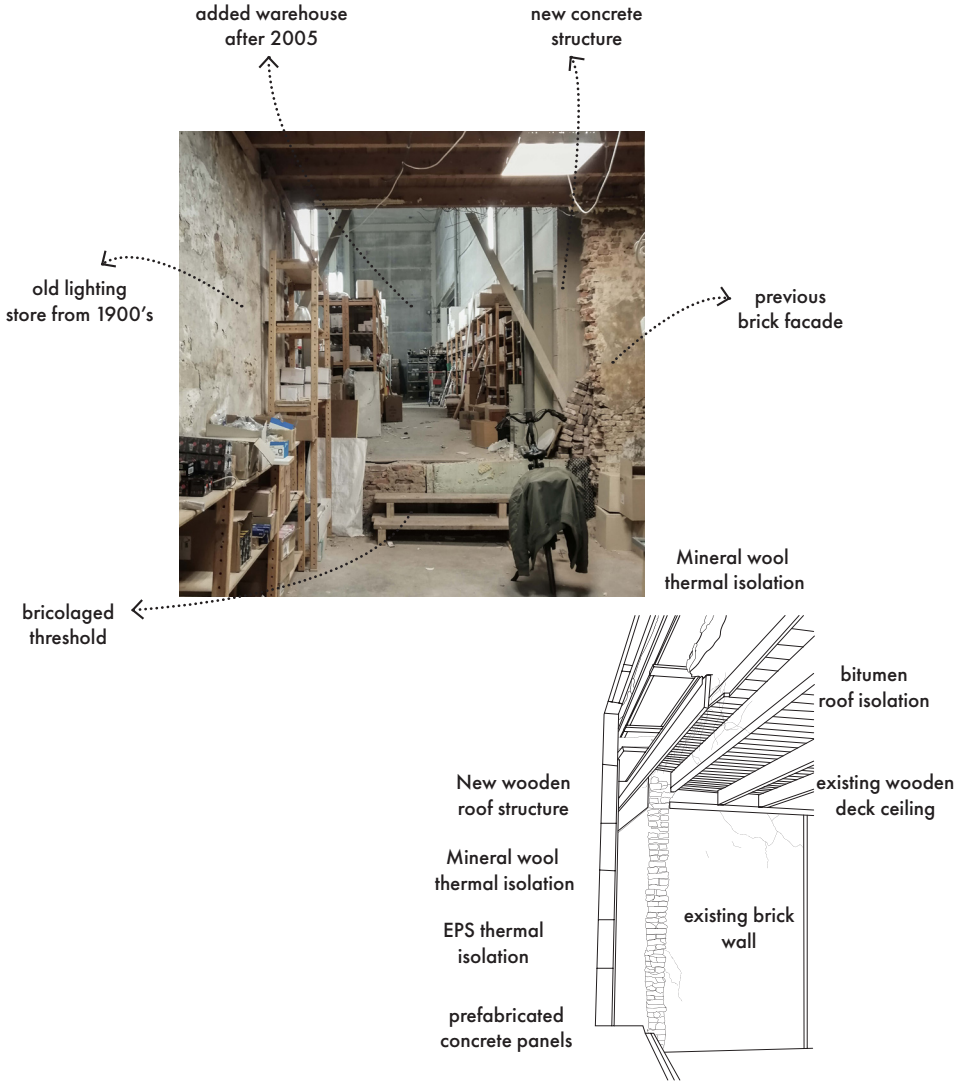
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## Connection Old&New



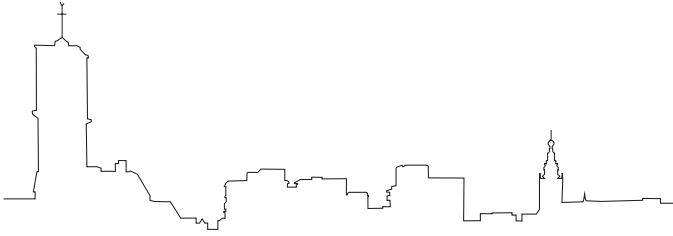
As a city which has grown and developed over a long time span, an evolved time-city as called in "Adhocism" (Jencks & Silver, 1972), Nijmegen and the specific project location offer many examples of layering and juxtaposition of elements from different historic period. From the Roman ruins laying beneath the buildings, to the pre-war buildings from the 1900s', to the shopping mall built in 1972 and to the most recent modifications and additions

29 Church structure

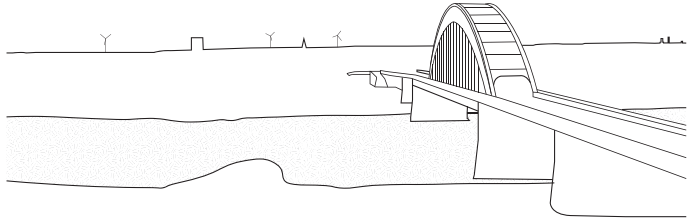


in the site. All of them form a palimpsest of historic layers and demonstrate us that buildings from various moments in time can co-exist and that history is not a single point in time but a layering of all individual moments. What secures a symbiotic relationship between the different elements in the urban environment, is the fact that they are the result of the needs of the inhabitants.

## Looking out at



The particular topography of Nijmegen offers many beautiful views across the city and the natural landscape from the highest points of the hills. In the city of today, this natural advantage has been recreated in the many accessible roofs and higher buildings from which the cityscape and skyline of Nijmegen are visible.



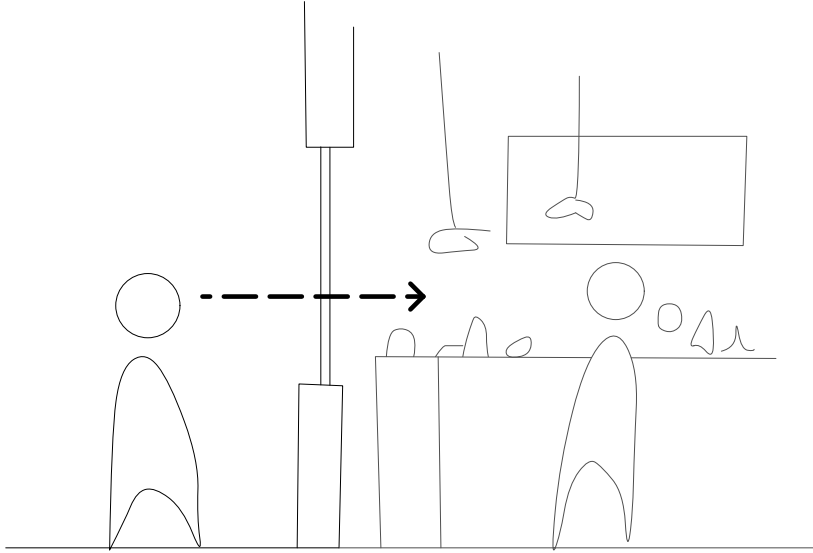
Looking at





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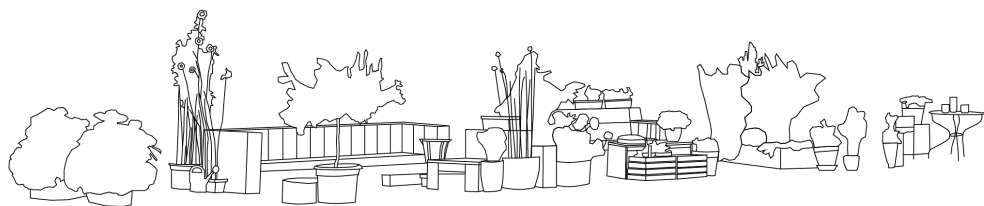
The act of looking is one of the primary actions that occur in public life in the city. Looking at other people (or simply looking at “life”) is a common activity in public squares, for example.



Looking into a building, be it a house, a shop, a laboratory, and satisfying the curiosity of the eye, is something that is usually allowed by glass vitrines. By exposing a process, produce atmosphere, the sense of vision (and enticement) is stimulated.



## Appropriation and care





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The appropriation of the space around private entrances, in this case, with elements such as pots, flowers, trees and decorations, indicate a level of care of the immediate surroundings within a neighbourhood. A clear desire to beautify the setting is tangible, and one to offer a positive view to the passerby, which acts as a spectator of this act of care and exhibition.

## Identities



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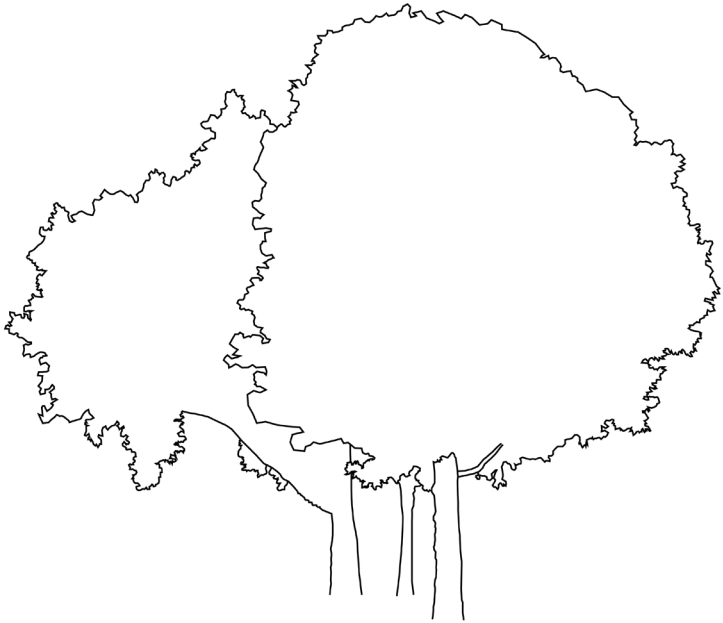
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Being the neighbourhood of the site extremely diverse, the acknowledgement and appreciation of the different identities has been one of the drivers for the project. Rather than making a case for altering the characters of the site, places such as Vlaamsegas - the "coffeeshop street" - and St Peter Canisius church are preserved and celebrated for what they bring to the site. The exploitation of their identity opens up opportunities for the entire site.



**Connection to nature**





The need for nature - and “green” in general - to become an intrinsic component of the urban fabric is reflected in some of the most frequented squares and pockets of the city. An example of this is found in Koningsplein, where trees become natural canopies for shade, but also for the sheer enjoyment of the café-goers and passersby.

## Connection to nature



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There is a strong relationship between the people and the natural environment of Nijmegen. With its great variety of parks, the waterfront and the beaches, the Ooyse nature reserve and the hills on which the city sits, the enjoyment of nature - in solitude or socially - become almost a daily part of life.

45

44 Valkhofpark

45 Waalkade

46 Kronenburgerpark



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## Attitude of Nijmegenaars

Fred:

*There is a lot of freedom here, even to start your own thing, especially in the cultural field...*

Wido:

*I recognise a lot of faces, I say a lot of times "Hi".*

Merdzan and Kremena

K: *What do you like particularly in the city?*

H: *The people here are nice, benevolent, there is work for us, we feel well.*





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The general attitude of the people of Nijmegen is often described as “progressive”, “non-pretentious” and “open”. The ‘left-ish’ political scenario allows for a degree of freedom of expression and openness to multi-cultural and LGBTQ+ communities, creating the condition for inclusion and interaction for people from different walks of life.

## Attitude of Nijmegenaars



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Han Dekker + Norbert

H: *Nijmegen is more friendly than other dutch cities: Other cities accepted 500 Syrian immigrants, whereas in Nijmegen we welcomed 3000 and collected clothes for them.*

K: *I am from Bulgaria.*

H: *Then you should go and speak with the Bulgarian street musicians, there are also Romanians.*

K: *Oh, sure. How do you feel about them?*

H: *Why should I feel any different about them? They are nice people, they play music and ask for money, they are not causing problems.*







