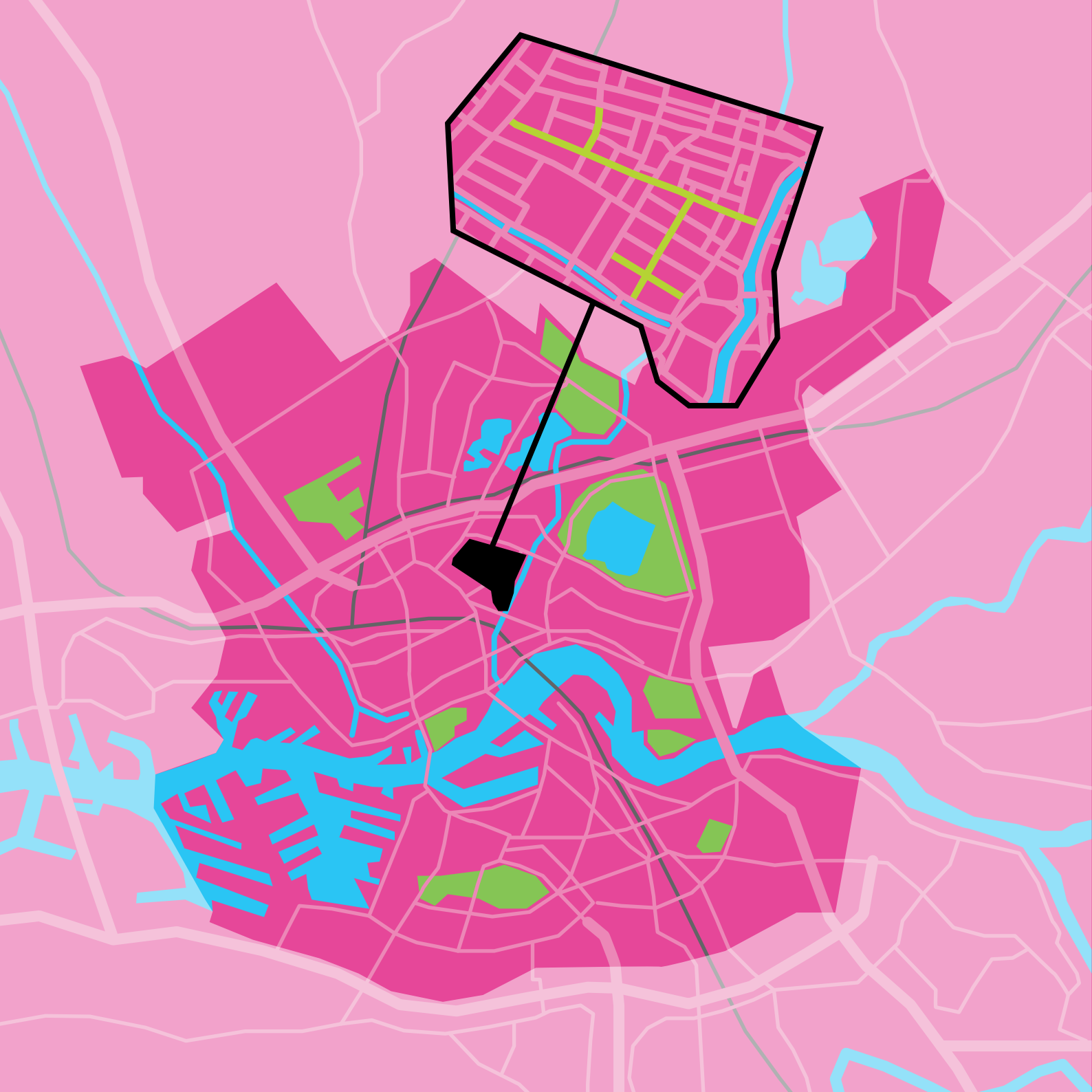


Living, playing, learning.

Child-friendly Erasmus neighbourhood and Rotte quarter





Starting small

Changes tend to start small. The development of a child-friendly area in the Erasmus neighbourhood and Rotte quarter started with a set of passionate and persistent individuals in 2006. Primary school De Klimop, foundation De Meeuw and Havensteder (at the time still Com-wonen) had ambitious ideas to offer more opportunities for a good, healthy and safe development in this neighbourhood full of children. In the chapter 'Space and opportunities for children' (p. 8) you can read more about these ideas. Not long after, the borough council Noord joined the initiative. It was the start of a close collaboration. Social investment was needed to strengthen the Oude Noorden [Old North]. The area scored low on the social index.

Loving

The ability to collaborate is substantial: that is the Noorden's strength. Internal communication happens easily and without barriers. There is always a willingness to achieve something together in the neighbourhood. Everyone contributes from their own expertise and possibilities and a positive basic attitude. 'Waters can be choppy, but together we can move forward.' There is no room for big egos, because the neighbourhood's interests come first. Professionals in the Oude Noorden do more than 'just their job'; they love their work and the area. This commitment is essential for things to succeed. As is support among and collaboration with the residents. If they're not behind it, it won't work. It's about mutual dependency; we need each other. ▶

► **Mutual dependency**

It's important to realize beforehand that you can't achieve something so substantial within a year. It takes careful preparation, stamina and patience. Sometimes things happen differently that you envisaged. But letting go isn't an option. You need a core team of enthusiastic people, who keep at it. You need to hold each other's hand sometimes and be open to learning from each other. That is the only way in which change can be effected. All these ingredients are present in Noord. This makes the child-friendly area more than a collection of individual projects. The individual elements – physically, socially and pedagogically – enhance each other and form a unity.

Strong basis

Collaboration, the commitment of enthusiastic people, a shared vision and joining forces for a single cause. That is the basis underlying the child-friendly area projects in the Erasmus neighbourhood / Rotte quarter. The results are visible and tangible throughout the neighbourhood: playgrounds, children's art, greenery and the child-friendly route. And the vision is reflected in neighbourhood activities and in-school and out-of-school activities. We're proud of the fact we can share the results with you through this booklet.



Harlow Brammerloo,
Chair Borough Council Noord



Peter van Lieshout,
Director Centrum Noord Havensteder

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Part 2

The start

Het Oude Noorden [The Old North]

The Oude Noorden is a lively working class neighbourhood in Rotterdam with lots of children. With lots of traffic, lots of bricks, but not a lot of greenery. The area does have green courtyards, but these are hidden among the houses. The many squares are typical for the Oude Noorden. They each have their own atmosphere and purpose.

The neighbourhood was developed at the end of the nineteenth century. The refurbishment of city neighbourhoods starts in 1975. This results in many new and refurbished apartments. These are mainly apartments at a low (social housing) rent.

Most apartments in the Oude Noorden are small, with only three or four rooms. These are not that appropriate for families.

Many people live on top of each other. They are mainly from Dutch, Moroccan, Turkish and Surinamese origins.

Amount of residents:

16.909 in 2013

Amount of children 0 –14 years old:

2.953 in 2013

The Oude Noorden harbours six primary schools.



Space and opportunities for children

A child-friendly Oude Noorden starts to develop in 2006 at two locations: in the neighbourhood itself and in the city.

Child-friendly Rotterdam

Rotterdam city council wants to make the city more child-friendly. Many families are leaving. They want larger houses, more greenery and more room for their kids to play. According to the city council, a city without families doesn't have a future. They are needed for a healthy social structure and for the economy. Therefore Rotterdam wants to give children more opportunities and space. A group of enthusiastic civil servants – De Jonge Honden [The Young Dogs] – investigates what that requires. Based on that knowledge, the city council starts the Child-friendly Neighbourhoods programme.



Meanwhile, in the Oude Noorden

Havensteder, primary school De Klimop and foundation De Meeuw want to make the Erasmus neighbourhood en Rotte quarter more socially cohesive. Their idea is to invest in the future, by investing in children. They prefer all facilities for children to be located in the vicinity of the primary school, including sports clubs, music lessons, a library or school gardens. A kind of campus, like at universities: a children's campus. Outdoor space should be friendlier and opportunity-rich for children too. Football areas, or playground equipment that appeals to different talents, and green spaces in which children can learn about nature. With housing that is appropriate for families. And safe routes, without crooked pavements and dog poo everywhere. In addition, it is important that above all children have a say in the process and can contribute to ideas and their implementation.

Eight kinds of bright

The initiators in the Oude Noorden use talent development as guiding principle. This is a theory developed by the American psychologist Howard Gardner in 1983. He says that people can be intelligent or bright in different ways. According to him there are ►





- eight kinds of talent or intelligence:
 - image bright (visual, spatial)
 - number bright (logical, mathematical)
 - body bright (physical, kinesthetic)
 - people bright (interpersonal)
 - music bright (musical, rhythmic)
 - nature bright (nature oriented)
 - language bright (verbal / linguistic)
 - self bright (intrapersonal)

When children are brought into contact with all these talents, they can discover what kind of bright they are and what they like. The idea of a children's campus – and subsequently the child-friendly neighbourhood – in the Oude Noorden is that children can develop their talent in their own neighbourhood. Gardner's theory is the umbrella for all the pedagogical and physical projects in the child-friendly Erasmus neighbourhood / Rotte quarter and for the collaboration between all parties involved.

One goal

Then portfolio holder Scalzo of the borough council Noord is enthusiastic about the development in the Oude Noorden. He knows about the plans for a child-friendly city and draws attention to the initiative in Noord within the city council. The Erasmus neighbourhood/ Rotte quarter becomes one of the planned child-friendly areas. Every party has its own

approach. The city council wants to keep higher-income families in the city. The local borough wants a safe neighbourhood for children and residents who are involved in the neighbourhood and its design. The Housing Association wants its tenants to stay in the same location, and happily so, for long periods. The school wants children to be able to develop well. Residents want a neighbourhood in which they enjoy living and where their children can grow up. They may be different starting points, but the end goal is the same: a child-friendly neighbourhood. The project organization in the Oude Noorden appoints an independent project manager. He coordinates the project, stimulates residents' participation and provides cohesion.

“Different starting points, but the end goal is the same: a child-friendly neighbourhood.”

Design community centre

Projects need to start somewhere. They need a place where people see each other and can talk. And where they can work towards a child-friendly neighbourhood.

Therefore Havensteder provides an empty shop at Tollensstraat 77 as a community centre, the Activiteitenhoek [Activity Corner]. It is literally 'around the corner'. Close to the residents it's meant for. Pupils of primary school De Klimop eat their sandwiches there during lunch hour. Subsequently they play in the Rembrandtstraat courtyard. After school, children are welcome to do arts and crafts, work with clay, paint and so on. These activities have in the meantime moved to the location of Kinderparadijs Meidoorn [Children's Paradise Hawthorn]. The community centre also hosts many other local activities, such as the neighbourhood watch, residents' meetings and language lessons.

Girls' Room

Malika Noubis, a mother who lives in the Erasmus neighbourhood, starts a Girls' Room in the Activiteitenhoek. "Community centres have disappeared because of cuts. Girls need a safe place to meet though, so they don't

hang out on the street. The Girls' Room has a homely atmosphere. The girls feel at home here." The Girls' Room is mainly aimed at teenage girls. "But on Fridays even mothers come." Three volunteers run the room. They offer homework support and cooking lessons. The girls can engage in sports, arts and crafts, watch a movie or just chat and have a cup of tea.

Growth

Soon the Activiteitenhoek is bursting at the seams. Therefore Havensteder opens another community centre at Noordplein 12. The Girls' Room moves there, among other things. The Parent's Room and sounding board group KiWi (abbreviation for child-friendly neighbourhood) also find a home there. A third community centre opens at Tollensstraat 3, meaning that residents on the other side of the Zwart Janstraat have a place around the corner to go to too. There a comic strip maker provides drawings lessons for children. And the Princess Juliana School organizes activities. Neighbourhood residents take care of the shopping and the roster for the community centres themselves.





Playground De Klimop

The vision is there: time for the execution. Erasmus neighbourhood / Rotte quarter will become a neighbourhood where children can play safely and can playfully discover what they're good at. That starts at the Klimop's playground.

Now the Erasmus neighbourhood / Rotte quarter is part of the citywide Child-friendly Neighbourhoods, money becomes available. The refurbishment of the school playground can start. It needs to become a place that appeals to all eight kinds of talent. De Werff Architecture comes up with a design that includes equipment that stimulates children's fantasy. A slide made out of metal tubes. It doesn't immediately look like a slide. Children

use it just as easily as a climbing rack. A wobbling plate: boys jump on and fall off; girls dangle from it, keeping their balance. Some pieces of equipment are to be used individually. Others stimulate collaboration.

Greenery, language and music

Playing a game of football is possible on the refurbished playground too. A poem by a pupil is written in large white letters. Chalk allows children to add to it whatever they like. This is playing with language. Wind vanes pick up the sound of the wind and provide 'music'. Greenery appears on the playground. In large planters and along the façades plants start to grow. Every year, during National Tree Planting Day, children will plant anew and do maintenance. Different trees that bloom at different moments show the change of seasons.

Thinking differently

At this stage of the process a different approach to outside space emerges. Usually practical issues take centre stage. Does it work? Is it cheap and easy to maintain? But this time the physical adjustments need to also stimulate the developments of children's talents.

Eight years of eating your lunch out of a box and drinking from a mug that has of course leaked all over.

Eight years of playing at a playground with hundreds of others who are bigger and ruder than you.

(poem: Mohammed Tazakout)

Design Tollensstraat

De Klimop's pupils walk every day from the main building to the school's annexe. This route partly follows the Tollensstraat. That part of the street is therefore refurbished too.

Main concern is that this trajectory is safe and fun for children. This part of the Tollensstreet is not accessible for cars. But the street cannot be entirely closed off for traffic. Emergency services should always have access. But you can discourage car traffic. De Werff Architecture designed a paved edge that looks like a pavement, but isn't. Just like

at the playground, there are planters. And trees that blossom during different seasons. Fun play equipment is added for the young ones. Children like the changes. The new rubbish bins are popular too. 'It's nice and clean now here', they say. It is a logical step to also improve the route through the Tollensstraat, alongside the playground. The school annexe no longer exists. What remains is a nice play area near the school.

**"The Tollensstraat:
a safe play area and
'nice and clean'."**





Courtyard Rembrandtstraat

The courtyard along the Rembrandtstraat completes the first large, physical project in the child-friendly neighbourhood. The playground, the Tollensstraat and the courtyard are all interconnected.

The Oude Noorden harbours a lot of hidden courtyards. Small plots of lands with room for greenery and to play. The courtyard at the Rembrandtstraat can be a beautiful extra public space, also for children of De Klimop. Therefore owners Havensteder are refurbishing it. Playing football is now allowed on the

school playground, which taken away all the nuisance from the courtyard. Here nature plays first fiddle from now on. There is a grass pitch and there are a lot of plants. The trees also here indicate the seasons. Especially for the children there are school allotments where they learn about nature. They don't need to take the bus anymore to get to the school gardens, as they are now around the corner.

Residents participate

Ever more adults and children use the courtyard. There are benches and a table with a colourful mosaic. Made by residents themselves. That residents really participate in this child-friendly neighbourhood is clearly illustrated by this courtyard. They also have their own little gardens and the courtyard has become a meeting place. Eva Bes takes care of its maintenance. Initially she did it as a volunteer, but now it is her job. Eva: 'This has become a nice, green play area. Children rustle through the leaves and build huts. They love the flowers and little creatures.' Jalel Ben Saïd accompanies the children on the allotments. Eva and Jalel and their families both live in the neighbourhood.

“Rummaging through the leaves and building huts in the city.”

Varied school and neighbourhood programming

Talent development finds a solid base in the child-friendly neighbourhood. At school, in physical projects, outdoors, during neighbourhood and extended school activities: everywhere there is attention for the different kinds of bright, following Gardner's theory.

The project organizers take this very seriously. All parties involved meet monthly to discuss what is about to happen. They assess the activities against the talent development measure. Are we doing enough about logical thinking, music or nature? Is enough attention being paid to language or interaction? Inauguration parties for children's artworks, playground activities, football tournaments and the house of Sinterklaas: children are able to explore what interests them everywhere. Through creative workshops, for instance, or a larger-than-life jigsaw puzzle, or singing.

Room for every child

Primary school De Klimop has been offering extended school activities for years. In addition to the usual topics, such as literacy and numeracy, children are also taught social skills, drawing and art and crafts, sports, first aid and

how to play an instrument. Through these extended activities a child can discover what suits their talents, and the activities enhance them. The ordinary lessons pay attention to as many talents and intelligences as possible. Tutors use these talents to aid the children in their learning and growth. The other primary schools in the neighborhood also have extended school activity programmes and focus on talent development in their offer.

Intertwining

The contexts in which children grow up – school, the street, at home – become intertwined with each other. It works because professionals, schools and local residents really work towards an environment that provides opportunities. And they all do that subscribing to the same underpinning, i.e. talent development.

“Talent development is the umbrella for all activities in the child-friendly neighbourhood.”



Adolescents get their own space

Children turn into adolescents and adolescents want different things than children do. They get their own space in the Erasmusstraat. As a result a formerly derelict plot is given a good destination.

Adolescents also deserve to be paid attention in a child-friendly neighbourhood. Following primary school their lives change dramatically. They fan out and are less visible. There's nothing really to do for them in the neighbourhood. They're too grown-up for the playground, but there's no real alternative.

Relaxed hangout

The solution is a derelict plot owned by Havensteder along the Erasmusstraat. Adolescents need their own space. And this demolition site needs a new, temporary use. Students of the Willem de Kooning Academy, all local residents, and the girls from the Girls' Room come up with ideas for refurbishment. It will be a relaxed hangout, for which young architects design a sort of 'fallen over house'. It will have a long white wall. They can use it to spray graffiti at their leisure. No tags, but cool drawings. In the meantime a basketball hoop has been added. Which is used a lot. Also by dads who join in in the evenings. New

ivy and lighting make the site greener and safer. It is certainly not a hidden away, anonymous place where 'hang youths' cause a nuisance. Local residents keep a close watch. And the youths can do what they like doing: meet friends.

“Too grown-up for the playground, but without an alternative.”



Part 2 The sequel

Child-friendly route

The next step is the child-friendly route. A route from home to school, and from school to a playground, a square or a sports club. Safe and fun, because children always choose the most fascinating route.

What have we realized along the child-friendly route?

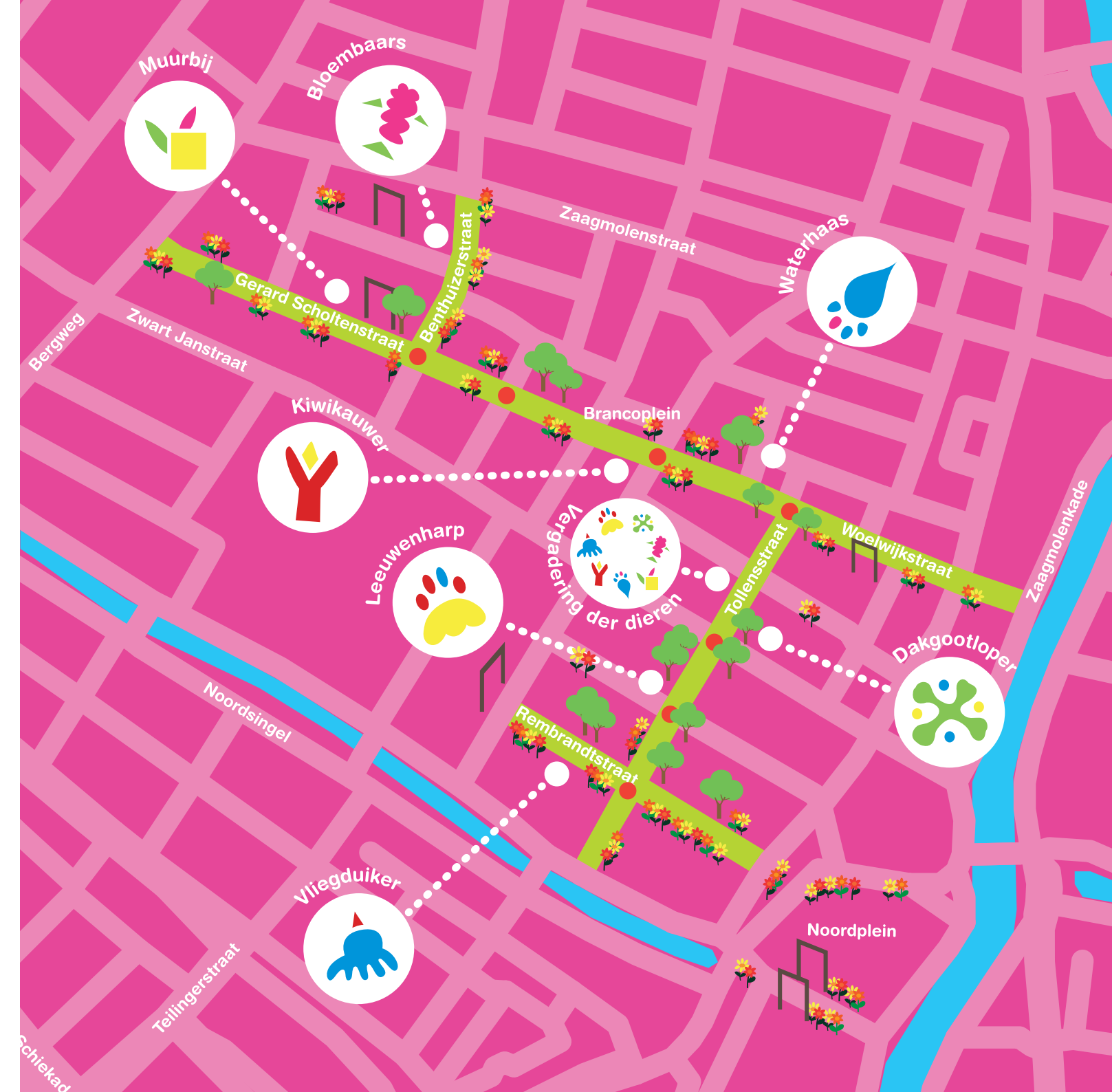
Child-friendly route

- 20 new trees
- 7 speed bumps
- 5 entrances courtyards
- façade greenery & gardens
- children's artworks
- 7 neighbourhood animals with each their own track

To determine the trajectory of the route, research is required. Where are the schools located, the playgrounds, the libraries, sports clubs and so on? What are the most important connections? Added to this is the fact that children move in a limited area. Up to 6 years they have a radius of about 300 metres. For children somewhat older, it is about 600 metres. Observations are part of the research too. Children, teenagers, adults and specialist go out into the neighbourhood. They all observe the streets in their own way. What are the fun and less fun, dangerous or challenging locations? De Werff Architecture collates the outcome of all this research into a map. As a result the route emerges and it becomes clear what is required to make it child-friendly.

Participating, contributing and celebrating

The child-friendly neighbourhood and route come about with help from the residents. There is a sounding board group: a mix of old, young and new local residents.





- ▶ They discuss everything with the project organizers and give feedback on what the locals think. People who are not part of the sounding board group think along and participate too. The project organizers organize meetings to present ideas and designs. And to receive feedback from residents. Every milestone moment or delivery is cause for a party, to show that it's not just plans.

Around the block

Residents are active in their observations too. The children walk around the block, literally. They experience the world close to home and to the ground. They see broken pavement slabs – awkward for roller-skating – or dirty cigarette butts. Using chalk they indicate what's wrong. You need to be able to cross here. Or: it's dangerous here. Teenagers mainly see their neighbourhood as the place where their families and friends live. Where they come home, when they return from school by tram from another part of the city. They have the fresh eye of an outsider who doesn't live in the area. These observations provide a clear overview. About which streets are busy, which are safe and have wide pavements. And where something is happening and what is attractive to children.

Other schools

At the start of the child-friendly neighbourhood project, it is mainly primary school De Klimop that is active. The school's pedagogical vision is a guiding principle for the entire project. At the start of the child-friendly route the Princess Juliana School and Het Plein [The Square] become more involved too. These schools are located along the route, just like De Klimop. All three schools subscribe to the concept of talent development.

The Streets

The child-friendly route runs along these streets:

- Gerard Scholtenstraat
- Woelwijkstraat
- Tollensstraat
- Rembrandtstraat

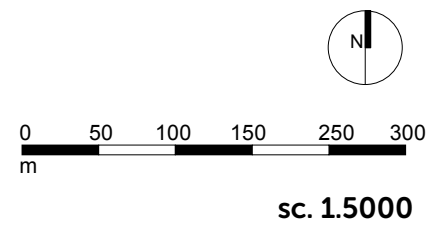
“Crooked pavements are awkward if you want to roller-skate.”

Child-related activities

Action radius 300 m, functions

Oude Noorden - Zuid
The Old North - South

- School
- Playground
- Open space / pavement
- Play area
- Play areas toddlers
- Sports ground
- Sports centre
- Other child-related activities



7 Pushpins

A child-friendly route is of course above all else safe. And the Oude Noorden is a neighbourhood with a lot of traffic and busy streets. To slow traffic down, there are seven crossing with 'pushpins'.

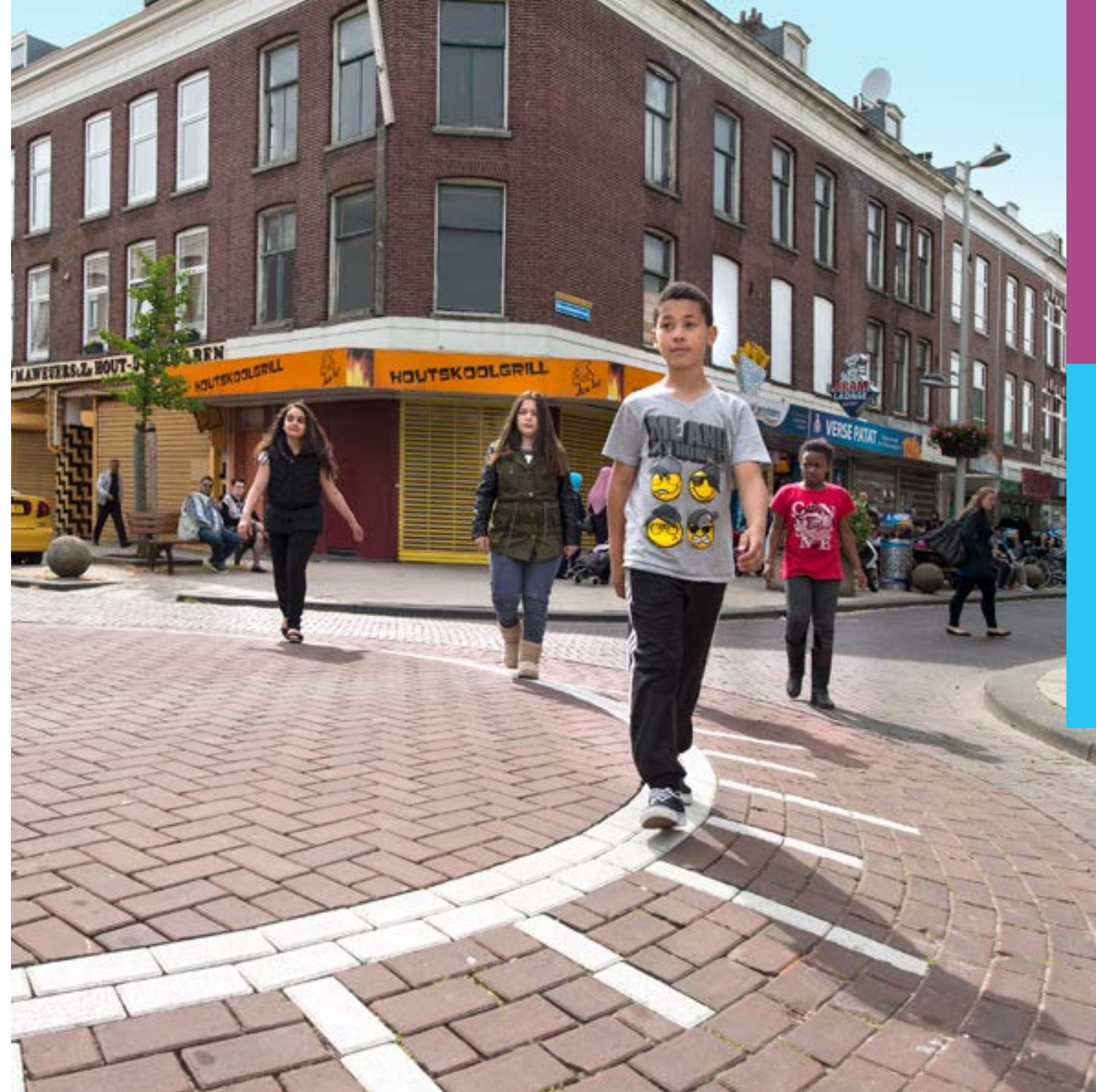
These pushpins are large, round protrusions in the road. Clearly marked with white lines. They're not speed bumps or roundabouts, although they look quite similar. These pushpins aren't sharp, but they do stimulate. They draw people's attention in traffic. Pedestrians, cyclists, motorbike riders and car drivers: everyone encounters them. The effect is that people slow down and pay extra attention. That makes crossing a lot safer.

"These pushpins aren't sharp, they stimulate."

Other measures help too. The bend in front of the Princess Juliana School has been altered in such a way that drivers need to slow down. And the pavements are wider. The bend from the Noordplein to the Heer Bokelweg, which crosses the Noordsingel, has been diverted. Therefore pedestrians and drivers see each other approach well in advance.

Zebbras on the street

The pushpin is new in the Oude Noorden. There are three of them in the Tollensstraat and four of them in the Woelwijkstraat/Gerard Scholtenstraat. The first pushpin is at the crossing between the Zwart Janstraat and Tollensstraat. The delivery of this pushpin coincides with the inauguration of the children's artwork the dakgootloper [gutter walker]. During the celebrations people walk around in zebra suits. The zebras are part of the municipal safety campaign, 'stop for the zebra'. For once they attract attention to a pushpin instead of a zebra crossing.



5 Entrances courtyards

Courtyards are often hidden treasures. But you need to be able to find them. Five of those treasures are given a striking entrance, so you can't miss them.

The courtyards are public space. Residents should be able to enjoy them and children should be able to play there. But they are often hidden among the housing blocks. And if you don't know about them, you don't go there. Therefore the entrances of five of these areas are given a new and striking exterior.

Clearly visible

The entrance gate has a steel frame in a striking colour: bright red. Children see those red entrances and know: I can go and play there. The recognizable frames immediately indicate that there's a courtyard. The colour, the lighting and plantation are recurring everywhere. Even though every frame has its own shape, because it's made to measure for each entrance. Lighting ensures for safety and visibility in the evening. Vegetation offers the finishing touches. Greenery feels at home in a child-friendly environment. Children like to see flowers and insects, and they might just discover that they're nature bright.

Extra safe

During the day the courtyards are open to everyone. They're locked in the evening. Which gives a sense of safety to the residents. They can of course come and go as they please themselves. Three entrances open and close via an automatic time lock, instead of a key. If that works well, then the other courtyard will be fitted with a similar lock.

The striking entrances are in these streets:

- Gerard Scholtenstraat
- Woelwijkstraat
- Jacob Catsstraat
- Erasmusstraat
- Rottestraat

“Because of the bright red entrances, a child immediately knows: I can go there.”



20 Extra trees

Greenery plays an important part in a child-friendly environment. But there's often not enough room for it in the streets of city neighbourhoods. You don't 'just' put a grass pitch or park somewhere.

On National Tree Planting Day 2012, the city council planted 20 extra trees along the route. Local children helped with the planting and decorated the trees with festive ribbons. Some 19 trees are in the Woelwijkstraat and the Tollensstraat. The other tree is a climbing tree, which is located at the Snellemanplein.

“That many new trees in a city neighbourhood is unusual.”

The climbing tree is still protected. It has to settle and grow first. Only in about five years it will be strong enough to climb in. So care is also being taking of the future.

Every tree counts

That many extra trees is unusual. And each tree is one tree. It is tricky to plant trees in a city. You can't put them just anywhere because of cables or underground piping. In addition, the quality of city soil is often not good enough for plants and trees.

Therefore every newly planted tree is given fresh soil and special feeding. Narrow streets are not good for tall trees. They take away a lot of light. The maximum height of the new trees will be about 8 metres. They are:

- Feather Maples
- Hawthorns
- Yellow Chestnuts
- Silver Beech
- Shadbush
- Katsure trees
- American sweetgum
- Pagoda trees
- Ornamental Cherries

25 Tree mirror gardens

Children mainly look at the ground. If you want to make a route appealing for children, you therefore have to make sure that things are happening at street level. In mini gardens around tree trunks, for instance.

The square metre around a tree is always unpaved. It's called the tree mirror [or tree dripline in English]. A tree needs that space to get water and oxygen. This piece of soil doesn't need to remain bare. So there's a wonderful opportunity to make the child-friendly route brighter. Using flowering plants in these tree mirror gardens.

Lively affair

The children in the neighbourhood help with planting in October 2012. At least, in that part that borders on the Princess Juliana School playground. The rest is taken care of by the city council. Pansies and bulbs fill the small gardens. It's a lively affair. The new tree mirror gardens are located along the Snellemanplein, the Pijnackerplein and in the Gerard Scholtenstraat. Some trees are given a concrete edge and new soil for the plants. And a low fence to keep bicycles and dogs out.

Touching allowed

Local residents and children maintain the little gardens themselves. Looking and touching are both allowed! That way, children learn more about nature. In the Tollensstraat local residents have started their own tree mirror gardens. They planted flowering species and herbs. Now it's exciting: what will start growing and flowering? If you live in the neighbourhood, you're allowed to water the plants. Which tree mirror will have the tallest sunflower?

“Flowering plants in mini gardens: there's a lot to look at ground level.”

225 Metres of façade gardens

Façade gardens are also at 'children's height'. They brighten up the route to school. Therefore some 225 meters of façade gardens were planted in 2012.

A façade garden is about a pavement slab deep and usually as wide as the front of a house, either side of its front door. An edge neatly demarcates it. Façade gardens are nothing new; there are many of them already in Rotterdam. But in this case, the city council provides the plants, right at the start. And that's new. Residents can choose between different varieties: vegetables and herbs,

annuals, perennials or a combination of those. Most people opt for perennials.

Greener and prettier

Following the first information meeting and presentation of the designs, many people have become enthusiastic. Even now, there's still a demand for façade gardens. And why not? They brighten things up. And you might see your neighbours a bit more often, while gardening. The gardens are in people's name, and they actually sign a contract for them. They maintain the garden themselves: they weed, water and replace dead plants. Possibly neglected façade gardens are cleared by the council. At the end of the day the streets need to look nicer.

Interaction

Some people are unable to maintain their façade gardens. Because they are less mobile, for instance. Fortunately there's a solution for that. At various locations along the route, local residents help with pruning and clearing up. What's also nice: in the courtyard in the Rembrandstraat local children grow seeds to be planted out in the façade gardens!

“You see your neighbors a bit more often, while gardening.”





13 Locations with façade greenery

The Oude Noorden has little greenery. It does have many streets and houses. So what you do when you want more greenery? You brighten up the façades using plants.

Greenery is fun. It's fragrant and colourful. You might discover little creatures. It rustles when you touch it. What more do you want as a child? Thirteen façades along the child-friendly route will become green. Entire streets with façades covered in greenery is unfortunately not possible. That is too expensive. But the chosen locations are in full view, for maximum effect. They catch the sun, which will benefit the plants. They're covered in two varieties of climbers: the Virginia creeper and the wisteria. They are safe choices, which won't damage the walls. The walls are covered with wire constructions, along which the greenery will trail nicely.

Patience

It will take a couple of years before the façades are entirely covered. So it requires some patience. This summer we can fortunately see some progress already. On the corner of the Gerard Scholtenstraat and the 3rd Pijnackerstraat flowering plants brighten up the façade. They mirror the shapes and

colours of the Muurbijen [wall bees], the children's artwork.

The façade greenery is growing at thirteen locations:

- Gerard Scholtenstraat
- Benthuizerstraat
- Woelwijkstraat
- Touwbaan
- Tollensstraat
- Rembrandtstraat
- Rottestraat
- Noordplein

**“Green is fun.
It rustles when you
touch it.”**

Children's artworks

The KiWi explorers, a group of children from Het Plein, The Princess Juliana School and De Klimop primary schools, thought the route would be more fun with art.

They thought up fourteen fantasy animals. Over 300 schoolchildren selected seven animals that would be installed along the route. Kinderparadijs Meidoorn organized workshops to bring these neighbourhood animals to life. Local children played around with lots of different materials. They used, among other things, paint, wood, wire and clay. Some artworks subsequently received professional treatment, to ensure they could be installed outdoors. plaatsen.

The power of making

When children make art themselves, they can discover what they enjoy and what they're good at. And that gives children self-confidence.

The Kinderparadijs calls it 'the power of making: you can do more than you think.'

There are eight children's artworks along the child-friendly route:

- **Dakgootloper [gutter walker] - Tollensstraat:** the gutter walker consists of various parts, which children have painted onto panels
- **Muurbij [wall bee] - Gerard Scholtenstraat:** children's drawings are printed onto aluminium
- **Leeuwenharp [lions' harp] - Tollensstraat:** the children have designed the lions' harps themselves, cut from wooden panels and painted them.
- **Waterhaas [water hare] - Prinses Juliana-school:** a four-metre-high steel frame, which is entirely covered by plants
- **Vliegduiker [fly diver] - Rembrandtstraat:** children's drawings printed on aluminium
- **Kiwikauwer [kiwi chewer] - Woelwijkstraat:** children have designed the kiwi chewers themselves, cut them from wooden panels and painted them
- **Bloembaars [flower bream] - Benthuizerstraat:** steel frames with wooden flowers
- **Vergadering der dieren [meeting of the animals] - Tollensstraat:** large aluminium panels with enlarged children's drawings of all animals of the neighbourhood.



36 Street name signs

The streets along the child-friendly route have been allocated names of the neighbourhood animals. This required the production of street name signs. They're large green signs, which are located directly underneath the normal signs.

The largest is 1.2 metres wide. It's not allowed to put a street name sign just anywhere, but the council has given permission in this case.

Living along the Waterhaaskade [water hare quay]

The signs make the route visible. And the street names are easy to remember for children. On top of that, it's much nicer to say 'I live along the Waterhaaskade, or the Muurbijsteeg.' That immediately conjures up an image for children. The route therefore becomes recognizable and 'theirs'.

The new street names

Some streets, like the Tollensstraat, host several neighbourhood animals. They share the street, but each stretch is given its own name. Therefore this street has more new than old street name signs. The new street names are:

- Bloembaarspad [flower bream path]
- Dakgootloperpad [gutter walker path]
- Kiwikauwerdreef [kiwi chewer drive]
- Leeuwenharplaan [lion's harp lane]
- Muurbijsteeg [wall bee alley]
- Vliegduikersveld [fly diver meadow]
- Waterhaaskade [water hare quay]

Of course you can continue to use names like Tollensstraat, Woelwijkstraat, Rembrandtstraat and Gerard Scholtenstraat!

♥ Bloembaarspad ♥

♥ Dakgootloperpad ♥

♥ Kiwikauwerdreef ♥

♥ Leeuwenharplaan ♥

♥ Muurbijsteeg ♥

♥ Vliegduikersveld ♥

♥ Waterhaaskade ♥



311 Pavement slabs

In the workshops of Kinderparadijs Meidoorn children brought the neighbourhood animals to life. They made artworks and considered how the animals would live, eat, sound and walk. They also drew each neighbourhood animal's track.

These drawings have been cut out of pvc, a plastic. Subsequently every animal's footprint was laid into a pavement slab and sealed. The pavement slab manufacturers of Rotterdam made all 311 track slabs, one after the other.

Connection

The tracks connect the neighbourhood animals with each other. They're no longer singular artworks, but part of a route. As a result the animals gain real meaning, which makes the route attractive to children. And therefore they'll likely to use the route. Because children don't take the shortest route, but the one that's most fun.

“Walk from one school playground to the other, using the gutter walkers' gait.”

The seven track designs are:



15 Task signs and things to do

Each children's artworks is accompanied by a map of the route. This also makes the route recognizable and visible. These signs also contain tasks. Children not only want to watch, but also do things. Through these tasks they can playfully develop their talents.

'Near the **Vliegduiker** there are 20 marble holes. The sign carries the invitation: 'Bring your marbles and come and play a game with your friends.'

'Walk from De Klimop playground to that of the Princess Juliana School. Can you also do it playing hopscotch?' It says next to the **Dakgootloper**.

'Count the muurbijen in the Muurbijsteeg.' Next to the **Muurbijen** is a chalkboard. Children can leave the answer there.

'The **Leeuwenharp** roars like a lion, GRRR. How many words do you know that start with GR? Write the number on the chalkboard.'

'At the **Waterhaas** it's about nature. 'Do you water the tree gardens once in a while? Do you see any insects among the flowers?'

'The **Kiwikauwer** likes skipping. Therefore there's a skipping pole. 'Do you want to join in skipping the ropes?'

'The smallest **Bloembaars** is about 1,25 metres tall. How tall are you?' Children can figure it out themselves with the ruler on the wall. They've also decorated the ruler.

"Children not only want to watch, but also do things."



Part 3 Spin-off

More in the Oude Noorden...

More is happening around the topics of child-friendly and/or outdoor space. This doesn't fall under the project 'child-friendly neighbourhood', but it does make the Oude Noorden a neighbourhood that offers children opportunities. This chapter lists some of these projects.

Playground Princess Juliana School

Green hedges replace the tall fences. Children can now also use the playground surrounded by greenery beyond school hours.

The Wijkchool [Neighbourhood School]

The Wijkchool helps young people who don't have any qualifications. They get help with following courses, problems at home, addiction and other issues. These young people do, for instance, maintenance jobs in the neighbourhood. The wijkchool is housed in a former Havensteder office building, in the Erasmusstraat. A child-friendly neighbour-

hood also offers opportunities for young people.

Snellemanplein

The quare has new trees (among them apple trees), shrubbery, bicycle racks and there's a grass pitch for the sports hall. A green hedge replaces a long fence.

Johan Idaplein

The stone-clad Johan Idaplein is designed with children in mind. Now there's a green playground with play equipment and height differences. There's a goblet to sit in and observe your surroundinga from a certain height.

Het Klooster [The Monastery]

Het Klooster along the Ruivenstraat has turned into an open, lively community centre. Here children also get ample opportunity to discover what they like and what they're good at.



Ending small

This booklet gives a good overview of the child-friendly Erasmus neighbourhood and Rotte quarter. The evaluation monitor of Rotterdam Child-Friendly already showed clear improvement in 2010. The most recent social and safety indexes show a higher score for the Oude Noorden. Now residents are very positive about the neighbourhood and they verbalise that. They often consciously opt for the neighbourhood's dynamism. The child-friendly neighbourhood certainly contributes to that positive image, but it is only one element of a wider approach. We also develop other parts of the area, such as the Zwaanhals, the Zaagmolenkade, the area along the Rotte and the Kloosterbuurt.

Seduced

Now the project has come to an end, it is up to the neighbourhood to continue the good work. We have invested and seduced, to give people the appetite to work on things themselves. Various organizations have become involved, and now propagate the child-friendly ethos. During the project we have told local residents, parents, about the ideas and they have contributed. Just like their children have. Of course we're not disappearing from the neighbourhood. Havensteder and the council will remain partners in the area. If residents or organization come up with ideas, we'd like to think with them. This child-friendly neighbourhood is something magnificent, and small, local initiatives need to now keep that alive. And you can see it happening. A nice example is the gnome path. Under that header, residents of the Rotte quarter organize walks for children across the wonderful courtyards. Children are given all kinds of tasks: find four little creatures or dig a hole until you find water. That is talent development at work.

In the genes

The child-friendly principles and starting points will find their ways into other projects and neighbourhoods too. If it's in your genes, you automatically take it with you. Then we're talking, among others things, about greening and play areas on squares and in courtyards. In the past we designed outdoor space mainly from the perspective of adults. Now we also look at children's needs. That doesn't always happen under the header 'child-friendly neighbourhood', but it's about the intention, not the label. We don't have to pour everything in a rigid stricture. Good ideas often appear spontaneously and can grow into something magnificent. It's exactly that spontaneity and enthusiasm that gets things done!



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Colophon

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Your Neighbourhood! Your Child! Your Heart!

