



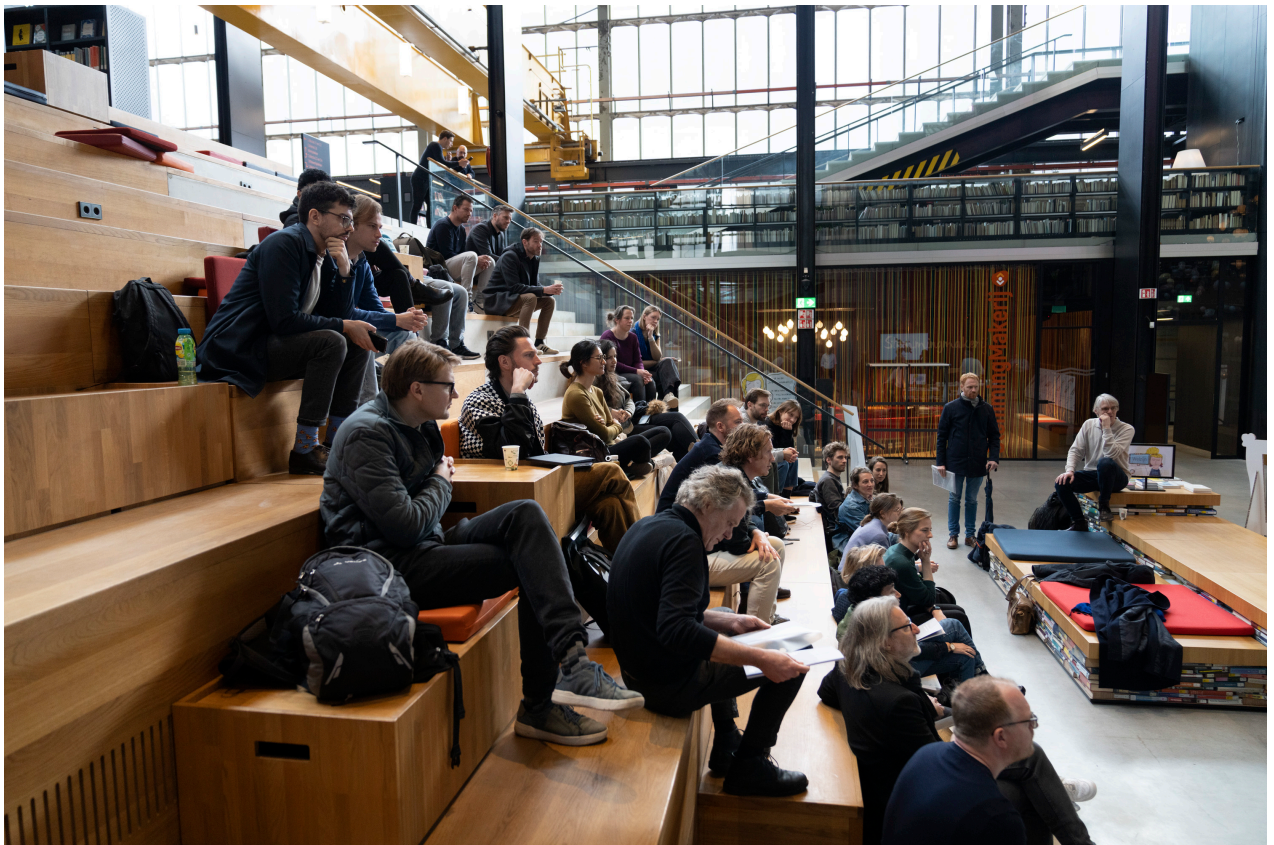
Exploring Sites

European 17 – Living Cities

learn more about each competition location, ask questions, and interact with site representatives.

European 17, the longest-running and largest design competition in Europe for architects under 40, took place in the Urban Region Breda-Tilburg (SRBT) in the Netherlands. The event aimed to address the sustainable development of the region and featured six competition locations: **Groenewoud** and **Kenniskwartier** in Tilburg, **'t Zoet** and **Schorsmolen** in Breda, the shopping center in **Etten-Leur**, and the Taxandriaweg in **Waalwijk**.







Site Visits | 9.30 – 12:30

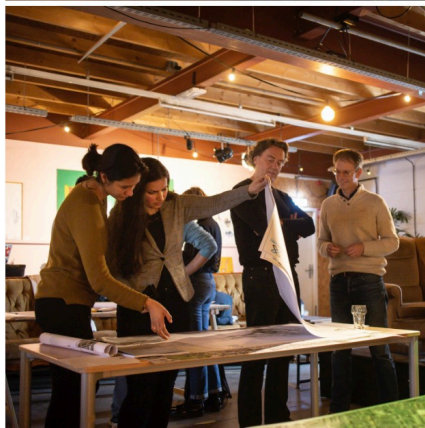
The day program started with a series of site visits from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM. Participants had the opportunity to explore each competition location, ask questions, and interact with site representatives. The site visits began at the LocHal in Tilburg, where a brief introduction was provided before groups departed with their respective site representatives to visit the different locations.





Insightful Workshops | 16.00-18:00

In the afternoon, participants reconvened at the MotMot Gallery in Breda for insightful workshops from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. These workshops provided an opportunity for participants to deepen their understanding of the sites and competition assignments in detail with the site representatives.



Symposium Living Cities | 19:30-21:15

'Dare to dream big.'

The evening program, titled "Symposium Living Cities," took place at the same venue, the MotMot Gallery, from 7:30 PM to 9:15 PM. The symposium was open to everyone and aimed to delve deeper into the importance of European and the participating municipalities. We delved deeper into the importance of the Urban Region Breda-Tilburg (URBT) and of participating in European, and into the six locations and their corresponding themes.



Sabine Lebesque (Board Member European NL) gave a short introduction on European. She stressed that the goal of the competition is for the winners to get a second assignment, either to build or to follow up their ideas. Previously, winners won an assignment, and their design was built. These days it's more about research, which can eventually lead to a design. **Lebesque** has been connected to European since the early nineties and witnessed the shift in the competition through the years. **Lebesque**: 'These days, the different locations in one country are all in the same region. That makes for a stronger competition.'



Bas van der Pol (Alderman of the Municipality of Tilburg) was previously, as director of the Architecture Institute of Rotterdam (AIR), involved in European 15. He talked about the value and strength of European for the URBT. Van der Pol stressed the importance of finding young talent and connect them with clients, to create opportunities for the architecture (and also for the landscape). Van der Pol: 'We're a young region with nineteen municipalitie

s and want to do great things, to add to the existing quality. It's good to have young people on board.' The six selected locations have been described as 'prototypical development sites'. Van der Pol: 'The locations revolve around big themes and challenges. I'm looking forward to new perspectives.'



Ton Venhoeven (Venhoeven CS) gave a key note presentation on Living Cities, the theme of **European 17**.

Venhoeven: 'It's important tot solve problems within the neighbourhoods. That asks for a big system change.' He shortly referred to his projects Rotterdam Alexander and the Olympic swimming pool in St. Denis, Paris, before focusing on his ideas for one square kilometre micro cities, with a circular economy and mobility hubs on their outskirts, that solve their problems on a neighbourhood level. **Venhoeven:** 'As a city, to make simple projects would leave the next one with high costs. That offers no solution. We have to change. The one square kilometre city is ideal for an integral approach. Don't keep it simple.'

Venhoeven On URBT: 'URBT, as a part of Brabant City, is strategically positioned. The challenges of the six selected locations are also global challenges. So they should be placed in a broader perspective.'



Video's introduced the six locations, followed by an discussion with **Peter van Schie** (Urban Planner of the Municipality of Breda) and **Marco Visser** (Urban Planner of the Municipality of Tilburg) on the significance for the URBT of participating in Europan. 'The theme is Living Cities, not Liveable Cities. There's a need for change, to do things differently, so that everybody prospers. That is our goal. The municipalities in the URBT together form a 'mosaic'. We should optimally deploy this Brabant mosaic.'



Kenniskwartier, Tilburg :

In short, the challenge is to develop a radical spatial intervention on this site: design a new building with innovative work and home typologies for multiple generations and income brackets, buzzing with activity which can attract talent. The aim is to create a new urban centre of activities that connects talent and city, restores social and economic imbalance, contributes to a healthy and climate adaptive city, In time this location is to catalyse the urban dynamics in neighbouring districts.

Two main design tasks for **Kenniskwartier**, Tilburg:

1. Design a new building with innovative work and home typologies, buzzing with activity which can attract talent.
2. Create a new urban centre that connects talent and city, restores social and economic imbalance, contributes to a healthy and climate adaptive city.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3TM3XZ3hdk>

Groenewoud, Tilburg:

In short, the challenge is to develop a spatial strategy implementing a new mix of functions in the central area of **Groenewoud**, at the same time conceptualizing a garden suburb of the future where existing green character is rethought to be an essential part of climate adaptability. Reinvent this postwar neighbourhood to be an attractive neighbourhood for the twenty first century urban dweller by, carefully designing community-oriented housing typologies, facilities and a new use concept for the surrounding landscape.

Two main design tasks for **Groenewoud**, Tilburg:

1. Develop a spatial strategy implementing a new mix of functions in the central area of **Groenewoud**
2. Carefully design community-oriented housing typologies, facilities and a new use concept for the surrounding landscape.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CM-dgzV3xiQ>

Etten-Leur:

In short, the challenge is to develop a spatial strategy implementing a new mix of functions in the middle of active shopping area, conceptualizing an experience of shopping to reflect moving away from consumption-only mentality towards a future where local production and mid-sized town character is integrated. And thus, reflective of circularity as an essential part of climate adaptable future. Reinvent this mono-functional shopping to become a place buzzing with activity all through the week. Carefully designing community oriented housing typologies, new facilities for the twenty first century dweller.

Two main design tasks for **Etten-Leur**:

1. Develop a Architectural design strategy to implement a new mix of functions to the existing shopping centre.
2. Carefully designing community oriented housing typologies, new facilities for the twenty first century dweller.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEhAfgCfVSA&t=1s>



Waalwijk:

In short, the challenge is to develop this strategic location in **Waalwijk** by presenting a densification strategy that unlocks the site's potential. The aim is to transform an under-used parking lot along the motorway into a healthy, vital, and interactive live-and-work environment that is well-connected to the nearby historical city centre giving a new meaning to **Waalwijk's** identity. The challenge also involves designing and integrating a new public transport hub which supports a new mobility perspective of moving away from car dependency.

Two main design tasks for **Waalwijk**:

1. Transform an under-used parking lot along the motorway into a healthy, vital, and interactive live-and-work environment
2. Design and integrate a new public transport hub which supports a new mobility perspective for **Waalwijk**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_PWaP7Bfsc&t=2s

't Zoet, Breda:

In short, the challenge is to develop a spatial strategy for the area referred as 'working cathedral' implementing a new iconic, complementary, inclusive, international, energy-neutral and dynamic living and working environment as part of Crossmark. Importantly designing an elaborate active public space at the Suikerplein as an urban-stage in conjunction with the water, nature and climate ambitions of Zoete Delta and Breda.

Two main design tasks for 't Zoet, Breda:

1. Design a spatial strategy implementing a new iconic, complementary, inclusive, international living and working environment as part of Crossmark.
2. Designing an active public space at the Suikerplein as an urban-stage in conjunction with the water, nature and climate ambitions of Zoete Delta and Breda.

Film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZlfWInliaA&t=1s>

Schorsmolen, Breda:

In short, the challenge is to develop a longterm spatial transformation strategy implementing a new mix of functions in the central area of **Schorsmolen**, at the same time testing and implementing new forms of collective living concepts, which can enhance social cohesion. Reinvent this postwar neighbourhood to be an attractive neighbourhood for the twenty first century urban dweller by, carefully designing community oriented housing typologies, facilities and a new use concept for connecting it to imitate the surroundings.

Two main design tasks for **Schorsmolen**, Breda:

1. Develop a longterm spatial transformation strategy implementing a new mix of functions in the central area of **Schorsmolen**
2. Design new forms of collective living concepts, which can enhance social cohesion

Film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbPI8Eb2L7U>



The site introductions were followed by a panel conversation, discussing some of the challenges. On stage were **Desirée Uitzetter** (Director Urban Area Development at BPD, Chair of the board of NEPROM), **Jonathan Woodruffe** (Board Member of Europan, architect and co-founding director of Studio Woodruffe Papa) and **Bas van Rijsbergen** (Director of Urban Development of the Municipality of Breda).



Rijsbergen reflected on the Brabant mosaic. **Rijsbergen**: 'The mosaic, that's the Brabant way. It's special that the nineteen municipalities decided to cooperate voluntarily, bottom up. Brabant is a rich region, everything is nearby, we have all this towns, and the landscape is pretty unique.' **Uitzetter**: 'The quality of living here is good.'

Woodruffe reflected on **Waalwijk**, a town with no train station. 'Here we have to address the substantial use of cars. People need that now. This is a prototypical site, where we can show what is possible, and what solutions look like.'

Uitzetter on **Kenniskwartier**: 'This site doesn't need just buildings. It's important to attract companies, e.g. start-ups, and create jobs.' **Woodruffe** compared **Kenniskwartier** with the likes of Oxford, Cambridge and MIT. **Woodruffe**: 'Presumably this site doesn't need an iconic building. It's more about creating a mix, a different urban fabric.'

't Zoet needs an icon, according to **Rijsbergen**, a statement, because it's the next big step in the development of Breda.

Both **Groenewoud** and **Schorsmolen** need revitalization. **Woodruffe**: 'In **Groenewoud**, there's hardly a connection between the buildings and the green heart. This location needs a rethink about its green, beyond clichés. Think contemporary garden city feeling.'

Schorsmolen can be seen as a prototypical model. **Woodruffe**: 'That models needs a rethink. Now it's also about the needs of the residents. **Schorsmolen** is a classic example of top down, maybe now we should work with them and try bottom up.' **Rijsbergen**: 'Once we thought this was okay, but that was then. Now, we have to make **Schorsmolen** future proof.'

Etten-Leur has a tradition as it comes to of innovation. Shopping centre **Etten-Leur** was the first indoor shopping centre of the Netherlands, a new concept, and the first gas-free district of the country is in **Etten-Leur**. The town is looking forward to plans that transform the outdated shopping centre into a new urban fabric.

'We are open to innovation. Bring it on.' Does the panel has good advice for the participants?

René Reijngoudt (Municipality of **Etten-Leur**)

'When it comes to the realization of a project, put yourself in the shoes of all parties involved and convince them.'

Uitzetter

'Dare to dream big. Shape a new identity, don't follow it.'

Rijsbergen

Overall, **European 17 - Living Cities** in the SRBT region was a comprehensive event that provided architects under 40 with an opportunity to contribute to sustainable development and engage with the participating municipalities. The site visits, workshops, and symposium offered valuable insights and fostered meaningful discussions on the future of urban design in Europe.

The symposium, that was moderated by Sophie Stravens, was attended by 75 interested parties. The night was concluded with drinks.