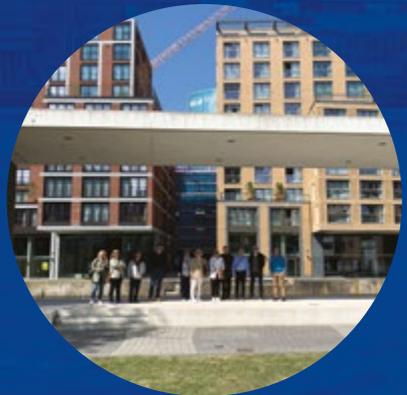


BEYOND BELFAST'S WATERFRONT

MARITIME BELFAST STUDY TRIPS



maritimebelfast.com



MARITIME
BELFAST



An effective and impacting study trip is a thing of great beauty. Well thought through and planned, it seeks to offer a space for people to leave their comfort zone and experience a different space, a different culture, a different narrative. It aims to create imaginative interaction with the new, and to analyse and think through if anything that is encountered has implications or potential transference to the starting place.



At Maritime Belfast we are passionate about our precious waterfront, we want it to be the best that it can be and as part of our work we have embraced the concept of studying others, and being inspired by what we have seen. But also note that Belfast itself has many ideas to share!

Over the last several years, we have carefully chosen a number of key cities and gone to study all aspects of their waterfront development. Our trips have shown us how other cities approach the water's edge and have opened our imagination in innovative ways. Maritime Belfast uses these trips as inspiration for the Board and staff on developing our heritage and destination focussed projects, and has hugely influenced the development of the Belfast Waterfront Framework. We always use local people to assist us in this exploration and the results have been to build up an invaluable collection of useful information and ideas, and a strong group of friends and advocates for our city from across Europe.



We make no apologies for our explorations, all of which have yielded valuable information and learning for us that has translated into better outcomes for our wonderful waterfront.

Marie-Thérèse McGivern
Chair, Maritime Belfast



How to use this guide

Study trips have been inspirational for Maritime Belfast, so we've selected some key learnings and experiences from three of our recent study trips, and included an introduction from key people who shared their cities with us. We've also included travel tips for travelling with a large group (include coffee stops!) and the key objectives that Maritime Belfast consider when planning a study trip.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or to share ideas from inspirational places you've visited.



Copenhagen



Rotterdam



Vienna

Key Objectives

Benchmark

To undertake benchmarking/best practice visit to inform the vision for Belfast's waterfront.

Consolidate

To further consolidate the Waterfront Promenade Framework and help inform Maritime Belfast's role in terms of delivery.

Understand

To better understand the successful linkages between public realm, public art, interpretation, heritage, animation and ground floor uses.

Identify

To identify different approaches to the water's edge.

Develop

To further develop the Board and staff as an effective team.



Copenhagen

Copenhagen is a great place to visit for an immersive experience on state-of-the-art urban transformation at this crucial time in our shared urban history! For centuries Copenhagen has transformed into a place where people have learned to co-exist with nature. This naturalistic legacy informed decades of progressive policy and planning development and this achievement has successfully been taken to interesting extremes in recent decades. Existing and new city developments have spawned a wealth of urban transformation projects offering our people and our visitors a wealth of sustainable urban lifestyle opportunities.

In the historic medieval urban core, in the surrounding urban districts from the 19th and 20th Century all the way to our new town developments of the 21st Century at the urban fringes of Copenhagen, our city offers urban professionals from all over the World an expansive and accessible open-air case study that they can visit and experience on foot and on bike. A great place to reflect on your own city and to take home some new answers to the big challenges cities all over the western world are very familiar with today.

Oliver Schulze
Schulze + Grassov



Why Copenhagen?

The capital of Denmark is a city built on two islands, originally a Viking fishing village and natural harbour. One of the world's most environmentally friendly cities, Copenhagen has spent decades cleaning the water of the harbour so its residents and visitors can swim all year around. The city is also known for design, architecture, and urban planning, as well as its quality of life and happiness ranking.

Itinerary

The Maritime Belfast study trip visited the port of Copenhagen and its amazing architecture and public realm. Key considerations were the interventions that have cleaned the harbour and allowed people to be both in, and on the water. Floating islands, moveable pontoons, saunas and swimming pools are scattered across the waterfront, and the developments are people centric and driven by quality of life. Copenhagen has really considered transportation, and even multi-storey car parks have a multiple use with urban sports parks on the roof.

- Absalon Folkekirke (community kitchen in an old church)
- Evening stroll in Vesterbro (former meatpacking district)
- Harbour bus to Nyhavn (north harbour)
- Visits to Enghave Brygge and Islands Brygge (waterfront areas)
- Museet for Søfart – Danish Maritime Museum (in a dry dock in Helsingør)
- Visit Aarhusgadekvarteret neighbourhood (former shipping district)

Water Connections

Copenhagen is located on the Øresund, a strait of water that connects the North Sea and the Baltic Sea and also has many canals.



Integrated planting

Key Learnings

- Once heavily polluted, Copenhagen embarked on a 20 year programme to clean their water, which is now a recreational resource for the city with swimming and saunas
- Repurposing heritage buildings and port structures for new uses
- Concern for ensuring quality of life appears to inform and influence how development is carried out in Copenhagen
- Holistic communities rather than real estate
- Joined up approach between stakeholders (civic & private) and a collaborative effort, planners, architects, landscape architects, developers, communities and civic leaders
- Overall control retained and clear design briefing for overall scheme - masterplan, and specific plots that individual developers /architects then interpret
- Thinking long term – over a 50-year horizon
- A little imagination can have a huge impact!



Floating businesses



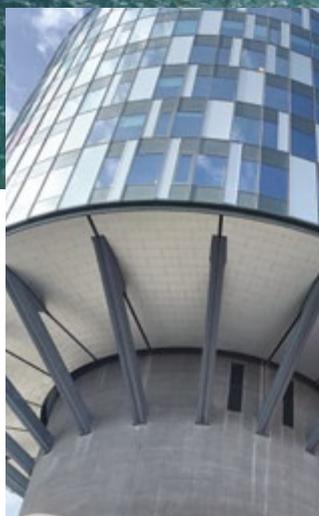
Urban beaches



Design vs branding



Play areas for all



Repurposing existing structures



Play areas for all



Viewpoints



Rotterdam

Rotterdam is one of the most interesting cities in Europe.

In WWII the city centre was destroyed by 90% by attacks from the Luftwaffe and then the RAF. After the end of the war Rotterdam City Council decided to clear all remaining urban structures and start planning its entire city centre from scratch. What has emerged then over the last 75 years is a success story. A young and modern European City Centre that has more taller buildings than most comparable European cities. An urban centre that is rich in modern transportation infrastructure for walking, cycling, public transit and even water taxis. It is also a city that has done well in welcoming immigrants from many parts of the world, and it shows in the diverse city spaces and places today.

Rotterdam has a vibrant planning and building culture, hosting events like the architecture biennale. The city carefully manages urban development at the waterfront to create a new and positive image of Rotterdam. One important lesson for Belfast: Rotterdam has managed to reimagine itself from the water's perspective!

Oliver Schulze
Schulze + Grassov



Why Rotterdam?

The second largest city in the Netherlands is a port city, with a similar maritime history to Belfast. Its rivers were tamed to create the city and the port, and after suffering devastation in WW2 the city developed a love of unique and challenging architecture. Rotterdam is now a major logistics and economic centre and Europe's largest seaport, and continuing to reclaim land.

Itinerary

The study trip to Rotterdam was an action packed 48 hours in the busy port city. The group toured the architectural highlights of Rotterdam such as the Market Hall building and Cube Houses, swing bridges, and visited public realm in the open market spaces and theatre square. The visit included an Architecture exhibition in three floating barges turned into an event space, garden and urban sports park. The study trip also included the Maritime Museum, with its inspiring collections and both indoor and outdoor exhibitions, on-site forge and maritime themed children's play area. The water taxis were a quick way to get around Rotterdam, Europe's largest seaport.

- Explored Kop van Zuid, Wilhelminakade and Wilhelminapier (redeveloped docklands)
- Markthal / Market Hall (residential, offices and indoor market)
- Rotterdam Central Station (travel, cycle stands)
- Schouwburgplein / Theatre Square (public realm)
- Katendracht (waterfront neighbourhood)
- Maritime Museum Rotterdam

Water Connections

Rotterdam is located on the New and Old Maas Rivers, tributaries of the Rhine river in the western Netherlands.



Exhibition in a barge



Public art



Markthal



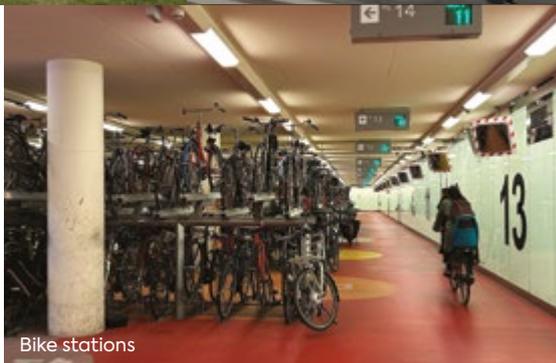
Erasmusbrug



A park in a barge



Architecture



Bike stations



Traditional boat building workshop

Key Learnings

- Rotterdam's maritime museum is innovative, interactive and had a wide range of exhibitions and artefacts. It also extended outside, and the collection included working boats, cranes and even a lighthouse
- The built environment and architecture were innovative and interesting
- Outdoor spaces and open-air theatres
- A wealth of planting in the public realm and rooftop gardens
- Good examples of meanwhile uses and temporary installations
- Public transport is the dominant service, with cars third place to bicycles
- Inner city living is designed to nurture communities
- Stepped backed buildings provide better environmental conditions for public realm at ground floor



Vienna

Vienna is a city well known for its historical centre but in the last two decades Vienna has invested a lot of time, money and effort into the development of new city areas.

Large railway areas, former airfields have been transformed into lively neighbourhoods. They focus on attractive urban spaces, large green areas, social housing for the middle class, mixed uses on the ground floor, attractive architecture and sustainable mobility solutions. Additionally culture is an element in city development – in both the old city and in new neighbourhoods. Institutions like KÖR (Public Art Vienna) show this engagement. The Smart City strategy from Vienna focuses on three elements: Innovation, Resources and Living Quality and shows how keen Vienna is to integrate the several aspects of a sustainable development.

Not every part is well done, not every project shows architectural excellence but in the whole Vienna has quality driven planning and real estate institutions. Walking through the new city centre areas revealed lively quarters with a high quality of living.

Claudia Nutz
Nutzeffekt

nutzeffekt *

Why Vienna?

Vienna is a city with a long history, and a UNESCO world heritage site at its core. One of the largest cities on the Danube River, it has embraced both its heritage and the opportunity that new developments bring. Known for its music and culture, Vienna is regularly voted the most liveable city in the world.

Itinerary

The study trip visited developments such as Viertel Zwei, the green district in the Prater park, Aspern Seesdtat where all the streets and public places are named after women. The group explored the neighbourhood of Sonnwendviertel around the new main train station, and the varied architecture of the university campuses. The highlights were the Klima Biennale Wien – an art exhibition in a meanwhile space, and the Museums Quartier, one of the largest cultural quarters in the world.

- Museums Quartier (cultural and museum centre)
- Klima Biennale Wien (Vienna Climate Biennale)
- Stephansplatz (historical centre)
- Sonnwendviertel (neighbourhood)
- Viertel Zwei (green district)
- Aspern Seestadt (new development)

Water Connections

Vienna is located on the edge of the Danube, the largest river in Europe, and has the River Wien and Danube Canal running through the city.



Use of water

Key Learnings

- The blend of old and new in architecture, and the variety of styles and design
- The clustering of attractions and museums within large areas of public realm
- Opportunities for play everywhere – including under motorway bridges – and integrated into new developments
- Great examples of a green city – lush planting, wildflowers, parks, temporary and movable planting
- Use of water to provide sound and movement, and water activities
- The city uses quality and design panels to assess and approve new projects, including criteria such as ecology, social inclusion, economy and architecture
- How the city uses rooftops for restaurants, bars and public access
- Commitment to high quality social housing across the city, often integrated with private housing and sharing facilities



Green district



Moveable planting



Art box



University buildings



Play areas under bridges



Reusing planting

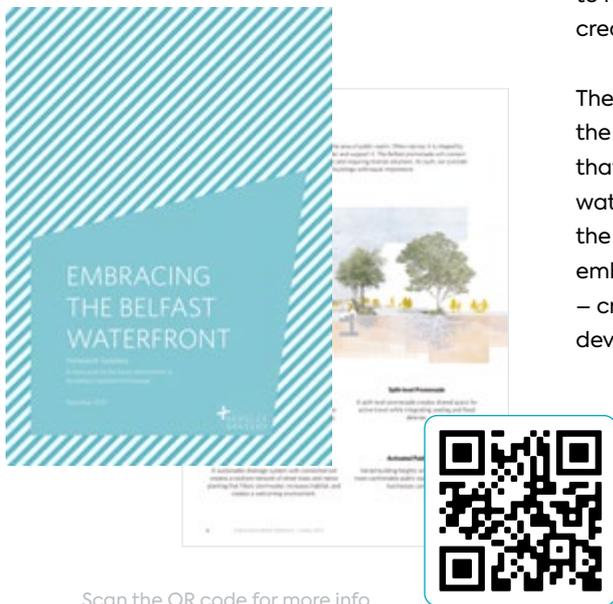


Varied architecture

Inspired by the study trips — applying our learning

Our study trips have been inspirational for the board and staff on numerous levels. From considering short-term interventions, to medium and longer-term projects, they have encouraged creativity and a new approach to our waterfront.

The most significant impact has been on the development of the **Belfast Waterfront Promenade Framework** — a report that now contains a vision for the area and an ambition for a waterfront that is greater than the sum of its parts. Embracing the Belfast Waterfront imagines what Belfast could be like if we embraced our waterfront as cities like Copenhagen have done — creating new spaces for vibrant cultural activities, sustainable development, and safe and green public spaces.



Scan the QR code for more info

“By balancing community, nature and development, a world-class waterfront will emerge over time.”

Our recent projects such as SoundYard were inspired both by the sounds of Belfast’s shipyards, but also by art installations in other cities on key parts of the public realm.

Adding new seating areas and a planter at Queen’s Quay was directly influenced by Rotterdam and their innovative seating all across the city, creating spaces where you can rest a moment and enjoy your surroundings. The relaxed planting was designed to encourage insects and bees to make their home in the planter, adding an essential area of biodiversity that is attractive to both people and nature.

Study trips have allowed and encouraged us to think broader, to try different things and consider the site from multiple perspectives. Whether that is how other cities approach the water’s edge, or how they link their public realm with public art and interpretation, and how other cities engage with their maritime heritage.



SoundYard



Queen’s Quay planter



Quick Guide to Study Trips

You've agreed what the objectives are, and what you would like to see, now you need to plan your trip.

Guide

Reach out to tourism agencies within the chosen city, and see if you can find a local guide for some elements of the trip. We've found that urban designers and architects are particularly good at sharing their cities with visitors.



Hotels

Recommendations are always good, but we focused on central hotels either close to public transport, or a key area on our itinerary.



Weather

Check weather forecasts and advise everyone to dress for travel, walking, and being outside – so raincoats and sunscreen!



Itinerary

Plan your itinerary on Google My Maps. It will also help with calculating the distances between locations. Also look for city tourist apps that can be helpful.



Reflection Breaks

Make sure you include coffee stops and plan in lunch and dinner breaks. Use these opportunities for the group to collectively reflect on the surroundings.



Public Transport

The best way to see another city and be sustainable is to use their public transport and it provides a real insight into what can be improved in Belfast!



Luggage

Consider luggage. Some airlines will ask you to check bags at late notice if flights are full, but do encourage people to travel light.



Back-up

Make sure there are a couple of people who know the itinerary inside out, just in case one can't make it.



Chill Out

Include free time so that people can see the cities outside of the itinerary or have time to relax and recover from all the walking.



Travel Packs

In your travel packs include a brief history of the city you are visiting. It will help with visiting any heritage sites or regeneration sites.



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