

Stories of the Streets:
An Oral History of Carnisse by its Residents (1953-2023)

Oliver Kriebel-Bruno
Student number: 547011
547011ok@student.eur.nl
Supervisor: Dr. Pieter van den Heede
Erasmus University Rotterdam
25/06/23

Abstract: This master's thesis explores the history of Carnisse, a neighborhood in the south of Rotterdam, from the perspective of its current inhabitants. To do so, it makes use of data collected during a series of 10 walking interviews with current residents of Carnisse, aiming to understand which places and stories residents perceived as most important to the neighborhood's history. Through qualitative thematic analysis, the study uncovered three major themes related to important locations: food/drink, public outdoor spaces, and cultural spaces. It was determined that residents valued places that served as social hubs, fostering connections and community engagement. The study also identified themes in the stories shared by participants, including transitions, (dis)connection to the neighborhood, and perceived gaps in the neighborhood's amenities. Although the small sample size of the project limits the conclusions of the research, it serves as a proof of concept for a new, participatory approach to engaging with Carnisse's history. Furthermore, the results of the research are adapted into a proposal for a walking tour through Carnisse to help residents discover the offerings in their own neighborhood.

Keywords: Carnisse, Rotterdam, history, participatory, co-creative, public, walking, tour, mapping, interviews, qualitative, stories

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	4
1.1 Research Questions	5
1.2 Literature Review.....	6
1.3 Theoretical Concepts	10
1.4 Sources and Methods	11
1.5 Innovative Aspects.....	14
Chapter Two: Participatory Methods in Rotterdam	16
2.1 Museum Rotterdam.....	16
2.2 Stichting Wijkcollectie.....	17
2.3 Conclusion	17
Chapter Three: Meaningful Places in Carnisse	19
3.1 Food and Drink	20
3.2 Cultural Spaces	21
3.3 Public Outdoor Spaces.....	23
3.4 Conclusion	24
Chapter Four: Stories	26
4.1 Transition	26
4.2 Feelings of (Dis)connection.....	27
4.3 What's Missing?	29
4.4 Conclusion	30
Chapter Five: Conclusion.....	31
Bibliography.....	33

Chapter One: Introduction

I haven't lived in Carnisse, one of Rotterdam's neighborhoods located south of the Maas river, for very long, but in the year and a half I've spent walking its streets I've started noticing patterns. While strangers may often avoid your eye when you cross their path, there are certain places, such as the park at Amelandseplein or the *Huis van de Wijk*¹ where the community comes together, and conversation is lively. But what other places are special to the residents? And what is meaningful about these locations? Often when one hears about Carnisse, one hears mainly about crime statistics and redevelopment plans.² While such statistical analyses of the material quality of life in the neighborhood are certainly useful and important, they neglect a humanistic element. How do the residents of Carnisse themselves experience their daily life? What aspects of the neighborhood are meaningful to them? How do they come together to create a sense of community? These questions are rarely asked in the context of Carnisse, which is often dismissed as a "problem neighborhood" with little cultural value.³ On the rare occasions that Carnisse's story is told, as is the case in the documentary mini-series *Carnisse: Geschiedenis van Rotterdam-Zuid*, produced by the Rotterdam heritage organization Steenhuis Meurs, it is usually a solely factual history accompanied by a description of the neighborhood's architecture and physical attributes.⁴ While such projects do contribute to the discussion of Carnisse's past and present, they lack input from the community in deciding how that story should be told. The absence of a local voice is particularly troubling when it comes to cultural policymaking, as it results in either a lack of attention or projects which do not represent the aims and interests of the community. My master thesis research seeks to address this issue by amplifying a perspective which is too often ignored when sharing the history of Carnisse: that of the residents themselves.

The goal of this research project is to gain a better understanding of the history of Carnisse as viewed from the perspective of its current inhabitants, which will be achieved using data collected through a series of 10 walking interviews with current residents of Carnisse. The periodization of this project stretches from 1953-2023 because the most senior resident I interviewed for this project has lived in Carnisse since this moment. As a key

¹ In English: House of the Neighborhood. Akin to a community center.

² Gemeente Rotterdam, 'Wijkagenda Carnisse', webpagina, Begroting Rotterdam 2021, accessed 25 January 2023, <https://www.watdoetdegemeente.rotterdam.nl/wijken/wijkagenda-carnisse/>.

³ Frank van Steenbergen and Julia Wittmayer, 'Carnisse in Transitie?: Een Verkenning van Het Verleden, Het Heden En de Toekomst van Een Rotterdamse Wijk' (Rotterdam, Dutch Research Institute for Transitions, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2012) 5.

⁴ *Carnisse: Geschiedenis van Rotterdam-Zuid* (Steenhuis Meurs, 2018), <https://vimeo.com/296010966>, accessed 11/22/2022.

additional outcome of this project, I will translate these findings into a walking tour through the neighborhood which will allow residents of Carnisse to learn more about their home through the stories of their neighbors. Doing so will contribute to efforts to engage in public historical outreach, as emphasized in the fields of public and applied history. The idea of creating a walking tour about the history of Carnisse stems from my overall intention to contribute to more effective public historical outreach, but the specific idea came from the participants themselves during the interview process. This will result in a final product that is not just made *for* the residents of Carnisse, but also *with* them. This directly connects to some of the foundational principles of public history. It therefore contributes to the field of public history by applying its core approaches in a practical manner, in particular making use of Nina Simon's design principles for participatory exhibitions. Her methods involve the community in every step of the process, therefore giving residents a say in how the story of their neighborhood is told.⁵ By producing such an exhibition, this project will show to cultural policymakers in the Netherlands that Carnisse does in fact have cultural value, but that the perspective of its residents is essential to uncovering that value.

1.1 Research Questions

Research question:

Which places and stories do residents of Carnisse consider to be of key importance to the history of their neighborhood?

Sub-questions:

- How have museums and heritage institutions in Rotterdam represented the history of Carnisse since 2013?
- Which places do residents of Carnisse consider important to the history of the neighborhood and why?
- What stories do residents have associated with the neighborhood?

⁵ Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum* (Santa Cruz: Museum 20, 2010), ii.

1.2 Literature Review

As previously mentioned, relatively little academic attention has been devoted to Carnisse throughout its existence. When scholars do take notice of the neighborhood, it is often from a statistical perspective analyzing trends of poverty, gentrification, and migration. For example, Frank van Steenbergen and Julia Wittmayer, researchers from the Dutch Research Institute for Transitions at Erasmus University Rotterdam, examined Carnisse's role as a neighborhood in transition by looking at its present and plans for its future.⁶ In doing so, they also provide a brief overview of its history including its integration into Rotterdam in 1865, development as a neighborhood of worker's accommodations in the twentieth century, and its role as a popular destination for migrants and guest workers from the 1970s until the present.⁷ However, their approach is rather impersonal and focuses more on the neighborhood than the neighbors. This highlights the need for a public centered perspective of Carnisse.

At the core of this project is a desire to make the past available to the public, giving them the opportunity to take an active role in shaping both the form and the content. It also seeks to provide a new perspective of Carnisse by swapping statistics for stories and placing its residents front and center. Such an undertaking is well situated in the field of public history, and therefore inherits the debates and tensions associated with it. Additionally, to understand the co-creative methods of Nina Simon which are applied in this project, it is necessary to situate them in a wider context. Public history arose in the mid 1970s alongside wider societal trends of bottom-up approaches and the inclusion of typically underrepresented groups in historical narratives.⁸ As stated in the 1978 article *Public History: Its Origins, Nature, and Prospects* by Robert Kelley, an American historian who was the first to coin the term, the aim of public history was to reach beyond the walls of the academy and actively involve the public in the creation of history.⁹ In this way it has a sense of "stepping out of the ivory tower" of the university and working in and with society. When stating the intentions of the field, Kelley argued that historians possess a valuable set of skills which were being underutilized in resolving societal issues. The ability to identify trends and patterns and see the historical roots of contemporary issues is highly useful, but according to Kelley, historians tend to apply these skills in the context of academia to produce things which are

⁶ van Steenbergen and Wittmayer, 'Carnisse in Transitie?' 1.

⁷ Ibid, 4-5.

⁸ Thomas Cauvin, *Public History: A Textbook of Practice*, 1st ed. (Thomas Cauvin.Description: New York: Routledge, 2016. Identifiers: LCCN: Routledge, 2016), 18, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315718255>.

⁹ Robert Kelley, 'Public History: Its Origins, Nature, and Prospects', *The Public Historian* 1, no. 1 (1978): 17, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3377666>.

interesting but often irrelevant.¹⁰ This perspective is also lacking among people in positions of power, thus demonstrating the need for historians to take a more active role in society. In a particularly relevant example, Kelley mentions that old neighborhoods which become unprofitable or unproductive often get targeted for demolition (or in a more modern context, gentrification), but historians who see the value of such places can work to make their unique identities visible and in doing so strengthen a community's sense of self.¹¹ As one could probably guess, the public is at the center of public history.

However, beginning as early as the late-1970s, the field of public history has faced critics in the academic sphere.¹² The American historian Peter Novick for example, criticizes the academic rigor of the discipline's methods in his 1988 book *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession*.¹³ Central to his critique is the argument that involving the public in the creation of history may make it more engaging and societally relevant, but comes at the cost of scientific objectivity. According to Novick, when historians advocate for a specific course of action, or on behalf of a specific client or organization, there is the risk that they may sweep opposing evidence under the rug to serve their own purposes.¹⁴ He argues that this is the advantage of cloistered institutions such as universities, where academics can pursue research free from the influence of outside forces.¹⁵ While his criticism is valid and worth considering in the context of my own research, this particular point has since been refuted by Thomas Cauvin who retorts that the university walls are not nearly as sterile as Novick depicts them to be.¹⁶ He points to the existence of office politics, attempts to obtain funding, and pressure to constantly publish new material as examples of outside pressures influencing academic research. This is not to suggest that because outside pressure is likely to occur regardless, we should stop striving for scientifically rigorous research, but rather that the conflicting interests of stakeholders can be appropriately managed in both academic and public settings.

As the debate surrounding a more direct and extensive inclusion of the public in historical research swung in favor of public historians in the beginning of the 1990s, projects

¹⁰ Kelley, "Origins," 17.

¹¹ Ibid, 18.

¹² Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream : The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge [England] : Cambridge University Press, 1988), 469, http://archive.org/details/isbn_9780521357456.

¹³ Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 470.

¹⁴ Ibid, 471.

¹⁵ Ibid, 511.

¹⁶ Cauvin, *Public History*, 13.

focused on better understanding the public could move forward.¹⁷ This was the natural first step for the field, as it would be impossible to include the public without first knowing how the latter actually engaged with the past. One of the most influential examples of such an undertaking can be found in Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen's 1994 book 'The Presence of the Past', a study into patterns of popular history-making amongst the American public.¹⁸ What made this study innovative was its focus not on how history is represented via various formats, but rather on how (or indeed *if*) the public was engaging with them. To answer their questions, they devised an in-depth questionnaire to be conducted via telephone asking participants how they had interacted with the past in the last 12 months (visiting a museum, looking at photographs with family or friends, reading a history book, etc.), which made them feel the most connected to the past, and which they trust most as a source of historical knowledge.¹⁹ Rosenzweig and Thelen found that in all three cases, respondents placed interactions with family consistently at the top.²⁰ They took this to mean that the public feels that the past is more relevant when it contains some element of personal connection to themselves or to their family, rather than having abstract or seemingly unimportant facts thrown at them by a professional.²¹ The most relevant conclusion drawn by their study was that the public does actively engage with the past, proving that although lay people may find academic history unappealing, they do actively integrate historical meaning-making into their daily lives.

Rosenzweig and Thelen's study was highly influential in the field of public history and has since inspired several follow-up studies applying their approach in other contexts. For example, Paul Ashton and Hilda Kean, historical researchers at the University of Technology in Sydney, expanded upon their methods by conducting a similar survey on the subject of public historical engagement in Australia.²² Much like its American counterpart, the survey suggested that while Australians trust and respect traditional academic history, what truly makes people feel connected to the past is a personal or familial connection rather than grand national narratives.²³

¹⁷ Cauvin, *Public History*, 18.

¹⁸ Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (Columbia University Press, 1998).

¹⁹ Rosenzweig and Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, 19-21.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 19-21.

²¹ *Ibid*, 22.

²² Paul Ashton and Paula Hamilton, 'Connecting with History: Australians and Their Pasts', in *People and Their Pasts: Public History Today*, ed. Paul Ashton and Hilda Kean (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2009), 23, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230234468_2.

²³ Ashton and Hamilton, 36-37.

While Rosenzweig and Thelen are a major source of inspiration for my thesis project, their approach has left an interesting gap in the understanding of how historical meaning is created by the public. Since their study showed that members of the public feel that aspects of the past to which they are personally connected (such as family histories) are the most relevant, it would be interesting to know how they relate to the history of their neighborhood or local environment. This is not touched upon by Rosenzweig and Thelen, nor by other studies of Carnisse, and therefore this project can complement their research by highlighting alternative methods of engaging with the past.

By the early 2000s, the debate concerning the role of the public in the production of history shifted from whether it should be done to how it could be done most effectively.²⁴ At this point, many public historians switched their focus from defending their field to publishing more practical guides to involving the public in the creation of history through a variety of mediums. For example, Nina Simon published *The Participatory Museum* in 2010 which outlined the need for practices of exhibition creation which change visitors from passive consumers into active participants. These practices, which she calls “co-creative” seek to involve the public in every step of the process, thus resulting in a final product which is designed not only *for* them but also *with* them. Simon argues that the need for co-creative practices is more needed than ever given that attendance at museums and cultural institutions have been steadily declining, making it clear that they will need to evolve if they wish to survive.²⁵ She argues that the lack of public engagement is one of the major issue that contributes to the contemporary disillusionment with traditional exhibition design, as they too often take the form of an authoritative narrative which is bestowed upon visitors by distant professionals.²⁶ Her vision of future exhibitions is a place where visitors get to shape the narrative for themselves, turning museums into spaces of creation where the public can engage with subjects they are passionate about.²⁷ To help other historians and museologists make this ideal a reality, she outlines a series of principles to consider when designing a co-creative exhibition. Firstly, exhibitions should be creative and ever evolving, instead of static and unchanging. Secondly, exhibitions should be social spaces, where visitors can interact with each other as well as with staff to share ideas and build community. Finally, exhibitions

²⁴ Cauvin, *Public History*, 18.

²⁵ Simon, *Museum*, i.

²⁶ *Ibid*, ii.

²⁷ *Ibid*, iii-iv.

should encourage critical discussion and debate surrounding its contents to encourage visitors to get involved with its creation.

The work I have thus far examined serves as an overall roadmap for this project. Conducting research of this nature would be impossible without the groundbreaking work of Robert Kelley, who defined the nature of the field of public history. Though Kelley has done the heavy lifting of outlining the need for public history projects such as mine, Peter Novick's critique of advocacy by historians is certainly worth addressing in the context of my own project. This approach also represents a major departure from the precedent set by the work of Rosenzweig and Thelen. While their methods were effective for gathering quantifiable data to better understand the behavior of the public, their strictly defined and closed-answer questions resulted in a rather top-down approach. This represents a foundational difference from my own research, which not only asks open ended questions, but works with the public to decide what those questions should be. This co-creative approach is heavily based on the work of Nina Simon, whose recommendations will also help shape the form of the final project. This project will also put Simon's ideas into practice and critically reflect on their efficacy.

1.3 Theoretical Concepts

In the interest of being precise and specific about the meanings of the concepts used in this project, some may require further explanation. For example, the concept of place is found frequently throughout this project, and therefore should be briefly touched upon here. Specifically, it should be separated from the concept of "space," as the two are often used interchangeably but have an important distinction. I will borrow here the definition used by Yi-Fu Tuan in *Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective*, who argues that while space is a physical delineated location, place is something more.²⁸ Place is not only the physical location but also the layers of meaning and history overtop. Place is what I am primarily interested in for this project, as I am interested not in the dry factual history of the neighborhood but rather the stories and memories that residents have of it.

Additionally, the term "shared authority" as coined by oral historian Michael Frisch is an important concept for this project. 'Shared authority' denotes the inclusion of public audiences in the decision-making process of the creation of history. Instead of being

²⁸ Yi-Fu Tuan, 'Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective', in *Philosophy in Geography*, ed. Stephen Gale and Gunnar Olsson, Theory and Decision Library (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1979), 387, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-009-9394-5_19.

something that is produced by professional historians and bestowed upon a general public, when ‘sharing authority’, historical meaning-making becomes a creative process conducted in the public sphere.²⁹ Central to this concept is the idea that historians work as members of the public, instead of being separate from or operating above it. This creates a relationship between historians and the public as mutually constituent parts of a whole instead of polar opposites, allowing the public to choose the direction of research and historians providing the expert experience necessary to realize their visions. Doing so entails an act of trust in the public, as it requires professional historians to give up a degree of control over their research. As a result of this, the American historian Jim Gardner has argued that an act of “radical trust” is necessary to create a system of true shared authority, therefore giving the public a voice when it comes to determining the direction of historical research.³⁰

The role of the public in exhibitions has been a hot topic in both history and museum studies. While some scholars, such as Peter Novick, warn about the potential loss of scientific objectivity that may accompany the inclusion of the public in historical research, others, such as Nina Simon, argue that the public should be given a more active role in shaping exhibitions instead of being treated as passive consumers and that doing so will allow museums and heritage institutions to remain dynamic and relevant.³¹ In the interest of providing a new perspective in the academic discourse concerning Carnisse, this project will apply Simon’s approach towards co-creative projects in which ‘community members and museum staff work together from start to finish to define the project’s goals and program, based on community interests.’³² By conducting research following this design principle, this project therefore contributes to the academic discussion surrounding the field of public history.

1.4 Sources and Methods

Most of the conclusions drawn in this project are based on qualitative oral data gathered through interviews of residents of Carnisse. Gathering information directly from residents allows me to get an idea of the most meaningful locations in the neighborhood, as well as receive feedback on the content and form of the exhibition which will follow this project. My method for working with this data will follow three key steps: First, I will present some

²⁹ Cauvin, *Public History*, 14.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 15.

³¹ Simon, *The Participatory Museum*, i-ii.

³² *Ibid*, 183.

information about the demographics of my sample. Then, I will lay out the results of the walking interviews I conducted to gather data for this project. Finally, I will analyze the raw interview data using a qualitative method known as thematic analysis, which will be explained in greater detail later in this section.

To collect data for this project, I conducted 10 walking interviews of 30 minutes to an hour with residents of Carnisse. Because the participants who have lived in Carnisse the longest have resided here since 1953, I chose the periodization of 1953-2023 for this project. Participants for this study were recruited through networking at social events in the neighborhood, such as the weekly walking group hosted by the *Huis van de Wijk*. After each interview I asked the participant if they could refer me to anyone else who may be interested in the project, allowing my pool of residents to grow through snowball sampling. A table showing some demographic information about the sample group can be seen below:

Pseudonym	Gender	Ethnicity	Years in Carnisse
Mitch	Male	Indonesian	4
Jason	Male	Dutch	3
Adam	Male	Norwegian	1
Mac	Male	Catalan	1
Hannah	Female	Dutch	20+
Bob	Male	Dutch	71
Josephine	Female	Dutch	71
Steven	Male	Italian	1
Daniel	Male	Italian	1
Tommy	Male	Moroccan/Latvian	1

Table 1: The demographic makeup of the sample of residents who participated in this study.

It is important to note that this sample has limitations. Naturally, the opinions of 10 residents is too few to make sweeping authoritative statements about a neighborhood of over 11,000 people. However, the intention here is simply to provide an initial glimpse into the relationship between residents and their neighborhood, and by doing so provide a proof of concept for a potential future study with the time and resources necessary to gather such a large amount of data. Also important to note is the fact the participants who have lived in Carnisse for one year all happen to be international students. This is a result of snowball

sampling, as the student network tends to be very active which allowed me to recruit many participants this way. Furthermore, as these students were conducting research of their own, they may have been more sympathetic to my calls for participants. While all participants met the criteria for being included in this study (being a current resident of Carnisse), it can be that international students are overrepresented in this dataset.

During these interviews, participants were asked to plan a route through the neighborhood, and as we walked, I asked them about their favorite places and the stories they had associated with them. These interviews were recorded using the voice memo function on my smartphone, and the routes on which I was taken were recorded using a mapping app. Such an approach has previously been employed by researchers with high degrees of success, such as in the 2009 Connected Lives project conducted in the UK. The aim of this project was to learn about how connections are made in urban landscapes through a variety of participatory methods, of which walking interviews were one.³³ Researchers of this project asked participants to plan a route around the neighborhood starting from their home, as the researcher accompanied them and conducted a casual interview along the way. The strength of this approach is that interviewees often have an easier time opening up if they are casually walking and talking about locations and objects they pass, as opposed to a traditional formal interview format.³⁴

More recently, and closer to home, Vincent Baptiste of Erasmus University Rotterdam conducted a similar project in the neighborhood of Katendrecht in the South of Rotterdam. Like Carnisse, Katendrecht used to have a reputation as a bad part of town, largely because of its housing of the city's brothels and being the main home for Rotterdam's Chinese community.³⁵ However, ambitious urban renewal projects beginning around the 1980s completely reshaped the neighborhood, turning it into one of the more hip and trendy areas in Rotterdam today. However, this transformation has been decried as yet another instance of gentrification, as many of the original residents were forced out in the process.³⁶ Baptiste's research focused on how residents remember Katendrecht as it was before its transformation, and to determine this, he conducted a series of walking interviews with people who lived in the neighborhood prior to the 1980s. By recording the routes on which he

³³ Nick Emmel and Andrew Clark, 'The Methods Used in Connected Lives: Investigating Networks, Neighborhoods and Communities' (NCRM Working Paper Series, United Kingdom: ESRC National Centre for Research Methods, 2009), 1-28.

³⁴ Emmel and Clark, "Connected Lives" 13.

³⁵ Vincent Baptiste, 'Pleasure Near the Port: Spaces and Legacies of Notorious Entertainment Culture in 20th-Century Rotterdam' (Doctoral Thesis, Rotterdam, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2023) 136.

³⁶ Baptiste, "Pleasure Near the Port," 139.

was taken, he was able to determine which areas in Katendrecht hold the strongest memories and the attitudes of participants towards its ongoing redevelopment.³⁷ Baptiste's use of walking interviews has served as a major inspiration for my own method.

Once I had collected the data from the walking interviews, I could begin digging into it to uncover patterns in the locations mentioned and themes in the stories the participants had shared. To do this, I used a qualitative method known as thematic analysis, specifically following the guidelines set down by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke in their article *Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology*. According to Braun and Clarke, thematic analysis is one of the foundational methods in qualitative research, giving analysis an academically sound structure instead of resorting to "anything goes" guesswork, as some critics of qualitative research have warned against.³⁸ Thematic analysis involves the following steps: first, interview data should be transcribed and broken into codes. These codes are small fragments of data which contain the core meaning of a chunk of text.³⁹ Next, these codes should be organized into preliminary themes, giving a clearer idea of what the dataset is about. Important to note is that these themes do not "emerge" naturally from a dataset but are the result of intentional selection and interpretation from the researcher.⁴⁰ Finally, these themes should be refined and adjusted not only to make certain that each theme is individually coherent, but also that the themes taken together are fully representative of the entire dataset.⁴¹ I performed these steps twice using the transcriptions of the walking interviews as a dataset, the first time creating themes of locations mentioned by the participants and the second time creating themes of the stories they shared about those locations. The results of this process will be presented in chapters three and four.

1.5 Innovative Aspects

As mentioned in the topic introduction, this project takes a new approach towards research into the neighborhood of Carnisse. Where previous projects have focused more on sterile empirical studies of the neighborhood's quality of life, this one takes a qualitative, humanistic approach towards learning about the stories of its residents. This makes it a first of its kind in the context of Carnisse. This project also contributes a new perspective to the

³⁷ Baptiste, "Pleasure Near the Port," 146.

³⁸ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology", *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (1 January 2006): 78, <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.

³⁹ Braun and Clarke, "Thematic Analysis," 88.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 79.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 86.

field of public history as it seeks to practically apply the recommendations made by the leading scholars in the field. While the participatory methods used in this project may not be groundbreaking, they are still in their infancy and therefore this research will serve as a method of reflecting on their efficacy.

Chapter Two: Participatory Methods in Rotterdam

This project does not exist in a vacuum; it can be situated within trends in the Rotterdam heritage sector towards more participatory micro-histories in place of overarching grand narratives. Therefore, it is useful to provide a brief overview of similar projects conducted in Rotterdam over the past few years, especially those focusing on Carnisse. It would be impossible to fit a complete overview of all heritage institutions within a project of this scale, so for the purposes of brevity I will focus here on perhaps the most influential: Museum Rotterdam, as well as one of its associated organizations: *Stichting Wijkcollectie*. For this project, I spoke with Paul van de Laar (former director of Museum Rotterdam) and Nicole van Dijk (current head of *Stichting Wijkcollectie*).

2.1 Museum Rotterdam

Museum Rotterdam has undergone massive transformations in recent years. Once the foremost city museum, a combination of budget cuts and the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020 forced the museum to close its main location.⁴² Since then, while they still maintain one permanent location in the Delfshaven neighborhood, the museum has adopted a strategy of mobility by integrating its projects directly into the city.⁴³ To do this, they built on experience gained from earlier exhibitions with similar approaches, such as the *Panorama* project which lasted from 2005-2007.⁴⁴ *Panorama* was built on a research which suggested that many migrants in Rotterdam did not feel connected to the grand narrative of Rotterdam's history presented by Museum Rotterdam, which followed the city's development through the middle ages, its development as a principle port, its bombardment in the Second World War, and reconstructed throughout the second half of the twentieth century. The issue, the project determined, was that the roles of migrant groups in Rotterdam were not represented in this narrative, and therefore it did not resonate as strongly with audience members of migrant backgrounds.⁴⁵ The *Panorama* project addressed this by using community submitted photos to create exhibitions presenting smaller, local histories of neighborhoods instead of a single overarching narrative of Rotterdam and displaying these exhibitions directly in the

⁴² Paul Th. van de Laar, 'The Contemporary City as Backbone: Museum Rotterdam Meets the Challenge', *The Journal of Museum Education* 38, no. 1 (2013): 39.

⁴³ van de Laar, "The Contemporary City," 47.

⁴⁴ Paul van de Laar, Interview with Paul van de Laar, interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno, Interview, 3 April 2023, 12:13.

⁴⁵ van de Laar, interview, 12:56.

neighborhoods instead of collected at a single location.⁴⁶ They found that this resulted in final products which resonated much more strongly with the audience due to their personal connection to the subject matter.⁴⁷

Closer to home, Museum Rotterdam has also devoted some attention to Carnisse. In 2013, the museum worked with residents to create *Sweaters of Loes*, a musical exhibition celebrating a resident who over the course of her life knitted over 500 sweaters as a form of therapy, although these sweaters had never been worn.⁴⁸ Seeing this as a potential story, the museum organized a flash mob in Carnisse with 500 participants, each wearing one of Loes's sweaters. This project builds on the museum's trend towards local micro histories and away from grand city-wide narratives.

2.2 Stichting Wijkcollectie

Stichting Wijkcollectie is a heritage organization focusing on the histories and heritage of neighborhoods in Rotterdam, which frequently collaborates with Museum Rotterdam. Their main focus is to create collections of objects, locations, and people which represent the history and identity of neighborhoods throughout Rotterdam. However, although these objects are catalogued for the exhibition, they are left in place instead of being collected and exhibited together.⁴⁹ This creates the feeling of an exhibition spread throughout the neighborhood, allowing the audience to engage with it throughout their day-to-day lives rather than needing to go to a specific location to see the exhibition. The organization argues that keeping the objects in their original contexts prevents them from becoming "dead" or static, meaning it avoids the loss of their original meaning by removing them from their environments.⁵⁰ Although *Stichting Wijkcollectie* has produced 16 neighborhood exhibitions as of 2023, Carnisse has not yet been included.

2.3 Conclusion

Although the work of Museum Rotterdam and Stichting Wijkcollectie show that in the Rotterdam heritage sector there is a general trend towards smaller scale local history projects which include the public in the process, Carnisse is still not as fully represented as other

⁴⁶ van de Laar, interview, 13:45.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 15:04.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 15:32.

⁴⁹ Nicole van Dijk, Interview with Nicole van Dijk, interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno, Interview, 23 March 2023, 8:22.

⁵⁰ van Dijk, interview, 8:54.

neighborhoods. While some projects focus on individual stories in the neighborhood, such as the *Sweaters of Loes* exhibition, a more general overarching project about the history of the neighborhood as a whole still does not exist. This leaves a gap for such an exhibition to be made using participatory methods which give the residents control of how the story of Carnisse should be told.

Chapter Three: Meaningful Places in Carnisse

The following chapter focuses on the places which the residents of Carnisse consider the most important to the neighborhood's identity. This was determined through a series of walking interviews, during which each route was recorded, and every mentioned location was noted. Below you can find a map of Carnisse showing the routes on which I was taken, as well as icons marking every mentioned location.

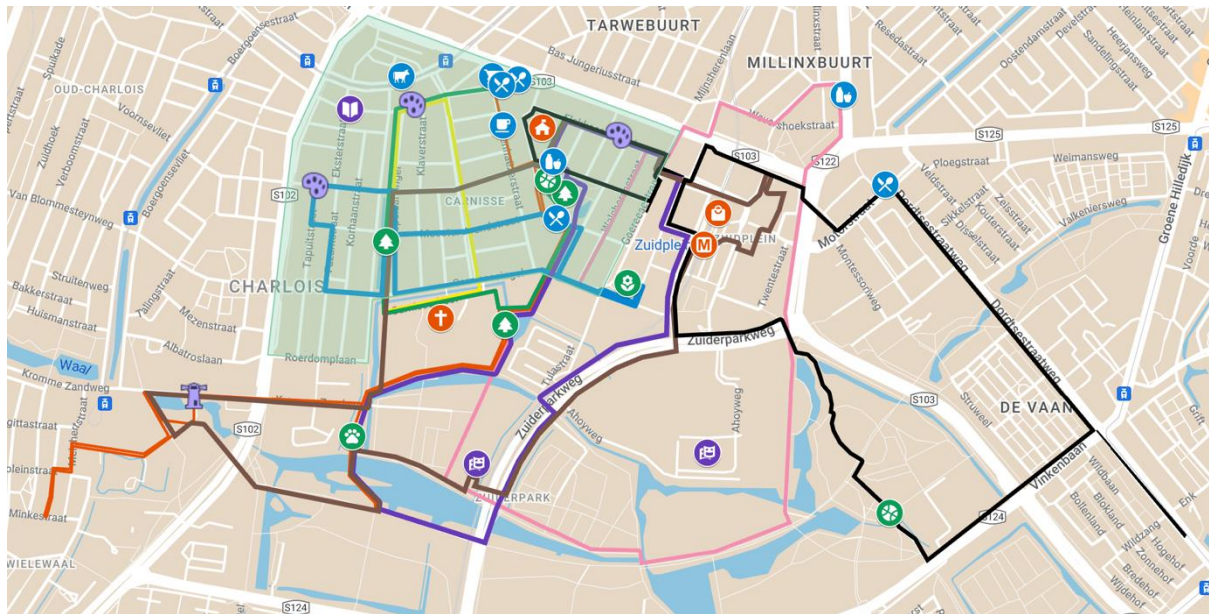


Figure 1: A map showing the municipal boundaries of Carnisse (shaded blue), the walking routes taken for each interview, and markers showing every mentioned location during the interviews. These markers are organized by color into four themes: blue=food/drink, purple=cultural, green=public outdoor, and red=other. An interactive version of this map can be accessed here:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1VXDp8TH_NTH6iNuLTKXpAdn07iUokZo&usp=sharing

This process made it possible to learn which kinds of locations are typically meaningful to residents by grouping all mentioned locations into broad themes. You may notice that there are several marked locations which exist outside the municipal boundaries of Carnisse. These were included by conscious choice, as if residents considered a place to be part of their “home turf,” as one interviewee put it, I saw no reason to exclude it simply because it existed on the other side of an imaginary line. The following sub-sections of this chapter explain the themes of these locations in greater detail.

3.1 Food and Drink

Many residents mentioned restaurants, cafés, and grocery stores when asked about the locations in the neighborhood which were meaningful to them. Although what made these locations meaningful differed from person to person, food was regularly mentioned as playing an important part in the identity of the interviewee and in their connection to the neighborhood, as illustrated by the quote below:

Tommy: The availability of affordable, tasty things that I'm familiar with, makes me feel at home, 100%. [...] Whenever I grab those spices, I feel Moroccan.

Mitch: When I cook a vegetable, I cook it the way I like it. I don't follow a fixed cuisine. For example, when I cook an Indian dish, Indian people would say 'you cooked it the wrong way.' I use the basic principles of the cuisines, but I give my own twist, I experiment.

For some, the availability of foods from their home countries was important to their feelings of "at homeness" in Carnisse, while for others, the wide variety of global cuisines present in the neighborhood allowed them to experiment and combine them to make something unique to them. Food is well-known for being an important part of one's identity and has received a great deal of academic attention, especially by scholars in the field of memory studies. For example, Sharon Macdonald of Humboldt University explored the use of food by migrants to create a sense of connection to their home countries in her book *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today*.⁵¹ She argues that food can be a powerful sensory trigger for memories of home, not only through eating it but also the recognition of packaging and the consumption of produce grown in their home countries.⁵² In the context of Carnisse, residents who reported feeling connected to the neighborhood through food also reported shopping mainly at local, independent stores which sold food from their home countries.

However, not all residents felt the same culinary connection. Some said that the spread of restaurants and grocery stores made them feel actively *disconnected* from the

⁵¹ Sharon MacDonald, 'Feeling the Past', in *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 89.

⁵² MacDonald 89.

neighborhood. This was usually a result of either a lack of cuisine from their home country, or a feeling that Carnisse lacks a distinct, cohesive culinary identity:

Daniel: For me cuisine is very important. I wish there was more local food, but there's nothing here. Just McDonalds, KFC, Burger King, and some Arab restaurants, but it's normal since we live in a globalized world.

Outside of connecting to the identity of their home countries, many residents reported that they used food as a way to build community. Some reported that they often cook their favorite dishes for friends and family, while others often go to restaurants or cafés with the intention of meeting new people. The local café and event venue Koffie en Ambacht was often mentioned in this context, being claimed as important by over half the respondents:

Jason: This place was like my second living room. Because this street doesn't have any other restaurants or cafés or that kind of thing, this is the only place in a wide area where I would go for fun. It's where I've met a lot of people and sort of reconnected with the neighborhood again. [...] Usually when people go inside, they're surprised. They don't expect anything like this to exist on this street which is a bit [run-down].

3.2 Cultural Spaces

In addition to locations serving food and drinks, many residents mentioned the importance of spaces for cultural activities such as event venues, street art, and spaces for theatre performances. The three murals which were mentioned by residents to be important to the local culture are located on the Flakkeesestraat, Roodborstplein, and Robbenoordplein. Photos of these murals can be seen below.



Figure 2: Local murals in Carnisse located at (from left to right) Flakkeesestraat, Roodborstplein, and Robbenoordplein.

Participants often reported that murals such as these made the neighborhood feel vibrant and unique, giving it a sense of character and making it feel more welcoming:

Mac: This neighborhood is perceived as dangerous, at least by friends of mine who come here. They say they don't feel 100% safe at night, and I can understand that. But I think that having a mural like this shows that this place is alive, and there are people who take care of it.

In addition to local art, several residents referenced two spaces intended for theatrical performance. However, both of these spaces possess a bit of baggage which makes it hard to definitively place them in this category. Firstly, many residents mentioned Ahoy, a massive event and concert venue on the outskirts of the neighborhood. However, few considered it to be important to Carnisse's identity, claiming that it felt more like it belonged to the city of Rotterdam as a whole:

Mac: We live quite close to the Ahoy, but I feel that it doesn't belong to us. It's here, but it's not part of the neighborhood. It belongs to the city, not to the people who live in this particular area.

The other location in this category is *De Schouwplaats*, a curious space in the *Zuiderpark*⁵³ containing an outdoor stage and a collection of odd statues. While many reported liking this spot because it is a bit weird and unexpected, none knew that it was actually intended for outdoor performances. For this reason, it is more of a mysterious local oddity than a clear theatrical space.

3.3 Public Outdoor Spaces

Finally, participants mentioned several outdoor public spaces such as parks (the *Zuiderpark* was mentioned by every single respondent), gardens, and sport complexes. While some reported using these spaces on their own, such as for walks or runs, most people said that they used them as a space for activities with others.

Tommy: I've met a lot of people at the sport complex in *Zuiderpark*. When I play basketball there, that's definitely when I feel part of the community, for sure.

Mac: I think it's great to have green areas here. It's a minor detail maybe, but it's something that has helped me get more attached to this place. Anytime I'm having a bad day, I can just come here and breathe for a second. And sometimes I come for a run with my flat mate.

Outside of sports, several residents also spoke of neighborhood gardens. One spoke of her regular collaboration with her neighbors to plant and maintain mini-gardens on the *Lepelaarsingel*, and how it helped her build connections and a sense of community with her neighborhood:

Hannah: People say: 'oh it's just my little garden,' but if everyone has a little garden and works together it can make real change.

In addition to mini-gardens on the streets, several respondents also mentioned the *Van Swietenhof* public garden to the East of *Carnisse*. This location is a true hidden gem of *Carnisse*, as it is well hidden in a residential courtyard, making it very difficult to locate unless you already know where it is. The courtyard sat full of dilapidated playground

⁵³ Literally: Southern Park. This is the largest park in Rotterdam and is located directly to the south of *Carnisse*.

equipment 20 years ago, until those living around the courtyard worked together with the municipality to turn it into a public garden. Now it regularly hosts events such as concerts, poetry nights, and outdoor games. I was lucky enough to speak with the original head of this initiative who has lived in Carnisse for over 70 years and still maintains the garden today.

While many spoke of appreciating the public outdoor spaces in Carnisse and its access to greenery, several respondents felt that there was still room for improvement in this regard. Residents spoke of wide gray streets and boring blank walls throughout the neighborhood, specifically referencing the Meester Arendtstraat:

Hannah: I find it quite unfortunate that this street is so wide, but nothing happens here. There are a few trees but there could be so much more, like little gardens or something for the little kids to play on. This street is okay but can be much better.

In addition to these boring, featureless streets, some residents complained about the amount of litter on the streets and in the parks, which made them feel disconnected to the community. However, for some this served as a spark to become more active, both in volunteering to clean up litter and participating in initiatives to create mini-gardens to make streets like Meester Arendtstraat more beautiful:

Adam: Because it's nice here, you just automatically feel invested in it because you tend to go out into it to spend your time. [...] You just automatically want to be here and therefore care.

3.4 Conclusion

Be it through restaurants, cafés, grocery stores, parks, or gardens, the residents of Carnisse sampled for this project seemed to be drawn to places which draw people together and provide feelings of “homeness.” They also frequently mentioned places which give the neighborhood a sense of vibrancy and life, such as murals and street art. It is also interesting to note that not all places mentioned as meaningful to the neighborhood lie within the official municipal boundaries of Carnisse, showing that the space which the residents consider their ‘home turf’ stretches outside the administrative borders. In any case, socialization and community building were common themes across the mentioned locations. This seems to suggest that what ties people to the neighborhood is at its core not the physical locations

themselves, but rather those you can meet there. Mac summarized this perfectly by saying: 'You don't get attached to places; you get attached to the people who live there.'

Chapter Four: Stories

The following chapter is a continuation of the thematic analysis conducted using the dataset of walking interviews. While the previous chapter focused on physical locations in the neighborhood, this section presents stories that residents told about these places, as well as more general stories related to the neighborhood as a whole. The aim of this chapter is not only to get a better idea of what makes the previously identified places important to the neighborhood's heritage and identity, but also to end up with a set of broad story themes which can be constructed into a narrative for the future walking tour exhibition in Carnisse.

4.1 Transition

Carnisse has something of a reputation as being a "transition neighborhood." This means that people, often migrants, land in Carnisse due to its affordability but then move elsewhere in Rotterdam once they have the ability to do so. Many residents who took part in this study referenced this trend, either by talking about their own plans to move out or by wondering how anyone could want to leave.

Roughly half the residents who spoke to me said that they had plans to leave Carnisse in the near future. Those with immediate plans to leave were those who had lived in Carnisse for the shortest amount of time, usually around one or two years. These respondents reported that moving to Carnisse was strictly a practical choice, motivated by cheap rent and availability.

Steven: There's a process when you're looking for a place in a new city, when you don't really know where you should live or what the neighborhoods are like. I was skeptical of everything south of the river, but at the end of the day it's not like I had much choice. If I wanted to live in Rotterdam, I had to say yes to whatever I was offered.

Mac: This was the first place I could get. Sadly, the housing market is terrible, so I was just looking for a roof over my head.

In many cases these residents were dissatisfied with their experience in Carnisse and planned to leave as soon as they had the means to do so:

Daniel: I thought this was a place where I could begin my career. [...] At the beginning I was here to study and maybe stay longer but after this experience in this area I don't want to stay here anymore.

However, the other half of the respondents had lived here for many years (ranging from 20 to an impressive 71) and had no intentions of leaving any time soon. Some of these residents grew up here, while others moved later in their lives and decided to put down roots.

Hannah: After [I got married] people would say: 'you're going to move outside of Carnisse now of course?' and I said 'why? Why? I want to stay here!'

Tommy: I don't plan on moving out of the area any time soon. Dude, I love this area, huge, big time. I don't want to move out of here. It feels much more like home than anywhere else in Rotterdam.

In short, those who plan to stay seemed to be those with the strongest sense of connection to the neighborhood.

4.2 Feelings of (Dis)connection

In addition to stories about arrival and departure in Carnisse, many residents spoke about things that made them feel both connected and/or disconnected to the neighborhood. Residents who reported a strong sense of connection to Carnisse tended to be very active in the neighborhood, taking part in events and activities where I frequently encountered them when I was getting to know people for this project. They also often spoke of attending social gatherings such as religious services or organized sports, and that this helped them feel more connected to the community:

Hannah: My church has open hours almost every day, where people can just come in to have a coffee and a chat. I go to the service on Sundays and afterwards stay a while to chat, and once a month I help in the garden.

Tommy: I've met a lot of people at the sport complex in Zuiderpark. When I play basketball there, that's definitely when I feel part of the community, for sure.

Of course, those with friends and family in the neighborhood also reported feeling more at home. One respondent who grew up here had many childhood memories of Carnisse, and after moving away for his studies, decided to return to the neighborhood to be closer to his family. Our walk together led to a lot of reminiscing; in particular, the small islands in the canal at Zuiderpark triggered a memory:

Jason: I remember as a kid going to this island and not even grass grew there. [...] It's fun to see how high and how thick trees can grow during your lifetime and for me this is a way to sort of track that development.

However, there were also several things that residents said made them feel disconnected from their neighbors and from Carnisse as a whole. Several residents mentioned that they did not know many people in the neighborhood, and this makes it difficult for them to feel connected to the place where they live:

Steven: It's hard to feel connected to a place where you don't have people. When I'm here, most of the time I'm by myself and it's a bit alienating.

Mac: I am one of the few people in my circle who lives here, so it's a place where I can just do my own thing. I guess my life here is just a very individual thing; when I'm here I'm by myself. But I spend most of my time in my apartment so honestly, I don't know shit about Carnisse.

Another issue is that while most participants had lived in the neighborhood for at least a year, many still felt totally unfamiliar with the neighborhood and what there was to do here. They reported feeling that there is no incentive to explore because they think there is nothing to discover.

Daniel: I don't really know this area because I kind of think it's sad. All the buildings are boring and constructed with the same style, so I don't really think it's worth taking a walk here. I really limit my time in the South because I'd rather go to Schiedam or an area in the west of the city because it's prettier, there is stuff to do, there are bars. Here there's just supermarkets and stuff to live, you know?

Steven: I don't feel like there's many activities here except for basic stuff for surviving, like grocery shopping and stuff. The only place where I spend time here is the parks, but other than that it's just going to the supermarket, going to the gym, and then taking the metro or my bike to travel somewhere else.

This creates something of a vicious cycle; some residents don't explore because they feel disconnected from the neighborhood, and they feel disconnected from the neighborhood because they don't explore. For example, one participant had lived in Carnisse for around a year and yet had never made the 10-minute walk to Zuiderpark. We decided to go there for our interview, and although on the way he shared his rather negative perception of the neighborhood, he had something of a change of heart once we arrived:

Daniel: Can I say, I'm really re-evaluating this area. I've never been to this park and it's beautiful.

When asked about the possibility of a walking tour highlighting interesting locations to explore in Carnisse, many expressed positive sentiments:

Steven: If I had something like that, I would have gone to all those places. It's not that the neighborhood is empty per se, but it feels like it. [...] Finding places that are special can make up for all the people who leave the neighborhood because they think there's nothing here.

Daniel: I would use it for sure. Because if you look up on google: 'things to do in Carnisse' it's only restaurants like KFC, McDonalds, jean stores, normal stuff. I would use [the walking tour] because discovering things makes your experience in a place richer.

4.3 What's Missing?

It can be just as enlightening to think about not just what the neighborhood has to offer, but also what residents think is missing. This was another common theme of stories, as even long-term residents who felt a deep connection to the neighborhood thought that there were still things that could make Carnisse better. Many residents felt that Carnisse was lacking

social spaces such as bars and cafés, and many residents also expressed their desire for a farmers' market in the neighborhood. For them, a market represents not only a place to buy local produce, but also a place to get to know one's neighbors on a regular basis:

Mac: When you have a farmer's market in a neighborhood, it ends up being a place of socialization. You end up meeting your neighbors and you see they're real human beings you can interact with. I think they give personality and character to places and create a stronger social fabric. [...] The attachment to the people attaches you to the place.

Steven: I would be there all the time if there was a market here, this feels like a place where you're supposed to have one. Shopping among your neighbors makes you feel like a part of the community and a big supermarket doesn't do that.

4.4 Conclusion

Through this second round of thematic analysis, I constructed three broad themes which cover most stories told by residents about the neighborhood. They are transition (stories about arrival and departure), feelings of (dis)connection, and things which are missing in Carnisse.

Among the residents who participated in this project, some had no plans to leave Carnisse and some wanted to get out as soon as possible. Based on the stories shared with me, it seems that a major consideration for whether one wants to stay is whether they have an active network of people in the neighborhood and are aware of spaces to meet these people regularly. People with such a network reported feeling connected to the neighborhood, while those without one felt isolated and disconnected. Therefore, more social spaces are needed in the long term, and in the short term the visibility of social spaces should be increased.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This project has provided a new perspective in the academic discourse surrounding the neighborhood of Carnisse in the south of Rotterdam. While previous studies have focused mostly on statistics or the physical makeup of the neighborhood, this project has taken a humanistic approach by applying participatory methods from the fields of public history to give the residents control over how the history of their neighborhood is presented. This is in line with the general direction of projects conducted by heritage organizations in Rotterdam, such as *Stichting Wijkcollectie* and Museum Rotterdam, both of which have been favoring small scale local histories instead of larger overarching narratives of the city as a whole. However, these methods have not yet been applied to Carnisse, making this project a first of its kind.

The central aim of the project was to get an idea of which locations the residents of Carnisse felt were important to include in a future exhibition about the neighborhood, as well as the stories they have associated with those locations. To do this, I conducted a series of 10 unstructured walking interviews and then performed thematic analysis to sort the data into broad themes. The locations mentioned by residents were separated into the themes of food/drink, public outdoor spaces, and cultural space. The stories they told were sorted into the themes of transition, (dis)connection to the neighborhood, and things they felt were missing in Carnisse. Based on these locations and the way in which the residents reported interacting with them, I concluded that what residents valued most were places which could be used as social spaces to spend time with friends and meet new people. The construction of a network of people in the neighborhood seemed to contribute to feelings of connection to Carnisse, and those without such a network were more likely to report that they had plans to leave in the near future. However, there are some weaknesses in these findings which must be addressed. Firstly, my sample size was quite small, as 10 people are not enough to be fully representative of a neighborhood with 11,000 inhabitants. Secondly, students are overrepresented in my dataset, as they were more enthusiastic to take part in my research. However, these weaknesses could easily be addressed in a future study with more time and the resources to carry out an outreach campaign to gather participants.

The findings of this research project will be used in the future to create a walking tour through Carnisse. The aim of doing so is to share the locations that I dug up through the process with the residents who feel there is nothing to do in the neighborhood. Creating such a walking tour increases the social relevance of the project by presenting the findings in a

format which is engaging for a non-professional audience. Because the general public rarely reads academic texts, combining traditional research with a public history project has the added value of allowing the public to engage with the research findings. However, it also contributes to the academic discourse in the field of public history by practically applying its theories surrounding the creation of participatory exhibitions. Although the work to do in Carnisse is far from over, this project shows that it is work which is worth doing, and work which can only be done together.

Bibliography

Adam. Interview with Adam. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. 41:34, 3 April 2023.

Ashton, Paul, and Paula Hamilton. 'Connecting with History: Australians and Their Pasts'. In *People and Their Pasts: Public History Today*, edited by Paul Ashton and Hilda Kean, 23–41. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2009. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230234468_2.

Baptiste, Vincent. 'Pleasure Near the Port: Spaces and Legacies of Notorious Entertainment Culture in 20th-Century Rotterdam'. Doctoral Thesis, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2023.

Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 'Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology'. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (1 January 2006): 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.

Bulchandani, Darshana. 'Koffie & Ambacht'. Inside Rotterdam Magazine, 13 April 2020. <https://insiderotterdam.nl/koffie-ambacht/>.

Buurttuin van Swietenhof. Facebook post, 21 December 2020. https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1103181903454773&set=pcb.1103182090121421&locale=nl_NL.

Carnisse: Geschiedenis van Rotterdam-Zuid. Steenhuis Meurs, 2018. <https://vimeo.com/296010966>.

Cauvin, Thomas. *Public History: A Textbook of Practice*. 1st ed. Thomas Cauvin. Description: New York: Routledge, 2016. Identifiers: LCCN: Routledge, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315718255>.

Daniel. Interview with Daniel. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. 1:16:53, 29 April 2023.
Dijk, Nicole van. Interview with Nicole van Dijk. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. Interview, 23 March 2023.

Emmel, Nick, and Andrew Clark. 'The Methods Used in Connected Lives: Investigating Networks, Neighborhoods and Communities', 28. United Kingdom: ESRC National Centre for Research Methods, 2009.

Frenzel, Fabian, Malte Steinbrink, and Ko Koens. *Slum Tourism: Poverty, Power and Ethics*. New York: Routledge, 2012.

Hannah, Bob, and Josephine. Interview with Hannah, Bob, and Josephine. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. 1:29:30, 14 April 2023.

'Huis van de Wijk Carnisse - Radar'. Accessed 24 June 2023. <https://www.ruimteurenindebuurt.nl/Rotterdam-Charlois/carnisse/huis-van-de-wijk-carnisse>.

Jason. Interview with Jason. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. 1:06:37, 29 March 2023.

Kelley, Robert. 'Public History: Its Origins, Nature, and Prospects'. *The Public Historian* 1, no. 1 (1978): 16–28. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3377666>.

Laar, Paul Th. van de. 'The Contemporary City as Backbone: Museum Rotterdam Meets the Challenge'. *The Journal of Museum Education* 38, no. 1 (2013): 39–49.

Laar, Paul van de. Interview with Paul van de Laar. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. Interview, 3 April 2023.

Mac. Interview with Mac. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. 24:24, 5 April 2023.

MacDonald, Sharon. 'Feeling the Past'. In *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today*, 79–109. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Mitch. Interview with Mitch. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. 1:33:53, 28 March 2023.

Novick, Peter. *That Noble Dream : The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession*. Cambridge [England] : Cambridge University Press, 1988.
http://archive.org/details/isbn_9780521357456.

'nr. 0001 | Volkswagenbus van Kamen | Stichting Wijkcollectie'. Accessed 25 June 2023.
<https://wijkcollectie.nl/project/ere0001/>.

Rosenzweig, Roy, and David Thelen. *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*. Columbia University Press, 1998.

Rotterdam, Gemeente. 'Wijkagenda Carnisse'. Webpagina. Begroting Rotterdam 2021. Accessed 25 January 2023.
<https://www.watdoetdegemeente.rotterdam.nl//wijken/wijkagenda-carnisse/>.

Simon, Nina. *The Participatory Museum*. Santa Cruz: Museum 20, 2010.

Smiley.toerist. *Nederlands: Metrotreinen Bij Het Zuidplein*. 22 November 2019. Own work.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rotterdam_metro_Zuidplein_2019_3.jpg.

Steenbergen, Frank van, and Julia Wittmayer. 'Carnisse in Transitie?: Een Verkenning van Het Verleden, Het Heden En de Toekomst van Een Rotterdamse Wijk'. Dutch Research Insitute for Transitions, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2012.

Steven. Interview with Steven. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. 39:00, 18 April 2023.

'Stichting Wijkcollectie | Stichting Wijkcollectie'. Accessed 25 June 2023.
<https://wijkcollectie.nl/stichting-wijkcollectie/>.

Tommy. Interview with Tommy. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. 1:18:45, 2 May 2023.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. 'Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective'. In *Philosophy in Geography*, edited by Stephen Gale and Gunnar Olsson, 387–427. Theory and Decision Library. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1979. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-009-9394-5_19.

Exhibition Plan:
We, the Explorers of Carnisse

Oliver Kriebel-Bruno
Student number: 547011
547011ok@student.eur.nl
Supervisor: Dr. Pieter van den Heede
Erasmus University Rotterdam
25/06/23

Introduction

We often imagine that to go on an adventure, we must travel far from home and hack our way through some uncharted jungle or climb some never-before-climbed mountain. While both of these quests would certainly prove to be adventures in their own rights, I argue that one can begin much closer to home. In fact, one can begin in their own backyard. Building on the findings of my MA thesis conducted throughout the first half of 2023, I propose the creation of a walking tour in the neighborhood of Carnisse in Rotterdam Zuid. This tour will take the name *We, the Explorers of Carnisse*, and will encourage residents to go out and explore their backyard. The locations highlighted on the walking tour are chosen from those mentioned during my thesis research, which involved a series of 10 walking interviews with residents of Carnisse. The content of these interviews varied quite a bit, with some long-term residents (one had lived in the neighborhood for an impressive 71 years!) having strong opinions about what locations should be included in a potential exhibition, while others who had only lived in Carnisse for a year or two struggled to find places to take me, stating that they had not taken much time to explore their neighborhood. This finding highlights both an issue and a solution. Some residents feel that there is no reason to explore the neighborhood because there is nothing to discover, while others who have lived here for many years have taken the time to uncover the hidden gems. The aim of this walking tour is therefore to share the places dug up through my research with the community in a way which is both accessible and entertaining to encourage them to get to know Carnisse and the people in it. The preliminary walking route can be seen below:

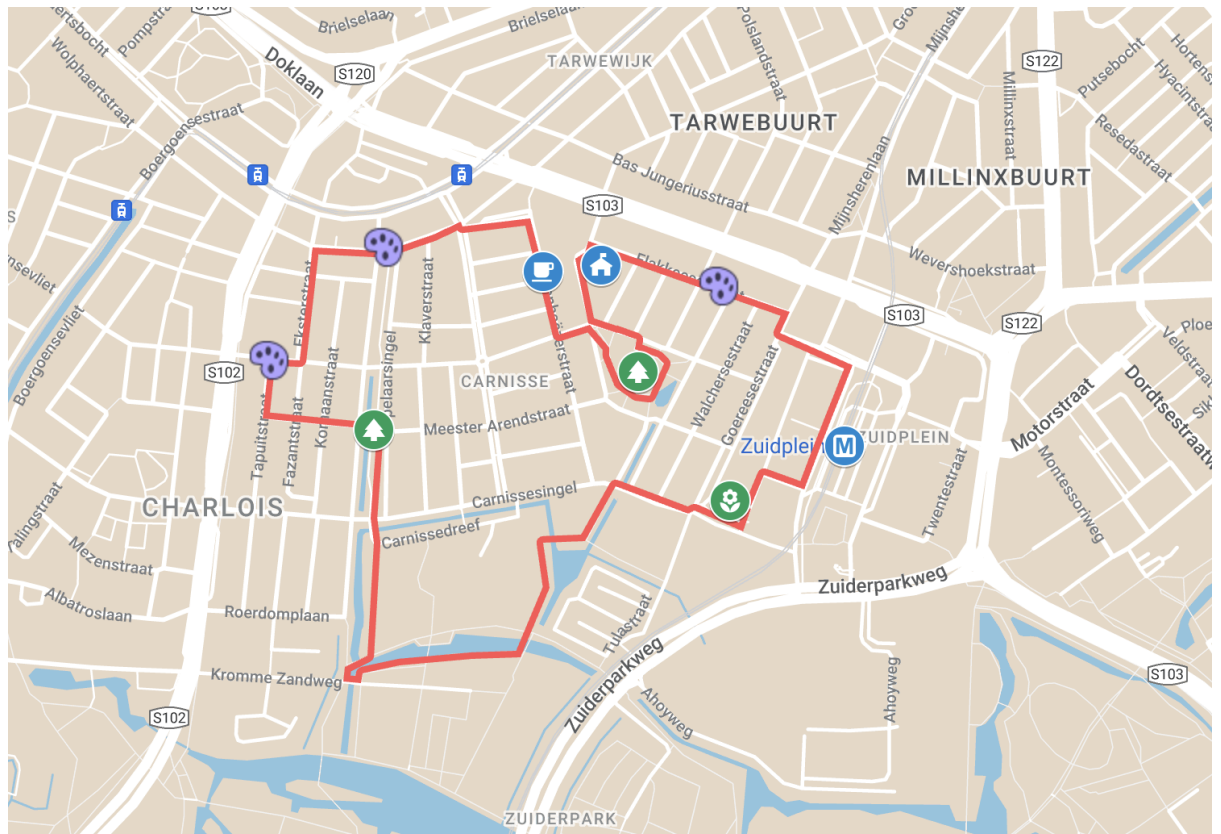


Figure 1: A map showing the intended route of the walking tour through Carnisse. Each icon represents a location where the audience is invited to stop and read some information included in the walking tour pamphlet. More information on these locations will be provided later in the proposal.

The Assignment

The reality is that most people do not spend their free time reading academic texts. They are often dry and filled with jargon or complicated language, making it difficult for non-professionals to engage with them. But what if there was a way to get the complicated information contained in academic texts across to a non-professional audience by presenting it in a more accessible and appealing format? This is the purpose of the public component of the Applied History master's thesis. As a compliment to a traditional thesis, we are tasked with creating a project related to our research which is aimed at a public audience. The idea here is to end up with a final product with an increased level of societal relevance by creating something which can be engaged with outside of traditional academic circles.

Purpose and Objectives

The central message of this exhibition plan is that Carnisse is not a dead neighborhood. Although the neighborhood has something of a reputation of being nothing but a “transition neighborhood” which people leave when they have the means to do so, the aim of this tour is to subvert this narrative by showing that there is beauty here if you are willing to take the time to look for it. In doing so, it challenges the audience to take on the role of an explorer in their own neighborhood. It is about breaking patterns and seeing things with new eyes; about setting down one’s expectations to look for the beauty.

The reason for creating a walking tour alongside a traditional thesis is to create something which is relevant to society as well as academia. While a traditional thesis may be effective for organizing the data from a given research project, there is very little chance it will be read by a non-professional audience. Combining this research with a public element such as a walking tour is therefore the best of both worlds, allowing the conclusions of the research to reach a wider audience. The societal aim of this project is to translate the findings of the thesis research into plain language and present it in a format which is both accessible and enjoyable to interact with.

Methods

As previously stated, this walking tour is based upon the findings of my MA thesis. The aim of this project was to uncover meaningful locations in Carnisse which could then be presented in a potential exhibition about the neighborhood. However, the thesis research differed from previous projects investigating Carnisse by focusing less on the physical attributes of the neighborhood and more on the people who live there. It therefore took a co-creative approach by directly asking the residents what places they thought were important, rather than simply creating a narrative and bestowing it upon the neighborhood without consulting local stakeholders. To do this, the project followed the guidelines of co-creation set down by the American curator Nina Simon in her book *The Participatory Museum*, which will be explained in further depth later on.

The research project had two distinct phases. The first was data collection, which involved a series of 10 walking interviews with residents of Carnisse. The first step of this phase was to find willing participants for the research. To do this I adopted an outreach strategy of attending events in the neighborhood such as a weekly walking club, as well as

volunteering at the local community center. In doing so, I was able to find a few residents who were interested in taking part in my project and agreed to an interview. These interviews were unstructured, and participants were allowed to take me wherever they wanted. Some planned routes in advance while others began simply by wandering around until they thought of a place they wanted to show me. During the interview, we chatted about their experiences with the places in question as well as the neighborhood as a whole while a recording was being made and a GPS device tracked our route. Once the interview was completed, I also asked them if they knew of anyone else who might be interested in taking part, and this allowed my sample to snowball through their personal networks. Once I had collected the data from the walking interviews, I could begin the second phase of the research.

The second phase of my MA thesis research involved digging into the data to uncover patterns in the locations mentioned and themes in the stories the participants had shared. To do this, I used a qualitative method known as thematic analysis, specifically following the guidelines set down by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke in their article *Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology*. Thematic analysis involves the following steps: first, interview data should be transcribed and broken into codes. These codes are small fragments of data which contain the core meaning of a chunk of text.⁵⁴ Next, these codes should be organized into preliminary themes, giving a clearer idea of what the dataset is about. Important to note is that these themes do not “emerge” naturally from a dataset but are the result of intentional selection and interpretation from the researcher.⁵⁵ Finally, these themes should be refined and adjusted not only to make certain that each theme is individually coherent, but also that the themes taken together are fully representative of the entire dataset.⁵⁶ I performed these steps twice using the transcriptions of the walking interviews as a dataset, the first time creating themes of locations mentioned by the participants and the second time creating themes of the stories they shared about those locations.

Conducting these steps of thematic analysis allowed me to draw some preliminary conclusions about what makes certain places in Carnisse special and the relationship that residents have to them. Firstly, the residents of Carnisse sampled for this project seemed to be drawn to places which draw people together and provide feelings of “homeness,” such as restaurants, cafés, grocery stores, parks, or gardens. Socialization and community building

⁵⁴ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, ‘Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology’, *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (1 January 2006): 80, <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.

⁵⁵ Braun and Clarke, "Thematic Analysis," 81.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 81.

were common themes across the mentioned locations. This seems to suggest that what ties people to the neighborhood is at its core not the physical locations themselves, but rather those you can meet there. One resident summarized this perfectly by saying: ‘You don’t get attached to places; you get attached to the people who live there.’ Additionally, among the residents who participated in this project, some had no plans to leave Carnisse and some wanted to get out as soon as possible. Based on the stories shared with me, it seems that a major consideration for whether one wants to stay is whether they have an active network of people in the neighborhood and are aware of spaces to meet these people regularly. People with such a network reported feeling connected to the neighborhood, while those without one felt isolated and disconnected. A contributing factor to this could be the physical layout of the neighborhood, which lacks a clear center for people to gather and requires some exploring to uncover social spaces. This highlights the need for existing social spaces to be made more visible, which is part of the objective of this walking tour.

During the research process, it was determined that the most effective medium to share these findings with the general public was a walking tour. When asked during the interviews what medium the participants preferred, several interviewees suggested a walking tour. If a participant was unsure how to answer, I would offer several possibilities including a walking tour, and in these cases the participants responded favorably to the idea. One participant stated: ‘If I had something like that, I would have gone to all those places. It’s not that the neighborhood is empty per se, but it feels like it. [...] Finding places that are special can make up for all the people who leave the neighborhood because they think there’s nothing here.’ Furthermore, since the data was collected through walking interviews, a walking tour seems a natural way of sharing the findings. A more practical advantage of a walking tour is they require very little funding and materials to set up. All that is required is a pamphlet with a route and highlighted locations, and a few sentences of information for each place. Keeping costs to a minimum allows the pamphlet to be distributed for free, which was always a key goal for this project. Since my neighbors donated their time and stories to make this project a reality, it is important to me that I can give them something in return.

Intended Audience

The intended audience for this walking tour is anyone who lives in Carnisse. Because it encourages the audience to look at the neighborhood with new eyes, it can be enjoyed by people who have lived in Carnisse for one year or 80. By welcoming all residents regardless

of their age, identity, or duration of stay in the neighborhood, I hope to reach as wide an audience as possible. While this intention may seem overly broad, it is generally restricted to people who already live here, meaning non-residents are not included in the intended audience. While there is nothing stopping them from partaking in the tour, I worry that actively marketing towards them could encourage a phenomenon known as “slum tourism.” Originally used in the context of wealthy visitors from the Global North visiting apartheid-era townships in South Africa and *favellas* in Brazil, slum tourism has become a popular topic of academic research within the field of tourism and heritage management. According to Malte Steinbrink, Fabien Frenzel, and Ko Koens, an international team of researchers, slum tourism occurs when wealthy tourists visit poverty-stricken areas for leisure or out of curiosity.⁵⁷ Such a practice has raised several ethical debates, with its critics warning against unequal power-relations and the commodification of a community’s way of life.⁵⁸ Therefore, I worry that actively encouraging outsiders to come into the neighborhood could indirectly contribute to gentrification and the eventual displacement of existing residents.

To make it more feasible to create something to relevant to such a large intended audience, I will create the tour with my research sample personally in mind. I got to know a wide variety of people throughout the project, so I hope that thinking of them personally will give the project a feeling of familiarity that would be lacking if I try to write to such a large group of people that I do not know. To further strengthen the co-creative aspects of the project, I will also share a concept version of the tour with those I interviewed during the research process to get their feedback. It is important to me that they feel that the tour is representative of the information they shared with me during the interviews.

Storyline

The storyline of this tour is intentionally open-ended. There is no linear narrative that the audience has to follow, it is more about going out and creating your own story against the backdrop of Carnisse. To this end, there is no set start or endpoint, but rather a closed loop that the audience can begin at any point. Because I learned so many different stories throughout the research process, I think it would be more effective to create something which can serve as a spark for the audience to create their own narratives rather than trying to

⁵⁷ Fabian Frenzel, Malte Steinbrink, and Ko Koens, *Slum Tourism: Poverty, Power and Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 2012) 1.

⁵⁸ Frenzel, Steinbrink, and Koens 8.

construct my own out of the material. The tour will still share the information gathered throughout the thesis research but will also encourage residents to go out and make new stories themselves.

While there may not be a specific linear narrative, there are still story themes which will be included in the tour. Firstly, inspired by the focus that participants in the interviews placed on social spaces, the concept of togetherness will play a major role in the tour. This will be done not only by including the spaces which were mentioned during the interviews and therefore increasing their visibility for other residents of Carnisse, but also by encouraging the audience to bring a partner or group along with them (or perhaps even to find one along the way). Each stop will include discussion questions which can be answered along or together, but the audience will be encouraged to discuss it with someone else. There will also be a QR code on the pamphlet which leads to an online forum where they can leave comments and share their experiences. The second theme which will play a recurring role in the tour is that of exploration. As previously stated, the primary aim of the tour is to get people to go out and discover their neighborhood by finding adventure in their own backyard. This will hopefully address the trend I identified during the thesis research in which several participants felt they did not know Carnisse very well and felt there was nothing in the neighborhood worth discovering. These story themes will be conveyed to the audience both in the introductory material as well as in the descriptions of each location.

The decision not to create a fixed linear narrative is based on a finding uncovered during the research project. When asked about the factual history of the neighborhood, for example referencing its development as workers houses following the Second World War and subsequent destination for migrant workers arriving in Rotterdam, many participants stated that they simply weren't that interested. Instead, they were much more interested in their own personal histories in the neighborhood, for example the story of their arrival or stories related to the places where they spend significant amounts of time. This leads me to hypothesize that the potential audience of this tour would be less interested in a fixed narrative of the neighborhood's history and would prefer to simply interact with the locations and build their own stories. This tour therefore seeks to give the audience the tools and the impetus to go out into Carnisse, discover what it has to offer, and make stories of their own which they can then share with others.

Locations and Descriptions

There were several locations which came up many times throughout the interviews conducted for the thesis research, which I took to mean that they were important and worth including in a tour through the neighborhood. While the walking tour route is flexible and can be started at any point on the loop, the idea is that these locations serve as anchors that the audience can discover and mark their progress with. Each one will be accompanied by a short description and discussion question, which will hopefully pique their interest and encourage them to continue walking to the next destination. The places I have included in this tour are a mix of green spaces, street art, and social spaces which give the tour a healthy dose of variety, making it more likely that there will be something that resonates with the audience. Important to note is that this is simply a selection of locations identified through the research process, rather than a complete dataset. Including every single location would result in a tour with poor walking flow, and which would take several hours. For this reason, I have made a selection with the aim of including the locations which were mentioned the most, a selection of locations representing the major themes constructed through the process of thematic analysis, and locations which put together result in a tour with a good flow (limited doubling-back, no need to enter or exit buildings, pleasant walking environment). Although I have made this selection of locations myself, a concept version of the tour will be shared with the participants of the research project to ensure that they feel it is representative of the data they shared with me, thus preserving the co-creative nature of this project.

Zuidplein:

Figure 2: A metro arriving at Zuidplein. Zuidplein is a major connecting hub to the rest of Rotterdam. Accessed from: Smiley.toerist. Nederlands: Metrotreinen Bij Het Zuidplein. 22 November 2019. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rotterdam_metro_Zuidplein_2019_3.jpg.

It seems only fitting to begin with the most familiar location. Zuidplein is a major metro station and commercial hub which serves both as a social gathering space in Rotterdam Zuid as well as a connection to the rest of Rotterdam. In the context of this walking tour, Zuidplein is a major landmark which serves to ground Carnisse in its surroundings. Including it in the tour also allows for pamphlets to be distributed at the metro station, through which a large amount of foot traffic passes. This makes it a good location to reach an audience which may be interested in a walking tour through Carnisse.

Neighborhood Murals:

Figure 3: Three murals in Carnisse, located at (from left to right) Flakkeesestraat, Roodborstplein and Robbenoordplein.

During the research project, three street murals were mentioned by residents as being important to the neighborhood's identity. Therefore, they also seem like natural additions to the walking tour. Street art is also a medium which works very well with a walking tour, as the audience can admire the murals along their path without needing to enter any buildings or deviate from their course.

Huis van de Wijk:

Figure 4: A photo of the Huis van de Wijk, a local community center in Carnisse. Accessed from: ‘Huis van de Wijk Carnisse - Radar’. Accessed 25 June 2023. <https://www.ruimteurenindebuurt.nl/Rotterdam-Charlois/carnisse/huis-van-de-wijk-carnisse>.

The Huis van de Wijk is the local community center in Carnisse. Similarly to Zuidplein, it serves as something of a landmark for those who know about it. It was mentioned several times by long-term residents of Carnisse but was not so well known by those who have lived in the neighborhood for a shorter period of time. Including it in the walking tour therefore has two main benefits: it helps anchor the audience with landmarks they may recognize, and also brings the Huis van de Wijk’s existence to the attention with anyone who may not be familiar with it. Also included in the description of this location will be a short selection of free activities on offer for residents, such as sport classes, creative classes, mealtimes, and so on. Furthermore, the Huis van de Wijk is emblematic of the story theme of togetherness through its initiatives which bring the neighborhood together, meaning its inclusions helps create a more cohesive narrative throughout the tour. A potential discussion question for this location is: “Which activities are you interested in trying at the Huis van de Wijk? What activities do you wish they offered?”

Amelandseplein:

Figure 5: A photo of the Amelandseplein park, located in the center of Carnisse.

Amelandseplein is a small park nestled in the center of residential Carnisse. Although it is modest, it acts like something of a heart of the neighborhood, serving as a frequent venue of local events and festivals. In the recent past, these have included clothing swaps, cultural festivals, and flea markets.

Koffie en Ambacht:

Figure 6: A photo of the interior of the café Koffie en Ambacht, located in the northwest of Carnisse. Accessed from: 'Koffie & Ambacht - Inside Rotterdam Magazine'. Accessed 25 June 2023. <https://insiderrotterdam.nl/koffie-ambacht/>.

Koffie en Ambacht is a local café and social space which is supported by volunteers from the neighborhood. In addition to serving food and beverages, it frequently hosts events and markets itself as a “second living room” where people can spend time and meet new people. It was mentioned by over half the respondents in the interviews conducted for the thesis research, and therefore presents itself as an important institution in the neighborhood. Unfortunately, due to an illness of the owner, the café is currently very often closed, and has been for the duration of the research process. However, in the interest of creating a tour which will remain relevant for a long period of time, it seems beneficial to include it anyways with the optimistic view that it will reopen in the future.

Lepelaarsingel:

Figure 7: A photo of the Lepelaarsingel, a small park running alongside a canal in the west of Carnisse. Note the family of swans to the right of the image.

Similar to Amelandseplein, Lepelaarsingel is a public green space which is frequently used for walking or enjoying the playground equipment with children. The space is also flanked by community garden plots which are maintained communally by the residents, making it emblematic of the story theme of togetherness. The Lepelaarsingel is also home to a family of swans, which has become something of an icon for the area.

Zuiderpark:

Figure 8: A photo of the Zuiderpark, located to the south of Carnisse. This particular photo was taken near the center of the park.

Zuiderpark is the largest park in Rotterdam and is located right at the doorstep of Carnisse. Although the municipality classifies it as its own neighborhood, it is clearly important to the residents of Carnisse as every participant in the research project brought me here. I take this to mean that residents of Carnisse do not envision a firm boundary between themselves and Zuiderpark, meaning the two neighborhoods are intertwined. Additionally, since this project is just as much about the people of Carnisse as it is about the physical neighborhood itself, it seems relevant and important to include in the tour. Although Zuiderpark is very large and has a lot that would be interesting to include in the tour, I feel that it is best to keep it short and sweet in the interest of time and keeping the tour accessible for audience members who may have difficulties walking long distances. Therefore, the tour will only include a brief stretch throughout Zuiderpark to let the audience know it is there, while encouraging to explore it further at a later moment. It will briefly mention some of the amenities on offer in the park, such as the eighteenth-century windmill, the children's petting zoo, and the sport complex, although the audience will not be led to these places during the tour.

Van Swietenhof:

Figure 9: A photo of the van Swietenhof public garden, which is hidden in a residential courtyard to the east of Carnisse. Accessed from: Buurttuin van Swietenhof. Facebook post, 21 December 2020.

https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1103181903454773&set=pcb.1103182090121421&locale=nl_NL.

Van Swietenhof is a public garden to the East of Carnisse. This location is considered to be a true hidden gem of Carnisse, as it is well concealed within a residential courtyard, making it very difficult to locate unless you already know where it is. The courtyard sat full of dilapidated playground equipment 20 years ago, until those living around the courtyard worked together with the municipality to turn it into a public garden. Now it regularly hosts events such as concerts, poetry nights, and outdoor games. I was lucky enough to speak with the original head of this initiative who has lived in Carnisse for over 70 years and still maintains the garden today. I felt that this location was important to include in the tour because it offers so much to the neighborhood but is very unknown. By including it I hope to increase its visibility to residents of Carnisse. Including a hidden gem like Van Swietenhof therefore also fits with the story theme of exploration.

Rationale of Choices

In a perfect world, it would be possible to include every location mentioned by the residents of Carnisse who participated in the research project. Unfortunately, there are practical considerations which make it necessary to significantly reduce the number of locations which are included in the tour. Firstly, many of the locations that residents mentioned as important lie outside the official municipal boundaries of the neighborhood. While this in and of itself is not a great problem (I see no reason to exclude a location as important simply because it exists on the wrong side of an imaginary line), when taken all together it would result in a huge area that the audience would need to cover to be able to reach all the locations. While this would not only discourage some potential audience members from following the tour, it might also make it completely impossible for those with mobility issues. In the interest of inclusivity and accessibility, I found it necessary to focus on locations closer to the center of the neighborhood to ensure that a full loop of the tour can reasonably be accomplished within an hour.

Moreover, many of the locations mentioned by residents during the research project had a primarily personal significance, for example a specific island in the canal at Zuiderpark with which the resident associated a childhood memory. While this is interesting, it may not resonate with other members of a potential audience who do not have the same connection. For this reason, I prioritized including locations which have the best chance of carrying a broad appeal to as many people as possible.

Another consideration which played into my selection of the preceding locations was a desire to end up with a selection which is representative of all the broad themes constructed during the research project. During the process of researching the important locations in Carnisse, I assembled the themes of food and drink, public outdoor spaces, and cultural spaces to help segment the dataset using the method of thematic analysis. Therefore, I found it important to ensure that all of these themes were present in the walking tour to ensure that the selection was representative of the complete dataset collected during the research project. Furthermore, ensuring a good variety of different types of locations has the added benefit of making the tour more interesting by making it more likely that there will be something that any given audience member will enjoy engaging with.

Timeframe

This project began all the way back in December of 2022 with an idea. It was decided that I would conduct research in my home neighborhood of Carnisse, but it was still unclear what it would be. This became clearer in March of 2023 with a loose idea of what I would be researching, but it did not become fixed until later that month when I began the data collection process by conducting interviews. As I spoke with my neighbors, I began to notice patterns in the kinds of things they would talk about, giving me a clearer idea of the direction they were suggesting I should take my research. With the data collection finished in the beginning of May 2023, it was time to begin the analysis, which was completed later that month. June of 2023 saw the typing up of the results and presentation of the exhibition proposal. The walking tour is projected to be finished by September of 2023, after the period of the summer holidays. The initial distribution is scheduled to take place throughout October of 2023.

Challenges

There were several challenges that arose in the process of conducting the research project, as well as in formulating the walking tour. For example, the research was highly reliant on interview data, which necessitated a high degree of trust in the participants. Unlike using data from books, articles, or archives, conducting interviews required coordination and collaboration with the public, which posed logistical difficulties. This led to significant delays in the beginning of the process, as it was necessary to put in a lot of work building up a network before I could begin collecting data. These delays resulted in the research project being finished later than expected, and compounded over time also resulted in a crunch at the end of the process which caused this proposal to be produced within a much smaller window of time than initially estimated.

Another issue in the data collection phase of the project lies in the manner in which the interviews were carried out. The initial plan was to conduct 300 two-minute interviews instead of 10 interviews lasting between 30 minutes and an hour and a half, but a lack of engagement necessitated a change of approach. While a dataset of 300 interviews would have provided the findings of the research project with a stronger statistical foundation, I found that there was an attitude of distrust towards strangers on the street, making it very difficult to find willing participants.

Another challenge is the complete lack of budget for this walking tour. As it stands, any costs associated with producing this tour will have to come out of my own pocket, meaning there are very few resources for printing and distributing. I am in talks with the municipality about the possibility of collaborating and delegating some of the distributional tasks, and this will be explained in greater detail in the next chapter.

Distribution Strategy

As previously stated, a key aim of this project was to create a final product which could be distributed for free. Since it is built on the donated stories and time of participants who volunteered to take part, I felt that it was important to make sure that the walking tour can be used by anyone who is interested in it. To this end, the plan is to print the tour on a single sheet of paper, with the stories printed on the back. The design will be highly minimalistic with a mostly black and white color palette, therefore greatly reducing the printing costs by reducing the need for colored ink. This paper can then be folded into a pamphlet and left at locations and businesses throughout the neighborhood, such as the Huis van de Wijk or Koffie en Ambacht. Locations which are featured on the walking tour will be specifically targeted for these distribution efforts.

Additionally, after coming into contact with a team of volunteers working with the municipality to create a book featuring the stories of Carnisse, they have expressed an interest in including this tour in their project. Such a collaboration would surely increase the visibility of the tour and allow it to reach a much larger audience. However, while this collaboration is certainly worth pursuing, it is important to me that it does not hinder my plan to make sure the tour is available to everyone for free, not just those who purchase the book. Therefore, further discussion and negotiation is necessary on the topic of copyright and publishing regulations to ensure that it can be distributed in both manners.

In either case, it is important to note that this proposal is for an initial concept rather than a fully fleshed out final product. This is done with intention, as the aim is to have the tour evolve and become more refined over time after receiving feedback and impressions from the residents of Carnisse. In this manner, the development of the tour follows the guidelines of public history by inviting the audience to take an active role in contributing to the exhibition in line with co-creative methods. The tour will therefore be updated over time, making it even more important that each draft can be produced cheaply and distributed for free. Another advantage of freely distributing the tour is that it will reach a wider audience

than it would if it were locked behind a paywall, and having more people engage with it will make it more likely to receive valuable feedback for the following version of the tour.

Relevance

This project contributes a new perspective to both the social and academic discourse around Carnisse. Most existing studies are usually a solely factual history accompanied by a description of the neighborhood's architecture and physical attributes but lack a humanistic element.⁵⁹ While some work from heritage institutions in Rotterdam, such as Museum Rotterdam or Stichting Wijkcollectie, have taken a humanistic approach in regards to research on Carnisse, they often focus on one singular story. In contrast, this project focuses on the neighborhood as a whole. However, both these organization contribute to the general trend in the Rotterdam heritage sector of transitioning away from grand narratives of the city and towards smaller scale micro-histories.

As an example of this trend towards smaller scale exhibitions with more personal relevance to their audiences, the *Panorama* project created by Museum Rotterdam between 2005 and 2007 resulted in the creation of several mini exhibitions situated in neighborhoods throughout Rotterdam.⁶⁰ This exhibition was created as a reaction to the finding that many migrant groups without personal or familial histories in the city did not feel a connection to the grand narratives of Rotterdam, which typically followed its development as a port city, its bombardment during the Second World War, and its reconstruction throughout the second half of the twentieth century. In response to this conclusion, each exhibition featured in the *Panorama* project featured community submitted photos and objects, thus serving as a highly relevant example of an exhibition created using co-creative methods in line with the guidelines set down by the public historian Nina Simon.⁶¹

As an additional example, *Stichting Wijkcollectie* is a heritage organization in Rotterdam which focuses on uncovering stories and objects which are relevant to a neighborhood's heritage.⁶² As of the moment of writing, they have currently created exhibitions in 16 neighborhoods throughout Rotterdam, although Carnisse is not yet one of

⁵⁹ *Carnisse*.

⁶⁰ Paul van de Laar, Interview with Paul van de Laar, interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno, Interview, 3 April 2023, 12:13.

⁶¹ van de Laar, interview, 12:56.

⁶² 'Stichting Wijkcollectie | Stichting Wijkcollectie', accessed 25 June 2023, <https://wijkcollectie.nl/stichting-wijkcollectie/>.

them. It is important to note that although *Stichting Wijkcollectie* creates exhibitions in these neighborhoods, they do not actually collect the objects and display them together. They argue that doing so would remove them from their original contexts, and this would result in the objects becoming “dead” or static; becoming completely disconnected from their original meaning.⁶³ Instead, the organization chooses to leave the objects in place and simply mark them with a medallion classifying them as *Echt Rotterdams Erfgoed*, or Real Rotterdam Heritage.⁶⁴ In doing so, the exhibition essentially becomes spread out throughout the neighborhood instead of collected and displayed all in one place. This approach has several practical advantages outside of preserving the meaning of the collection by keeping the objects in their original contexts. For example, as the objects are spread out it is much more likely that people will stumble across them and become curious about the medallion that is plastered upon them. In doing so, the exhibition may reach a wider audience as people may decide to look up the meaning of the medallion and become interested in learning about or locating the other objects in the exhibition. Furthermore, leaving the objects in place does not require them to be donated or loaned to *Stichting Wijkcollectie*, making it much more likely that people will be willing to contribute objects to the exhibitions. In fact, this practice began with the loan of a van from a Bulgarian delivery driver for an exhibition about migrant work in Rotterdam.⁶⁵ However, naturally the driver eventually needed the van back so he could do his work, but this ended up inspiring the method of leaving objects where they are, becoming the very first object in the *Echt Rotterdams Erfgoed* collection.⁶⁶

The practices of both Museum Rotterdam and *Stichting Wijkcollectie* serve as inspirations for this project. Like the *Panorama* project from Museum Rotterdam, this exhibition is based on material which has been selected by the community as a result of a research project into the meaningful locations of Carnisse. Similarly, this project takes an approach much like that of *Stichting Wijkcollectie* by focusing on locations spread throughout the neighborhood rather than collecting objects together in a single place. This has the advantages of preserving the original meanings of the collection while also increasing its visibility by making it more likely that potential audience members will stumble upon the exhibition.

⁶³ Nicole van Dijk, Interview with Nicole van Dijk, interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno, Interview, 23 March 2023, 8:22.

⁶⁴ ‘Stichting Wijkcollectie | Stichting Wijkcollectie’.

⁶⁵ ‘nr. 0001 | Volkswagenbus van Kamen | Stichting Wijkcollectie’, accessed 25 June 2023, <https://wijkcollectie.nl/project/ere0001/>.

⁶⁶ ‘nr. 0001 | Volkswagenbus van Kamen | Stichting Wijkcollectie’.

However, such an approach also has academic relevance, specifically in the field of public history. This field has devoted a great deal of attention on what role the public should play in historical research, with its proponents often arguing that they should be given a more active role. Nina Simon for instance, whose guidelines for co-creative research served as the foundation of this project, argues in her book *The Participatory Museum* that the public should not be treated as passive consumers of heritage, but rather as actors who shape it.⁶⁷ Furthermore, she argues that doing so is necessary if museums and heritage institutions to wish to remain dynamic and relevant. Her vision of future exhibitions is a place where visitors get to shape the narrative for themselves, turning museums into spaces of creation where the public can engage with subjects they are passionate about.⁶⁸ To help other historians and museologists make this ideal a reality, she outlines a series of principles to consider when designing a co-creative exhibition. Firstly, exhibitions should be creative and ever evolving, instead of static and unchanging. Secondly, exhibitions should be social spaces, where visitors can interact with each other as well as with staff to share ideas and build community. Finally, exhibitions should encourage critical discussion and debate surrounding its contents to encourage visitors to get involved with its creation. These guidelines serve as a blueprint for this walking tour and will be more concretely applied in the section outlining the exhibition's storyline.

This project contributes to the discourse of public history by putting Simon's guidelines into practice and critically reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of her approach. In general, involving the public in the process did allow for the collection of data which is personally relevant to the audience and therefore more likely to have societal relevance. However, there are also some limitations to her approach which should be considered by future researchers thinking of creating a similar project.

Conclusion

This walking tour is built upon findings from my MA thesis research, which investigated meaningful locations and the stories associated with them in the neighborhood of Carnisse. This process involved conducting a series of 10 walking interviews with residents of Carnisse, where participants were invited to plan a route through the neighborhood to

⁶⁷ Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum* (Santa Cruz: Museum 20, 2010), i-ii.

⁶⁸ Simon, *The Participatory Museum*, iii-iv.

share what they felt were locations which were important to the neighborhood's identity. The data from these interviews were then processed using a method called thematic analysis, through which the locations and stories were sorted into broad themes. This led to the conclusion that locations with social functions were among the most highly valued, but several of the participants who had not lived in the neighborhood for a long period of time were unaware of their existence. In response to this finding, the central aim of this tour is to share these locations with the entire neighborhood by encouraging them to go and investigate them for themselves. It is this which led me to choose the story themes of togetherness and exploration as the primary themes for this tour, reflecting both the focus on social spaces and discovery of interesting places.

By creating a walking tour aimed at a non-professional audience, this project seeks to present the findings of the thesis research in a way which is relevant to the wider society outside of academic circles. Because it is unlikely that the academic thesis will be read by non-professionals, it is necessary to present the information in a manner which is accessible and enjoyable to ensure that the research can create an impact in the local community. However, creating a walking tour using data from a formal research project also has academic relevance, as it practically applies the participatory methods outlined by Nina Simon in her book *The Participatory Museum*. It also provides a new perspective in the body of research on Carnisse by focusing on people and their stories instead of the physical neighborhood.

The intended audience of this walking tour is residents of Carnisse. This is intentionally broad, as it encourages the audience to see the neighborhood with fresh eyes and is therefore relevant for residents regardless of the duration of their stay in Carnisse. However, the tour is not market towards non-residents to prevent any form of slum tourism. This is designed for people who already live here to get to know their home a bit better. This is done by providing them with a selection of locations from the thesis research and a suggested walking route. Unfortunately, it is impossible to include every single location that was mentioned during the research process, but I have done my best to make a selection which is representative of the major themes as well as including the locations which were mentioned most frequently.

Bibliography

- Adam. Interview with Adam. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. 41:34, 3 April 2023.
- Ashton, Paul, and Paula Hamilton. 'Connecting with History: Australians and Their Pasts'. In *People and Their Pasts: Public History Today*, edited by Paul Ashton and Hilda Kean, 23–41. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2009.
https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230234468_2.
- Baptiste, Vincent. 'Pleasure Near the Port: Spaces and Legacies of Notorious Entertainment Culture in 20th-Century Rotterdam'. Doctoral Thesis, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2023.
- Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 'Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology'. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (1 January 2006): 77–101.
<https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.
- Bulchandani, Darshana. 'Koffie & Ambacht'. Inside Rotterdam Magazine, 13 April 2020.
<https://insiderotterdam.nl/koffie-ambacht/>.
- Buurttuin van Swietenhof. Facebook post, 21 December 2020.
https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1103181903454773&set=pcb.1103182090121421&locale=nl_NL.
- Carnisse: Geschiedenis van Rotterdam-Zuid*. Steenhuis Meurs, 2018.
<https://vimeo.com/296010966>.
- Cauvin, Thomas. *Public History: A Textbook of Practice*. 1st ed. Thomas Cauvin. Description: New York: Routledge, 2016. Identifiers: LCCN: Routledge, 2016.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315718255>.
- Daniel. Interview with Daniel. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. 1:16:53, 29 April 2023.
- Dijk, Nicole van. Interview with Nicole van Dijk. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. Interview, 23 March 2023.
- Emmel, Nick, and Andrew Clark. 'The Methods Used in Connected Lives: Investigating Networks, Neighborhoods and Communities', 28. United Kingdom: ESRC National Centre for Research Methods, 2009.
- Frenzel, Fabian, Malte Steinbrink, and Ko Koens. *Slum Tourism: Poverty, Power and Ethics*. New York: Routledge, 2012.
- Hannah, Bob, and Josephine. Interview with Hannah, Bob, and Josephine. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. 1:29:30, 14 April 2023.
- 'Huis van de Wijk Carnisse - Radar'. Accessed 24 June 2023.
<https://www.ruimteurenindebuurt.nl/Rotterdam-Charlois/carnisse/huis-van-de-wijk-carnisse>.
- Jason. Interview with Jason. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. 1:06:37, 29 March 2023.

- Kelley, Robert. 'Public History: Its Origins, Nature, and Prospects'. *The Public Historian* 1, no. 1 (1978): 16–28. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3377666>.
- Laar, Paul Th. van de. 'The Contemporary City as Backbone: Museum Rotterdam Meets the Challenge'. *The Journal of Museum Education* 38, no. 1 (2013): 39–49.
- Laar, Paul van de. Interview with Paul van de Laar. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. Interview, 3 April 2023.
- Mac. Interview with Mac. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. 24:24, 5 April 2023.
- MacDonald, Sharon. 'Feeling the Past'. In *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today*, 79–109. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Mitch. Interview with Mitch. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. 1:33:53, 28 March 2023.
- Novick, Peter. *That Noble Dream : The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession*. Cambridge [England] : Cambridge University Press, 1988. http://archive.org/details/isbn_9780521357456.
- 'nr. 0001 | Volkswagenbus van Kamen | Stichting Wijkcollectie'. Accessed 25 June 2023. <https://wijkcollectie.nl/project/ere0001/>.
- Rosenzweig, Roy, and David Thelen. *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*. Columbia University Press, 1998.
- Rotterdam, Gemeente. 'Wijkagenda Carnisse'. Webpagina. Begroting Rotterdam 2021. Accessed 25 January 2023. <https://www.watdoetdegemeente.rotterdam.nl//wijken/wijkagenda-carnisse/>.
- Simon, Nina. *The Participatory Museum*. Santa Cruz: Museum 20, 2010.
- Smiley.toerist. *Nederlands: Metrotreinen Bij Het Zuidplein*. 22 November 2019. Own work. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rotterdam_metro_Zuidplein_2019_3.jpg.
- Steenbergen, Frank van, and Julia Wittmayer. 'Carnisse in Transitie?: Een Verkenning van Het Verleden, Het Heden En de Toekomst van Een Rotterdamse Wijk'. Dutch Research Institute for Transitions, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2012.
- Steven. Interview with Steven. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. 39:00, 18 April 2023. 'Stichting Wijkcollectie | Stichting Wijkcollectie'. Accessed 25 June 2023. <https://wijkcollectie.nl/stichting-wijkcollectie/>.
- Tommy. Interview with Tommy. Interview by Oliver Kriebel-Bruno. 1:18:45, 2 May 2023.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. 'Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective'. In *Philosophy in Geography*, edited by Stephen Gale and Gunnar Olsson, 387–427. Theory and Decision Library. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1979. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-009-9394-5_19.