

Museumplein, Amsterdam

Kees Sanjers / Zaanen Spanjers Cs Architecten
Netherlands



A two-storey underground car-park for 600 cars, an underground supermarket, an underground bus-parking facility for 25 touring-cars and above ground pavilions and kiosks- these were all parts of the master plan by Danish landscape architect, Sven Ingvar Andersson for the Museumplein. The Museumplein is a major square in Amsterdam, which borders the Rijks Museum, The Van Gogh Museum, the Stedelijk Museum and the Concertgebouw.

The car park was awarded the 2001 EPA Award for 'best new car park in Europe'.

A car park for pedestrians

The open space of the Museumplein is in sharp contrast with the charm and intimacy of the old town center and surrounding neighbourhood. The design for the square by Danish landscape architect, Sven Ingvar Andersson, focuses on this contrast. Like the eye of a hurricane, it is a place of quietness in the middle of dynamic strength. Dutch architect and interior-architect Kees Spanjers designed the underground buildings and the pavilions, which serve as entrances to these buildings, in close consultation with Andersson.

On the south side of the square, near the Concertgebouw, there is an underground car park for 600 cars and an underground supermarket (2000). The entrance to the car park and supermarket is underneath a sloping lawn. The car park design is guided by the motto 'design a garage for pedestrians', and the obvious touch of an interior designer gives a new perception to a usually neglected design-issue.

Because there is no building above the garage, the structural design could be adapted to a favourable routing, so that drivers find their way quick and easy. When the driver leaves the car and becomes a pedestrian, there is a dramatic change in view. Mood and layout are designed on a scale for pedestrians. Light fixtures are mounted above the doors of the parked cars. From every point in the parking structure, there is a clear and straight route to passageways that lead to the exits. The structural design and colours support easy orientation. Acoustic absorption above the roadways muffles the noise of moving cars, which is normally very obvious in a naturally quiet subterranean environment. A technically advanced thrust ventilation system, using low noise ventilators, ensures optimum air quality and avoids the need for ductwork on the ceilings.

A two-storey high walkway, which exits at both ends, is bathed in daylight, due to a linear skylight in the lawn above. At night, this skylight is illuminated by an artificial light source. The use of light and transparent materials avert claustrophobic feelings, and clear, unobstructed views provide public security. For drivers and pedestrians, it is a pleasure to visit this high quality car park.

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