



Dutch Modern

20th-century and contemporary architecture

6–11 September 2023 (MJ 853)

6 days • £2,830

Lecturer: Professor Harry Charrington

An immersion in the last one hundred years of Dutch urban design.

Highlights of early modernism include the Rietveld Schröder House in Utrecht, Hilversum Town Hall and the Van Nelle Tobacco Factory in Rotterdam.

City centres are balanced by the Hoge Veluwe National Park, the Voorlinden estate and the docklands of Amsterdam.

Travel by Eurostar and stay throughout in beautiful Utrecht.

Why do the Dutch excel at architecture and urban design? It is hard to resist the temptation to make connections between the hard-won, man-made origin of much of the country's surface area and the scrupulous consideration of the uses to which it is put, and between the high density of population and the highly developed sense of social responsibility which prevails in the Netherlands.

Another ingredient may be the independence of spirit and love of liberty which characterises much of Dutch life and society, born perhaps of the seafaring and trading history of the nation – in turn impelled by a poorly endowed and vulnerable habitat adjacent to the sea.

Good neighbourliness and fierce individualism do not normally make good bedfellows, but in dynamic tension may be the perfect recipe for an excellent built environment. Some of the most exciting architectural developments of the last hundred years have been sited in the Netherlands.

Dutch architecture is not just a matter of major showpiece buildings, though there are plenty of those. They arise in the context of an outstandingly high level of planning, building and urban design at every level.

This trip includes tours of a clutch of icons of modern architecture – the Rietveld Schröder House in Utrecht, the Van Nelle factory in Rotterdam, Dudok's Town hall in Hilversum. And alongside these cutting edge developments are being completed all the time.

There is, however, one compelling reason not to join this tour. Whatever part of the world you come from, return is likely to lead to melancholy. By comparison with the



Van Nelle Tobacco Factory in Rotterdam.

brilliance of the Dutch scene, your home town is guaranteed to seem drab and depressing.

Itinerary

Day 1: London to Utrecht. Travel by Eurostar at c. 11.00am from London St Pancras to Rotterdam (direct train), and from here by coach to Utrecht. An early evening walk introduces the beautiful, historic centre. All five nights are spent here.

Day 2: Utrecht, Hilversum. Begin at Gerrit Rietveld's Schröder House. Built in 1924, it is one of the icons of 20th-century architecture, a revolutionary and beguiling deconstruction of an urban house. The campus of Utrecht University is a clump of exciting buildings including a sleek library by Weil Arets and Koolhaas' Educatorium. Outside Hilversum in sandy pine forest, the restored Zonnestraal Sanatorium (Duiker 1931) is a wonderful glass building with complex massing. Hilversum's Town Hall (Dudok 1930), 'the brick building of the century', masterfully balances vertical and horizontal, functionalism and fantasy.

Day 3: Residential Amsterdam. Never in history has social housing been so well crafted and whimsically alluring as de Klerk's 'Eigen Haard' (1913–20). Continue to the Eastern

Docklands, a redevelopment of the '90s and '00s with unflagging variety of design. The newest expansion is on IJburg, more removed, more peaceful, more watery. End at the Open Air School by Duiker and Bijvoet (1930), one of the first in an urban setting and a model example of modernism (*this visit is subject to confirmation nearer the time*).

Day 4: Hoge Veluwe National Park. The day is dedicated to the wild expanse of the Hoge Veluwe National Park. Visits include the Hubertus Hunting Lodge by Berlage (1919), porters' lodges (MVRDV 1995), and the Kröller-Müller Museum, a superb art collection especially notable for Van Gogh, in buildings by Van der Velde (1919–38), Rietveld and Wim Quist.

Day 5: Rotterdam. The Van Nelle Tobacco Factory is one of the monuments of modern architecture (1931); built by Brinkman and van der Vlugt with input by Mart Stam, it combines glass-walled functionalism with humanising asymmetry. The afternoon is spent in the Museumspark, home to the Netherlands Architectural Institute (Jo Coenen 1993), Kunsthal (Koolhaas 1992) and the Sonneveld House, a family dwelling, built by Brinkman and van der Vlugt in 1933. The latest addition to the park is the Depot Boijmans van

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Beuningen (MVRDV 2021), a state-of-the-art storage facility, and the first in the world to be publicly accessible. *The Museum Boijmans van Beuningen is closed for major renovation; much of the collection is on show in the Depot.*

Day 6: Wassenaar. Independent morning in Utrecht before an early afternoon departure for Wassenaar. In a beautiful estate of woodland, meadows and dunes, Voorlinden is an excellent private collection of modern and contemporary art in a light and lofty building by Kraaijvanger Architects (2016), with gardens by Piet Oudolf. Continue to Rotterdam for the Eurostar to St Pancras arriving c. 10.00pm.

Lecturer

Professor Harry Charrington. Architect and Head of the School of Architecture & Cities at the University of Westminster. He read Architecture at Cambridge, where he was the founding editor of *Scroope: Cambridge Architectural Journal*, and subsequently combined academia and practice in both England and Finland. He has a particular interest in the history of modernism. He obtained his PhD from the LSE on Alvar Aalto and has published widely on his work. His book *Alvar Aalto: the Mark of the Hand* won the RIBA President's Award for Research 2012.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £2,830 or £2,630 without rail travel. **Single occupancy:** £3,230 or £3,030 without rail travel.

Included: Eurostar (Standard Premier); hotel accommodation; travel by private coach; breakfasts, 1 sandwich lunch and 3 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Accommodation. The Grand Hotel Karel V, Utrecht (karelv.nl): converted from a 19th-century hospital in a quiet location within the city walls. Rated locally as 5-star. *All single rooms are deluxe doubles for single occupancy.*

How strenuous? This is a relatively short but busy tour with a lot of walking and standing around. Participants need to be fit. Average distance by coach per day: 60 miles.

Group size: between 8 and 22 participants.