

Riebeeek Square

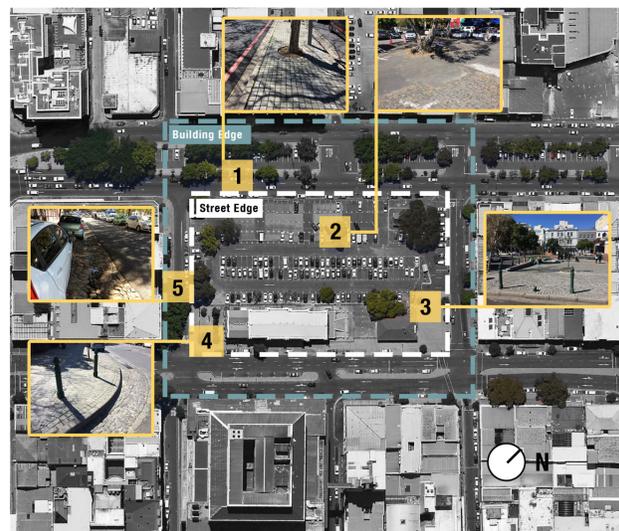


Edges

The Riebeeek Square basically has two edges. One that is formed by the buildings surrounding the square. And the other one that is formed by the roads enclosing the square.

When standing on the square the buildings will determine how far you can see and they gave you a feeling that the square is closed by it. With only the roads cutting through this wall of buildings who give entrance to the square.

On the other hand there are the roads that enclose the square by it's own edges. A parking lane and a pavement directly to the square basically divide the square from the road creating it's own edge and setting it apart from the building edge.



Surfaces

The materials used in a square determined for a great part what kind of feeling people get from the square. On church street on the left there was already a lot of interaction from the buildings with the street. But on top of this they also used other more natural stones for the parking lanes and the pavement (see picture 5). This gives a more natural feeling instead of the asphalt normally used. On picture 3 you can see they did the same thing. The pavement here distinguish itself from the asphalt pavement and the corner here feels directly more natural and attractive for pedestrians. The same applies for picture 4. However when we look at picture 2 you can see the parking spots mainly consists of plain asphalt with here and there some stone to fix a whole in the ground. The square is now being used as a parking lot so the choice for asphalt isn't strange but it doesn't make the square attractive to pedestrians as they rather gather at the side streets where there is a lot of interaction and smooth and warm surfaces.



Relationship

How a square interacts with its edges can tell you a lot about the dynamic of the square. In this case the interaction means the entrance of a building or the entrance to the square. Because the Riebeeek square is divided by the roads there is no direct interaction from the buildings with the square. Every interaction is indirect because the pedestrians first need to cross to road in order to access the square. On the left and right side there is a lot of interaction from the buildings with the road. These streets are experienced as much more friendly streets for pedestrians, which has to do with the interaction of the buildings. On the top side you can see there are only three arrows with interaction. The rest of the plint are only windows or plain walls which feel isolated from the street. The bottom side isn't that bad but there is a big hospital who has a very chilly interaction with the street. More to the right there is a restaurant with a terrace outside what immediately feels more cosy and pedestrian friendly.



Pedestrians

Facilities for pedestrians play a big role in creating an attractive square. Actually every one of the previous mentioned subjects can relate to creating a pedestrian friendly square. And the Riebeeek Square isn't that pedestrian friendly. Only a small part of the square is pavement and therefore for pedestrians. The other part is used for car parking. Shelter for the pedestrians can be a tree, a building or tents. Back again there is the example of the church street where trees provide great shelter for the pedestrians. This street is a very attractive and pedestrian friendly street. On the square there are only a couple of trees but mostly not even in the pedestrian zone. The only seating provided is the one on the lower right corner. This is a shame because when seating and shelter are provided people are gonna use the square and stay on it. When there's only asphalt people are gonna walk by and won't even bother to stay there.



Section A-A

In the section it becomes very clear that the shelter, seating and pedestrians area's are on the side streets. These streets aren't actually part of the square itself as they're cutted off by the streets enclosing the square. So actually people stay more on the Church and Shortmarket Street than they do on the square. What is very remarkable seen the potential the square got. The building edges are quite low here what makes that you can see beyond the square. Looking at Table Mountain or Lions Head for example.



Section B-B

What this sections makes clear is that the church creates a new edge. The church creates a pedestrian stroke between the street edge and the church edge, only after passing the church you can see the square. On the right side you can see the Buitengracht Street where there is this small island in the middle surrounded by trees. Once again this place is used for parking but can have so much more potential. The building edges are very high in this section what really closes off the square from the rest of Cape Town.

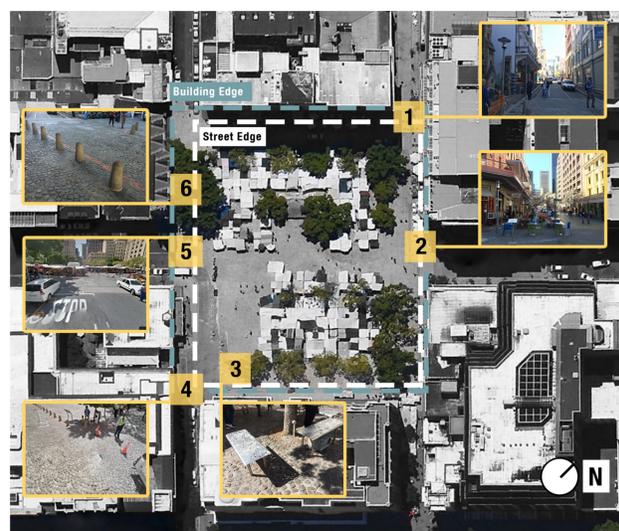
Greenmarket Square



Edges

Greenmarket Square is enclosed by a very large scale building edge. There is only one street crossing the square and one street intersecting with it. The square is almost car free. And the street and building edge are basically the same edges.

Because of the large scale buildings addressing the building edge of the square it really feels like you're in the middle of city surrounded by high rise buildings. The only acces to the square are these streets cutting their way through this high rise building block. So if you come through these narrow streets entering the square it's like you are in the forest and you see this magic open space where you can finally see the air and get some breath.



Surfaces

The Greenmarket Square has very friendly and warm surfaces. The whole square basically consists of natural stone. What even reflects in the stone pole (see picture 6). As soon as a asphalt road enters the square the surface address itself to the surface of the square (see picture 5). The seating facilities are in steel, what is a bit less warm but it's at least hufter proof (see picture 3).

In picture 1 and 2 you can clearly see the narrow streets entering the square. These narrow streets have a lot of seating facilities and have also warm surfaces. So the experience of the square already begun before you enter the square.



Relationship

The square has 6 places where you can enter it. These are the streets that run on to the square. The other places of interaction take place at the plint of the buildings. Where there is a bank, a church, hotel or restaurants. There is a lot of interaction with the building edge what makes it a vibrant experience. The street edge is cutting it's way through the buildings. They entering the square and then leaving the square on the other side. So on your way through you have the experience of the square with all the relationships of the building edge and after that you continue your journey through the smaller streets.



Pedestrians

Facilities for pedestrians play a big role in creating an attractive square. Actually every one of the previous mentioned subjects can relate to creating a pedestrian friendly square. The Green Market square is a very good example of a walkable square. Basically the whole square is used for pedestrians. There is only one street on the left who crosses the square. Here the car needs to slow down as he is driving on the 'pavement'. On the square there's plenty of shelter for the pedestrians. There are a lot of trees but als a lot of tents who provide shelter. The seating on the square is provided by a couple of steel benches but mostly by the restaurants who are at the side of the square. This is what makes Greenmarket Square stand out from the other squares as none of them provide restaurants and a great interaction with the square.



Section A-A

The street and the building edge are basically the same as you can see. There's only one small area for car's but it's protected by trees and poles so the pedestrians still feel safe. The whole square is being used for pedestrians and on the side people have shelter from the high rise buildings and they can sit and relax over there. The building edges are quite high on both sides.



Section B-B

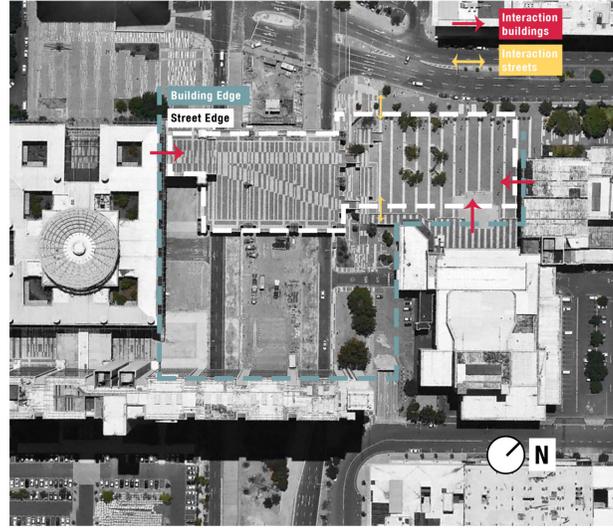
The building and street edge are exactly the same in this section. The buildings on both sides are also quite high. This provides shelter from the sun and views. The square run down a bit. You do notice this when you walk on it but it isn't a very big deal.

Artscape Square



Edges

The Artscape square is a shattered square with no clear edges at all. It opens up to the top and on the left, right and bottom side there are building 'edges'. The square is half lifted above the busy streets. So the street isn't the main factor of the edge but it's the grill that prevent you from falling down on the street. The other part of the square is on the top enclosed by the street which forms a edge. And on the bottom and right side enclosed by the buildings. The edges are closed by a grill and by a pavement who will protect you from the streets.



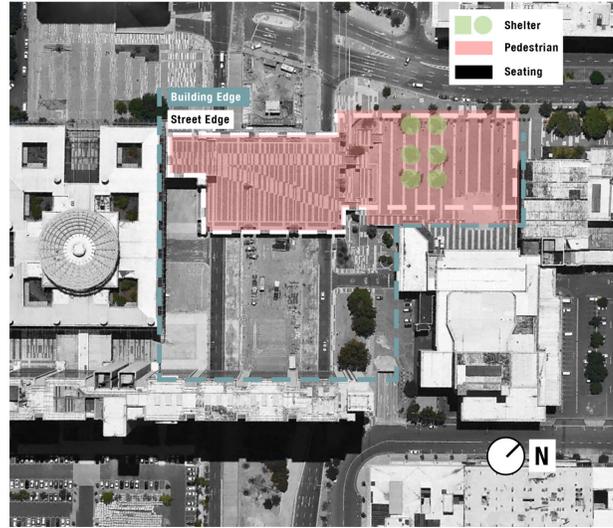
Relationship

The relationship with the buildings and the streets are very marginal. There are only three places where the buildings interact with the square. And those are all quite far from each other, what doesn't help the square become a walkable square. It is even worse with the street edge. On the top lower side you can enter the square from the pavement on the whole side. Then there's a small passage on the bottom side. But at the top deck of the square there's only the relationship with the bottom part of the square. So basically there's no interaction at all with the streets surrounding the square. The only reason you have to be on this square is if you need to be in the buildings surrounding it. Otherwise this square is unused as no one has a reason to be on it.



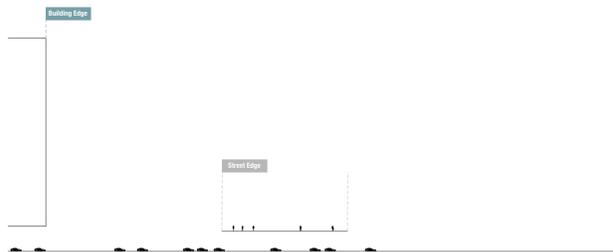
Surfaces

The relationships with the surrounding weren't that good but if you look at the surfaces it's even getting worse. There are only very kil stones who only look good at the drawings of the architect. There are no trees, no seating facilities or shelter. They've played with the colour of the stones so people know where to go. what isn't so hard because there are only three options. The scale is very overdone and there is no feel of nature at all. If you look at picture 4 where there are some rare trees, you can see immediately that people are going to sit there. But if you look at picture 2 nobody is even thinking about staying there.



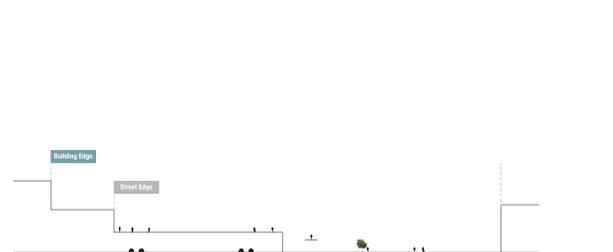
Pedestrians

As you see the diagram you might think this square is quite pedestrian friendly and walkable. And while this is the case, there are no pedestrians at all. Because for people to use the space they need shelter and seating. And they forgot to provide those in the square. There are only six trees with a bit of seating around it, but it's nothing compared to the scale of the square.



Section A-A

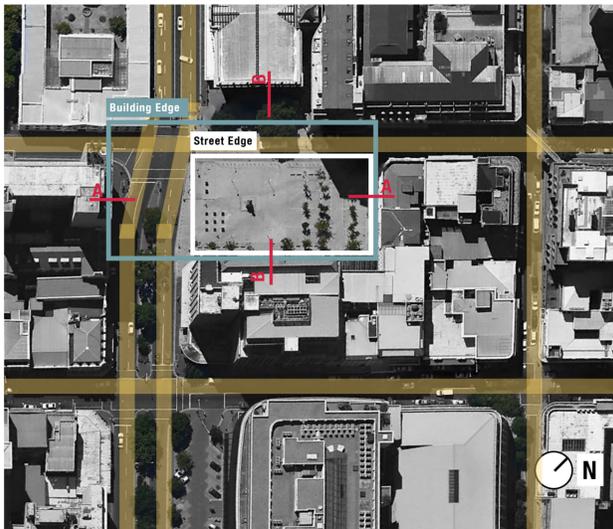
The square is lifted from the ground above the roadway. So it's enclosed by a grill and you can't easily enter the square. The building edge is far away from it on one side and on the other side there isn't even a building edge. Well there is but it's really too far away. So the view you have from the square consists of buildings and cars. No nature, no exciting places and no restaurants.



Section B-B

On the left there is the one building that has the interaction with the lifted part of the square. Here there is a slightly more clear building edge but there is still no clarity. You can see the one tree on the square where people can sit.

Church Square



Edges

Church square is addressed by two streets who enclosing it. There is one busy street on the left and a calm one on the top. On the right and bottom side the square is addressed by the buildings. So the square opens up to the top and left side and is closed to the other sides. This provides shelter and creates an intimate feeling. The square is recently renovated so it's very exciting to see how they did it and if they've succeeded in creating a walkable and pedestrian friendly square.



Relationship

As we've already seen the relationships with the building and street are very important for a square. The Church square has enough of both. It opens up at the top and left side but also has enough interaction with the buildings surrounded by it. The top street is experienced very pedestrian friendly but even the one on the left side is very safe for pedestrians. They applied a couple of very smart tricks to accomplish this as we can see at the surfaces.



Surfaces

To provide safety for the square and protect it from the busy roads they've protected it with poles. As you can see on picture 1 and 4. This is a very smart way because now people can still walk in without disturbance but at the same time they do feel safe. Again they've made use of natural stone for the whole square which gives it a warm feeling. There are a lot of trees planted. They're not so big yet but you can see they've thought about it. Also using colours for the lines on the road (picture 1 and 2) helps for the safety for the pedestrians and supports the walkability of the square.



Pedestrians

This square is a really good example of a square doing it right. There is plenty of pedestrian space. But unlike the artscape square this time the pedestrian space is activated by providing shelter in the form of trees and by providing seating. The shelter is provide across the whole square while the shelter concentrate itself at the building edge.



Section A-A

In the section it becomes clear that the buildings provides shelter and the street has a very soft edge. The building on the left has a private courtyard but it does provides trees which address the square in a good way. The whole square is accessible for pedestrians and only the side for cars.



Section B-B

As you can see clearly here the road on the left doesn't have a huge separation from the square. It's all been done in a very subtle way. That's why it feels more like a whole. Everything connects very well with each other. The city planners did a good job on this one.