



WELCOME

This walk is an ideal blend of architecture, culture and nature. Admire the fine houses, relax in the city park, and be sure to step inside one of the many museums. Remember during your walk that the churches are only open in the morning. And don't forget to take a photograph in the country's largest market square!

Any questions or comments?

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1 Grote Markt (Market Square)

You're standing in the largest market square in the country. The square stretches from the statue known as 'Het Woord' (The Word) to Onze-Lieve-Vrouwerk (the Church of Our Lady). The market was our gift from the Countess of Flanders, Margaret of Constantinople, on condition that it should remain undeveloped and undivided. Its 3.19 hectares of space provide ample room for events of all kinds. The weekly market has been held here every Thursday morning, 'sdonderdags voor den noenen' ('Thursdays before noon') since 1513. The market has become a meeting place. The Grote Markt in Sint-Niklaas is one of the few places in the world where hot air balloons can take off from the centre of the city. Welcome to Sint-Niklaas, the ballooning city!

Tip!

The Vredfeesten (Peace Festivities) are held here on the first weekend in September. Then as many as 60 hot air balloons in the craziest shapes and colours take off from the square.



2 Stadhuis (Town Hall)

The town hall of Sint-Niklaas one of the most impressive buildings in the Grote Markt, was erected in 1876 and opened in 1878 after its predecessor went up in flames. Flanking the belfry tower stand the two majestic flights of stairs that give access to the building. Four sculpted seated lions embrace the city's coat of arms. Feel free to step inside and take a look around! To the left of the town hall stands St Nicholas, the city's patron saint, but we'll have more to say about him later.



Tip!

Enjoy a free organ recital at the church every Thursday morning.



3 Sint-Nicolaaskerk (Church of St Nicholas)

Popularly known as 'daa keirk' ('the old church'). Built from 1262, this church marked the founding of our city. The church survived the Iconoclasm of 1566 and a severe fire in 1690. It is open to the public every morning. Pay special attention to the magnificent stained glass windows inside.



4 5 6 Parochiehuis (Parish Hall), Cipierage (Prison Guardroom), Postgebouw (Post Office) and Landhuis (Mansion House)

Close by the church you will find a row of four handsome buildings. The first of these is the Parochiehuis. As the name suggests, this was the old town hall. It can be recognised by the statue of patron saint Nicholas at the top of the facade. Erected in 1663-1664 by Lucas Faydherbe.

To the right of this building stands the Cipierage, the old city prison. Can you identify all the coats of arms on the facade?

Further along you'll see the post office and the Landhuis. The Landhuis was originally built as a meeting place for the leaders of the Land Van Waas (Waasland). Recently this historic building has taken on a new lease of life.



8 The two countesses

We now cross in the direction of Nieuwstraat. Along the way, meet the two founders of our city and market, sisters Margaret and Johanna, who look back over their achievements. You'll find them in a contemporary version on the wooden esplanade. The perfect spot for a selfie!

9 Broederschool (Brothers' School)

Sint-Niklaas is an art deco city; you will find fine buildings all along the route. This school, a little jewel run by a religious order, was built by August Waterschoot and his son Leander in 1932. The interior is even more impressive, but is not always open to the public.

Tip!

Ask for the Art Deco walk at the tourism office and discover all the Art Deco buildings throughout the city.



10 Castrohof

A delightful green space where events are regularly organised. The little castle which stands here was once known as the 'Exaerdekenshof', after its founder, Jan Van Exaerde, who had it built in 1626 in the Flemish Renaissance style. The ideal spot for a picnic or a game of kubb.

11 De Wafelenbak (Baking Waffles)

Did you know that cartoonist and honorary citizen Marc Sleen grew up and learned to draw in Sint-Niklaas? On the wall, you might recognise the traditional waffle baking scene that features at the end of his cartoon strips. His cartoon 'Het B-Gevaar' is about the city of Sint-Niklaas.

12 Het Woord (The Word)

This work was created by Romanian sculptor Idel Ianchelevici for the 1958 World Expo. The bronze statue stands five meters high and weighs 2 tons. In 1988 it was donated by the non-profit organisation Kunst in de Stad (art in the city) and erected on this spot in the market square.

13 Romain De Vidts park

Welcome to the Romain De Vidts park, named after a former mayor of the city. If you look carefully you might even run into him! The park is a place to unwind, picnic, walk and play. Feel free to wander around and discover the Reynaert bench, war memorials, beautiful ponds and fountains, with the occasional duck waddling around.



Tip!

Explore the park's play forest, where the squirrel lives with his friends. Sint-Niklaas is aiming to create a child-friendly city with the "9100Speelstad" playground.

DISCOVER SINT-NIKLAAS CITY WALK 5 KM



14 15 Kiosk & Kasteel Walburg (Bandstand and Walburg Castle)

Did you know that this bandstand used to stand at the corner of the Grote Markt? The perfect spot for family snapshots. Close by the bandstand you'll find the Walburg Castle. This moated castle once served as a textile factory and brewery. A delightful spot surrounded by greenery.

Tip!

Did you know that the knight William of Waelwyck had this castle built in 1550 and named it after his beloved Walburgis?

16 Sint-Nicolaasplein (St Nicholas' Square)

Referred to by young people as "t plein" and as "achter daa keirk" ("behind the old church") by the older generation. The many cafés, bars and restaurants make this square a pleasant place to linger in summer and winter. In summer, lively events are held here with weekly dancing and singing. The go-to spot where young people meet up to get the weekend started. Many locals have met their first loves "achter daa keirk".

17 Houtbriel

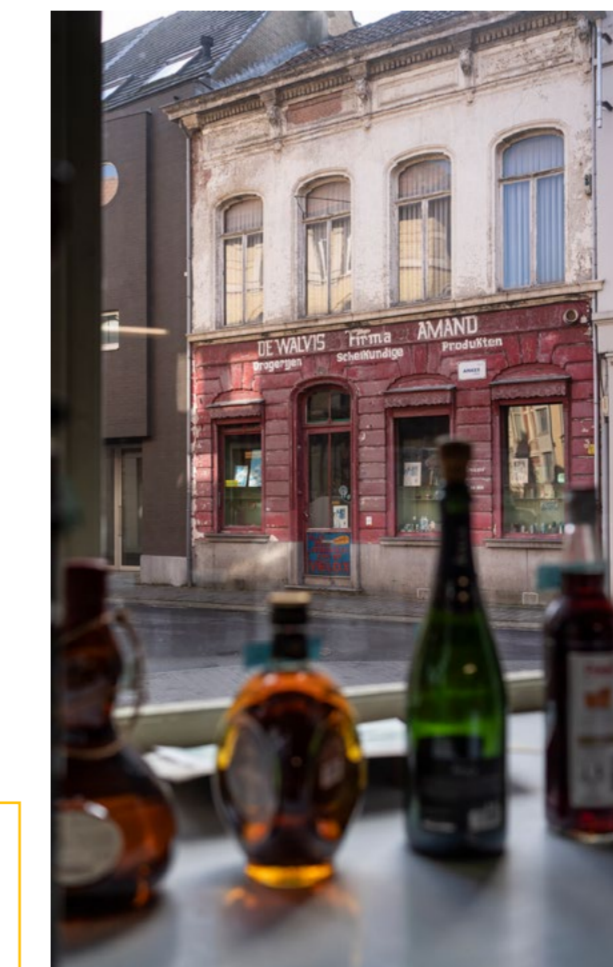
This square is named for the wood (hout) that was once traded here. It dates back to the 16th century and has at various times been known as the Beestenmarkt (livestock market), Varkensmarkt (pig market), Groentemarkt (vegetable market) and Kardinaal Mercierplaats (Cardinal Mercier Place). A bluestone monument to the fallen of the First and Second World Wars stands in the square. It is now an attractive spot full of restaurants and cafés. Linger a moment to admire the handsome buildings.

18 19 De Walvis drugstore and De Clercq wine and liquor store

The first crossroads stands between two fine historic buildings with a charming story attached. To the right is the red facade of De Walvis (The Whale), at first sight a shop with a history. Both the shop front and the whole interior are protected.

Opposite (on the left) is the De Clercq family wine and liquor store, famous throughout the region. Leo De Clercq, now a striking man in his eighties, has been running this business since 1954. His grandfather Alphonse De Clercq, who started a liquor business in 1880 in nearby Walburgstraat, appointed the architect Waterschoot to erect this commercial building in 1905. The corner building occupies the former site of the 17th-century inn "Den Anker".

Did you know that the store has remained virtually unchanged since its opening in 1919?



20 21 22 Museum site

The Mercator garden also has something to offer. The large red play equipment strikes the eye at once. You can also see the impressive Huis Janssens, sold to the city in 1907 on the condition that it be used as a cultural destination. Since then the Royal Society of Antiquaries of the Land van Waas has been based here, and it has been fully restored. Alongside this building stands the Mercator Museum, the museum of cartography, which focuses on Gerard Mercator and his atlases, globes and maps.

At the rear of the park you can reach the city museum, the SteM. The Museum houses a permanent collection on the origins of the city and region and the Knitting Workshop. It also frequently mounts exciting exhibitions. Well worth a visit!

Did you know that every seagoing ship still carries maps on board based on the Mercator projection? Even GPS navigation derives from this!



Oh! KOM MAAR EENS...



Compilation, final editing and coordination: tourist office Sint-Niklaas
Layout and printing: Z-CARD®
Translation: LS Translation
First print March 2024

Printed on 100% recycled paper

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Oh! KOM MAAR EENS...





23 Regentieplein

What a delightful square! This small green park is surrounded by handsome mansions and splendid restaurants and cafés, and was once the centre of the then new Station district. The large statue in the centre of the square is a monument to Major Benedikt Rolliers, who fought in the revolution of 1830. We turn into Prins Albertstraat. Art nouveau has clearly made its mark on this street. It's impossible to miss the amazing buildings at numbers 47, 45, 43 and 20.

Tip!

24 in the side street you will also find the Pipe and Tobacco Museum, home to the biggest cigar in the world!



26 Stationsstraat (Station Street)

Welcome to Sint-Niklaas' main shopping street. In the pedestrianised Stationsstraat, you will find a wide range of shops, restaurants and cafés. Stroll past the fine statues, fountains, terraces, benches and greenery.

27 The Salons

This monumental neo-classical mansion, built in 1928 for textile manufacturer Edmond Meert, has been owned by the city since 1984. Every year, this building is transformed into the "House of the Saint", and Saint Nicholas takes up residence for three weeks. You can visit his kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and so on.

28 Handsome facades

As you stroll down the street, be sure to look up! Many of these buildings have handsome historical facades, number 35 being the absolute best.



29 Convent of the Josephinian sisters

The impressive school adjoins the former convent of the Josephinian sisters. The monastic community was founded in 1755 with the aim of taking in poor orphan girls and teaching them handicrafts and spinning. Pay special attention to the magnificent architecture.

30 31 D'Academie Beeld (Fine Arts Academy) and Stadsschouwburg (Municipal Theatre)

Along this street of culture, you'll find first D'Academie Beeld and then the Stadsschouwburg. We are now in the Paul Snoekstraat, named for one of our country's best-known poets and prose writers and a native of Sint-Niklaas. And just a little further on you will come across his teacher Anton Van Wilderode, whom he met at the Sint-Jozef-Klein-Seminarie (St. Joseph Minor Seminary).

32 Collegekerk (College Church)

Next to Anton Van Wilderode, you will see the neoclassical facade of St Joseph's Minor Seminary, also known as 'the college'. Adjacent to this is the austere 17th-century baroque Sint-Antoniuskerk (St Anthony's Church) or 'the college church'.

25 Casino Park

This renovated park was taken in hand by floral designer Daniel Ost. The park adjoins the Casino Concert Hall. When the Casino was founded in 1852, the société anonyme de musique et d'horticulture had two objectives: the promotion of music and horticulture. Both music and horticulture continue to flourish here even today. Daniel Ost transformed the park into a pleasure garden as in the early days.

► We continue walking down the shopping street.

► If you'd prefer a quiet neighbourhood, turn right down Casinostraat and stroll past d'Academie Beeld and the Stadsschouwburg (the fine art academy and municipal theatre) and pay a visit to Anton Van Wilderode beside the College Church. We will rejoin the walk later.



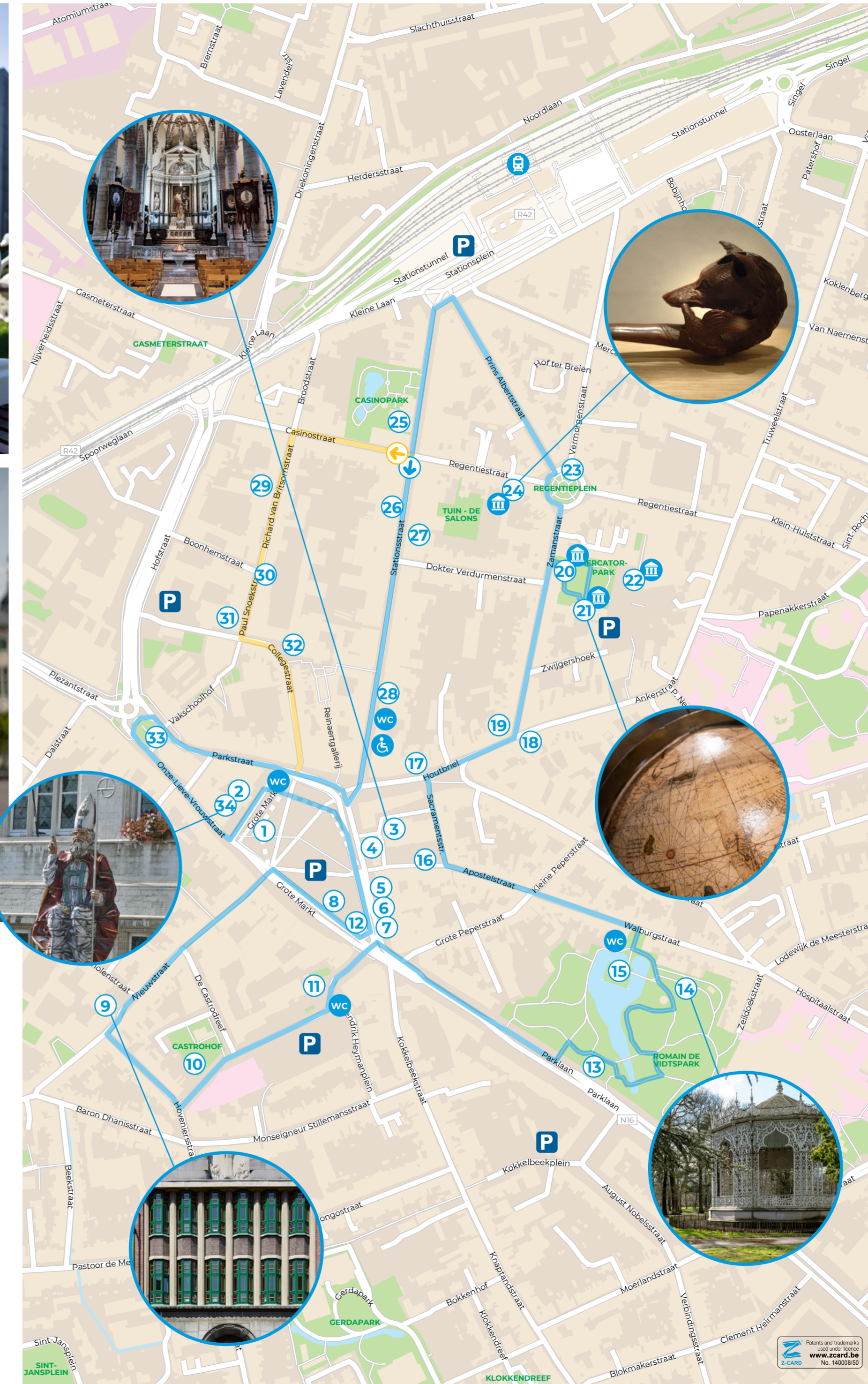
33 Onze-Lieve-Vroukerk (Church of Our Lady)

The pride of Sint-Niklaas, built between 1841 and 1844, but only completed in 1896 when the gilded statue was erected at the top. The church is open every morning. Be sure to step inside and discover the Byzantine-inspired interior with Gothic features. It's no ordinary church! The magnificent murals make it very special. It has been a protected monument since 1973.

34 Sinterklaasbeeld (St Nicholas Statue)

Our walk now takes us to the right past the side of the church and the town hall. We end up by our old friend Sinterklaas: Saint Nicholas of Myra, the city's patron saint after whom Sint-Niklaas is named. He's waiting to wave you goodbye, for we have reached the end of our walk. It has taken you past some of the top sights in Sint-Niklaas. Feel free to seek out your favourite spot and savour your discovery of this beautiful city.

The church is sometimes popularly known as the new church or 'Marja Vergult' after the gilded statue of Mary. This church was built after Sint-Nicolaaskerk. The gilded statue of Mary stands some six metres high, as high as the entrance gate.



POINTS OF INTEREST

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 - 3 Sint-Nicolaaskerk (Church of St Nicholas)
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 - 5 Ciperage (Prison Guardroom)
 - 6 Postgebouw (Post Office)
 - 7 Landhuis (Mansion House)
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 - 9 De Broederschool (Brothers' School)
 - 10 Castrohof
 - 11 De Wafelenbak (Baking Waffles)
 - 12 Het Woord (The Word)
 - 13 Romain De Vidtspark
 - 14 Kiosk (Bandstand)
 - 15 Kasteel Walburg (Walburg Castle)
 - 16 Sint-Nicolaasplein (St Nicholas' Square)
 - 17 Houtbriel
 - 18 Walvis drugstore
 - 19 De Clercq wine and liquor store
 - 20 Huis Janssens
 - 21 Mercatormuseum
 - 22 SteM
 - 23 Regentieplein
 - 24 Pijp- en Tabaksmuseum (Pipe & Tobacco Museum)
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 - 26 Stationsstraat (Station Street)
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 - 30 D'Academie Beeld (Fine Arts Academy)
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 - 32 Collegekerk (College Church)
 - 33 Onze-Lieve-Vroukerk (Church of Our Lady)
 - 34 Sinterklaasbeeld (St Nicholas Statue)
- Museum
 Parking
 Toilets
 Railway Station
 Folding buggies and wheelchairs are available to hire at number 11a.

There is also a public disabled toilet and changing table for your comfort and convenience.