

5

CIVIC STRUCTURE



CIVIC STRUCTURE

AMSTERDAM

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Amsterdam's civic structure can be defined by the streets and canals that break the city apart. While these linear elements bisect land and visually parcel out the city, they effectively connect the city's distinct neighborhoods, buildings, and squares. Without this vast infrastructure network, Amsterdam's most compelling character element would cease to exist.

The fan-like shape of Amsterdam speaks to its development, as it has grown from a tiny fishing village to the present metropolis in the Netherlands. This structure for growth has enabled the city center to remain a focal point, with canals and roads stemming towards outer areas. While way-finding in the older neighborhoods is not easy, the primary radial and perimeter roads and canals give Amsterdam an underlying structure that is simple and clear.

At the focal point of this radiating city is the train station, connecting Amsterdam to the airport and many cities beyond. This major building is a source of great activity and movement. With such activity, it



makes sense that this building is located at a central point, accessible to many different parts of the city.

Dam Square is also a major hub, located at the centermost part of the city, and linking Amsterdam's histori-



cal past to the present state of the city. Finally, the Museum Quarter is an important area, both in terms of historical significance and the current activities it provides.

Although the Amstel River has been channeled into a variety of dif-



ferent canals, the major fork of this river passes directly through the city center. This river, along with the canal offshoots it creates, becomes an important part of the city's identity. It also provides a link to Amsterdam's rich trade-centered history.

