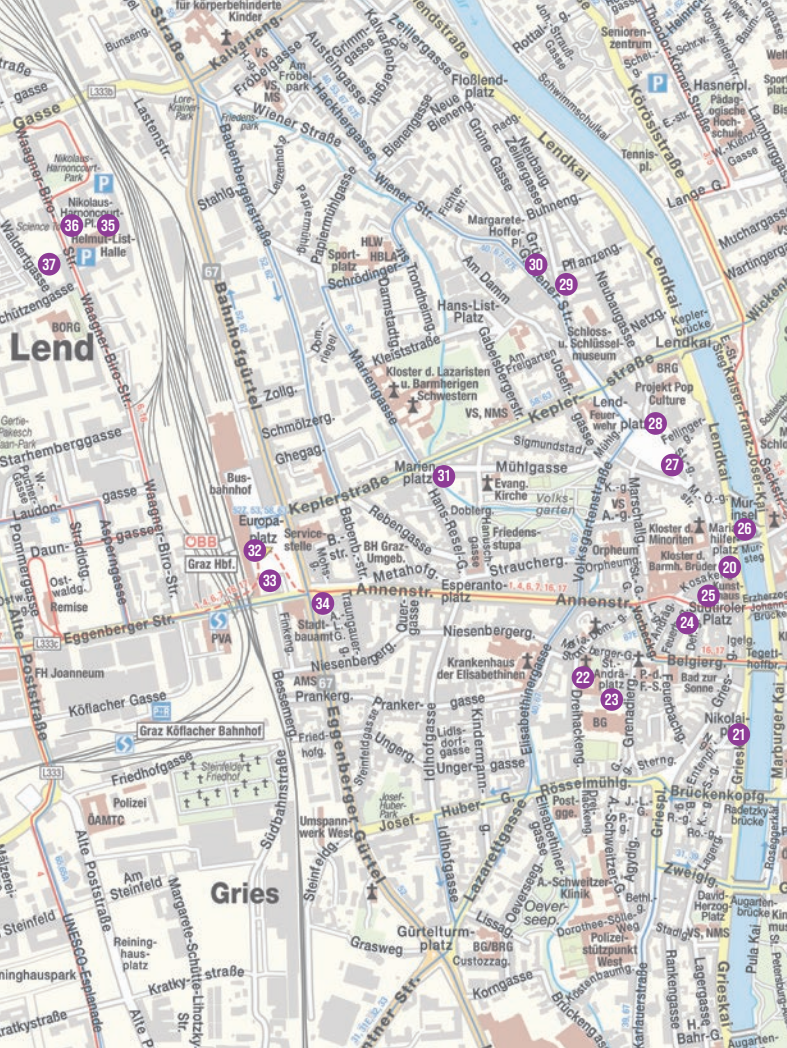




TOUR 2: GRIES & LEND

 Lines 1, 4, 6, 16, 7, 17

How a run-down artisan quarter is reinventing itself since 2003, the year in which Graz was European Capital of Culture

No longer bathed in red light, the outskirts on the right bank of the Mur – formerly an industrial and working-class district – are now a colourful place. From farmers' markets to haute cuisine and local pubs, there's something here for everyone. In this multicultural and multinational melting pot, spectacular architecture and fashionable residential quarters sit alongside the small-scale idyllic charm of the suburbs.

20 KUNSTHAUS

Südtiroler Platz 2 | Peter Cook, Colin Fournier (2003), J. B. Withalm (1848)

 1, 4, 6, 7 – Südtiroler Platz/Kunsthaus

Whatever you choose to call this deep-blue, otherworldly structure, it rapidly became the city's most famous building, a second landmark. The "Bubble" rests on a glass plinth, appearing to float weightlessly. Its outermost "skin" consists of more than a thousand uniquely curved acrylic panels, which are illuminated from behind. And "nozzles" that are designed to bring soft light from the northern side to the upper level. Highly functional at its core: two exhibition levels, accessed via sloping walkways, are situated one above the other. The gallery of the upper, domed space leads to the "Needle", a city loggia made of glass. It provides the visual link between the "Bubble" and the listed building next door, the *Eiserne Haus*. Its cast-iron construction and flat roof were a source of great amazement as far back as 1848.

21 OFFICE BUILDING NIKOLAIPLATZ

Nikolaipplatz 5 | Atelier Thomas Pucher, Bramberger Architects (2010)

In an age of plurality, the demand for new buildings within existing stock can only be met through the highest architectural quality. This steel structure achieves it: built to fit precisely atop an existing underground garage, it stands out with confidence in a contemporary design, defined by beautiful detailing and a sculpture-like aesthetic.

GRIESPLATZ

During the day, the central square of Graz's most populous district is bustling with people between the bus stations and goods from all over the world. In the evening, the bustling daytime activity switches over seamlessly to the area's nightlife – with neighbouring clubs, kebab shops and unique venues, such as the listed Postgarage. Both the controversial urban redevelopment on the site of the former *Rösselmühle* and the planned redesign of *Griesplatz* reflect the political will to create a liveable setting for the area's vibrant activity. What might such efforts look like? This can be seen in the neighbouring Lend district.



21



23



Tip: From the outside alone, the façade makes it clear that the (22) **Parish Church St. Andrä** (not shown) was shaped by unconventional thinking. Step inside and discover how the former parish priest turned the need to replace the church windows into something remarkable. As an art historian, he was able to enlist several artist friends to contribute to the embellishment of the devotional space, originally built in 1627 and repeatedly renovated. Examples include Otto Zitko's powerful spatial drawing in the Dominican Chapel (2003), or Manfred Erjautz's poetic work in the baptistry, which makes an invisible force perceptible.

23 HOUSING COMPLEX GRENAIERGASSE

Grenadiergasse 14 | Machné Architekten (2019)

H 16, 17 – Bad zur Sonne/Stadtbibliothek

Surprising. This is the best way to describe the building that rises above the courtyard of the former barracks dating from 1812. The four storeys of the new residential building rest on solid concrete columns that also dominate the space below. They open up views from the street onto the historic structures around the building, which is one reason why this design won the EU-wide competition. The revitalised building, which served as a student hall of residence as early as 1945, is characterised by its open arcaded walkways – a typical feature of Graz's inner courtyards.

24 RESIDENZ ZUM SILBERNEN ELEFANTEN

Südtirolerplatz 13 | Günther Domenig, Gerhard Wallner (2010)

H 1, 4, 6, 7 – Südtiroler Platz/Kunsthau

The former trade union headquarters – converted into a mixed-use building with residential, office and retail spaces, and complemented by a multi-storey residential building in a quiet courtyard setting. The special feature: two rooftop storeys designed as a sculpture, glinting in silver, sleek and aerodynamic like the body of a sports car.



25 HAUS DER ARCHITEKTUR AT PALAIS THINNFELD (not shown)

Mariahilferstraße 2 | ifau und jesko Fezer (2007)

H 1, 4, 6, 7 – Südtiroler Platz/Kunsthhaus

26 ISLAND IN THE MUR

Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Kai, Lendkai | Vito Acconci (2003)

Created in 2003 as a temporary “eye-catcher”, it has since become permanent – an artificial, shell-shaped island, connected to both banks by solid bridges. Its complex steel-tube construction serves both as a dome roof for the futuristic-looking cafe and as a concave structure for an open-air grandstand. The *Murinsel* holds up well against flooding, as its bridges are flexibly mounted and the floating bodies are fixed in place by a post. Island or ship? That is the question.

LENDPLATZ (not shown)

Few districts have experienced such dynamic development in the past two decades as Lend, once characterised by blue-collar workers and industry. The opening of the Kunsthhaus during Graz’s 2003 European Capital of Culture year is considered a turning point. This new era is also evident at *Lendplatz*:



Renovations and new builds with names like **(27) “Goldener Engel”** (Pentaplan, 2012) or **(28) “Schwarze Rose”** (not shown, Innocad, 2008) enrich the existing fabric around the square, which was redesigned in 2021 (Norbert Müller). The traffic-calmed zone to the south leads to the popular farmers’ market and the many popular pubs and eateries surrounding the market. And although traces of the former red-light district are only apparent at second glance, a vibrant nightlife and lively atmosphere still characterise today’s trendy district.

29 LENDHOTEL (not shown)

Grüne Gasse 2 | Lam Architektur (2017)

30 HOUSING COMPLEX PRINZESSIN VERANDA

Wiener Straße 20 | Pentaplan (2017)

The entrance and outdoor areas of the house – generous loggias and balconies – as if made for a princess? At its heart lies the oval, finely crafted atrium with its entrances, while loggias, serving as summer rooms, give structure to the façade of refined white exposed concrete. The floor plan follows the boundaries of the site. On the raised ground floor, bicycles “occupy” a space that, like its neighbouring units, could just as easily house a shop, an office or a café – signalling a shift in mindset.



31

31 HOUSING AND COMMERCIAL BUILDING RONDO

Marienplatz 1 | Markus Pernthaler (2008)

Ⓜ 1, 4, 6, 16, 7, 17 – Esperantoplatz/Arbeiterkammer/tim

The first thing that catches the eye is a strikingly curved, sloping building shell made of plastic multi-wall sheets. It conceals the spacious entrances, which are planted with shrubs and trees, leading to offices, apartments and studios distributed across seven storeys above the ground floor. The boomerang-shaped residential and commercial complex stands on the site once occupied by the Graz *Marienmühle*. The living areas, featuring large windows and wide, open-plan balconies, open out into the garden, through which the mill stream still flows. What has emerged from an urban problem area now combines high residential and recreational value with a distinctly metropolitan atmosphere.

EUROPAPLATZ Ⓜ 1, 4, 6, 16, 7, 17 – Hauptbahnhof

Its name says it all, as all railway station squares in Europe's capitals are similar: a diverse urban fabric, with a few prominent hotels, bustling activity and heavy traffic. But there are still new things to discover for those who remember the square from before. The busy junction has been made less congested, as the trams now dive downwards before they reach it. This has allowed the construction of spacious, naturally lit platforms, allowing passengers to make it to their train in time.



33

32 MAIN STATION Ⓜ 1, 4, 6, 16, 7, 17 – Hauptbahnhof

Europaplatz 2-10 | Christoph Zechner, Martin Zechner (2003)

It has been widely accepted, even made popular, since it was renovated in a cool, technoid architectural style and expanded to include a small shopping centre. The large hall, which was preserved as a monument to the 1950s, has been especially popular with travellers since it was given a striking new interior by the artist Peter Kogler during the year of Capital of Culture. It was so well received that people voted for the installation to remain after 2003. The redesign of the platforms and the forecourt was both completed in 2015. Opinions differ on the oversized ring-shaped canopy, which now obscures both the entrance to the hall and the clock.

33 HOTEL DANIEL Ⓜ 1, 4, 6, 16, 7, 17 – Hauptbahnhof

Europaplatz 1 | Georg Lippert (1955), Werner Aisslinger (2005, 2014)

This typical post-war building has become a must-see after its recent renovation, even for the people of Graz. Its motto: a return to the retro style of the design-savvy 1950s. The rooms: understatedly chic. If you can't spend the night here, we recommend visiting the espresso bar with its pastel-coloured coffee tableware – just like the night-time light effects in the loggias of the main façade.

34 HOTEL RADISSON (not shown) Ⓜ 1, 4, 6, 16, 7, 17 – Hauptbahnhof

Annenstraße 67 | Atelier Thomas Pucher (2024)



32



35 + 36



37

35 HELMUT-LIST-HALL 6, 16 – Dreierschützengasse/Helmut-List-Halle

Wagner-Biro-Straße 98a | Markus Pernthaler (2003)

New life for a former locomotive production hall. A flexible event space was required, in which both old and new music sound equally good. A challenging design task, which was resolved in an exemplary and integrative manner. The central part of the hall was replaced by a new concert hall, a double-shell box with solid timber cladding. In contrast, the delicate steel trusses have been preserved in the foyer, which has been transformed into an airy break area.

THE SMART CITY 6, 16 – Smart City/Peter-Tunner-Gasse/tim

There was a time when every major European city that wanted to keep up with the times planned a “Smart City” – energy-optimised urban planning combined with technological innovation. The result can be seen first-hand in the west of Graz. The development began with the Helmut-List-Hall and the **(36) Science Tower** (Markus Pernthaler, 2017), which works well as a landmark but is not economically viable as an office building. The residential buildings themselves – block developments with large inner courtyards and a central building adorned with containers – appears haphazard and rather uninviting. One redeeming advantage: the new tram line through the district was already in place when the first residents moved in. The most recent project to open, in 2019, was the district’s new **(37) Elementary School** (Architektur Alexa Zahn).