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Aerial view of part of the city-centre of Amsterdam.
(Photo: KLM Aerocarto)

FOREWORD

Interest in Dutch architecture extends far beyond the borders of the Netherlands. Down through the centuries, travellers have been astonished by the quality and versatility of architecture in the Netherlands. In the professional literature abroad there is regular interest in both contemporary and the older Dutch architecture.

The policy of the Dutch government with regard to architecture is aimed at creating favourable conditions for the production of architectural quality. This goal is expressed in the Memorandum, Space for Architecture which appeared in April 1991. The Memorandum examines the two pillars on which the architectural policy of the Dutch government can be said to rest: accentuation of the exemplary function of the national government, and improvement of the architectural climate.

This booklet offers a concise overview of architecture in the Netherlands both now and in the past. Chapter 1 deals with the forms of the Netherlands, Chapter 2 looks at the town planning. In Chapter 3 there are biographies of a number of Dutch architects. Finally, some practical information is given, such as a short description of a few important institutions in the field of architecture and the preservation of historic buildings, and a brief list of English language literature.

The booklet has been written bij Hilde de Haan and Ids Haagsma, authors and freelance journalists in the field of architecture.

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Planning

The town planner Cornelis van Eesteren* (1897-1988), once chairman of CIAM, the International Congresses on modern architecture which were held since 1928, liked to begin his lectures at conferences abroad with a slide of his native village, Kinderdijk. Invariably, it was an aerial photo on which a row of windmills could be seen. 'These are the surroundings I was born into,' he used to say, 'typical Dutch surroundings, because almost everything is the work of the human hand. The waterways, the polders, the villages and the towns.'

Dutch landscape near Kinderdijk, birthplace of town planner C. van Eesteren. (Photo: KLM Aerocarto)

The Netherlands

This slide showing Kinderdijk's famous windmills was more than mere homage to his native village, or a piece of folklore to catch the attention of the international audience. It was above all an attempt by Van Eesteren to confront his listeners with the fact that for him, as a Dutchman, planning the environment was in his blood. 'Everything is the work of the human hand', Van Eesteren was fond of saying with a certain dramatic emphasis. No doubt many of his listeners must have thought that it was natural that he, a Dutchman who had grown up amidst all those works of man, should be one of those responsible for laying the basis of the CIAM guidelines (such as separation of functions and light, air and space for every inhabitant), which were to so decisively influence twentieth century town planning.

A country where there was already a system of dikes by the year 1000, where by 1100 windmills were already turning to create polders, and keep them dry, and where even in those times there was a resourceful, democratised system to manage and maintain all those dikes and polders – it is natural for such a country to produce great town planners. Or at least, that is what you would expect. But the strange thing is that this country did not have a strong tradition of town planning. When Van Eesteren, after his architectural studies, decided to devote himself to town planning, he had to go to Paris because this subject was not taught in the Netherlands.

Nevertheless, by the middle of the seventeenth century the Netherlands was becomingly increasingly urbanised; almost a third of the population lived in approximately 150 towns, a unique situation in the Europe of that time.

A country full of towns but without town planners.

* The * indicates that a full biography of the architect or town planner can be found in Chapter 3, The Architects.

A sixteenth-century map of the northwestern part of the Netherlands (Holland), before draining of lakes and other stretches of water got seriously underway. Compare this map to the current situation on page 4.

The Battle Against The Water

In order to solve this apparent riddle, we have to give a sort of character sketch of the Dutch, who between the ninth and seventeenth centuries had founded a rather remarkable state.

The ongoing battle against the water was ever-present: not only did the sea have to be tamed, the waters of a number of large rivers coming from the interior also had to be brought under control. In building dikes, cooperation was a bitter necessity, because the proverb that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link is nowhere as true as in the taming of water. Again and again this water turned out to be fiercer and more unpredictable than had been thought and the dikes had to be reinforced and raised at dead of night.

Precisely because everybody was supposed to contribute as much as possible if the dikes threatened to give way, it was necessary to ensure that mutual differences of opinion never became decisive. In this country, tolerance has been from the very beginning a question of survival as people knew that sooner or later they would have to stand side by side with their neighbours to hold back the water. The battle against the water forced the inhabitants of this country to get everything organised, and also made it necessary to have a good, and above all, decentralised administration. Besides, with all its ponds, rivers and marshy areas the country was hardly suitable for powerful, big landowners who ran their estates in feudal fashion. And so, at the early stages of Dutch history a great number of small, quite autonomous towns came into being.

Whereas in other European countries the balance of power was held by knights, counts and ruling monarchs, in the Netherlands the power lay with the towns. Towns whose reason for existing was usually based on an increasingly flourishing trade and in which developed a society of self-confident, prosperous burghers. None of the many Dutch towns was founded according to a clear-cut, preconceived plan. They all developed gradually out of smaller settlements where trade was growing constantly until it became necessary to wall in these settlements and make them into fortresses.

The houses in such walled fortresses were mainly of wood as this was a light material suitable for the soft, boggy ground. Stone was only used for the fortress itself, the churches and a few public buildings. In the southern provinces that could be natural stone (generally brought from the nearby Belgian Ardennes), but in the more northern provinces they had to resort to brick, made of fired river clay.

Characteristic Cities

With the growing trade the cities expanded apace and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in particular the towns expanded and the wooden houses made way for brick houses, in which the old wooden skeleton was often incorporated.

The layout of cities like Haarlem, Delft, Leiden, Amsterdam, Alkmaar, and Dordrecht is characterised by a clear organization. There are a number of main streets or main canals and there is generally a central market with a number of smaller markets elsewhere. The townscape is in the first place dominated by the church towers and the towers of some public buildings. Fountains, statues, obelisks, triumphal arches and the like are not to be found in the Dutch towns.

The streets, often somewhat curved, are formed by rows of houses in closed blocks around inner courtyards, which are sometimes communal. They are generally rather small houses, two or three storeys high with some higher warehouses between them. The public buildings are preferably included in those blocks, among the houses. Free-standing palaces or government buildings are rare. Only the churches and in some cases the town hall, are detached, but as a rule these are not surrounded by symmetrical squares with uniform facades (as can be found elsewhere) but by somewhat irregularly formed spaces where the individual burgher's houses are standing shoulder to shoulder to form a shared facade. In comparison with other European cities, what is most noticeable about the early Dutch cities is the lack of grandeur. The national character was not that way inclined, and apart from this, there was hardly any autocracy or nobility who needed outward show.

A sixteenth-century print of Amsterdam, then a fortified town, with a view of the Haarlemmerpoort.

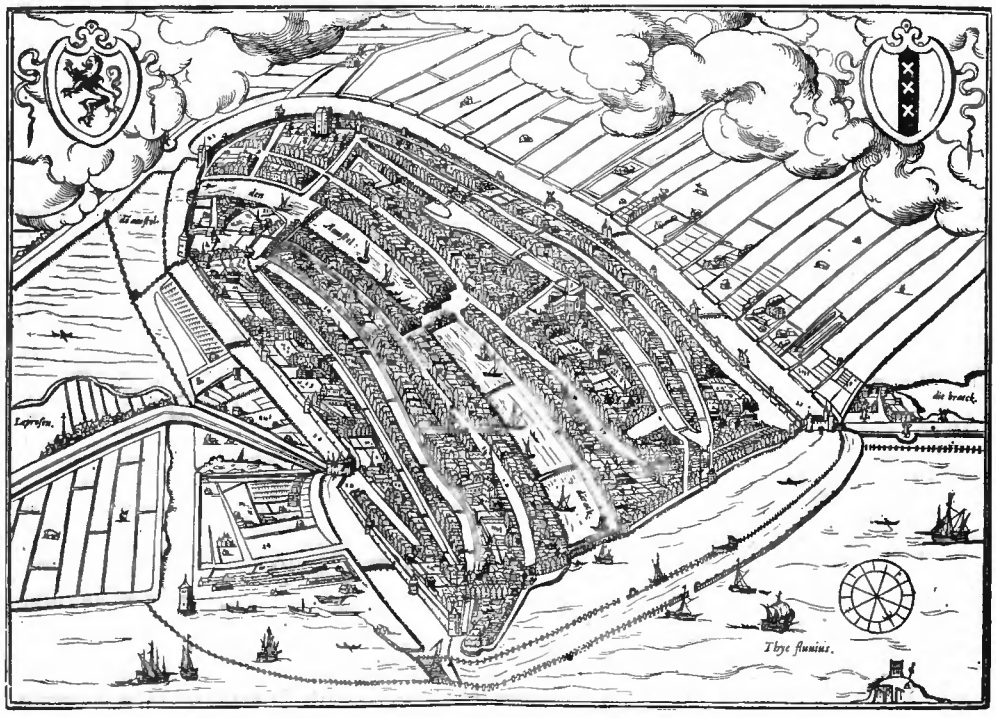
What is also noticeable is that these Dutch cities originally had a spacious layout. There was much open space within the walls, and that was usually out of necessity. Even in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it often happened that cities were besieged, especially during the Eighty Years' War fought by the Republic against Spain, and the open spaces were used as vegetable gardens and pasture land so that the city could feed itself in the event of an extended siege.

Even then, the townscape with its quite rigid allotment must have presented an image of order and neatness. Com-

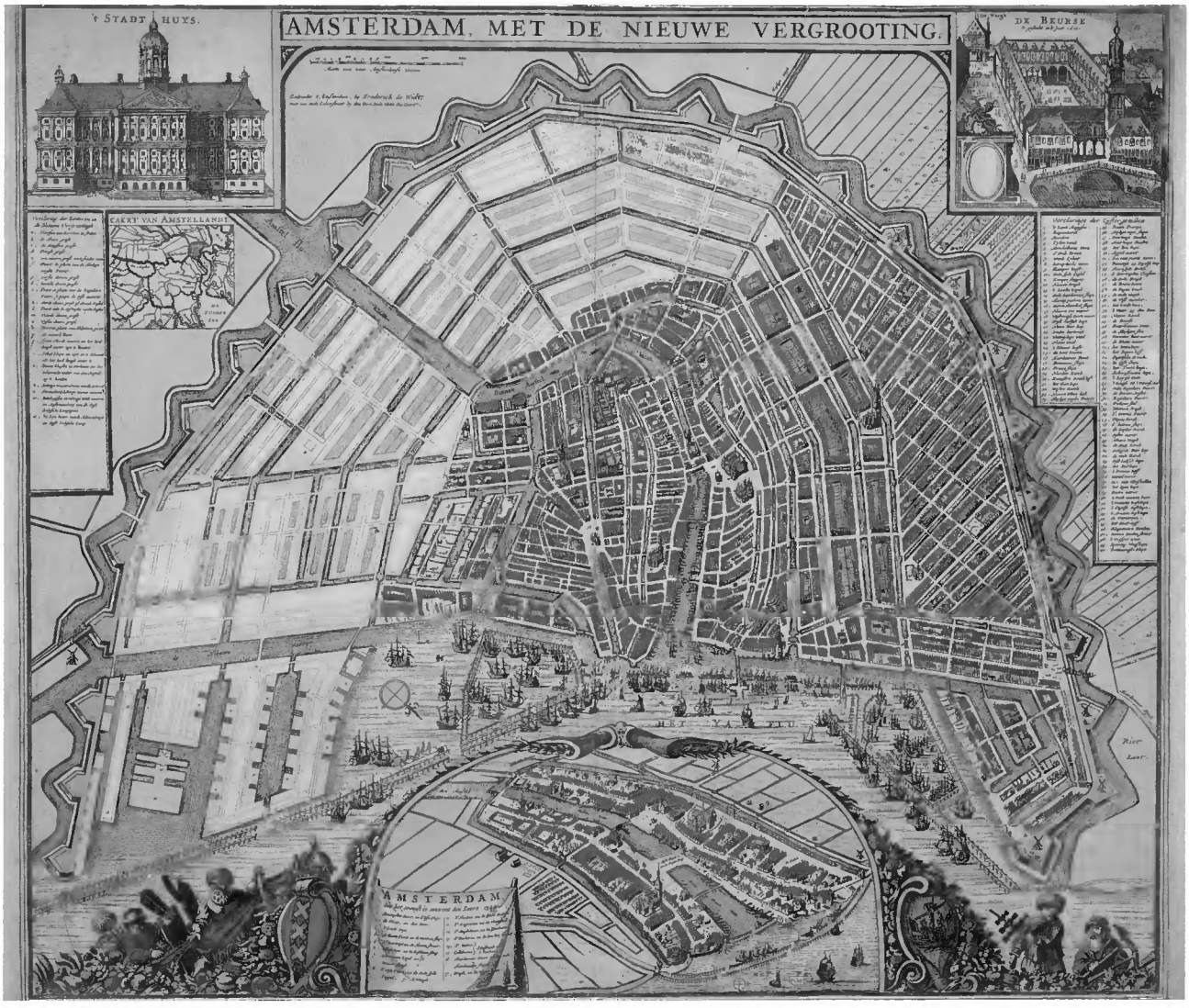
parisons are sometimes drawn with the practical spirit of sailors and shipbuilders: the houses looked like well-maintained ships. No unnecessary frills, ready to withstand heavy weather.
But they could just as well be compared with the dike builders. A dike has to be solid, and hold back the water in a functional manner and nobody in the Netherlands would dream, even after twelve centuries of dike building, of decorating a dike, leaving a dike unfinished or building a dike badly.
Seen from the surrounding landscape, a full-blown Dutch city looked like a fortress. The city was surrounded by a moat and a wall with defensive works set in it, which were usually also the entrance gates to the city. Extending the city was therefore a costly business and could only take place in times of great economic prosperity. In this way, many cities retained their individual character for centuries and in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in particular, when the economy was somewhat slack, the image of the city as seen from outside was unchanged. The expansion of the city took place on the pasture lands and vegetable gardens within the walls and it was during that period that even the space within the closed blocks was used for houses and businesses. In that period, the once spacious Dutch cities became the densely packed brick masses which are still to be seen in many old inner cities.
The cities which were in a position to 'extend' their limits generally did it very spaciously, and in this case the streets of the old city were simply continued into the new terrain.
After a city fire or devastation by the enemy, people merely reconstructed the earlier street pattern, even though new by-laws were often introduced which discouraged the building of wooden houses. Only occasionally was such a catastrophe seized upon in order to give a city a new, improved layout. In 1227, for example, the city of Groningen was set on fire after a siege and afterwards was rebuilt on the basis of a new, and for that time practical pattern. The city of Coevorden was destroyed by the Spanish in 1592 and the rebuilding was seized upon to change the city into a citadel. Between 1597 and 1607 a new city arose with a street plan shaped like a seven-pointed star, each point of which was a bastion. These were exceptions. In their structure, most Dutch cities retained the old historically developed pattern of streets and canals.

Canals

In a country with abundant water like the Netherlands, that water is obviously the most important means of transportation. Every commercial centre found it useful to have a good system of waterways. The most important cities were also built on the water: Amsterdam on the river Amstel, Haarlem on the Spaarne, Delft on the Schie, Deventer on the IJssel, Leiden and Utrecht on the Rhine and Maastricht on the Maas. The city of Groningen (favourably located on a sand ridge) is an exception.
The natural river became the first and most important canal in a city. And it was an obvious step for the city dwellers to supplement the natural waterways with canals they dug themselves. Cities like Amsterdam, Alkmaar, Delft, Leiden, Sneek, Rotterdam and Gouda were soon criss-crossed with a system of canals which made almost every significant warehouse accessible by water, if not at the front then at the back. In extending a city therefore, the old moat was seldom filled in. The water stayed as it was and the old walls or ramparts were replaced by quays, thus creating a broad and spacious canal.
That is very clearly to be seen in the heart of the old city of Amsterdam. From time immemorial, the city had existed as a settlement along the river Amstel with an outlet – the Damrak – into the IJ, which was a large inlet of the inland sea called the Zuiderzee.
Until the second half of the fourteenth century the city was surrounded by a defensive canal, the Oude Zijds Voorburgwal, and this became an inner canal when in 1380/84 the Oude Zijds Achterburgwal was dug. A few years later, with the laying of the Nieuwe Zijds Achterburgwal, this in its turn became an inner canal.
In 1433/54 Amsterdam extended its city boundaries once again and the Singel, the Kloveniersburgwal and the Gelderse Kade were created as a line of defence. In this way you can read the historical growth of the city from the canals, like the annual rings in a tree. Amsterdam is a spectacular example because this city quickly developed into a commercial centre on a world scale. But in smaller Dutch cities too, a similar gradual urban expansion can be read from the main canals. At the beginning of the seventeenth century something remarkable happened in the explosively growing Amsterdam. The extremely flourishing city started to plan a big expansion which, in a single move, was supposed to meet the space requirements for a very long time to come. A century or more was the period they had in mind. The city (then covering about 185 hectares) would have to quadruple its area in one go, and to achieve that a development plan was designed whereby the existing, semi-circular city was surrounded by three new concentric inner canals with another defensive canal surrounding them in their turn.
Whereas previously an extension was carried out by digging a single extra



Sixteenth-century map of Amsterdam, a woodcut by Cornelis Anthoniszoon.



Seventeenth-century map of Amsterdam; the first part of the girdle of canals has just been dug. Around 1600 work was begun on the eastern part, from the Leidsegracht to the Amstel.

canal, now four enormous canals were simultaneously dug. Canals which would be criss-crossed by side streets and connecting canals, all of them fanning out from the old inner city.

It is typical that the true designers of this plan, whose rational structure was attuned to organic growth, are not known. Some claim it was Frans Oetgens, others the City Carpenter Hendrick Jacobsz Staets, and the name of Hendrick de Keyser* is another name mentioned in this context.

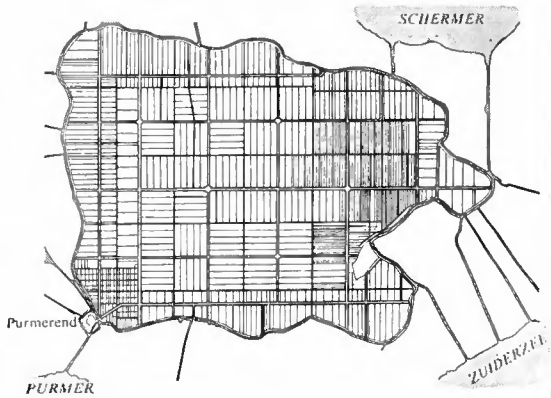
Amsterdam was lucky in that the economic prosperity lasted long enough to enable the greater part of this ambitious plan to be carried out. In 1610 it was begun in the east of the city and this occupied them until the second half of the seventeenth century. The last, most western part of the encircling was never carried out, which did not prevent the city from being enriched with a fascinating residential district where merchants came to live, generally conducting their businesses in or beside the house.

The plan for the extension of Amsterdam is unique. Some cities like Haarlem, Groningen and Rotterdam launched big expansions in the seventeenth century and some were even partly realised, but the drop in economic activity (Holland's Golden Age had come to an end) meant that it was not possible to complete them.

Amsterdam's extension met it needs for two centuries. At the end of the nineteenth century this city, like other Dutch cities including The Hague, Rotterdam, Arnhem and Utrecht, was faced with the consequences of industrialisation, with a great stream of people coming from the countryside to make a living in the cities. This resulted in rapid, big city extensions, with hardly any adequate town planning foundation. Usually, the new streets with blocks of tenements simply followed the pattern of ditches in the meadows. The rapidly growing cities encountered traffic problems, which were often conveniently solved by filling in the canals.

Polders

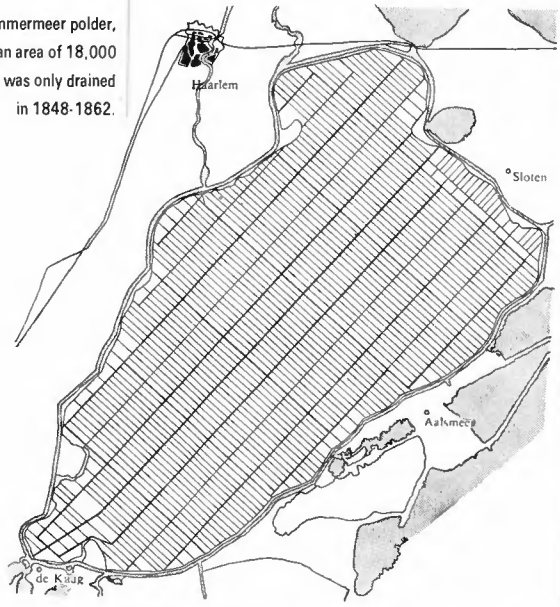
However, there was another reason for filling in the city canals: the increasing construction of polders. In the course of the centuries the Dutch had become increasingly skilled in the draining of lakes and ponds. In the Golden Age economic expansion was pursued not only in overseas territories, the country itself was also seen as a large territory to be reclaimed. Impoldering on a large scale was begun, particularly in the area to the north of Amsterdam. So, in 1608/12 the Beemstermeer became a new polder: a project which was extremely daring for its time, creating almost 8,000 hectares of new land (3.5 metres under the sea level) surrounded by a dike 45 kilometres long. The plans for the impoldering were made by the engineer and windmill builder Jan



The Beemster polder, with an area of 8,000 hectares, was drained between 1608 and 1612.

Adriaensz Leeghwater (1575-1650), who calculated that this lake could be drained with 36 windmills. The newly reclaimed land was then extremely functionally subdivided into rigid, square sections separated from each other by straight canals and roads, which were traversed by dead straight ditches.

The Haarlemmermeer polder, with an area of 18,000 hectares, was only drained in 1848-1862.



Whereas the Dutch cities had grown gradually from hamlets into cities, the polders were thoroughly thought out and rationally designed, without any embellishment. But that austere, monotonous design turned out to have its own beauty.

After the success of the Beemster came a great number of large polders, which were usually planned by Leeghwater. He himself dreamed of an even bigger project: the draining of the Haarlemmermeer, a large lake between the cities of Amsterdam, Haarlem and Leiden, which in stormy weather especially couldcause trouble in those cities. Leeghwater planned to tackle this problem using 166 windmills but the cities of Haarlem and Leiden were strongly opposed to the plan. One of them was afraid that the Spaarne river (which originated in the lake) would lose its transportation and fishing functions and the other feared the loss of its incomes from fisheries.

The Haarlemmermeer was only drained in 1840/52; not with 166 windmills, but with three English steam mills, and the layout of this polder was also a subdivision along dead straight lines. All through those centuries, there was no deviation from the functional principle as far as the layout of the polders was concerned.

No matter with what skill the polders were created, they did change the water management in the Netherlands. After the draining of the Haarlemmermeer in particular the surrounding cities had more problems with their canals. With the loss of the powerful flow of water caused by the lake, those cities found themselves confronted more often with stinking canals. Yet another reason for filling them in.

The Industrial Revolution

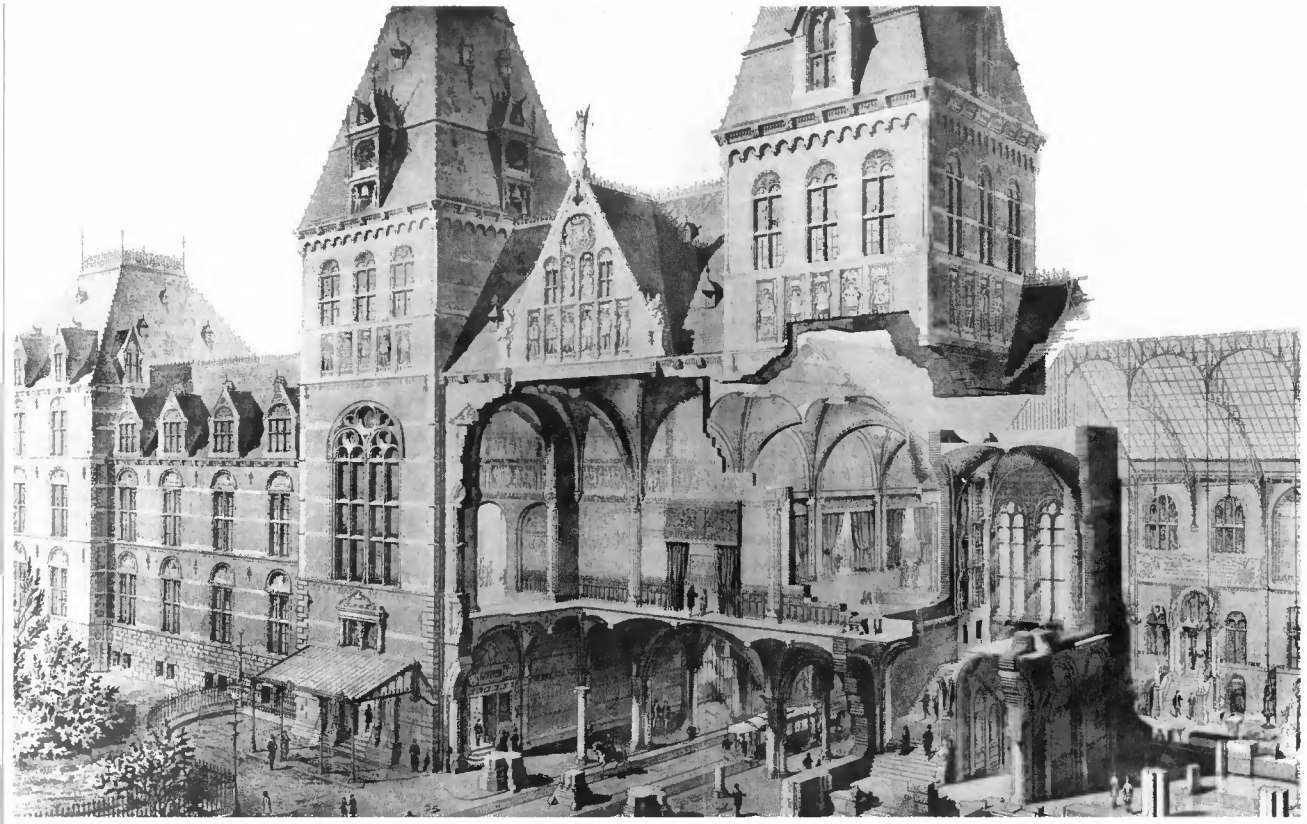
Between the seventeenth century Golden Age and the second half of the nineteenth century, there was little change in the appearance of the Netherlands. The population still fluctuated around the 2 million mark, only a small number of cities ventured to expand and although the impoldering of land continued, it was not on the spectacular scale of the Golden Age.

In the first half of the nineteenth century Arnhem was the only city to expand and it is characteristic that in doing so they did not look to the seventeenth century Dutch cities, but to European cities like Brussels and Dusseldorf.

Between 1870 and 1914 there were many changes: the Netherlands industrialised and trade revived. Rotterdam, long a relatively insignificant port, became the most important harbour for the German Ruhr, and in this period the population of the city quadrupled. Other cities also experienced rises in population and city expansions seemed unavoidable. The old ramparts were demolished on a large scale, and it was there, on what was formerly the moat, that the wealthy often built their stately mansions, inspired by foreign examples. Rather less care was devoted to housing the many workers. Here, it became very obvious that for two centuries the Netherlands had had hardly any experience in designing new urban areas. The haphazardly designed workers' districts are characterised by extremely bad housing facilities.

There were a number of attempts to house workers in a better manner. In 1885, in Delft, the director of the Delftse Gist and Spiritus factory founded the Agnetapark, in the English Garden City style where apart from workers' houses,

Gemaal Lijnden, one of the three pumping stations with which the Haarlemmermeer was pumped dry. The steam machines, now replaced by diesel motors, came from England, reason enough for the architect J.A. Beyerinck to use the English Gothic style for the architectural design of the pumping stations. (Archiphoto)



The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam by architect P.J.H. Cuypers, marks the earliest beginning of a new revival in architecture after a period in which, under the influence of the industrial revolution, it had become bogged down.

a sports building, a school and his own villa were also built. Philanthropic institutions were zealous advocates of good workers' housing and the trade unions also tried to do something about housing their members. There are no precise figures, but it can be estimated that in the Netherlands between 1850 and 1903 almost a million dwellings were built, 20,000 of them from a more or less socially inspired standpoint. The greater part of the housing construction, and with it the town planning, was therefore in the hands of speculative builders.

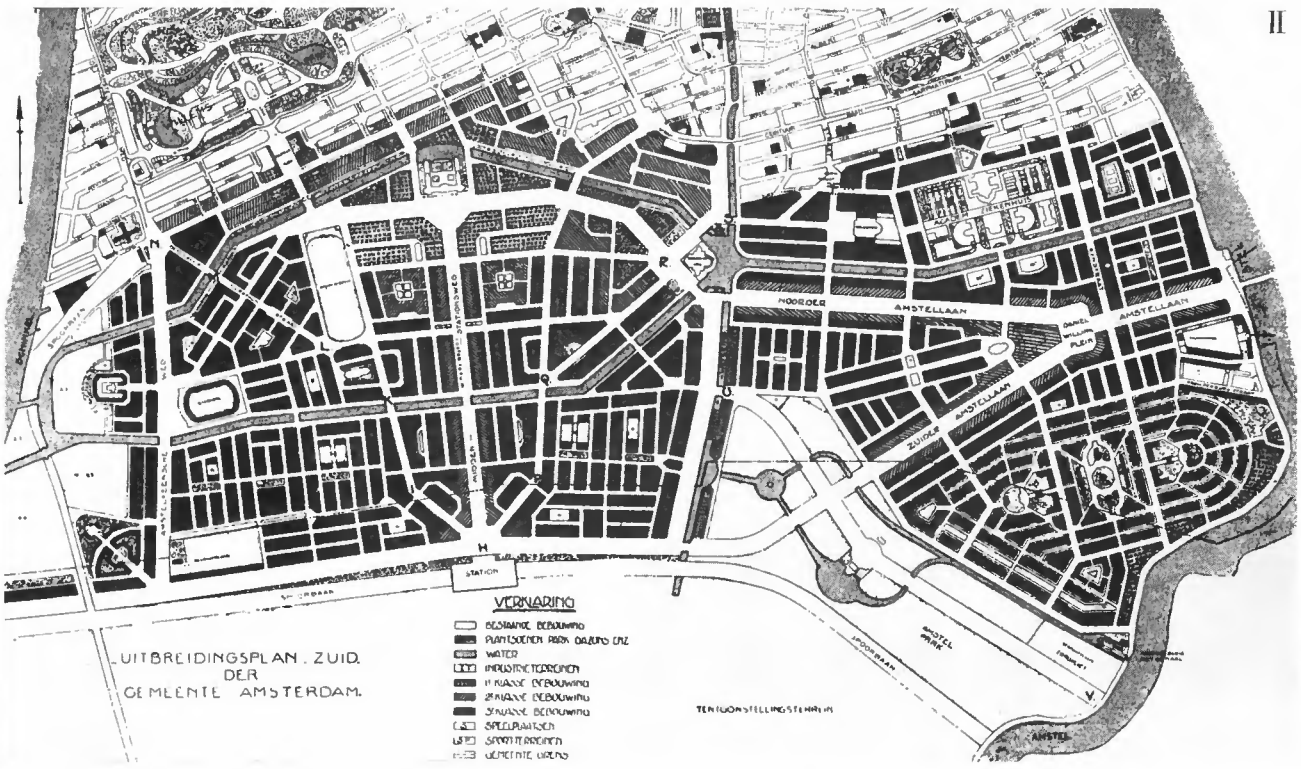
After two centuries of tranquility the Netherlands was overrun by the Industrial Revolution. The country plunged into the changes, and casually threw away its past. Churches were plundered, stained glass windows were sold and many historic buildings were demolished. In 1873 the art historian Victor de Stuers (1843-1916) published a fiery article entitled 'Holland at its narrowest' in which he denounced this 'glorious miserly system' and claimed that in the old cities and villages 'ex-carpenters and ex-bricklayers who dare to call themselves architects are mindlessly at work' and that the historic heritage which had survived was being assailed by the 'plasterers' who covered the brick facades in plasterwork. He criticised the way historic buildings were restored in the Netherlands, 'with such ignorance and rashness' that decay caused by 'the ravages of time was preferable to the coarse, barbaric mutilation which people are guilty of under the pretext of restoration'. De Stuers' picture of the defacement and the spiritual poverty of the Netherlands in the nineteenth century gradually found acceptance and he brought his by no means small influence to bear in order to improve the situation. He made a case for a national form of preservation of old buildings (which became a reality) and for a new revival in architecture. That is why he ensured that his friend, the innovative architect Petrus Josephus Hubertus Cuypers* (1827-1921) was given the important task of building the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. It was the beginning of a revival, but for the time being it would have little influence on planning in the Netherlands.

Detail of a tower in the Rijksmuseum: evidence of the reevaluation of craftsmanship which the architect Cuypers fought so hard for. (Archiphoto)

Certainly, the existing historical location was sometimes treated with more care, and Cuypers made quite a reasonable plan for the surroundings of the Rijksmusuem, but it was not enough to evoke a new zeal among city managers and architects.

That honour undoubtedly belongs to Hendrik Pieter Berlage* (1856-1934) who was the first to succeed in confident town planning which would open up new horizons. His first plans, never realized, still show a strong degree of uncertainty and are very much influenced by the Viennese town planner Camillo Sitte (1834-1903). But after a visit to the United States he turned to a more contemporary, bolder form of town planning, the result of which is to be seen in his extension plan for Amsterdam South (1915).

Berlage was the right man at the right time. The many social evils in the nineteenth century workers' districts had led the government to promulgate a Housing Law in 1901, which not only guaranteed better housing for the less



The definitive design for Amsterdam South by H.P. Berlage (1915-1917; built 1925-1940). (Photo: Dutch Architectutal Institute)

II

The rural garden city of Vreewijk in Rotterdam (M.J. Grandpré Molière and others, 1916-1919) was inspired by the ideas of the English Garden City Movement.

wealthy, but included a town planning section. Municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants or which were growing at a rate of more than 20% per year, were legally required to establish an extension plan 'which allocates the ground which in the near future is intended for the laying out of streets, canals and squares'.

Partly for this reason, at the beginning of the century interest in town planning in the Netherlands was growing sharply. Together with Karel Petrus Cornelis de Bazel (1869-1923) for example, Berlage represented to a certain extent the metropolitan movement in town planning thought. There were also many, such as the Delft architect and professor Marinus Jan Grandpré Molière (1883-1972), who following the English *Garden City Movement* wanted to give a more rural aspect to the extension of cities. The garden city of Vreewijk (1916) in Rotterdam is an eloquent example of this.

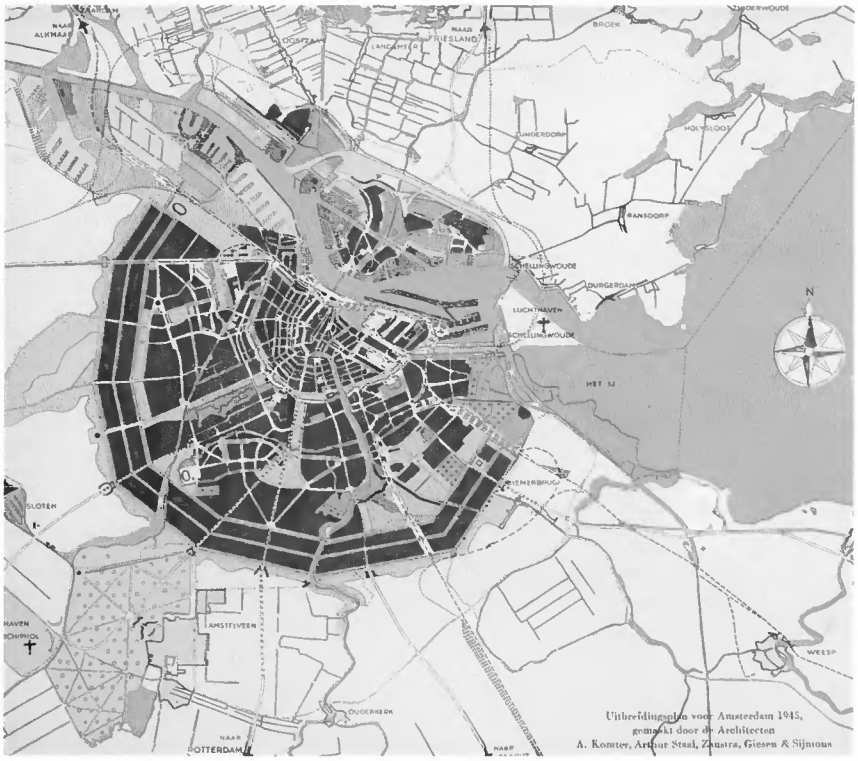
Rational Town Planning

This was the situation in 1916 when Van Eesteren decided to go to Paris to study town planning. There was great interest in that profession but it was based chiefly on the late nineteenth century ideas, usually imported from abroad. The abhorrence for the nineteenth century workers' districts was almost unanimous but most attention was still focused on the extremely rapid metamorphosis which the old Dutch cities were undergoing due to the growth of motor traffic. More and more cities were deciding, despairingly, to fill in their canals to make room for the tram, buses and cars.

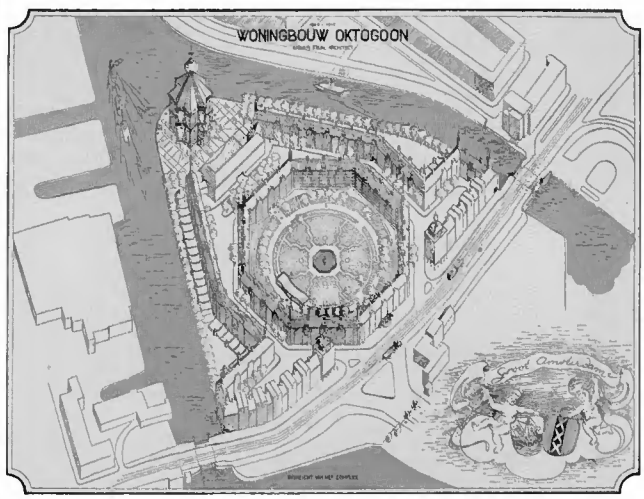
Van Eesteren loathed the 'spatial confusion' of that time, in which 'the visual instinct has been lost'. As far as that was concerned, he was in agreement with Berlage who kept on harping on the point that town planning is not only a question of technology, but of art.

In 1922 Van Eesteren said: 'All urgent town planning problems are fundamentally problems of traffic control', indicating that an entirely new trail had to be blazed. Whereas earlier town planners had more or less linked up with the existing cityscape, Van Eesteren was in favour of confrontation. A confrontation which, it is true, was in balance with the past, but still a confrontation. Together with officials from the Urban Development Department, Van Eesteren worked on a General Extension Plan for Amsterdam (AUP), which was founded on extensive demographic research and in which housing, working, leisure and traffic in Amsterdam was analyzed in many series of figures. A vision of the future was distilled from those figures, and also illustrated in figures: so many parking places needed per inhabitant, so many hectares of woods and public gardens per dwelling, so many sports facilities, so much industry. No longer was it only the dwelling which was tailored to its users, now whole suburbs were built on the human scale. No more closed blocks in which some houses are crushed into the corners, with many living rooms and gardens of necessity facing north, but detached rows of houses ideally situated with regard to the sun, and surrounded by greenery.

In the twenty five years after the Second World War especially, this way of working would become widely accepted in Dutch town planning. The AUP was planned in a modern, rational manner



Alternative extension plan for Amsterdam, made during the war years by a number of architects (Groep '32) who found the analytical approach of the AUP too one-sided. They based the forms of the extension suburbs of Amsterdam not only on functional requirements, but on the 'structure of the total community'. This meant that they planned a second - gigantic - girdle of canals around the existing city.



but perhaps unwittingly, its spacious layout with much greenery also gave it a somewhat rural character. In this it did not really link up with the centuries-old urban tradition of Amsterdam. Van Eesteren saw this as the desired confrontation. Others however, thought that it went too far and in the war years they worked on an alternative plan which was more urban and more traditional. Even the time-honoured concept of the girdle of canals was continued. Nothing came of this plan, but it showed the uncertainty which existed. Even in the first years after the war Dutch thinking about town planning was dominated for a while by a contrast between a traditional and a more modern approach to postwar reconstruction, but with growing prosperity that modern, rationally organised town planning got the upper hand.

Jacobus Johannes Pieter Oud (1890-1963) saw early on the objections to this: 'If you look at a lot of town planning-designs they show, alongside the advantages of the development, almost all the disadvantages of a too one-sided impersonal outlook.'

In vain. The 1950s and 60s continued to be the domain of the rational town planners. Not only for postwar reconstruction and city extensions, but in designing completely new villages and cities. The city extensions were completely dominated by separate blocks, with countless variations to avoid monotony.

Detailed development of the alternative extension plan for Amsterdam by Groep '32: functional requirements did not exclusively determine the architectural design and layout either, rather, it was attempted to link up with the existing elements. In the centre an octagonal housing block, surrounded by dwellings, shops and schools. Top left, a church.

The General Extension Plan for Amsterdam (AUP) from 1934 was for decades regarded internationally as the most trend-setting example of rational and analytic town planning. (Photo: Amsterdam Municipal Archives)

That inevitably led to conflicts and architects and town planners often found themselves in heated confrontation.

As in Velsen, for example. There, the somewhat traditional town planner Willem Marinus Dudok* (1884-1974) prescribed pitched roofs for the houses. The architects Johannes Hendrik van den Broek (1898-1978) and Jacob Berend Bakema (1914-1981) stuck to their preferred flat roof. The conflict ran deep, but finally the architects gave their houses that pitched roof.

With the prospect, according to demographic forecasts, of the Netherlands having a population of 20 million by the year 2000 – a prediction which did not come true as in 1991 the Netherlands has a population of 15 million – the city extensions in the 1950s and 1960s were tackled on a large scale.

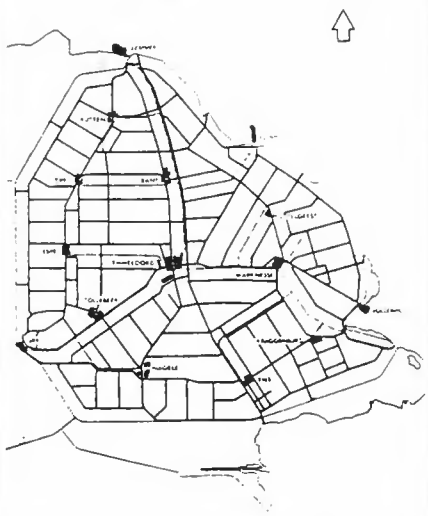
Development was rapid. By 1960 Van Eesteren's AUP, which was supposed to meet Amsterdam's needs until the year 2000, turned out to be outdated. This was the reason that Amsterdam devel-

The most recent Dutch province, Flevoland, consisting entirely of polders drained in the twentieth century. Unlike previous polders (see the illustrations on page 10 of the Beemster polder and Haarlemmermeer polder) a division into apparently randomly demarcated compartments was preferred to a strict geometrical layout.

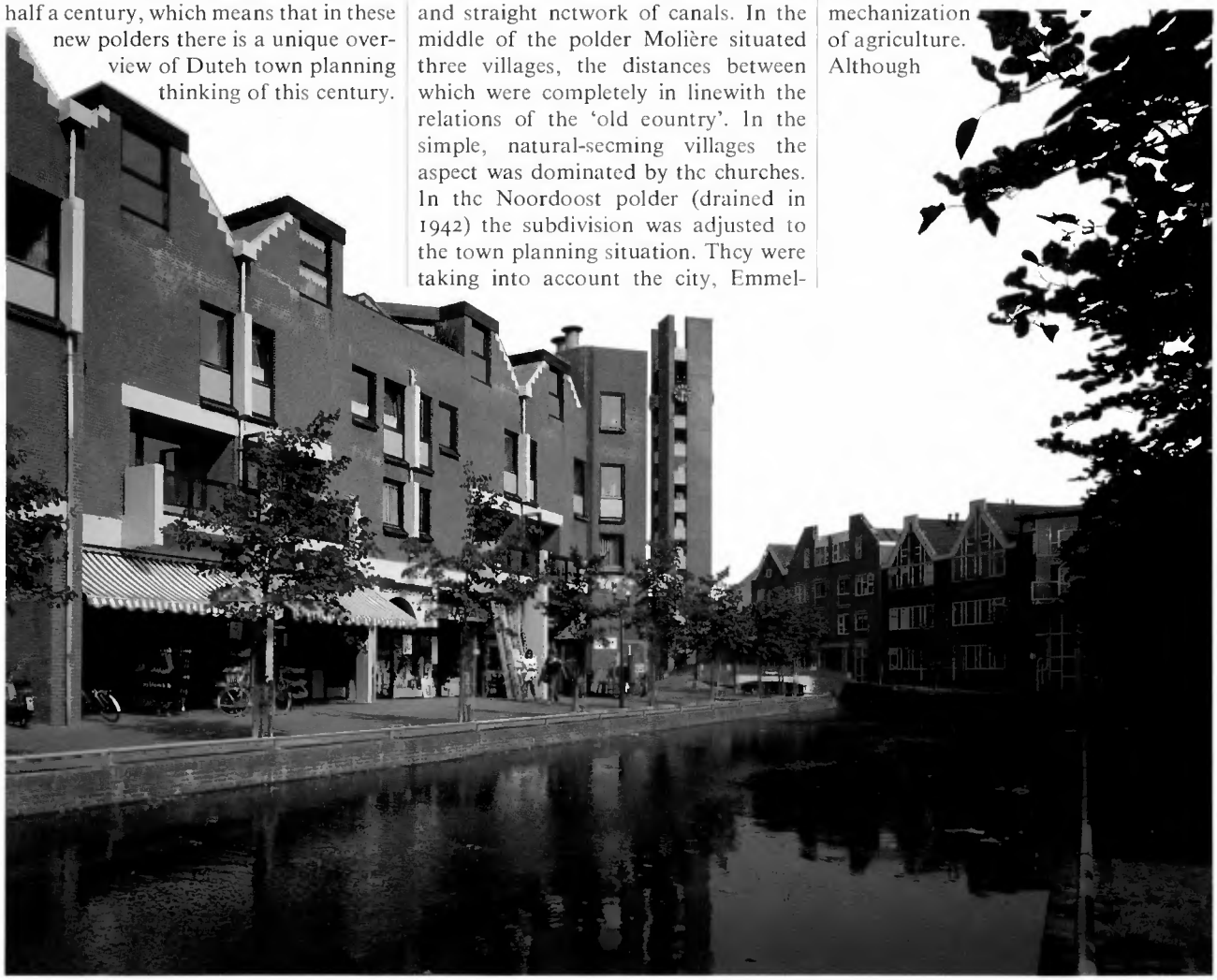
oped a new, large-scale extension plan, in which the ideas of Van Eesteren (that is, of CIAM) were duly realised: the Bijlmermeer. There, the big blocks were subtly arranged, motor traffic was strictly separated on elevated carriageways above the lower wooded area intended for pedestrians, cyclists and children.
The Bijlmermeer has not been enthusiastically welcomed by the Amsterdammers, nor by the rest of the Dutch people.

The Challenge Of The IJsselmeer Polders

Another challenging field for the town planners was the designing of new settlements on 'new ground': the IJsselmeer polders. In the 1920s work was started on the construction of a dike which would cut off the big inland sea, the Zuiderzee, from the ocean so that the coastline of the Netherlands would be drastically shortened. In the years following this the former inland sea (which was now called the IJsselmeer) would to a great extent be impoldered. That project lasted almost half a century, which means that in these new polders there is a unique overview of Dutch town planning thinking of this century.



Around 1930, Grandpré Molière made the plan for the nuclei in the Wieringmeer, whereby he had to accept the allotment plan as given. Unlike in the earlier polders, the layout chosen was not a strictly executed geometric plan, but the polder was given a great number of apparently jumbled up compartments, each of which had its own rigid and straight network of canals. In the middle of the polder Molière situated three villages, the distances between which were completely in linewith the relations of the 'old country'. In the simple, natural-seeming villages the aspect was dominated by the churches. In the Noordoost polder (drained in 1942) the subdivision was adjusted to the town planning situation. They were taking into account the city, Emmeloord, which was to be located at the centre, around which a number (to be determined later) of other residential nuclei were to come. Most designers of these new settlements drew their inspiration from the surrounding old land. In Emmeloord Cornelis Pouderoyen used a lot of right angles, lots of rows of houses in open blocks, but the most important shopping street is given a more traditional aspect. An exception is the village of Nagele which was designed by the architects' group *De 8*, who very consciously used CIAM principles. Houses and shops, all with flat roofs, were here grouped along the edges of an extended rectangular grass surface which was intended to be a communal area. The spaciously laid out village was completely surrounded by a line of trees. Although the design was worked on for eight years by 33 architects who all believed, to a man, in the ideals of the new urban design, the village has not been much copied.
East Flevoland was drained in 1957 and here the standard allotments were substantially increased, with an eye to the mechanization of agriculture. Although

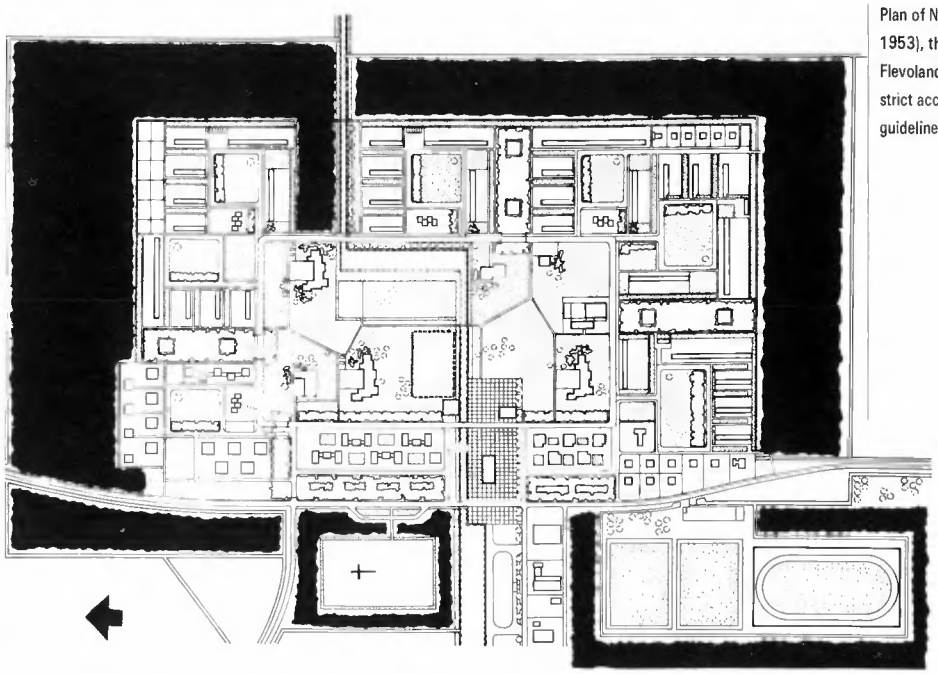


Dwellings, shops and offices on the Kerkgracht in Almere-Haven (architect D.C. Apon and others, 1974-1979); a conscious falling back on the tradition of old Dutch cities. (Archiphoto)

the original idea was that this polder would have two towns and a dozen villages, this was quickly dropped when it became clear that two towns (Lelystad and Dronten) and two villages were enough. At one time it was intended to expand Lelystad, for which Van Eesteren had designed the first master plan, into a city of 100,000 inhabitants. But that was when it was still thought that the northwestern part of the IJsselmeer would also be impoldered and Lelystad would indeed be in the centre of a vast polder area. However, the impoldering of this Markerwaard was also dropped and Lelystad could remain much smaller, while there were also new ideas in town planning, favouring small-scale large-scale.

In 1968 Southern Flevoland was drained and in this polder, near Amsterdam, a new city was founded with four nuclei which would be built one after the other. Here too the quickly changing insights in the field of town planning are reflected. With the first nucleus, Almere-Haven, the negative experiences of the Bijlmermeer in particular were consciously avoided and the tradition of old Dutch cities was revived in a contemporary manner: a canal, squares and a church which dominated a large part of the townscape. With the second nucleus, Almere-Stad, these ideas were again abandoned and it was attempted to introduce some more big metropolitan elements into the cityscape.

Fifty years of designing the New Land has not been without effect. Not only has it drastically altered the infrastructure of the Netherlands (the country got a new heart, so to speak), enormous experience in town planning has also been acquired.



Plan of Nagels (design 1948-1953), the only village in Flevoland which was laid out in strict accordance with CIAM guidelines.

Station in Almere-Stad from 1979-1987 by architect P.A.M. Kilsdonk. (Archiphoto)

Shopping arcade in Almere-Stad by Kees Rijnboutt and others, 1979-1985: a study element in the new town. (Archiphoto)

The Current State Of Play

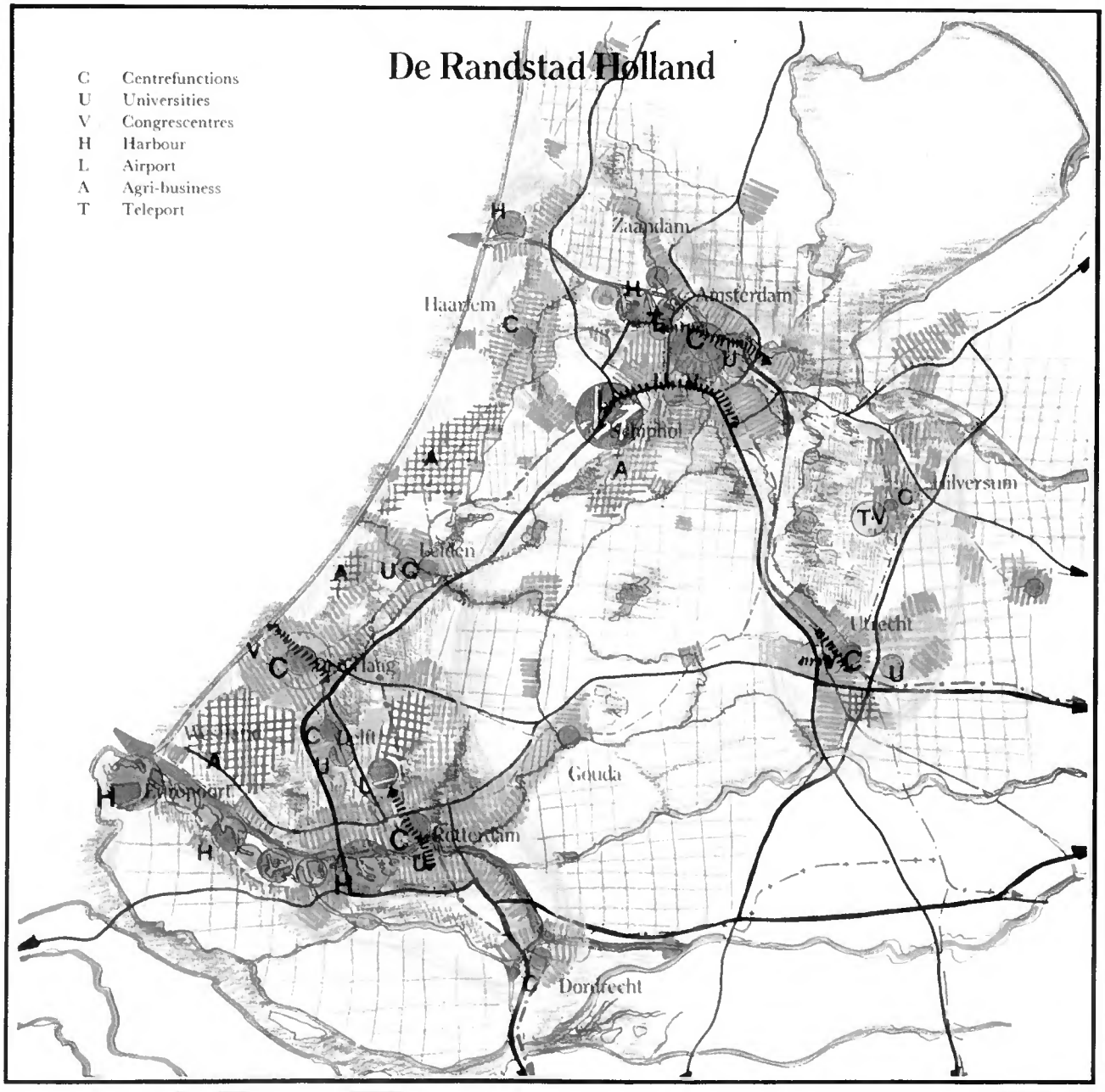
In three quarters of a century the Netherlands changed from a country with a population of about 6 million distributed in small, organically developed villages and towns into a highly urbanised country with fifteen million inhabitants, the great majority of whom are housed in a planned housing environment.

Notable are the new housing estates which were built in the Netherlands after the Second World War, in which uniform row houses predominate. Despite the fact that the strict housing blocks of the 1950s and 60s were succeeded in the 1970s and 80s by more playfully designed houses in which the traditional roof once more predominated, and with more attention to surprising street patterns, the monotony was still there. At the beginning of the 1990s that led to the sarcastic complaint by a young architect that 'in the Netherlands people have personal computers, but hardly any personal houses have been built since the Second World War'.

There is some truth to this perception of a country which in the first half of this century played an important role in the invention of a new architecture. Paradoxical as it may seem, the cause of this monotony should actually be sought in that rich architectural past when Dutch architects enjoyed worldwide fame for their revolutionary, pioneering buildings. Thanks to the trendsetting designs of Berlage, Rietveld* and Oud (and to these names can easily be added those of Michel de Klerk*, Van

Experimental housing in Spaarndam by architect Henk Klunder (1974-1979) in which involvement of the future residents at the planning stage and the avoidance of monotony were the most important principles. (Archiphoto)

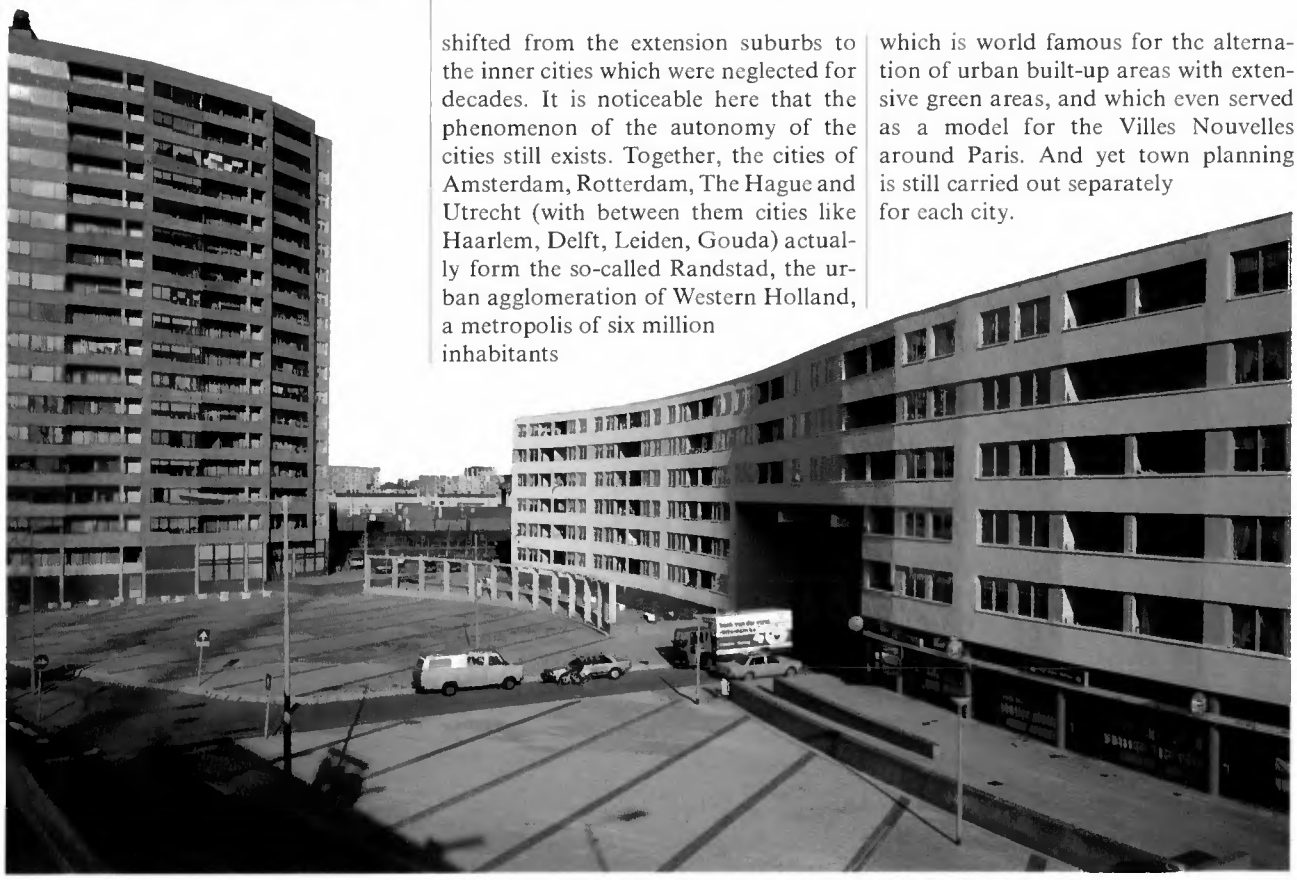
What is particularly striking in the new buildings in Deventer are the glass bays of the dwellings, sometimes two storeys high. On the southern edge of the complex there is a shopping arcade under these bays. (Archiphoto)



The Randstad, the urban agglomeration of western Holland: a metropolis with a number of extremely different urban centres alternating with broad green belts.

den Broek, Bakema and many others) the designing of public housing in the Netherlands became a point of honour for the architects and the state.
It was chiefly that state, with its strong drive towards planning, which then introduced a great number of regulations and rules in which the achievements of modern architecture were elevated to a compulsory minimum. And after that, hardly anyone took the trouble to go beyond these ordinances. Because this is what happens: what is originally presented with great enthusiasm as a solid basis on which to work towards ideal housing for the masses, quickly turns into a lazy standard. And in this way the Netherlands acquired its endless row of standard dwellings: reasonably priced and reasonably well-built but invariably oriented towards the ideal family with two children.
But this too has its good points. Because for the last few years young Dutch architects in particular have been looking for new possibilities. They are looking for the sources of modern architecture, they analyze where the mistakes were made and they come up with new, lively designs which can be realised within the existing norms.
In the world of Dutch planning these are still just occasional events. All the more so as in the 1980s the focus has shifted from the extension suburbs to the inner cities which were neglected for decades. It is noticeable here that the phenomenon of the autonomy of the cities still exists. Together, the cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht (with between them cities like Haarlem, Delft, Leiden, Gouda) actually form the so-called Randstad, the urban agglomeration of Western Holland, a metropolis of six million inhabitants which is world famous for the alternation of urban built-up areas with extensive green areas, and which even served as a model for the Villes Nouvelles around Paris. And yet town planning is still carried out separately for each city.

Urban renewal (1984-1987) in the old inner city of Deventer, by architect Theo Bosch. The new complex of 120 dwellings and seventeen shops was carefully slotted into the old surroundings and yet is contemporary in every respect. Not only the exterior design, but the contents.
For example, a great variety of dwelling types and floor plans, an energy-saving building technology and a town planning layout which offers a great variation between a closed and open character.



On the former Rotterdam harbour and industrial site of Hillekop, the young Delft architectural bureau Mecanoo designed (1989) a fan-shaped tower block and an undulating low-rise block together form their own small neigbourhood: innovative in its floor plans and urban design. (Archiphoto)

The great recorder of the austerity of Outch architecture was the seventeenth-century Haarlem painter, Pieter Saenredam, who in 1663 made this image of the Mariaplaats in Utrecht. On the right, the eleventh-century Mariakerk, on the left the early Gothic Buurkerk from the thirteenth century and in the middle the Oom, built between 1254 and 1510, whose tower dates from 1321-1382. (Photo: Boymans-van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam)

The Forms Of The Netherlands

The Dutch historian Johan Huizinga once pointed out that one of the most important characteristics of the Netherlands is the way it is open to the value of the foreign: 'We (Dutch) keep all our windows open to every breeze that blows. The centuries have made us familiar with the French, English and German spirit. If there is one thing in which our country may be said to excel, it is that it has known better than any other how to absorb the streams of three distinct cultures smoothly and to grasp the spirit of them all in full measure.'

Huizinga rightly perceives that this assimilation of various foreign cultures is mainly possible due to the fact that the Dutch have their own language: this enables them to maintain a sort of impartial position and they have 'a mirror in which to absorb the foreign' with also the possibility of 'maintaining an individual way of thinking, our own conceptual system'.
This observation can be applied without any difficulty to architecture also. The Dutch have always been open to the architectural forms of other cultures and in the west and north of the Netherlands especially the climate, the soil conditions and the materials available made it necessary to give these exotic forms a particularly Dutch character.

The Broad Outlines

In general, Dutch architecture has been more or less in step with the rest of Europe: a Romanesque period from 1000 to 1250 followed by the Gothic, whose influence can still be found in the first half of the sixteenth century.
The sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century are often given as the period of the Dutch Renaissance, a period which gradually runs over into a Classicism which lasts until around 1700. In the period between 1600 and 1675 approximately, Dutch architecture enjoyed a Golden Age. In the eighteenth century there are classical influences and the advent of the Louis styles while the nineteenth century is characterised, as elsewhere in Europe, by a multiplicity of 'neo' styles. For example, it was only around 1880 that neo-Gothic got going in the Netherlands and this stylistic period stimulated the search for a new

architectural style. The results of this became visible around 1900.

Between 1915 and 1930 Dutch architecture once again enjoyed a Golden Age. On the one hand with the expressionist brick architecture of the Amsterdam School, on the other hand with the austere, simple forms of international modernism in which movements like *De Stijl* and *De 8 en Opbouw* played a leading role. In the same period the foundations were also laid for a well-considered reevaluation of more traditional architectural forms, something which caught on especially in the 1930s.

The years immediately after the Second World War were still characterised by an amalgamation of more traditional and modern architecture, with the latter gaining the upper hand in the 1950s. In the mid-1970s this was to change again and Dutch architecture began to be characterised by a search for more closed forms which were built in traditional materials like brick, roof tiles and wood with a lot of attention to the wishes of the users. There had to be a reaction against this, and this came in the 1980s, which on the one hand sought sturdy forms, and on the other hand a new interpretation of the basic principles of modern building.

At the beginning of the 1990s the emphasis is very much on the spatial experience within the buildings and flexible layouts are especially sought.

Influences From Abroad

For each of these periods, the influences from abroad which were incorporated in Dutch building can be identified quite accurately. In the Early Middle Ages the pilgrimages to Jerusalem, Rome and Santiago de Compostella, and later the Crusades to the Holy Land had been an important source of cultural exchange, but in the Late Middle Ages this took place through trade. And architecture was also trade. For example, in the fourteenth century the master builders ranged far from their birthplace, travelling from job to job, and the master builder must therefore be seen as something of a contractor offering his services.

These must often have been partnerships of two people who were accompanied by a permanent core of craftsmen. Their activities were generally confined to the building of small churches, town halls, city walls and city gates which almost without exception were executed in a simple brick form. For building big churches another method was used. These churches, which following the Northern French example had to be richly faced in stone, were ambitious, long-term projects. For such a building project a lodge was often erected, a big workshop where the drawings were made and where the stonecutters could do their work. Attached to such a lodge was a master builder who was appointed for life, but as the work proceeded slowly, such a master builder had enough time to offer his services elsewhere as well. That could explain, for example, why there is such a strong affinity between the chancels of the St. Pieterskerk in Leiden (1390/1412), the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam (1385/1408) and the St.Bavo in Haarlem (1370/1400) all of which were probably built under the supervision of the master builder of the St.Nicolaaskerk in Kampen, Rutger van Kampen. His predecessor in the building of the Kampen church must have worked in the lodge of the cathedral of Cologne where the floor plans of the chancel in Notre Dame in Paris were probably available. In this way the great examples from abroad could reach the Netherlands, even if they were executed here in a more modest and simple manner. This was often due to bitter necessity. Originally, for example, it was planned to give the St.Bavo church in Haarlem a stone arched roof, but during construction it became clear that, given the soil conditions this would lead to greater subsidence. The church was given a wooden arched roof, just like many other Dutch churches from that period.

The Role Of Trade

An important aspect in building was the trade in stone. In the building of large churches especially, stone was a product much in demand despite its high price. Until the beginning of the fifteenth century much stone was transported to the north and middle of the Netherlands along the rivers Maas and Rhine, but from

In 1654 Pieter Saenredam painted this hushed interior of the Sint-Pieterskerk in Utrecht, an early Romanesque cruciform church which was begun in 1043.
(Photo: Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst)

Detail of the St. Jan in Den Bosch.

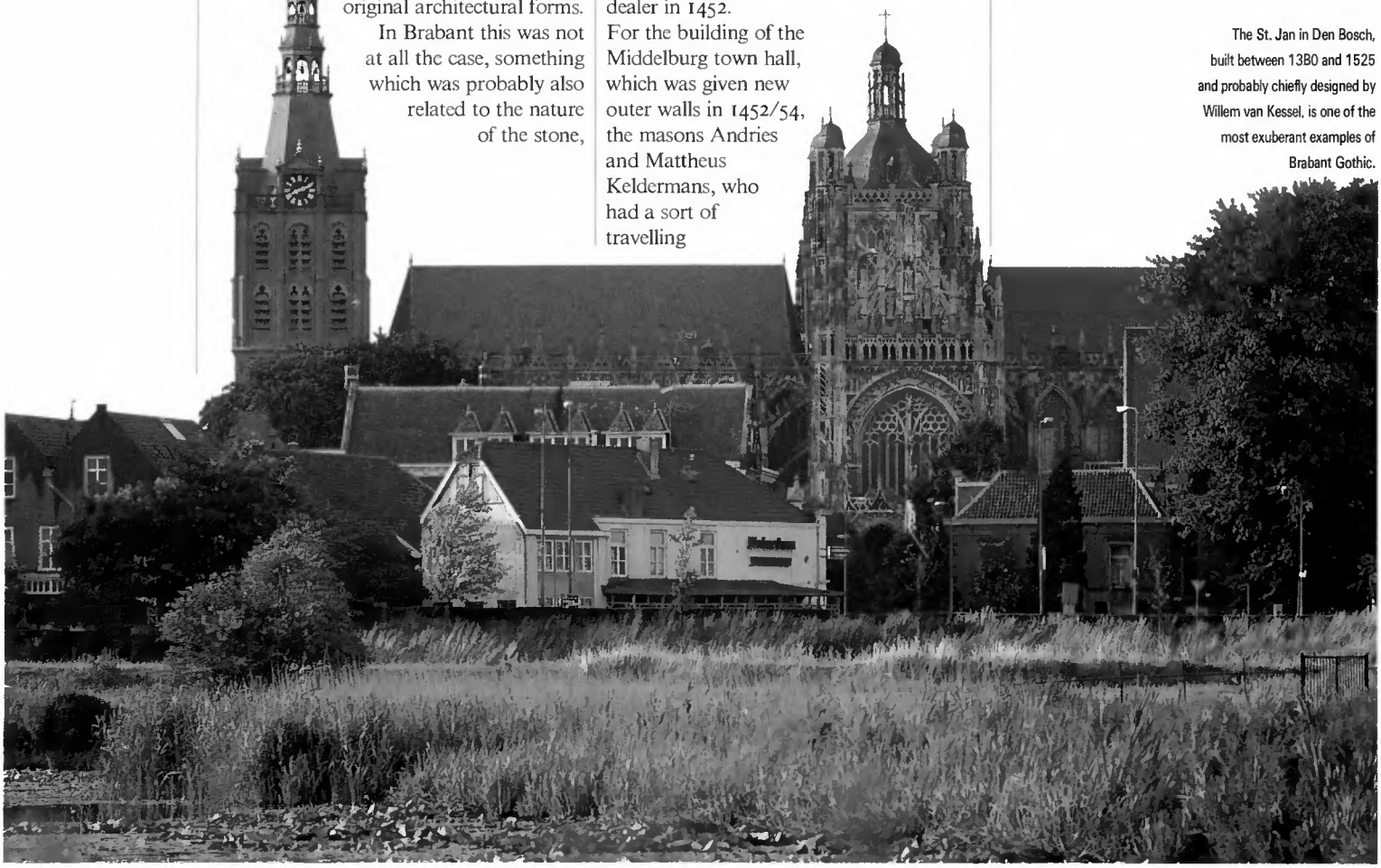
that time on the dealers in stone in the province of Limburg and in Bentheim in Germany began to occupy a more important position.

The Bentheimer stone came from an area where there was little in the way of original architectural forms. In Brabant this was not at all the case, something which was probably also related to the nature of the stone, which could be worked in very many ways. Already by the fourteenth century much Brabant stone was being used in the south of the Netherlands, as in the tower of the abbey in Middelburg and the Onze Lieve Vrouw gate in Bergen op Zoom. But some prosperous cities in the north of the Netherlands also ventured to use this material. The clothmakers' hall, the town hall and the meat market in Leiden (from 1410) are faced in Brabant stone and some parts of city churches were also faced in this material: the St. Bavo in Haarlem, the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam and the St. Pieterskerk in Leiden. Only two churches in the Netherlands, the Dom in Utrecht and the St. Jan in Den Bosch, are built completely in stone. In the course of the fifteenth century the Brabant stone dealers began to deliver their stone ready for use, prefabricated so to speak, and so came to have an important influence on the final form of the building. While these forms were simpler and plainer than those encountered in the Brabant cities themselves, there is a clear affinity. The town hall of Gouda was built in 1450 with stone which was carved ready for use in Brabant, but in the design of the town hall there is a clear local element. The Schoonhoven town hall was probably delivered completely ready for use by a Brabant stone dealer in 1452.

For the building of the Middelburg town hall, which was given new outer walls in 1452/54, the masons Andries and Mattheus Keldermans, who had a sort of travelling

Seventeenth century stepped gable on the Lange Voorhout in The Hague. (Photo: Hugo Verschoor)

The St. Jan in Den Bosch, built between 1380 and 1525 and probably chiefly designed by Willem van Kessel, is one of the most exuberant examples of Brabant Gothic.



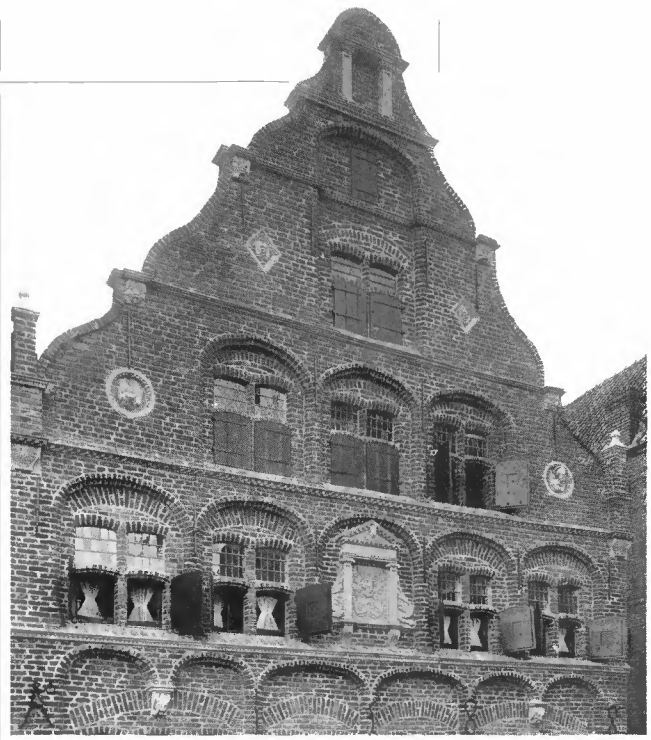
practice, were called in. They travelled to the place where building was taking place and exercised their craft on the spot, doing much more than dressing stone: they gave technical advice about foundations and drainage and also made a large architectural contribution.

Evert Spoorwater from Antwerp had a similar practice, but he went to the actual place to have a look at the site, and then returned to Antwerp and made his designs there, which he then had cut out by Brabant stonecutters. His clients then only had to put together the elements provided. In this fashion the northern transept of the St. Bavo in Haarlem was built in a very short time (1445/1448) and he probably returned a few years later to build the southern transept. The Grote Kerk in Dordrecht, the church in Bergen op Zoom and probably also the churches in Veere and Brielle and the town hall in Veere were built in this way.

Individual Contribution

These examples, chosen at random from the Gothic period, show that in the northern Netherlands there was not really a rich architectural culture, even in the biggest constructions of that time, the churches. With a few exceptions (in Utrecht and Den Bosch) the Dutch Gothic churches had little beauty, were rather rough and gruff, even though their rich interiors originally made up for a lot. But even that changed when a small but zealous minority turned against the prevailing religious doctrine in 1566 and destroyed the statues and works of art in many churches because in their eyes they were not in keeping with the true tenets of the faith.

When shortly after this the religious ideas of these 'protesting' believers became the official religion of the Netherlands, the Gothic interiors were stripped even further. The walls were covered with a coat of whitewash and the stained glass windows were often replaced by clear glass in order to let as much light as possible into the church. But even more than the buildings of the Dutch renaissance, the plain, unadorned interiors of the Gothic churches show the real attitude of the Dutch to buildings. Almost everything imposing, monumental, all the surface beauty had disappeared and what remained was a plain space *pur sang* where the light entered abundantly through the big windows.



The late Gothic Romerhuis in Venlo from the first half of the 16th century is an early example of exuberant brick architecture.

Renaissance

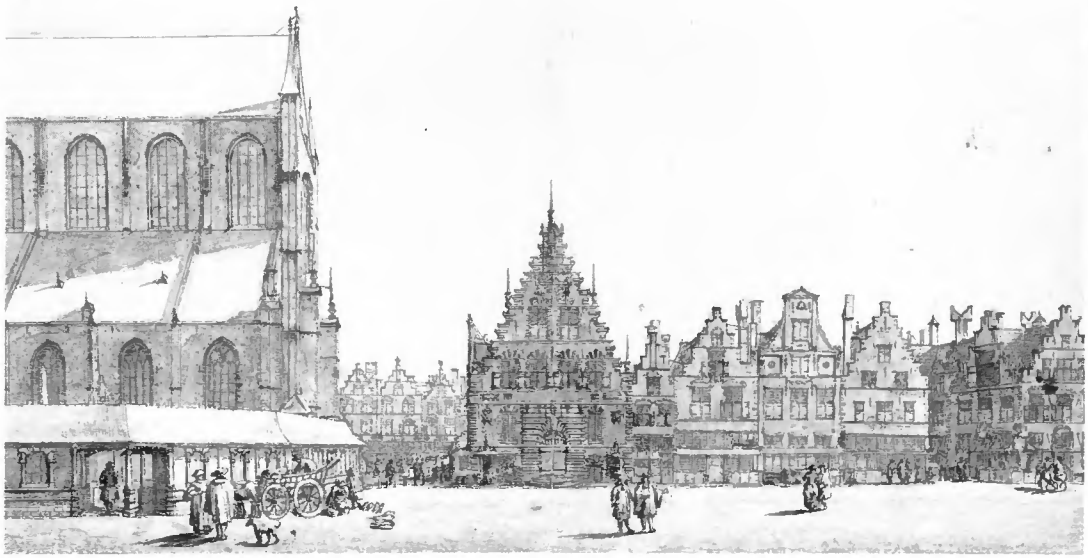
From the beginning of the sixteenth century the Netherlands very gradually began to show a growing interest in the Italian Renaissance. But here too, there were two inhibiting factors: the robust, serious character of the population was not really won over by Italian exuberance, while brick was not really suitable for carrying out extravagant motifs, which in Flanders for example, were richly worked in stone.

For the northern Netherlands Hans Vredeman de Vries was the great stimulator. Although born in Leeuwarden in Friesland (in 1527) as the son of a German, this painter soon left for Flanders where he came in contact with translations of the works of Serlio and Vitruvius, which he studied extensively. There too he began to devote himself to the painting and drawing of architectural perspectives with views of gardens and landscapes. From the 1560s onward he produced a great number of books with architectural examples of the Renaissance style.

The town hall of Middelburg was given the greater part of its current exterior between 1452 and 1521, originally under the guidance of Andries and Matheus Keldermans, but later under other members of this family of masons and architects, such as Andries' son Anthonis, and then the latter's sons Antonis and Rombout. (Photo: J. Wolterbeek)

The town hall of Bolsward, built in 1614-1616 after a design by Abraham Jacobsz, is a splendid example of Renaissance architecture. The painting dates from around 1875 and was made by Jan Feijtses Bos. Bottom right: a detail of the town hall.

Pen sketch by the seventeenth century painter Gerrit Adriaenszoon Berkheyde of the Grote Markt in Haarlem. On the left, the St. Bavo church from 1370-1400. In the middle the Vleeshal (1603) by the Haarlem master builder Lieven de Key who explicitly gave this building the appearance of a greatly enlarged house. (Municipal Archives Haarlem)



What is remarkable is that Vredeman de Vries never visited Italy. His models are to a great extent based on the architectural work of Cornelis Floris de Vriend, the Flemish architect who became famous mainly for his town hall in Antwerp, completed in 1566. But Vredeman de Vries also put many of his other experiences, in particular his later wanderings in Germany, into his books. This gave his models a remarkable mixture of Flemish ornament, German geometric forms and a Northern Dutch austerity. This remarkable, individual interpretation of Renaissance architecture is what made his books so popular in all of northwestern Europe and made them the great exemplar for many. Along the Baltic coast and in northern Germany Vredema de Vries's influence in the last four decades of the sixteenth century was extraordinary, and from here his formal language had spread as far as the north of the Netherlands by around 1600.

In that period, for example, the Haarlem master builder Lieven de Key (around 1560-1627) came under the influence of Vredeman de Vries's models. Not altogether strange, as De Key was born in Gent in Flanders and must have been familiar with the southern ornamentation. In 1580 he fled with his parents for religious reasons to London, and ten years later, in 1591, Lieven de Key settled in Haarlem where he was quickly commissioned to work as a master builder by the city authorities.

Although De Key probably also introduced English forms into Haarlem, his most important work, the Vleeshal in Haarlem, was strongly influenced by Vredeman de Vries. The building is a playful mixture of forms, it is even one of the most extravagant buildings of that period, and yet in comparison to the models of Vredeman de Vries it still looks moderate. Here too, the cause was the building material: the facades were built in brick, even though De Key made copious use of stone for his ornamentation.

The value of the Vleeshal however, is not so much the rich impulse towards ornamentation which prefigures the baroque, and which De Key introduced here in a convincing manner, as the form of the building. Although De Key had clearly been commissioned by the city authorities to build an imposing, striking urban building, what he actually did was to place on the market square an enlarged house, with splendid, expressive facades, which hardly clashes with the adjacent and surrounding dwelling houses. The building is absorbed into its surroundings, so to speak.

This would become a characteristic of many Dutch buildings in the seventeenth century. In the work of Hendrick de Keyser* (on which the Vredeman de Vries also had a considerable influence in the beginning) the ornamentation gradually becomes more austere and restrained. But in contrast to De Key, who was actually still building in the Gothic style, De Keyser had classicist tendencies and it was this style of building which would above all others determine the appearance of the Golden Age.

Seventeenth-century houses on the Begijnhof in Amsterdam: characteristic are the narrow, high gables which owe their monumental effect chiefly to the fact that there are a number of them alongside each other. (Photo: Hugo Verschoor)

The Amsterdam girdle of canals as it is now. On the right, the big white building, is the city hall cum music theatre by Cees Dam and Wilhelm Holzbauer. (Photo: KLM Aerocarto)

Bourgeois Classicism

However, the northern Netherlands was also individual in the way it adapted this classical renaissance. In comparison to the North

Italian pallazi the houses of the rich Amsterdam merchants were lacking in a number of striking elements. Although prospcrity meant that many of them could afford a stone facade full of rich ornamentation, the master builders ensured that here too the forms would not be overpowering or clash with the cityscape. Exuberant though many buildings may appear along the canal facade, in comparison to their contemporaries abroad they lack the monumental, imposing aspects. Not only the surroundings, but the passerby is respected. The building was impeccably bourgeois.

Herc too, the secret is the form of the building. In contrast to the pallazi, in the Netherlands the longest elevation was not parallel to the street – the facade on the street side was rather narrow while the building was deep, unlike the palazzi in this too. And in only a few cases were the splendid reception rooms placed on a raised *piano mobile*. The Dutch continued to prefer having their living rooms on the ground floor. ·

The steps characteristic of the seventeenth century canal houses are also not to be compared with the ceremonial steps. They are merely a transitional area between the street and the house. The somewhat elevated position of the ground floor is also not due to a desire for *piano mobile* but had a much more practical background: the marshy soil made it difficult to sink a cellar. It was better therefore to place the cellar half-sunk in the ground, which again had the advantage that the living rooms above it were spared a view of the goods piled on the quay.

In the Netherlands, the classicism of the Renaissance was stripped of its pomp, splendour and pomposity, and translated into soberness and modesty. And it is therefore no coincidence that the most striking image of the architecture of the Dutch Golden Age is *not* a particular building by De Keyser, Vingboons or Van Campen, but rather a view of a canal where individual buildings form a shared facade.

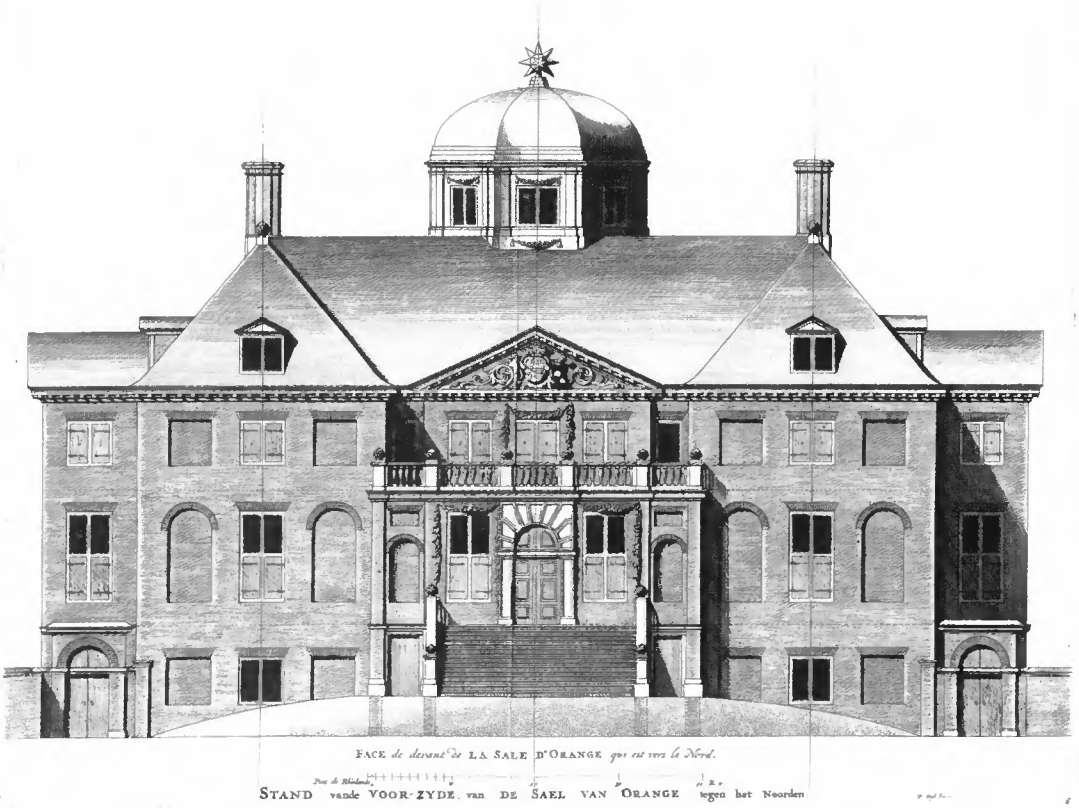
Imitation

The strength of Dutch architecture in the seventeenth century lay above all in the individual interpretation of forms which originated elsewhere in Europe. Ideas and forms from other cultures were eagerly absorbed without this damaging the individual characteristics of the building. The form of the pointed roof was adhered to for a long time, even though this was hidden behind a facade with scroll ornamentation (at the end of the sixteenth century, under the influence of Vredeman de Vries), behind a step gable (around 1600-1670), the austere pointed gable and the elegant clock gable (around 1620-1720), and the neck gable (around 1640-1770). Under the influence of French classicism, in the eighteenth century the roof was often concealed. Richly decorated mouldings hide the pointed roof from the view of the passerby. It is a striking detail. From the end of the seventeenth century it is increasingly common for the forms of a building to start taking on lives of their own. That is already noticeable in the later work of Justus Vingboons (1620-1698). His Trippenhuis for example, is a broad canal house, almost unprecedentedly so for Amsterdam, with an equally unusual *piano mobile* and a roof whose triangular fronton especially catches the eye.

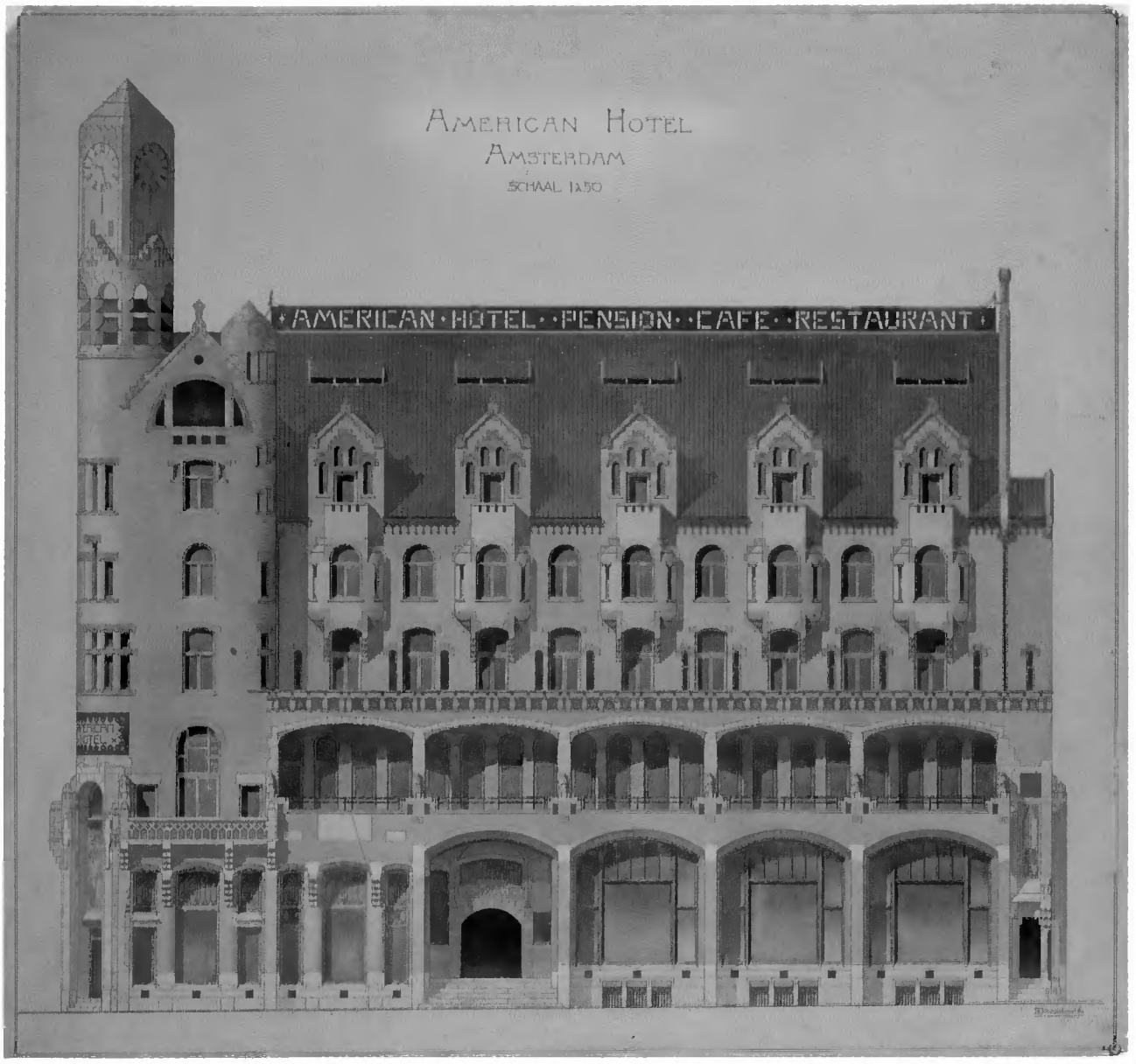
Jacob van Campen's* Amsterdam town hall of 1648 was also an imposing alien. They were forerunners. Because in the eighteenth century and in the first half of the nineteenth century forms were increasingly imported from other countries without enough individual character being added to them.

The historian Huizinga would later speak of 'the sickness which in more than one area would strip Dutch civilization of its true national character: French Classicism'. And the ninetcenth century man of letters Conrad Busken Huet concluded in his standard work on the seventeenth century, 'The Land of Rembrandt': 'Despite their modest proportions, how much more graceful they appear to us in their finery than the Amsterdam town hall, those public buildings built in the early seventeenth century in Haarlem, in Nijmegen, in Schoonhoven, in Bolsward, in Zwolle. Sometimes it can be a mere meat market or a watch house, somctimes, as in Hoorn, nothing more than an official inn. The only two town halls in the series are those of Bolsward and Schoonhoven, both relatively small. But they show, we think, a Dutch character. The family they are descended from is to be found in Flanders or Brabant. They seem to have sprung from the very earth.'

Both Huizinga and Busken Huet regarded the further development of Dutch architecture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with disapproval, because they could not discern anything specifically Dutch in it. They even occasionally made the comparison with the Late Middle Ages, when styles and forms from elsewhere in Europe were also imitated. This work was not without merit, but lacked confident originality, not to mention proud simplicity.



The classicist Huis ten Bosch from the middle of the seventeenth century was designed by Pieter Post and extended in the eighteenth century after a design by Daniel Marot. (Photo: Municipal Archives, The Hague)

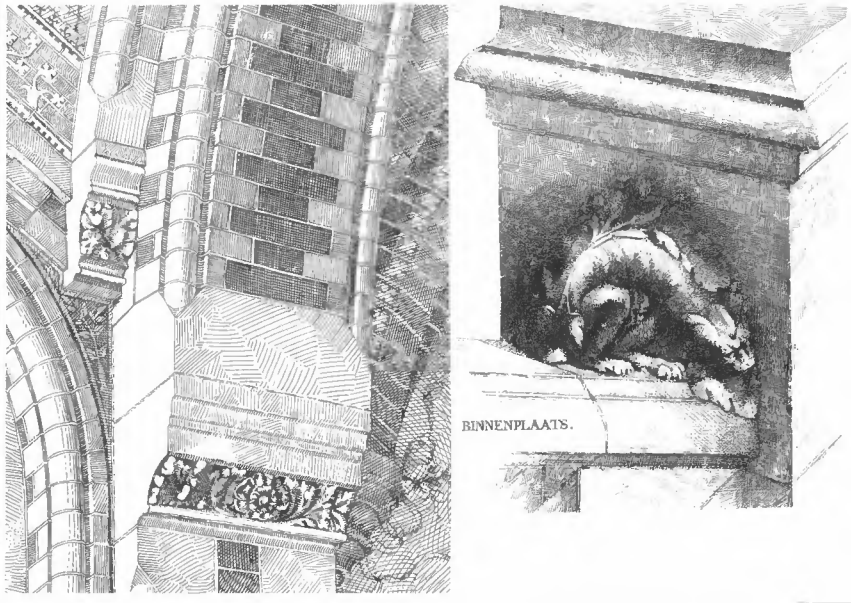


Around 1900 there were many architects who, just like Berlage, were striving after fundamental renewal in architecture. Such as Willem Kromhout who in 1898 designed the American Hotel in Amsterdam, built in 1903. (Photo: Dutch Architectural Institute)

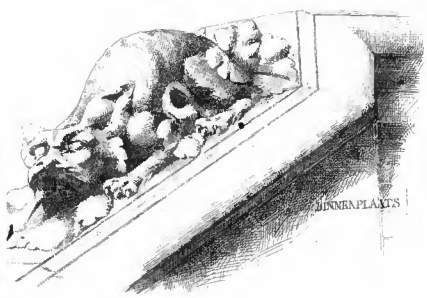
Renewal

In Dutch architectural history, Petrus Josephus Hubertus Cuypers* is generally seen as the great renewer. On an international level his ideas have had little influence; they were based too much on the work of the Frenchman, Eugene-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879). But in the Netherlands he set in motion a process which can still best be described as a quest for the true essence of architecture. A quest which is very much a dismantling, a systematic stripping down of architecture.

In Cuypers' actual work it is difficult to see this. In his Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (1885) what is immediately noticeable, rather, is the excess of late Gothic-early Renaissance ornamentation. Cuypers also argued in favour of



Architectural details of the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum by P.J.H. Cuypers: a profusion of late Gothic, early Renaissance decoration (see also page 26).



a return to the late Gothic because for him this period embodied honest, craftsman-like architecture. In this fashion he wanted to bring back inspiration to architecture, restore to it an enthusiasm which he believed had been missing for a century and a half. This choice of the neo-Gothic led to much discussion. When in 1885 in Utrecht there was a plan to build a new monumental university building, the architect chosen was E.H. Gugel. His design, in the style of the neo-renaissance, would stand at right angles to the Gothic Dom (Cathedral), whose old cloister had just been restored by Cuypers. It seemed simple, but it turned into a lengthy wrangle. The government were not in favour of a neo-renaissance building and commissioned Cuypers to make a neo-Gothic design. For years there were violent discussions and it was only in 1894 that the university building was completed. In Dutch renaissance style, after a design by Gugel. But as detached as possible from the Dom.

It is an example of how Cuypers's ideas could lead to turmoil. However, it meant that people were once again thinking about architecture and it cannot be denied that Cuypers, with his resolute stand, prepared the way for Hendrik Pieter Berlage. Berlage, who just like Cuypers believed in honesty and craftsmanship, but who wanted to penetrate even further into the essence of the building. In his designs around the turn of the century, he step by step removed much unnecessary ballast from architecture, until he had almost reached the soberness of Roman forms while retaining a characteristic, individual style.

His Beurs in Amsterdam (1903) must have hit Dutch architecture like a blow from a sledgehammer. Not only was the design kept secret for a long time, it proudly flaunted its intentions: to once again build a building, free from all ornamental tendencies, with an individual form and an individual spatial perception.

In a certain sense Berlage was an iconoclast who, just like the mob who plundered the churches in 1556, turned against superstition. But just as in the sixteenth century iconoclasm, the building remained intact. Enthusiastically as Berlage desired a new architectural style, his work was too much rooted in the architecture of previous centuries.

In Search Of The Essence

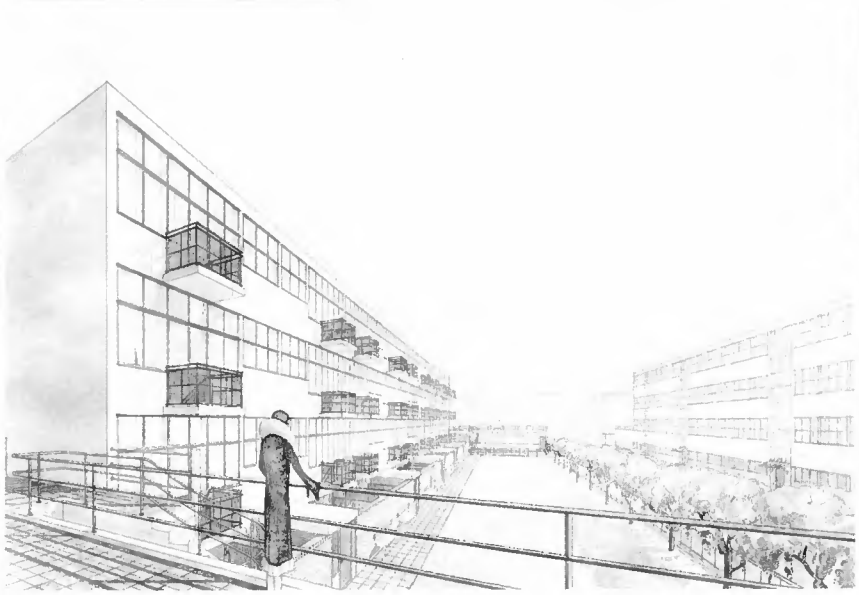
Berlage's search for the essence of architecture was very much part of the new age. All through the twentieth century this would be a recurring theme in Dutch architecture, with new sources being continually tapped to get at that essence.

This has certainly been the case since the end of the First World War when the New Realism or neoplasticism was propagated in the journal *De Stijl* by people like Theo van Doesburg, Gerrit Rietveld and Piet Mondrian. Looking back at the development of architecture it could be said that neoplasticism most closely resembles the stripped-down, whitewashed church interiors at the end of the sixteenth century where the light entered so mercilessly through the high, clear Gothic windows.

The building was stripped down to its skeleton. Only colours and the positioning of surfaces determined the relation of the building to the surrounding, universal space.

Dismantlement, the building stripped down to a bare, functional skeleton. That is also the case in the work of the functionalist architects Leendert Cornelis van der Vlugt (1894-1936), Jacobus Johannes Pieter Oud (1890-1963), Jan Duiker* and Bernard Bijvoet (1889-1979). Their searching however does not derive, as in the neoplasticists, from the almost mystical quest for a relationship

The interior of Berlage's Beurs - a revolutionary new spatial experience for that time. (Archiphoto)



with the universal, but more from a practical, functional approach to the building, in which there is plenty of space for the application of new materials and structures.

The difference between the De Stijl movement and the functionalists can be nicely illustrated by the fact that the most pronounced neoplastic building, the Schröder house in Utrecht by Rietveld, is nevertheless built in traditional materials like brickwork, plastered or bare, and wood, with only a little concrete; what was new was the use of a few steel columns to bear the balconies.

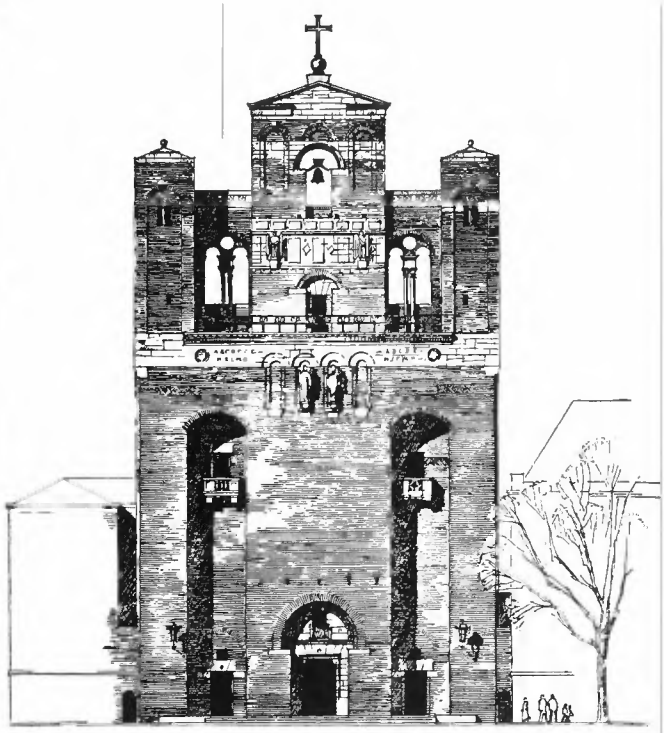
In contrast, the Van Nelle factory in Rotterdam, functionalist *par excellence*, is built in reinforced concrete, glass and steel. Although the De Stijl group, certainly in the person of Theo van Doesburg, and the more functionally orientated builders had a lot of contact with like-minded movements in Germany (the Bauhaus) and France, and there also influences from America (Frank Lloyd Wright, Henry Hobson Richardson), it can still be said that both groups developed quite autonomously, at least by Dutch standards.

Top left
A fundamental design, which remained unbuilt, by the architect J.J.P. Oud for the Rotterdam suburb of Blijdorp, from 1931. In the 1920s Oud built a number of other functionalist low-rise housing blocks which were particularly notable for their white colour, for example in the Rotterdam Kiefhoek and in Hoek van Holland.
(Photo: Dutch Architectutal Institute)

Top right
The Rotterdam Bergpolder block from 1934 by W. van Tijen was the first gallery flat building in the world; a functionalist experiment to see if highrise was suitable for family dwellings.
(Photo: Wim Ruigrok)

The Van Nelle factory (1926-1930) in Rotterdam by J.A. Brinkman and L.C. van der Vlugt is one of the most convincing examples of functionalist architecture in the Netherlands.
(Archiphoto)

The Rietveld-Schröder house in Utrecht, from 1924, the manifesto of 'neoplasticism'.
(Photo: Frank den Oudsten)



Design by M.J. Grandpré Molière for rebuilding of a Catholic church in The Hague. Molière aimed to base a design not on functional requirements alone, but on spiritual values too.

Archetype And Fundamental Image

In the 1930s a group of architects led by the Delft professor Jan Grandpré Molière (1883-1972) were looking in a completely different fashion for the essence of architecture. Instead of dismantling the building down to the skeleton this group was looking more for the traditional fundamental image, the archetype of the building. In the Dutch architectural world in the 1950s this search was dismissed as a conservative reaction to developments in the 1920s. And it cannot be denied that with Molière, conservatism did play an important role, but that detracts little from the sincerity of their search for a new, contemporary form for the buildings.

Scandinavian architecture especially, with its pure simplicity and its humanist approach provided much inspiration for this group, which for the sake of convenience was referred to as the Delft school. This name has acquired too many associations with the vehement discussions of the 1950s, and is too much identified with the large number of architects who out of laziness continued to adhere to traditional forms and do not really understand Molière's real message. The image becomes clearer if Molière is seen as a searcher for the essence of the building, not so much as a spatial fact but as a perceptual world for people. He expressed that search eruditely in words and in doing so spurred on many others.

Such as Dom Hans van der Laan*, who as a monk, spent decades stripping architecture down to its skeleton, but did not find the solution in a control of space through colour and surfaces (as in De Stijl), nor in an eternally valid archetype (as with Molière) nor even less in the making visible of the bare skeleton (as in the functionalists). On the contrary, Van der Laan sought the solution in fundamental research in the field of 'the spatial experience'.

The State Of The Art

The fact that Molière's basic idea, that architecture is based not only on functional requirements but also on spiritual grounds, turned out to be still topical later, can be seen from a statement by Aldo van Eyck* (1918), who after the Second World War developed into one of the most important architects: 'Molière got hold of the right stick, but the wrong end of it.' By this, Van Eyck meant that Molière looked back too much to the past.

Van Eyck himself also went in search of the essence. He looked for the fundamental image, the archetype, chiefly in non-Western cultures where he believed that image had not yet been obscured. Van Eyck's strength is that he translated the impressions acquired into contemporary forms with a sharp eye for the experiential values of present-day inhabitants.

While many designers applied the modern acquisitions of new materials and building techniques almost uninhibitedly in the service of the profit-seeking managers of a new, prosperous world (which includes the public housing officials in the Netherlands), Van Eyck constantly asked himself how the child, the resident, the user, the passerby would perceive the building.

The problem of all those searchers in the footsteps of Berlage has always been that developments in the twentieth century occur so rapidly. And above all, that there was relatively little need for buildings which were doctrinally correct. Again and again there were whimsical, fashionable eruptions which laid more emphasis on the appearance than on a well-thought-out spatial impact. Sometimes these schools arose in the Netherlands itself, such as the Amsterdam School from 1916 onward, or in the 1970s the idea that the form of houses should be determined by an excess of privacy and intimacy.

Sometimes the inspiration came from abroad (from Art Nouveau to the glass

Current interior of Aldo van Eyck's Burgerweeshuis in Amsterdam, which dates from the 1960s, and was renovated in 1990-91 by Van Eyck and Hannie van Eyck-Van Roojen and converted into accommodation for the internationally oriented architectural training institute, the Berlage Instituut. (Photo: Wim Ruigrok)

palaces of America) and sometimes from the past as in the contemporary baroque of the architect Sybold van Ravesteyn (1889-1983) or the neo-classicism of the 1980s.

Dutch architecture is at its strongest when it translates a strong idea (whether that comes from our own culture or from another, from antiquity for example) in an individual manner into the perceptual universe of the ordinary Dutch citizen. That was the strength of the Dutch renaissance, that was the strength of the canal buildings, that was also the strength of De Stijl and is still the strength of Van Eyck and his followers. This architecture is generally not imposing, often it is not even dazzling. But it is architecture that can be lived in. That this is not always achieved, is shown by the history of recent centuries in which periods of self-confidence alternate with periods of imitation, sometimes with merit, sometimes not. In the twentieth century that alternation occurs quicker than it used to. If in the 1980s there was much falling back on the heritage of the 1920s, that is in reality the same pattern as that of the 'neo' styles of the nineteenth century. But such a style can also be the basis for a renewal, for the winning of a new élan.

More profound, if less noticeable, are the attempts to expand on the existing architectural forms. In 1990s, the younger architects are increasingly seeking a contemporary form coupled with ingenious, flexible floor plans. In their quest they are probably still following mostly in the footsteps of Berlage, who best shows the trend of this century: search, search and search again.

Buildings over and beside the Rotterdam traffic artery Blaak (1978-1984) by architect Piet Blom, who since the early 1970s has been experimenting with forms to realise a 'housing forest'. That is, dwellings built on piles, in the form of a tilted cube for example, together forming a tight urban weave. The pencil-shaped block of flats beside the bridge of cube dwellings was also designed by Piet Blom.
(Photo: Luuk Kramer)

A dwelling in Rijnsweerd from 1982 where, using brick, the architects A. Alberts, Max van Huut and Piet Schaap formed organic architecture around the concrete skeleton of a standard family home.
(Archiphoto)

Experimental 'villa' (1990) in Almere, designed by Archipel Ontwerpers who in it realised four dwellings with extremely diverse standard floor plans for people with different 'life-styles'.
(Photo: Sandra Albers)

The Arc

H I T E C T S

Group portrait of the participants in CIAM 1931 in Brussels with, among others, Le Corbusier, Jan Duiker and Cor van Eesteren.

The Zuiderkerk in Amsterdam. (Archiphoto)

The Westerkerk, in a painting by P.P. Joseph. (Photo: Rijksmuseum Stichting)

Hendrick de Keyser (1562-1621)

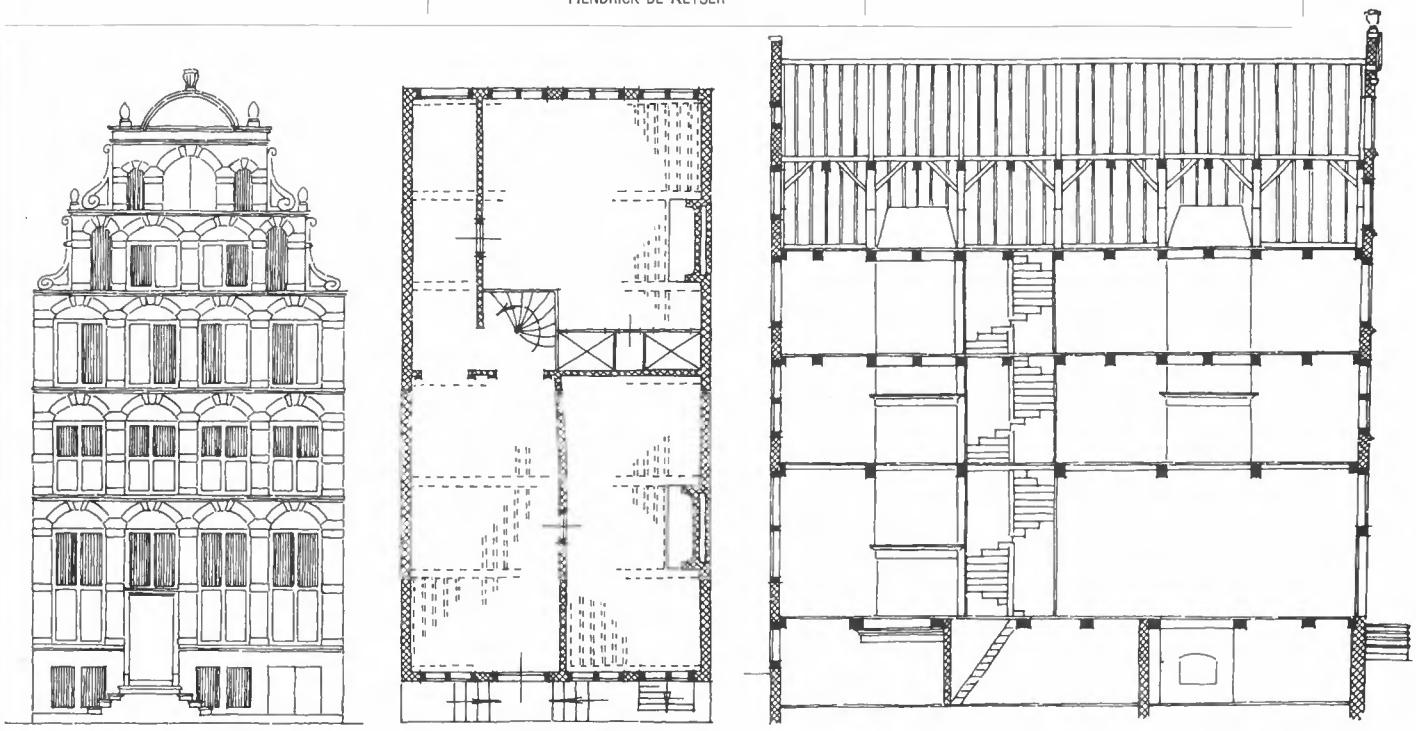
Looking back from our vantage point in the present, we see Hendrick de Keyser as the architect of many buildings which would determine the face of Amsterdam in the Golden Age, as the first half of the seventeenth century is called in the Netherlands. He designed the Zuiderkerk (1603-1614), the Westerkerk (1620-1638) and the Beurs on the Rokin (1607-1611, demolished in 1838), and probably also the crowns of the Montelbaans tower (1606) and the Munt tower (1620), as well as the Oostindisch Huis (1606). But at that time, the profession of architect meant something completely different than our current notions. There was no special training for it and the building process itself was a tradition of craftsmanship which was mainly in the hands of carpenters, bricklayers and sculptors. For the exterior design, examples (taken from books) from Holland and abroad were used, which were then given a personal interpretation.

De Keyser, born in Utrecht, originally trained as a sculptor with his fellow townsman Cornelis Bloemaert (1540-1596). When in 1591 the latter moved to Amsterdam to there become city sculptor and stone carver, De Keyser moved with him, and in 1595 succeeded him in both his functions. As such, he was probably involved in designing all the buildings erected by the city, but this was in collaboration with the city mason Cornelis Danckerts de Rij (1561-1631) and the city carpenter Hendrick Jacobsz Staets (1558-1631). Therefore there are plenty of contradictory accounts of who designed what exactly.

Another reason why the various sources contradict each other is that the relationship between Staets and De Keyser was often not very good. In 1628 a rhymed pamphlet appeared which ascribed practically everything built in Amsterdam between 1594 and 1627 to Staets. In 1631, partly as a reaction to this, appeared the book 'Architectura Moderna, ofte Bouwing van onsen Tyt', by the painter, poet and architect Salomon de Bray (1597-1664), in which practically all the important buildings since 1614 were ascribed to De Keyser (that is, only the later work, more sober and already somewhat inclined towards classicism) and the name of Staets is not even mentioned.

Nevertheless, architectural and art historians are nowadays almost certain that in the collaborative efforts with Staets and Danckerts, it was usually De Keyser who created the exterior forms of the building. He had a virtuoso, individual style of designing: both his many facades and towers are confident, individual creations in a renaissance formal language which is sometimes somewhat baroque, with pillars, pilasters and numerous sculptured ornaments.

De Keyser's great models, which were also those of his contemporary Lieven de Key (1561-1627) from Haarlem for example, were to be found in Italy and France (and their derivatives in England where the lessons of the Renaissance masters had already been put into practice). But both De Keyser and De Key developed a typical Dutch variant, less monumental then most models from abroad, with the stone of the originals being to a great extent replaced by brick,



A typical Amsterdam canal house designed by De Keyser (Herengracht 284).

the classic Dutch building material. That this made exuberant ornamentation possible is to be seen mainly from the big canal houses which De Keyser designed on the first part of the recently dug canal girdle: the Bartolotti house (Herengracht 170-172; 1617) and the house with the heads (Keizersgracht 123; 1662).

De Keyser also built outside Amsterdam, and designed the facade of the town hall in Delft (1618-1620) and the crowns of the St. Lebuinuskerk in Deventer (1612) and the Munt in Enkhuizen (1617), among others. He also continued to work explicitly as a 'stonecarver' and for example, he himself carved the tomb of William the Silent in the Nieuwe Kerk in Delft (1614-1621) and the statue of Erasmus (only cast in 1622) which still stands in Rotterdam. During his lifetime, in fact, he was chiefly renowned for his work in sculpture, and it was only after his death that his fame as architect would supersede it. De Brays' book 'Architectura Moderna' served for at least fifty years after its appearance as a book of patterns in the Netherlands and abroad, and that was precisely the period in which Amsterdam reached the peak of its power and acquired the lion's share of world trade. That is why architecture in the manner of De Keyser was, and sometimes still is, to be found in such places as England, Scandinavia, Russia and the Baltic countries, and even in the New World.

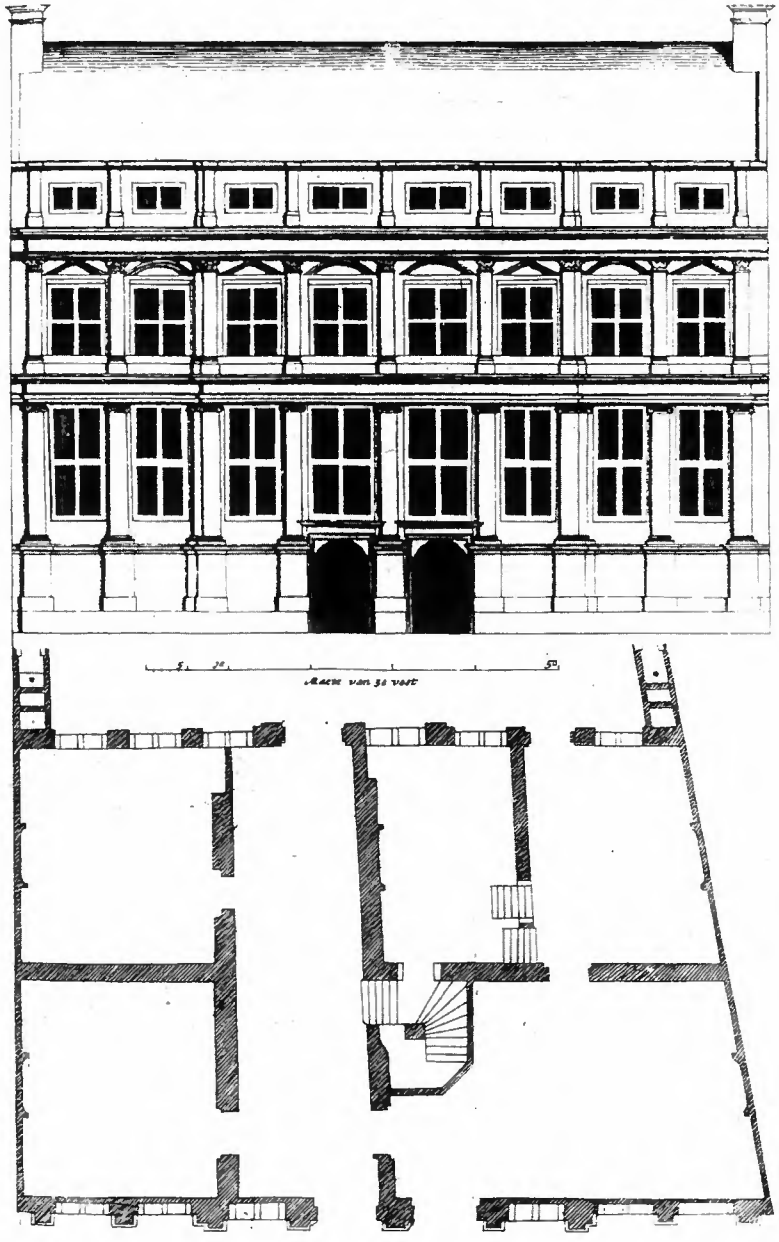
The statue of Erasmus in Rotterdam. (Archiphoto)

Jacob van Campen.

Jacob van Campen (1595-1656)

Jacob van Campen is the most important architect of the classical building style in the Netherlands; a style which never attained the popularity here which it had in neighbouring countries. But Van Campen was also one of the first to introduce this classicism into the Netherlands, and in an impressive manner. Born in Haarlem into a wealthy family, Van Campen had a broad cultural education, which led him to take up the art of painting, joining the St Lucas guild in 1614. In the years after this he probably travelled a lot, especially to Italy where he must have been struck by the architecture there, particularly the architecture based on classical rules of Andrea Palladio (1508-1580), who in his buildings and writings had resurrected the architectural rules and the doctrine of proportion of Vitruvius (first century BC). This made such an impression on Van Campen that when he got back to the Netherlands he appeared to have only one goal: to achieve a Dutch variant of the Italian classicism, suitable for the climate and way of life here. It is often said that in this he was reacting against the exuberant, decorative Renaissance architecture which was at its peak in the Netherlands at that time, with such names as the Amsterdammer Hendrick de Keyser but also Van Campen's fellow townsman Lieven de Key.

The Coymans house.



Van Campen's first known building is the double dwelling of the Coymans brothers on the Keizersgracht in Amsterdam (1626): an austere, monochrome building with a facade constructed strictly according to the rules of classical architecture. This building caused some commotion in Amsterdam but was also immediately greatly admired by the poet-architect Salomon de Bray (see also Hendrick de Keyser) who included some prints of it in his book 'Architectura Moderna, ofte Bouwing van onsen Tyt', which until around half a century after its publication in 1631, served as a book of models for architects in both the Netherlands and abroad. But even though that facade was so revolutionary in its time, the building was of little architectural interest. Van Campen's designs ended at the facade, while in fact the essence of classical architecture is the rational floor plan. It didn't alter the fact that the Coymanshuis in Amsterdam had the effect of 'a catalyst for a new style': from then on, classicist facades would appear in considerable numbers, on the canal girdle.

Van Campen's personal breakthrough as architect only came about ten years later, and was greatly helped by his friendship with Constantijn Huygens (1559-1687) from The Hague. This was a man who like Van Campen came from a wealthy family and moved in the highest literary and artistic circles but who also had great political power, as he was secretary to Prince Frederik Hendrik, then stadholder of the Republic of the United Netherlands. Huygens himself had acquired a weakness for classicism during his travels to Italy and England and was a great admirer of both Palladio and the English classicist Inigo Jones (1573-1652). He also practiced architecture, to a modest extent, and in the early 1630s had even started to design his own official residence in The Hague. He must have met Van Campen around this time and the latter's ideas appealed to him so much that he asked him for advice on the design of his own house.

The Huygens house with the Mauritshuis in the background. (Municipal Archives, The Hague)

The Dam and the New Town Hall, as painted by G.A. Berkheyde. (Photo: Rijksmuseum Stichting)

De Burgerzaal in the Amsterdam Palace on the Dam. (Photo: Bart Hofmeester)

According to diary entries by Huygens, Van Campen helped him 'like a true Vitruvius'. By later introducing Van Campen to Prince Frederik Hendrik as the real architect of this official residence, at a politically opportune moment, Huygens was able to ensure that within a few years Van Campen would be asked to build a remarkable number of country houses and palaces. Examples are the present Paleis Noordeinde (around 1640) for Prince Frederik Hendrik and what is now the Mauritshuis (1633), both in The Hague. He also received a number of large commissions in Amsterdam, such as the Theatre on the Keizersgracht (1637). In his birthplace of Haarlem he designed the strictly classical Nieuwe Kerk, whose severity is made even more noticeable by the fact that it was built directly against one of Lieven de Key's most exuberant towers. In 1643 came the commission for what would be his most famous work, the Amsterdam Town Hall on the Dam. The commission for this colossal building was problematical from the very first, as the town hall was a political football in a competition for prestige between different power groups. The design had to be altered numerous times and even during the construction so many problems cropped up that these probably contributed greatly to Van Campen's withdrawal in 1654 to his country estate near Amersfoort, and he was not even present at the official inauguration in 1655. However, the actual execution probably did not suffer from this, as it was probably not unusual for Van Campen to leave the finishing touches and technical details of the design to others. His buildings in The Hague were often built in collaboration with Pieter Post (1608-1669) and in Amsterdam, it is suspected that a number were built with Philips Vingboons (1607-1678, see next biography). The finishing touches to the Amsterdam Town Hall, which actually only functioned as a town hall for about a century and nowadays serves as Royal Palace, was mainly the work of the City Architect, Daniel Stalpaert (1615-1684).

Philips Vingboons (1607-1678)

In describing the work of architect Philips Vingboons you are also describing the life of the prominent citizens of Amsterdam in the period when this city had reached its pinnacle of prosperity and power. Vingboons was the man who, more than any other, was able to give shape, in their dwellings, to their desire to display their prominence.

Philips Vingboons was the second son of the painter David Vinckboons (later simplified to Vingboons) almost all of whose six sons ended up in the family business as engravers, mapmakers and architects. It was a family of high standing with which the most important citizens of Amsterdam had dealings, even if it was only because Amsterdam's power was directly related with trade to distant regions, for which good maps were absolutely essential.

Partly because of this family background the architectural work of Philips Vingboons is well documented. In 1648, together with his brother Johannes he published a book of plates called 'Afbeelsels der voornaemste gebouwen uyt alle die Philips Vingboons geordineert heeft' which included elevations, floor plans and short written commentaries on 28 designs, the majority of which had also been built. The book was a success and was reprinted a number of times before the end of the century. Together with the 'Tweede deel van de afbeelsels der voornaemste gebouwen uyt alle die Philips Vingboons geordineert heeft' of 1674, it still gives a good idea of both the work of this architect and the kind of housing found desirable by powerful Amsterdammers of that period.

Philips Vingboons, together with Pieter Post

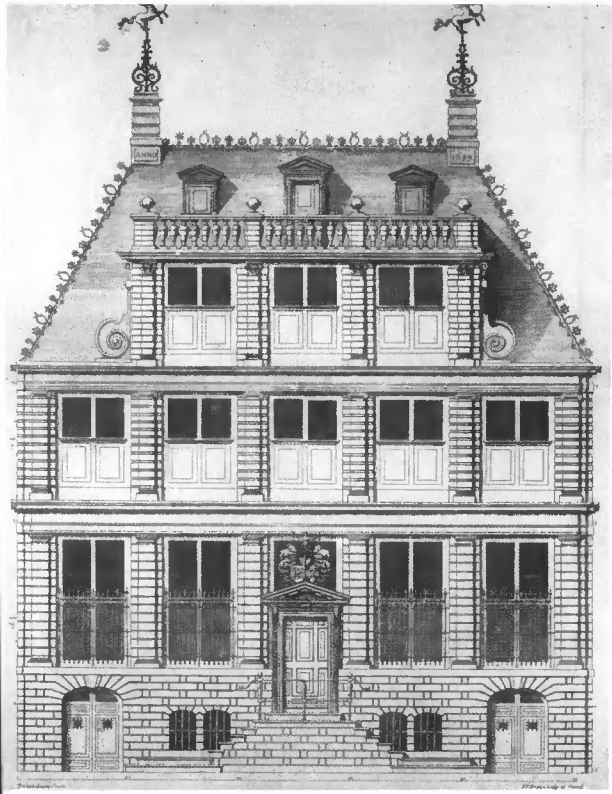
(1608-1669) and Arent van 's-Gravesande (1559-1662), for example, is usually counted as one of the Dutch classicists who followed in the footsteps of Jacob van Campen. It is suspected that Philips studied with Van Campen and it has even been established that he was once paid for structural drawings of buildings which were designed by Van Campen. But whether he made those drawings before, during or even after the actual building is no longer possible to ascertain.

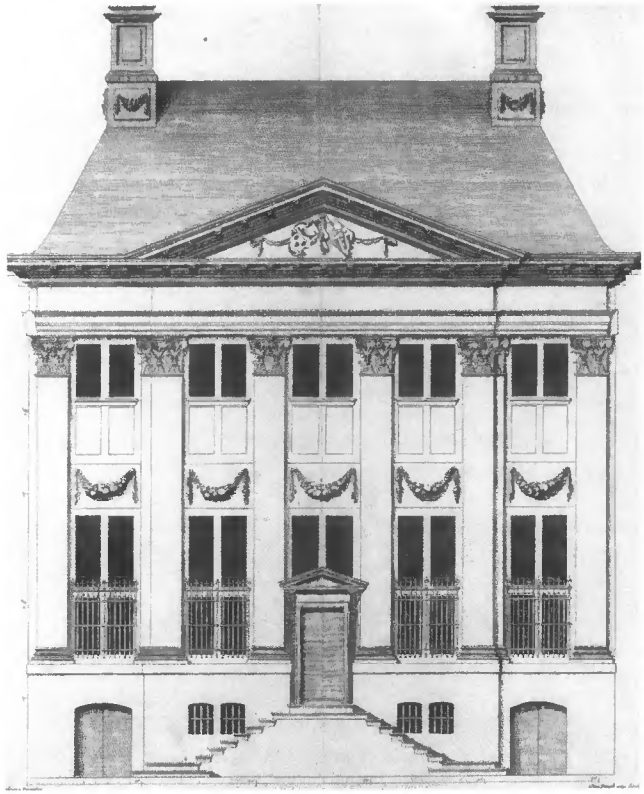
The earliest buildings which, thanks to 'De Afbeelsels', can definitely be attributed to Philips Vingboons date from 1637 and they do indeed have facades in classical style, which reflect knowledge of the rules of the Ancients as they were also applied by Italian architects like Palladio. They show that for Vingboons, pure proportions and a harmonious composition came first and that he found decoration less important. But to a great extent his designs were determined by the desires of the clients and the specific requirements of the relevant site.

It can be said, however, that in the many country houses and stately homes which Philips Vingboons originally for Amsterdam governors, the facades often have a more severe and dignified appearance than is the case with the canal houses from the same period. Along the canals, on narrow sites mostly, he designed modest houses with many varieties of playfully decorated neck-gables (so many in fact, that irrespective of who designed them these gables are now called Vingboons gables). If they nevertheless turned out to be impressive, that was only because there were numbers of them alongside each other, such as the two big ones beside two small ones for Jacob Cromhout on Herengracht 364-370 (1660-1662). There is also a great variety of forms to be seen on the many canal houses designed by Philips Vingboons, which were built on sites at least double the normal width. Richly decorated, for example, with an accumulation of small rusticated pilasters, was the magisterial building from 1642 for the powerful and ostentatious Joan Huydecoper (six times Mayor of Amsterdam, director of the United East Indies Company, knighted, patron of the arts and amateur architect) at Singel 548 (destroyed in the Second World War). In contrast, the almost as broad house at Kloveniersburgwal 95 built in the same year, for the rich but less ostentatious merchant's son Joan Poppen, is remarkable for its austere monumentality with pilasters of the Corinthian order across almost the entire facade height.

Nevertheless, it was in this latter genre of broad city houses that Vingboons would develop an individual style from 1660 onwards; the so-called 'severe style' in which the facades gave the monumental impression of the country houses thanks to their symmetric construction around a strongly accentuated middle section. More than had previously been the case, these facades also

The double house of Jacob Cromhout in Amsterdam.





Left
The house of Joan Huydecoper.

Right
The house of Joan Poppen.

Huis Van Schuylenburch, The Hague. (Photo: Hugo Verschoor)

formed a unity with the floor plan in which the middle section often consisted of a central hallway around which the rooms were arranged as symmetrically as possible. In the second part of the Amsterdam girdle of canals especially, which was laid out from 1660 onward, between the Leidsegracht and the Amstel, Vingboons was given the chance to realise some similar city houses on Herengracht and Keizersgracht, canals specially reserved for leading citizens. They are the most monumental canal buildings ever realised, and partly for that reason this section of Herengracht is called the 'Golden Bend'.

Daniel Marot (1661-1752)

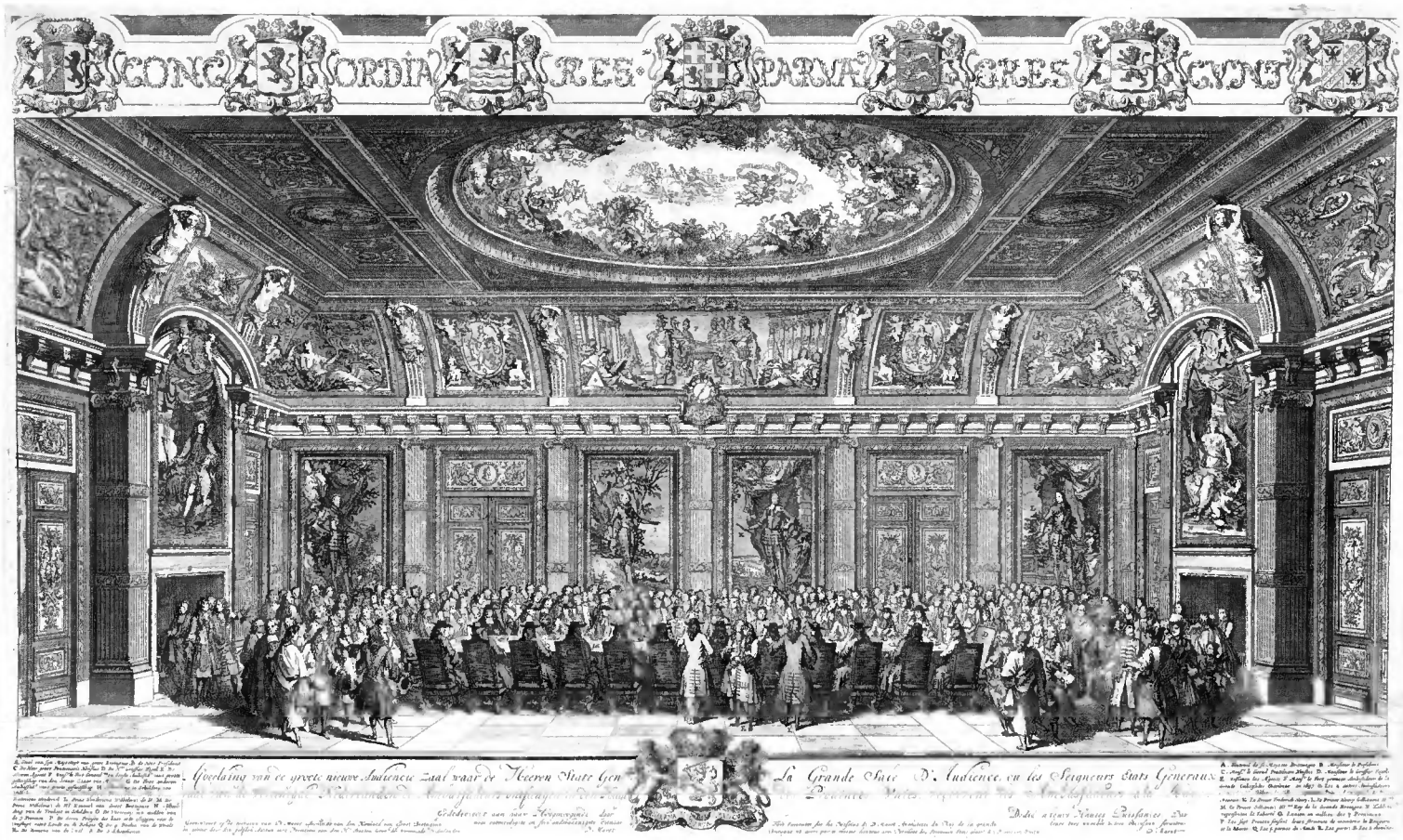
In the Netherlands Daniel Marot is known as the major designer of the houses of the rich in the eighteenth century. He was born in France where his father was architect and engraver at the French court – professions which were there strongly associated. Whereas in the seventeenth century craftsman-like knowledge and skills were still the main thing, this part of the architectural profession was now left to the woodcarvers, sculptors, plasterers and carpenters who realised, often in a virtuoso fashion, the designs of an architect who might also be an engraver, painter or draughtsman.

Daniel Marot.

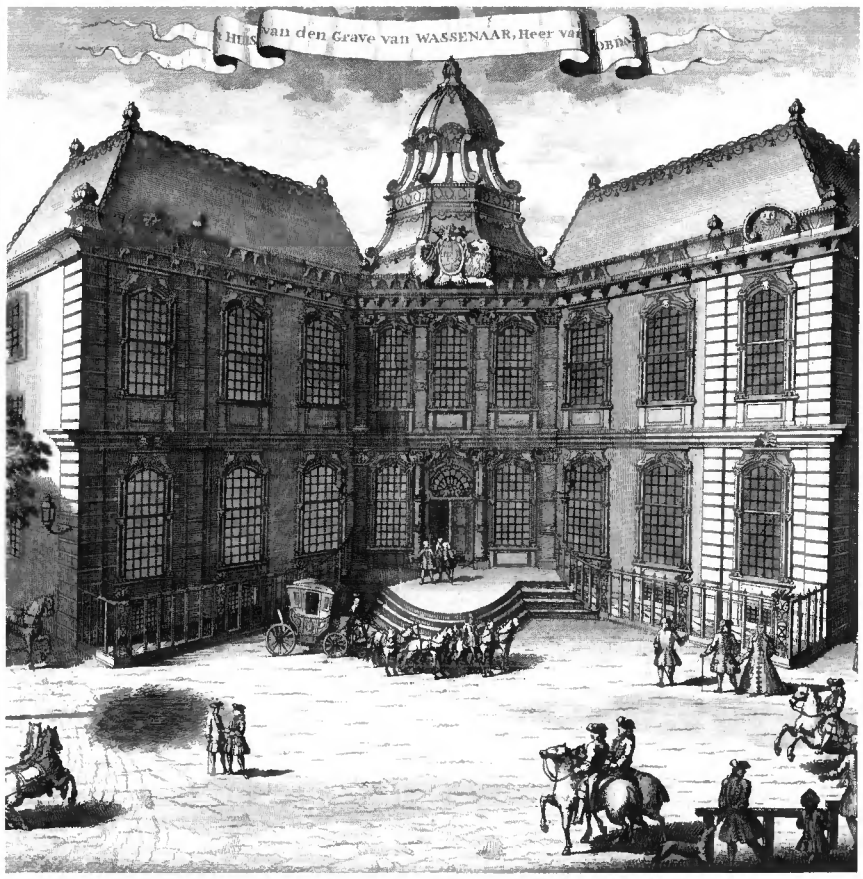
Marot had already been working for a number of years as an independent engraver and collaborating with his father when in 1686 he fled to Holland with numerous fellow Huguenots because Louis XIV had abolished religious freedom. In the same year, he found employment among the highest circles in the Netherlands, where despite the political controversy with France, French culture set the tone. Soon, he even entered the personal service of Stadholder William III, where he worked as 'dessinateur', which meant that he had to make both the exterior of the building and the gardens and the interior, including carpeting, furniture, wall paintings and stuccowork, into a harmonious whole. As such, he was in charge of the extension and renovation of Paleis het Loo, which after the Glorious Revolution of 1688/89 in which William III and Mary also became King and Queen of England was no longer considered big and impressive enough. His famous interior of the Treveszaal in the Binnenhof in The Hague, built 1698 as a Royal reception hall and conference hall of the Provincial States, is thought to be one of the purest examples of Louis XIV style in the Netherlands. Characteristic of it is that the exuberant allegorical pictures and decorations are placed in a strict architectural order, a comprehensive plan.

Until the death of William III in 1702 Marot received many commissions from the King to design interiors, renovations and temporary festive decors, some of them between 1694 and 1697 in England. After 1702 he applied himself for some time to the publication of his engravings, whose subjects ranged from palaces, city gates and complete country houses including their gardens, to interiors, ceilings, furniture and tombs. These publications were such a success with the prosperous middle class that he soon acquired a new clientele among the very wealthy in Amsterdam and The Hague.

In Amsterdam his work remained more or less confined to renovations and interiors but in The Hague he designed a number of houses so large and imposing that they were justifiably called city palaces. The best known are the Huis Schuylenburch on the Lange Vijverberg (1715); the Huis Wassenaer-Obdam on the corner of the Kneuterdijk and the Lange Voorhout (1723; later called Paleis Kneuterdijk) and the Huis Hugueton on the Lange Voorhout (1734; used as the Royal Library, now the Supreme Court). Characteristic of all these buildings is that they must have been modelled on the layout of the French city palaces, strictly symmetrical floor plans around a courtyard, although it was always necessary to make



concessions to the restrictions of the site. The always impressive entrances with Louis XIV decorations, in monumental but nevertheless austere facades, mostly built in stone, are directly derived from French examplars. However, Marot also gave this a 'Dutch' interpretation, presumably because his clients themselves had outspoken ideas about the way the buildings to be designed should best display their wealth, erudition and refined artistic tastes. The interiors were probably also decorated in Louis XIV style, with exuberant stuccowork and illusionist painting, but it is not always clear to what extent Marot had a hand in this.



Huis Van Wassenaer Obdam, The Hague. (Photo: Municipal Archives The Hague) with floorplan)

Petrus J.H. Cuypers (1827-1921)

The significance of the architect Petrus Josephus Hubertus Cuypers for Dutch architecture, lies less in the buildings he left behind than in the role he played in laying the groundwork for the modern building of the twentieth century. He was opposed to what he considered the artificial, false architecture of the second half of the nineteenth century, the architecture of false decorations in a jumble of 'neo' styles, and sought a more honest architecture in which the outer

P.J.H. Cuypers (right) with Victor de Stuers. (see chapter 1)

form of a building was determined by the structure.

Cuypers was born in Roermond and studied architecture, painting and sculpture at the *Academie* in Antwerp, Belgium, where just as in the *Academie des Beaux Arts* in Brussels for example, the rules of classical architecture were almost the only criterion. Cuypers, however, developed a great interest in the Gothic, which he had become familiar with during a trip through Germany and which he saw as a style which was not only more honest than classicism, but also originated from an indigenous tradition and an indigenous Christian culture, in this case Catholic.

In 1850 he established himself as an independent architect in Roermond where, apart from dwellings, he received mainly commissions for churches – something which had a lot to do with the fact that from 1853 on, Catholics were once again allowed to build churches, after a long period in which the practice of their religion was forbidden. With these churches Cuypers was given his first chance to put the neo-Gothic into practice.

At the same time he argued for the uniting of art and craft, to which end he opened a studio in 1852 in Roermond for Christian decorative arts, where young artists could be trained in traditional skills, in much the same way as this had been done in the medieval guilds. Cuypers thought that architecture was the highest among the arts, the one which gathered all the other arts into itself, and he believed that every

Central Station, Amsterdam. (Archiphoto)

Cuypers' house in the Rijksmuseum.

attribute, every element of a building had to not only form a unity with the whole, but also display craftsmanship. Cuypers' ideas were close to those of the Englishman Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812-1852) and even more so to those of the Frenchman Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879), who from the middle of the nineteenth century had made a case for both the Gothic and the reassessment of traditional crafts. Particularly the books of Viollet-le-Duc, with whom Cuypers became friendly, became a sort of manual for Cuypers.

In 1865 Cuypers moved to Amsterdam where he soon had a flourishing architectural practice and also soon became part of the highest cultural circles. His commissions were still mainly for Catholic churches, not only in Amsterdam but throughout the entire country, including many extensive renovations. In Amsterdam he also became involved in town planning tasks which he partly tackled himself, such as the residential district on the present-day Museumplein and the Vondelstraat district.

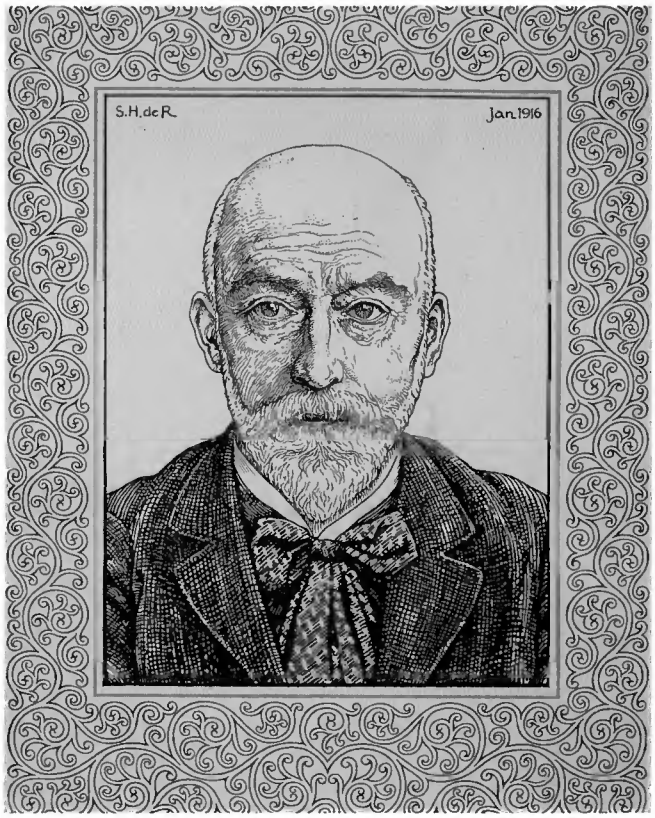
Cuypers did not go unchallenged; among Protestants in particular there was stiff resistance to the Catholic Cuypers. Nevertheless, through closed competitions, he received the commissions for the two most important state works of those years in Amsterdam: the Central Station (1882-1889, in collaboration with A.L. van Gendt) and the Rijksmuseum (1876-1885). In both buildings he implemented the Gothic style abominated by his opponents, even if he made some limited use of ornaments in Dutch renaissance style in order to meet the requirements of his clients, who had explicitly asked for a building in 'Old Dutch Style'.

Cuypers thought that there was a lack of trained craftsmen in Amsterdam, and therefore he founded a studio there too where artists were trained according to the medieval model: the 'Bouwloods' (Lodge), originally established in the rooms of the building overseer of the Rijksmusuem which was then under construction, and continued after 1879 as 'The Quellinus handcrafts and drawing school'.

A number of architects who would play an important role in the early twentieth century spent some years being trained there: Karel Petrus Cornelis de Bazel (1869-1923), Johannes Ludovicus Matthieu Lauweriks (1864-1932) and Hendrikus Wijdeveld (1885-1987).

Hendrik P. Berlage (1856-1934)

'The father of modern architecture' is the title sometimes given to Hendrik Petrus Berlage, and it is a fact that he played a leading role in the transitional period from the architecture of the nineteenth century, based on stylistic imitations, to the more rational and structure-based architecture of the twentieth century. But it is a title which was only thought of later, because during his life Berlage was above all a man of his own time, who participated intensively in the current discussions and actively looked for 'a new architecture'. However, when in the 1920s a younger generation actually gave birth to modern architecture, he did not feel much affinity with them.



H.P. Berlage

Berlage studied architecture at the Polytechnische School in Zurich from 1875 to 1878, and in the years after this

Design for the Beurs from 1885.

travelled through Italy, Austria and Germany. In 1882 he began his architectural practice in Amsterdam, for the first three years with Th. Sanders. In the 1880s and 90s he designed a great number of villas, houses and offices in and around Amsterdam, in an eclectic style. It was only in the 1890s that like many of his contemporaries he gradually became interested in a new architecture which would relate better to the new era ushered in by the industrial revolution which had also reached the Netherlands. In this he did not feel any attraction to the outer forms of Art Nouveau or Jugendstil: he returned to the fundamentals of architecture and on the basis of structural possibilities and a practical layout he tried to achieve a new architecture. In practice this meant that the exterior of his buildings became increasingly sober, with the structure being shown more clearly while there was less and less decoration. This development can best be seen in his designs for the Beurs in Amsterdam (1884-1903), where the design he submitted for the original competition of 1884 is a specimen of

Definitive design for the Beurs, 1902.

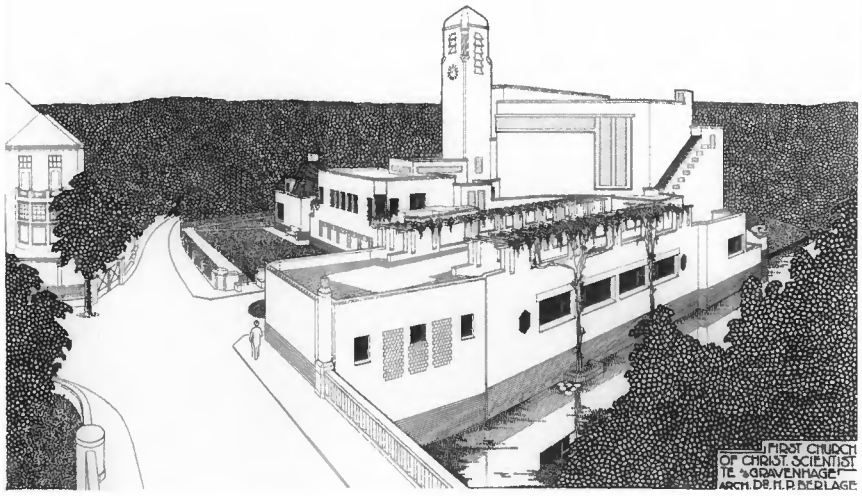
eclecticism, while the design of 1898 which was eventually realised is known as the revolutionary beginning of modern, functionalist architecture. The Beurs was immediately the subject of a storm of criticism in Amsterdam, but established Berlage's name as an innovator.

In 1911 Berlage travelled to the United States where he was deeply impressed by the buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright. It influenced his architectural work, expressed above all in his Hubertusslot on the Hoge Veluwe (1915) and in the Municipal Museum of The Hague (1919-1934).

Although in his buildings, and in his many writings and lectures Berlage also championed an honest, functional architecture, he felt little sympathy for the younger generation who thought they were following in his footsteps and who were trying to reduce buildings almost to their structure, and saw in this 'the aesthetic of the future'. To the great disappointment of Jacobus Johannes Pieter Oud (1890-1963) Jan Duiker and G. Th. Rietveld he took a stand (during the CIAM in La Serraz in 1928, for example) against both the architecture of De Stijl and that of the new rationalism and showed a preference for the expressionist Amsterdam School. His last housing project, on the Mercatorplein in Amsterdam (1923) also showed expressionist traits.

Berlage was famous not only for his architecture, but also for his town planning work. The best known is the Plan for Amsterdam South (first plan 1900-1904; adjusted plan 1915-1917; built 1925-1940), in which a rather analytic, functional layout is combined with architectural monumentality.

Municipal Museum of The Hague. (Archiphoto)



Design for the First Church of Christian Science in The Hague. (Photo: Dutch Architectutal Institute)

Michel de Klerk (1884-1923)

Michel de Klerk was the uncrowned King of the Amsterdam School, that exuberant, expressionist brick architecture which flourished in Amsterdam at the beginning of the century. He is also a legend, a genius, who put hardly any of his ideas into words, because he 'only spoke in his buildings.'

De Klerk was born into a working class Amsterdam family. It appears that the architect Eduard Cuypers (1859-1927), cousin of the older P.J.H. Cuypers once saw him drawing in school in such a promising fashion that he immediately offered the fourteen year old boy work in his studio, the workshop for 'Bouwen binnenhuiskunst', where in imitation of P.J.H. Cuypers' building workshop, traditional crafts were cultivated. During the twelve years which De Klerk then spent working in this studio, thanks to Cuypers' broad interests and the studio's liberal organisation he became familiar with all the important tendencies representing the new art in the Netherlands and abroad. There, he came to love craftsmanship, but also the decorative details and furniture which could form a whole with the architecture. The great models for this were the Arts and Crafts Movement with the Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), and the Viennese Sezession for example, but also Berlage's new architecture.

From the period De Klerk spent with Cuypers it is mainly his competition designs which have been preserved. He realised his first major commission in 1911, a year after he had started up on his own as an architect: a housing block in Amsterdam for the businessman Klaas Hille, in what was still a rather sober brick architecture. Only a few decorative elements and the powerful rhythmic character of the elevations provide a hint of the exuberant, sculptural architecture which De Klerk would later

Scheepvaarthuis, Amsterdam. (Photo: Dutch Architectural Institute)

realise and which he first displayed clearly in his contribution to the flamboyant Scheepvaarthuis in Amsterdam (1912-1916, architect Johan Melchior van der Mey (1878-1949) in collaboration with De Klerk and others).

From 1913 to 1920 he realised, under his own name, for the already mentioned Klaas Hille some housing blocks in the Amsterdam Spaarndammer district which would make him world-famous. The block which was soon nicknamed 'The Ship' in particular, is a small work of art in itself, right down to the smallest details, with its decorative curves, his innumerable decorations in iron, brick, wood and sculpture, its odd 'useless' tower and above all its powerful main form which is indeed reminiscent of a ship.

Although these buildings aroused some opposition from a number of architects, both old and young, the municipal authorities of Amsterdam were extremely pleased with this architecture, which meant that in the 1920s and 30s De Klerk and also a number of kindred spirits like Pieter Lodewijk Kramer (1881-1961), Van der Mey and Wijdeveld, were able to realise a great number of official buildings, housing blocks and schools in a similar, exuberant brick style. A style which was soon called the Amsterdam School and whose most important mouthpiece from 1915 to 1930 was the journal *Wendingen*, edited by Wijdeveld. In this journal, it can also be seen how closely the Amsterdam School was involved with other forms of applied arts and art, and how enthusiastically they sought inspiration from motifs and decorations from other cultures, particularly that of Indonesia, the then Dutch East Indies. In 1919/1920 De Klerk realised, with Piet Kramer, an extensive housing complex in Amsterdam South, which rivals the exuberance of the Spaarndammerplantsoen. In his later housing (including in Berlage's Plan for Amsterdam South) his architecure is much more austere.

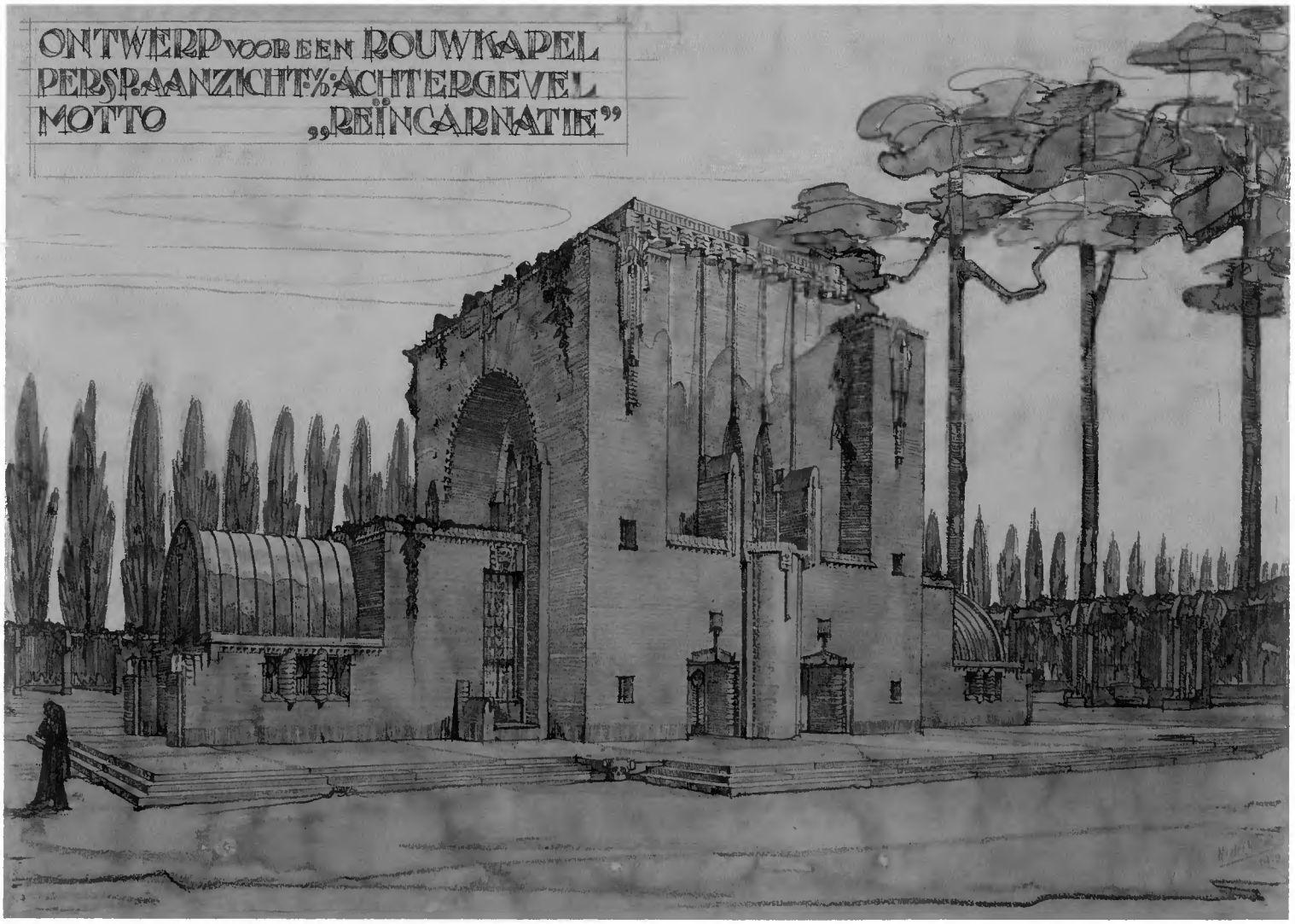
De Klerk had already established himself as the most inspiring architect of the Amsterdam School when he died in 1923, on his 39th birthday. The leading Dutch architectural journal, the *Bouwkundig Weekblad*, did not consider him worthy of a death notice, although shortly afterwards it recognised his great qualities by devoting a long article to an old competition design of his in which 'a whole new form of architecture was latent', through 'the unheard-of innovation of being decorative in the construction and constructive in the decoration and with great excess in both directions'. The journal *Wendingen* honoured him better, with four numbers devoted to his work.

Jan Duiker (1890-1935)

Johannes (Jan) Duiker is mainly known as the architect of the Zonnestraal sanatorium in Hilversum, one of the most famous examples of Nieuwe Bouwen in the Netherlands. Despite the fact that this complex has partly undergone extensive

P.L. Takstraat, Amsterdam South. (Archiphoto)

Spaarndammerbuurt, Amsterdam. (Photo: Dutch Architectural Institute)

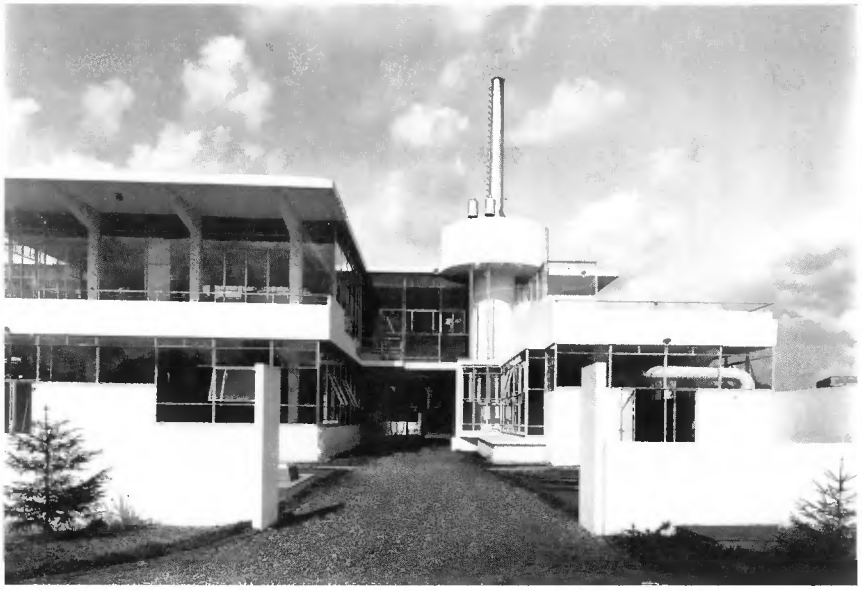


Design for a funeral chapel by De Klerk. Perspective view of the back.
(Photo: Dutch Architectural Institute)

rebuilding, and is partly also seriously neglected, it still appeals to the imagination, both here and abroad.
Duiker is therefore one of the most important architects of the Nieuwe Bouwen in the Netherlands, as it flourished in the 1920s. It could be said that he gave shape to the transition from the more traditional to the radical modern, as few others have done.
He studied architecture at the Polytechnische Hogeschool in Delft, where such a training, unlike the architectural training at Schools of Architecture, was not primarily seen as artistic. While a knowledge of systems of proportion for example was considered important, a proper technical training was clearly the first priority. There too he met his fellow student Bernard Bijvoet (1889-1979), who would be his partner from their graduation as constructional engineers in 1913 until 1925.
It was with Bijvoet that he received his first commission in 1917, as the result of a competition for the old people's complex Karenhuizen in Alkmaar. As in the housing blocks and houses in The Hague which Duiker and Bijvoet designed between 1918 and 1922, here too we find quite traditional buildings with load-bearing brickwork, even though its exterior is quite austere for that period and seems to have been inspired by both Berlage and Frank Lloyd Wright (the extent to which Duiker and Bijvoet must have been impressed by Wright can also be seen from their competition design from 1922 for the Chicago Tribune Tower).

Jan Duiker.

But around the middle of the 1920s a new period started. Through Berlage, Duiker and Bijvoet became involved with the 'Koperen Stelen Fonds', set up by diamond workers to use the proceeds of the waste products of diamond working, broken copper 'dops', to pay for the treatment of their fellow workers



Main building Zonnestraal. (Photo: Dutch Architectural Institute)

Grand Hotel Gooiland shortly after completion. (Dutch Architectural Institute. Photo: Eva Besnyö)

Nirwana flat, The Hague. (Archiphoto)

who suffered from tuberculosis. From that moment on, this 'Koperen Stelen Fonds', which also appealed to his social conscience, would become Duiker's most important client. The plans for a sanatorium were only gradually put into practice, and then with the greatest difficulty, partly because the diamond industry was undergoing something of a slump in the early 1920s. The first small buildings and first designs for Zonnestraal date from the beginning of the 1920s but the main building was only ready in 1928. It was in this period that Duiker definitively allied himself to the Nieuwe Bouwen (also called new rationalism), in which functionality is the only principle, where function is made the equal of beauty; it was an architecture which was in principle non-aesthetic. Duiker experimented more and more with new building materials: steel and reinforced concrete, and techniques which made a more efficient, lighter and more hygienic building possible.

Duiker was by no means alone in this, even though Bernard Bijvoet was to leave for Paris in 1925, and spend ten years there in order to work with the French architect Pierre Chareau. But Duiker, who in that same year moved to Amsterdam, found enough kindred spirits in that city, especially the group of young architects set up in 1927, 'De 8'. In the international journal *i 10* these young architects published a militant manifesto against 'luxury architecture' and in favour of 'rational architecture – more construction science than art'. From 1933, 'de 8', together with the allied Rotterdam group of architects 'De Opbouw', published its own journal: 'De 8 en Opbouw', of which Duiker was editor in the first years. And the group around De 8 en Opbouw maintained in its turn contacts with followers of the International Style in other countries, especially via the international congresses of CIAM, with one of the most important sources of inspiration being the French-Swiss architect Le Corbusier (pseudonym of Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, 1875-1965). In doing so, Duiker set his face against not only derivative architecture and the Amsterdam School but also against modern architecture as this was propagated in the journal *De Stijl*, where the artistic and spiritual element was considered essential. Duiker, however, remained completely convinced that his attempts at extreme functionality, at an optimal use of the most modern technical possibilities to make buildings like machines, was the only way to produce architecture which would meet the requirements of the new age. His buildings radiate, above all else, this belief in technology and the future, even if they also owe their beauty to the harmonious proportions and careful finish and details which Duiker took for granted as being part of this. The number of important buildings realised by Duiker, apart from Zonnestraal, is limited by his premature death: the open air school in Amsterdam (1929-1930); the third technical school in Scheveningen (1930), the Nirwana flat in The Hague (1927-1930), and finally Grand Hotel 'Gooiland' in Hilversum (1933-1936), for which he could only make the initial sketches and which was completed by Pieter Elling (1897-1962) and G.W. Tuinman (1895), under Bijvoet's supervision.

Interior of Rietveld-Schröder House
(Photo: Frank den Oudsten)

Gerrit Th. Rietveld (1888-1964)

Gerrit Thomas Rietveld is chiefly known for his Rietveld-Schröder house in Utrecht, built in 1924 as a spectacular manifesto of the new, neoplastic approach to architecture which was expressed in the journal De Stijl. So new, that this house led Berlage, the innovator who was by then established, to reproach Rietveld in these terms: 'You are destroying what I built up.'

Certainly, here for the first time was architecture where the boundaries of the spaces were not determined by facades and walls, but by coloured surfaces and light. For the first time too, there was a complete break with a classic dwelling floor plan in favour of an open floor plan with sliding panels, while the transition from interior to exterior was also designed in a revolutionary manner: these run continuously into each other, as they penetrate each other, so to speak.

Before Rietveld became acquainted with what is nowadays called the De Stijl movement, he had already acquired a wide range of experience in the field of architecture and the applied arts. He was born the son of a Utrecht furniture maker, and started working with his father when still young. This work consisted mainly of making the furniture which was popular in those years, richly decorated imitations of old styles. He then followed some courses in architecture with Pieter Johannes Christofel Klaarhamer (1874-1954) among others. The latter was a kindred spirit of Berlage's, and in his own architecture and furniture designs aimed at an extreme simplification of structure and form. In 1917 Rietveld began his own furniture works where he put Klaarhamer's lessons into practice and experimented further with the designing of modern furniture, whose form was dictated purely by the structure. Around 1918 he came in contact with the architect Robert van 't Hoff (1887-1979), a great admirer and follower of the American innovator Frank Lloyd Wright. Van 't Hoff, in his turn, was so impressed by Rietveld's work, including probably the red and blue chair, that he introduced Rietveld to Theo van Doesburg. And Van Doesburg brought him into contact with the other members of De Stijl, such as the painters Piet Mondrian and Bart van der Leck and the architects Oud and Van Eesteren.

The contact with the people involved in De Stijl stimulated Rietveld to continue

Wooden holiday home from 1941 in Breukelerveen. (Archiphoto)

along his own experimental path. From this period date the colourful furniture made of boards and strips of wood, and the first examples of architecture with so-called three-dimensional elevations, where the distinction between interior and exterior has been practically abandoned The Rietveld-Schröder house was the high point in this development, partly made possible by the fact that in the interior architect Mrs Schröder, Rietveld had found not only an ideal client, but also an inspiring fellow designer.

Rietveld once expressed his own aims as follows: 'I feel that art should not be about making pretty things which are a sort of luxury, its major task is to raise the complicated, confused, petty-minded murkiness to a great lucidity of form.' Rietveld was in no doubt that both his furniture and his architecture were forms of art. Where most architects of the modern movement took the function of the building as a guiding principle, Rietveld saw the function as a secondary principle which gave the architect a free hand to realise the main object: to put the space of the universal on a human scale by the simplest possible boundaries (which can never close off the space). This idea of architecture as art made him an ally of Van Doesburg, but what made Rietveld a loner within the De Stijl movement was that as an architect he was not interested in collaborating with artists. For Rietveld, a building had to meet the same requirement of 'great clarity' as his furniture and be a complete synthesis of light and space, colour and architecture.

At the end of the 1920s Rictveld was, in his own way, an active participant in the Nieuwe Bouwen movement, working on the International revue *i 10*, and in 1928 he was one of the founders of CIAM, and also felt committed to the socialist movement which supported better housing for the lower paid. For some years he studied intensively the possibilities of prefabrication in housing, something which he could only realise to a very limited extent (a chauffeur's house in Utrecht in 1927, three housing blocks in Utrecht and one in Vienna, 1920-1934).

From the end of the 1930s until his death in 1964 he had a flourishing architectural practice, designing mainly exhibition spaces in the Netherlands and abroad, as well as fifteen detached houses. Although his later work is less spectacular than the work of the 1920s, he remained faithful to his ideals and achieved great things with them. His reputation as artist was well established, something which the big De Stijl exhibition of 1951/52 in Amsterdam, Venice and New York probably contributed to. But as an architect, recognition by his colleagues came late. He was offered an honorary doctorate by the Technical University in Delft, the most important Dutch training institute for architects, only a few months before his death. His last works are an auditorium in Hoofddorp and the Vincent van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, for which he only produced a few sketches which were realised after his death by his partners J. van Dillen (1930-1966) and J. van Tricht (1928).

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam.

Cornelis van Eesteren (1897-1988)

Cornelis van Eesteren, the famous town planner, spent a great part of his life surrounded by his own productions. Around his home in the Amsterdam suburb of Buitenveldert he daily experienced how successful his 'modern, functionalist town planning' was, but often remarked that his ideal image had not yet been achieved. It was typical of the perfectionism of Van Eesteren, who was not only partly responsible for Buitenveldert, but for all important extensions of Amsterdam since 1934.

Cor van Eesteren. (Archiphoto)

Van Eesteren was born the son of a building contractor and originally wanted to be an architect. He worked in various architectural bureaus at the same time as he was following courses in architecture. In 1922 he even won the 'Prix de Rome', a student prize which awarded him a paid study trip. During this trip he visited among other places Weimar in Germany where he met Theo van Doesburg at the Bauhaus. The latter's ideas appealed so strongly to him that he not only 'joined' the De Stijl movement, but together with the much older Van Doesburg (1883-1931) would develop 'neoplasticism' in architecture. In this the architectural means were reduced to essential elements by means of analysis, and the form was finally determined by intuitively composing with these elements.

With Van Doesburg he also drew up the De Stijl manifesto 'Vers une construction collective', which ended with the words: 'The age of destruction is completely over. A new age is dawning: the GREAT AGE OF RECONSTRUCTION'.

The collective character of the new architecture was important, with architects and town planners not being seen as individual creative artists, but rather as instruments of society, with their own will and personality. Creative work, then, was not an individual question, but purely a matter of being in touch with the emotional values of the time or even better, of the near future.

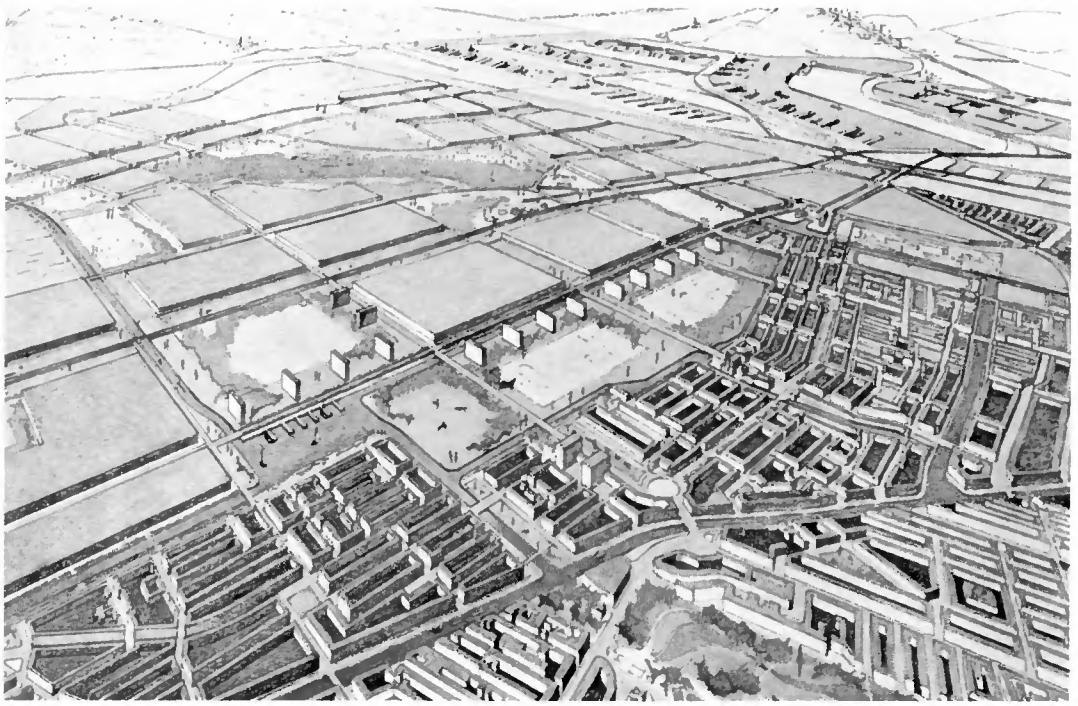
The combination of analysis and intuitive design was also decisive for his ideas on town planning, a profession which he felt more and more drawn to during his study trip. Along with many of his contemporaries he abhorred the 'spatial chaos' of the time, the soulless town planning which could offer no response to the great changes which industrialization had been setting in motion since 1850. Van Eesteren thought that here too a great period of reconstruction was required.

In 1923 he went to study town planning in Paris and soon developed an idea of the new planning, in which the concept of 'balance' was central. Balance between the past and the new era, but above all balance between the various activities, that is, functions, which take place in a city. In this too the lessons of Van Doesburg can be recognised: by means of analysis the town planning means were reduced to essential elements, after which the form was composed more or less intuitively.

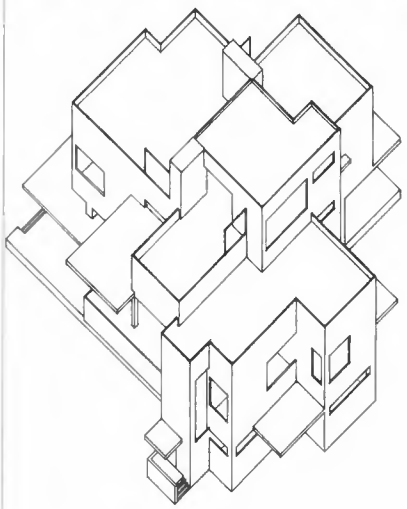
In his town planning work too, Van Eesteren chose the collective context.

In 1929 he went to work in the Department of Urban Development at the Amsterdam Public Works Service, and it is there that in collaboration with officials from Urban Development, he made his most famous plan: the General Extension Plan for Amsterdam (see chapter 1: planning).

The General Extension Plan for Amsterdam was world famous even before it was put into practice, as Van Eesteren had enthusiastically presented this plan to the CIAM, the international congresses of architects who propagated the Nieuwe Bouwen, and of which he was chairman from 1930 until 1947. For Van Eesteren himself this was the beginning of a fruitful career in Amsterdam where he would continue working until 1959 and also lay the foundations for the notorious Amsterdam high-rise suburb, the Bijlmermeer. He also worked elsewhere, and for example designed the layout of the IJsselmeer polders and the town of Lelystad.



Perspective of Amsterdam West, part of the General Extension Plan. (AUP)



1923 axonometry by Theo van Doesburg and Cor van Eesteren.

Willem M. Dudok (1884-1974)

The architect Willem Marinus Dudok, creator of the renowned Town Hall in Hilversum, always strongly resisted being slotted into any architectural movement. Although some elements of almost every major architectural movement are to be found in his substantial oeuvre, his work still has its own characteristic austerity and solidity.

Design of Hilversum Town Hall from 1917. (Photo: Dutch Architectural Institute)

Dudok was a typical autodidact. Born into a family of modest means in Amsterdam, in the first decade of this century he went to the Military Academy in Breda where he developed a special interest in architecture, there a rather unimportant subsidiary subject. Before he definitely abandoned a military career, he worked for the Engineering Corps, whose tasks included the building and maintenance of military buildings. The first commission he developed on his own was for a hostel for servicemen in Den Helder (1911) in which there is an unmistakable affinity with Berlage's work from the beginning of the century. In 1913 he finally decided in favour of a career in the civilian sector and became acting director of the Department of Municipal Works in Leiden. It was in this period that he made his first designs, reminiscent of the Amsterdam School, such as the building for the Leidsch Dagblad (1916-1917) in Leiden.

In 1915 he became director of Public Works in Hilversum, the city whose appearance he would to a great extent determine for forty years, as he designed almost all the municipal housing, almost all the schools and also the town planning layout of the new residential suburbs. From 1916 on he was also charged with planning a new town hall. His first designs for this are full of the spirit of the Amsterdam School, but his later

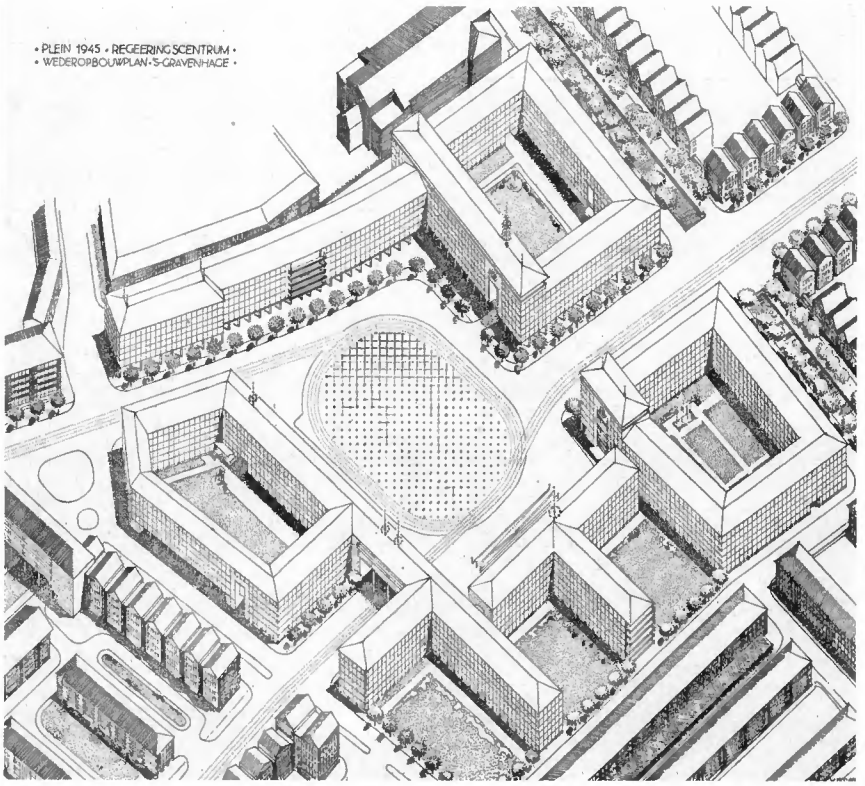
Hilversum Town Hall. (Archiphoto)

designs are increasingly strict and more cubist, a tendency which is also to be seen in his buildings built in that period. When, in 1927, the definitive design for the town hall was ready, Dudok could be seen to have become a master in the harmonious arrangement of geometric volumes like blocks and cubes; in his town hall there are clear references to both the prairie houses of Frank Lloyd Wright and to the Architecture of De Stijl, but it is also such an original work that it itself has become a much-quoted source of inspiration both in the Netherlands and abroad. Dudok must have regarded the Town Hall as his masterpiece even then and he was so closely involved with even the smallest details that during the building of it, in 1928, he exchanged his function as director of Public Works for the function of municipal architect, concerned exclusively with architecture, a post he would fill until 1954.

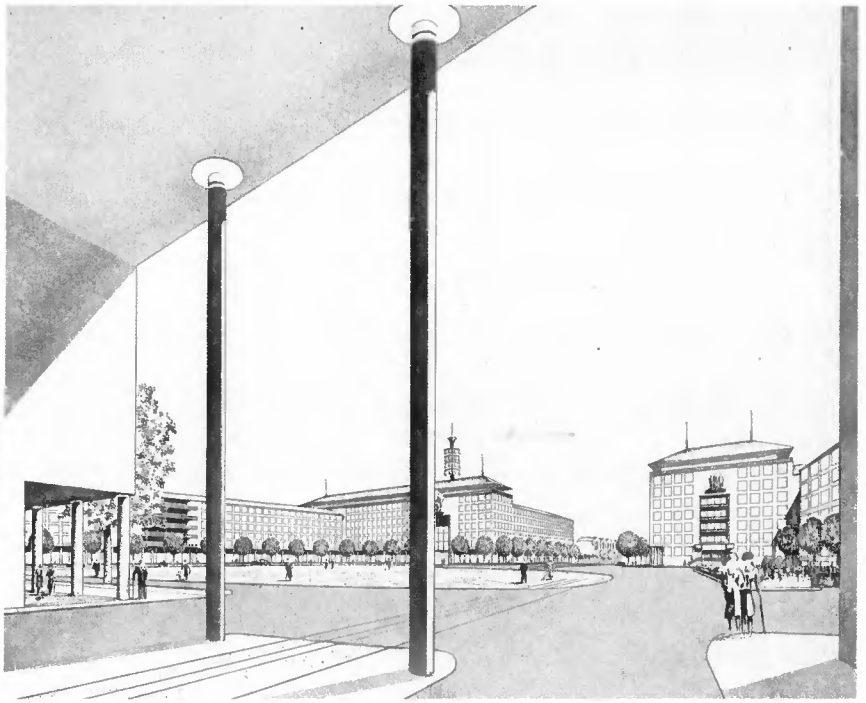
Alongside his work for the municipality of Hilversum, Dudok continued to work as a private architect, which was allowed on condition that he did not undertake any works in the municipality. At around the same time as the Hilversum Town Hall he built two works elsewhere which are to some extent comparable to it in terms of impact: a student hostel in the Cité Universitaire in Paris (1927) and the De Bijenkorf department store in Rotterdam (1930; partly destroyed in 1940, and demolished after the war). In the 1930s he designed many extremely diverse if less spectacular buildings outside Hilversum, such as the monument on the IJsselmeer Dam (1933), the crematorium at Westerveld (1937-1938), dwellings in the garden city of De Burgh in Eindhoven (1937-1938) and the theatre in Utrecht (1939-1941).

While this prewar work is mainly austere and functional, after the war Dudok showed a preference for more traditional forms, which was probably best expressed in his office building for Hoogovens (1948) and his Velsen Town Hall (1948-1965).

But even more than in his architectural works, his feeling for tradition is apparent in the many urban designs he made. Many of these plans, for Zwolle, IJmuiden, Voorburg, Velsen among others, and above all for many districts of The Hague (which city he was intensively involved with in 1933-1934 and again from after the war until 1952) were never carried out, because the functionalist ideas of Van Eesteren and the Rotterdammer Johannes Hendrik van den Broek (1898-1978) among others, set the tone in most places. Dudok was convinced however that for the design of a new urban area the fulfilling of functional requirements was not enough, and that explicit beauty, preferably monumental beauty, also had to be created; and when planning the reconstruction of an old part of the city the remains from earlier had to be treated very carefully.



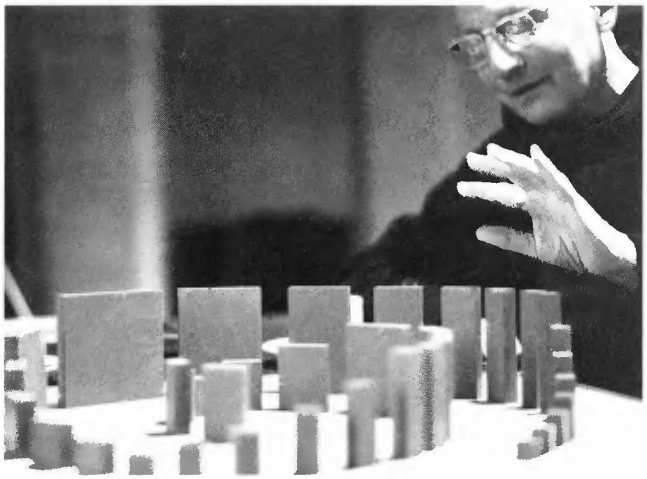
Proposal for new building and reconstruction in The Hague.



Developed detail from Dudok's reconstruction plan for The Hague.

Dom H. van der Laan (1905)

Dom Hans van der Laan occupies a unique place in the architectural world. Not because he is a monk and not because he has built mainly religious buildings, but because ever since his student days he has been looking for the essential in architecture. On the basis of this study, after fifty years, he has been able to formu-



Dom H. van der Laan. (Archiphoto)

late an all-encompassing architectural theory.

Van der Laan was born into an architectural family, with three of the ten children later studying architecture. In 1923 he went to the Technical University in Delft at the time when training was undergoing a period of extensive change. In 1924 Grandpré Molière was appointed Professor and he wanted to give new content to the training which was mainly oriented towards technical and aesthetic knowledge. Molière sought the eternal values in architecture and to this end formed an architectural study group together with his students, in which Hans van der Laan was an enthusiastic participant.

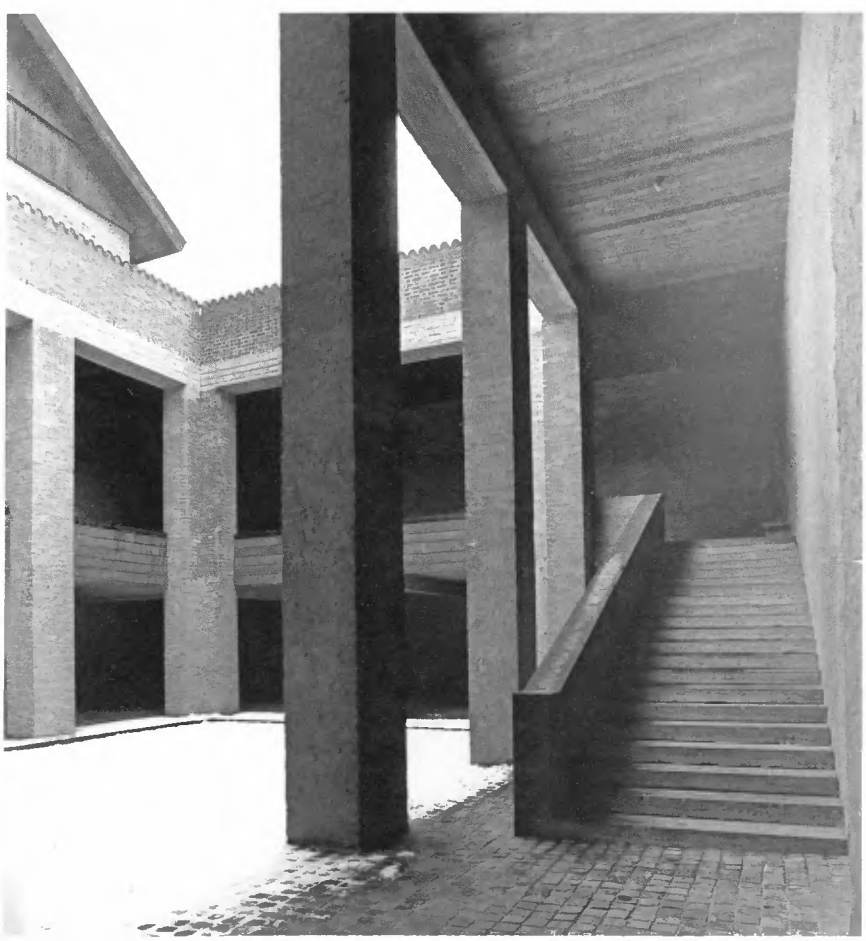
In that period, while the Amsterdam School and variations of the Nieuwe Bouwen were the centre of attention, the study group sought a balance between form, technique and function. Molière also ascribed great importance to tradition and a humble approach to the profession of architect. It was only in 1927 when Molière entered the Catholic Church that the eternal values he was seeking were given a religious content and for him architecture acquired a symbolic meaning: something which Van der Laan even then was opposed to. This difference in insight ran so deep that Van der Laan brought his studies at Delft to a premature end in order to retreat into a monastery. From there, he continued his own quest very cautiously, together with a number of fellow students.

He eventually came to use a system of dimensions which was supposedly based on universal laws of human perception. The basic principle for this sounds almost banal: people have always made houses in order to make the immeasurable space inhabitable. Just as time becomes measurable for us through its division into seasons, weeks and days, so space too only becomes perceptible if we divide it into measurable pieces. Van der Laan wanted to discover which dimensions are measurable for human perception. During the Second World War he formulated for the first time a 'plastic number', a ratio which expresses the way in which people distinguish magnitudes.

Van der Laan likes to compare this plastic number to an 'objective scale of measurements' just as in music there is an 'objective gamut of notes'. This gamut is determined exclusively by the mutual relationships and can be applied in architecture in numerous ways.

It took Van der Laan fifty years to develop this principle with all its consequences into a complete architectural theory. It is a theory which completely ignores the function, the construction and the social significance of a building and only deals with the most essential aspect of it: the proportions. In 1977 Van der Laan published his theory in the book 'The Architectonic Space' which has by now been translated and published in a number of languages.

Inner courtyard of the Monastery in Vaals. (Archiphoto)



The few buildings which Van der Laan has realised, reflect his long quest. His guest wing for the abbey in Oosterhout (1936) is a careful exercise in using a ratio system in a rather traditional design. The church and crypt of his own abbey in Vaals (design 1956) however, are more a ratio system in stone, constructed exclusively from elementary forms in a completely harmonious whole. In a convent in Waasmunster, Belgium (1978) and in a recent renovation and extension of the abbey in Vaals (1986) Van der Laan has used his ratio system in an increasingly virtuoso manner – he himself called it more melodic. The same is true of two monasteries in Sweden which will be built in the 1990s.

Small as his own oeuvre is, Van der Laan's influence is now considerable. Not only does 'The Architectonic Space' serve nowadays as a manual in various architectural academies both in the Netherlands and abroad, but in the southern Dutch provinces of Brabant and Limburg especially a number of architectural bureaus work in close adherence to this theory. And even though each of them is developing their own formal language, their work is nevertheless so recognizable and already so widespread, that the term 'Bossche School' has become current.

Interior of the monastery in Vaals with furniture designed by Van der Laan. (Archiphoto)

Aldo van Eyck (1918)

Aldo van Eyck is probably the most influential and most renowned Dutch architect since the Second World War. He has played a role in a number of radical innovations in architecture and has realised a number of revolutionary buildings. Nevertheless, apart from a great number of temporary exhibitions, children's playgrounds and unbuilt projects, his oeuvre is quite small.

From 1935 Van Eyck followed a technical course at the Academy of Fine Arts in The Hague, and in 1938 went to the Polytechnische School in Zurich. There, he not only met his wife and current partner Hannie van Roojen, but also joined the circle of artists who often met each other at the home of Carola Giedion-Welcker, wife of Siegfried Giedion, one of the founders of CIAM and author of the standard international work on modern building 'Space, time and architecure'. There he encountered the ideas of Dada and Surrealism, and of Le Corbusier. There too the foundation must have been laid of his *Weltanschauung*, in which polarities are seen as elements inextricably bound up with and complementary to each other, elements of a whole in which reason and emotion are preferably completely interwoven.

Van Eyck (right) shows Hertzberger around Estec. (Photo: Izak Salomons)

After getting his diploma in 1943 Van Eyck worked until 1946 in various bureaus in Zurich. He was then brought to the Netherlands by Van Eesteren to work with him in the Planning Department at the Municipal Works of Amsterdam, of which he was chief. It was there that Van Eyck's active role in the changes in his profession would begin. He immediately joined 'De 8', and became a Dutch delegate to the CIAM, and in this context he also worked from 1948 until 1953 on the layout of Nagele in the Noordoost polder. This is the only Dutch village which was built strictly in accordance with the CIAM guidelines: separate functions – housing, work, leisure – along the edges of rectangular communal green areas, with the whole

Sint Hubertushuis in Amsterdam. (Archiphoto)

village being surrounded by a broad fringe of trees.

But even then Van Eyck was working his way towards a fundamental critique of what he saw as CIAM's over-rational approach and from 1953, the ninth CIAM congress, he was part of the 'angry young men' , whose other members included the English architects Peter and Allison Smithson, the Greek Georges Candilis, and the Rotterdammer Jacob Berend Bakema (1914-1981). These 'angry young men' argued for a radically different approach to architecture and town planning, with much more attention for human experiences, spirituality and imagination. This meant a split within CIAM, which led to this organization being wound up by the younger members, Team X.

In the same year, 1959, Van Eyck and some kindred spirits took over the editing of the journal Forum, which from then until 1964 was to become the startling mouthpiece of his 'story of a different idea'. Forum set the tone at the time to such an extent, that even now we speak of the Forum generation, meaning the architects around Van Eyck who wanted to put the imagination in power within architecture, such as the other editors Bakema and Herman Hertzberger* (1932), and Van Eyck's 'follower' Piet Blom (1934). From 1966 Van Eyck and Hertzberger also propagated this vision as professors at the Technical University in Delft and therefore formed a whole generation of architects.

It was also in Forum that Van Eyck published his first big building, the Burgerweeshuis in Amsterdam (1955-1960), which can be regarded as a manifesto in stone of that different idea and which was designed completely from the experiential point of view. At the same time this is the first example of the architectural school which would later be known under the name 'structuralism', in which a coherent whole is built up from a great number of linked and similar elements (Hertzberger, Blom and Abel Cahen (1934) in particular were later to realise a number of structuralist buildings). The extremely comprehensive structure – particularly when seen from the air – linked to the wealth of perceptions which one experiences in the Burgerweeshuis, illustrate Van Eyck's search for what he calls 'labyrinthine clarity'.

Between 1971 and 1983 Van Eyck ran his architectural bureau together with Theo Bosch (1940) with whom he was to play a pioneering role in the field of urban renewal. In Zwolle (1971-1972) and especially in the Amsterdam neighbourhoods of the Jordaan and Nieuwmarkt (1972-1982) he built what are more or less the first social housing projects in an old inner city where the individual recognizability of the dwellings was central.

In 1980 he built his first major building together with Hannie van Eyck-van Rooijen: the colourful Sint Hubertushuis in Amsterdam, a home for single mothers with their children (1973-1978). Ten years later, this collaboration was to result in a number of buildings in which Van Eyck, together with his wife, was once again breaking new ground and with which he was once more to take his fellow professionals by surprise, also beyond the borders of the Netherlands: the psychiatric institution Huize Padua in Boekel (1980-1989) and office buildings and a restaurant for the European Space Centre/Estec in Noordwijk. In this last building especially the concept of 'labyrinthine clarity' was given a new dimension. Intimate spots are formed in a refined manner by controlling access of daylight, different ceiling heights and structural arches in all colours of the rainbow, but at the same time the big space remains completely intact, that is, can be taken in and perceived at a glance.

Restaurant (right) and office blocks of Estec in Noordwijk. (Photo: Jan Derwig)

Interior of the restaurant. (Photo: Jan Derwig)

Herman Hertzberger (1932)

In the early decades of his career, the Amsterdam architect Herman Hertzberger (1932) was known chiefly as a 'pupil' of Van Eyck. Not because the exterior form of his buildings was reminiscent of Van Eyck's work, but because to a great extent he designed on the basis of the same fundamental principles. Hertzberger himself has made it clear that he was very much formed by the years 1959 to 1963, in which he was an editor of the journal Forum. He had just graduated from the University of Technology in Delft when he was asked to join the editorial team by Aldo van Eyck and Jacob Bakema. By then, these two architects had already for some years been waging a successful campaign against the one-sided approach to architecture and urban design propagated by the international architectural congresses, CIAM. Through Forum, they were now spreading their ideas in the Netherlands too, and with them, Hertzberger dedicated himself completely to a 'more human' built environment. But while Van Eyck used mainly poetic and polemical language for this, Hertzberger showed himself to be more pragmatic. In Forum, he published a number of photos of match boxes which he had stacked on top of each other in various fashions. In this way he showed how these could together form a dull, unapproachable block but also a beautiful and versatile building with all kind of extra spaces, and which invited diverse usages.

Hertzberger's views on architecture are not limited to the ideas from his time with Forum. He had always been a great admirer of the clear form and light spaces of the International Style of the 1920s, and apparently it was after seeing the Maison de Verre in Paris, by Bernard Bijvoet and Pierre Chareau, that he made the definitive decision to become an architect. As well as every care for the users, his work always displays a weakness for forms which are sometimes directly derived from the architecture of the International Style. One of his first large works, a block of student flats on the Amsterdam Weesperstraat (1959), shows an unmistakable affinity with apartment blocks by Le Corbusier.

Nevertheless, Hertzberger himself prefers to emphasise that he takes his examples from all eras and every country. Just as a writer can only enrich his vocabulary with words which he has read or heard from another, an architect, according to Hertzberger, can only enlarge his possibilities if he is prepared to see lessons for his architecture in everything around him.

Hertzberger's most famous building is the Centraal Beheer office building in Apeldoorn (1968/1972). Every corner, every detail here has to contribute to making the employee feel at ease, and using the office as a second home. Therefore the building offers a series of meeting places and work areas which vary in the degree to which they are closed off. It was immediately recognised, also beyond the borders of the Netherlands, as pioneering, a radical response to the anonymous office parks which were in vogue in those years.

In all his buildings, Hertzberger has the user primarily in mind. He prefers to design housing projects, old people's homes and schools in such a way that they contain many places, often semi-public, which invite the user to furnish them or complete them according to his own taste. In a public building like the Utrecht music centre Vredenburg (1973-1978) he has created exhaustive possibilities for all kinds of different uses.

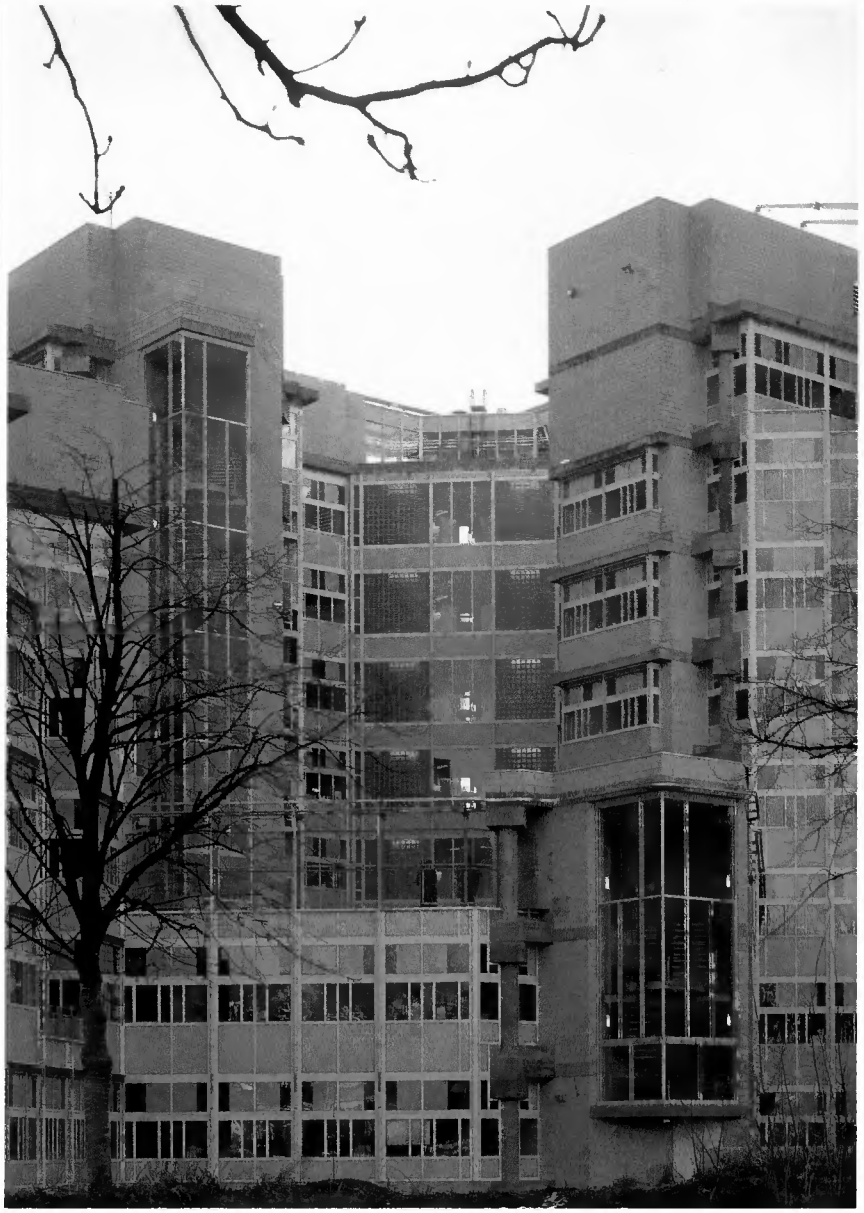
As far as his use of materials is concerned, Hertzberger has clear preferences. For example, he almost always builds in grey concrete blocks and makes extensive use of glass bricks, while his furniture and interiors are always made in plywood.

This consistency of ideas and choices of materials, however, does not prevent Hertzberger from constantly renewing himself and developing in his architecture. Whoever has followed his steady production of buildings over the years, has certainly noticed how Hertzberger's grasp of his designed spaces has become increasingly sure and how he has become increasingly successful in translating the lessons of his most important exemplars (Chareau/Bijvoet, Duiker, Rietveld, Van Eyck) into an individual architectural language.

Recent high-points are a number of schools in Amsterdam, such as the charming villa-like Montessori schools in Amsterdam South (1980-1983) and the extension to a school in Aerdenhout (1988/1989) where he gave a new wing a semi-circular, black wooden facade. He also displays growing facility with the large gesture, as can be seen to some extent in the Vredenburg music centre, but even more so in his Ministry of Social Affairs in The Hague (1979-1990) with its multi-storey atriums and magisterial hall.

In recent years Hertzberger has been receiving more and more recognition,

Centraal Beheer, Apeldoorn. (Archiphoto)



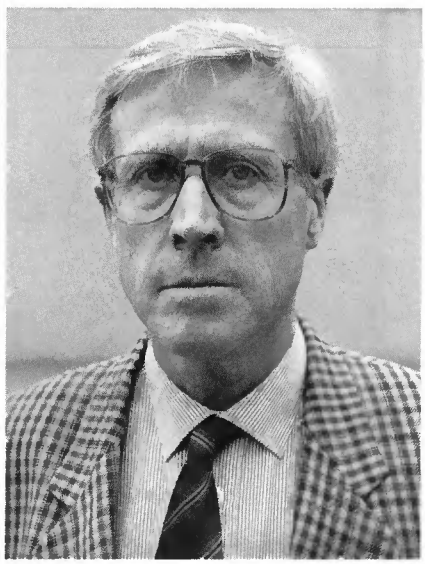
Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, The Hague. (Photos: Jan den Hengst, Ger van der Vlugt)

also outside the Netherlands, where he has built a number of buildings. The most important are some housing blocks and a film centre in Berlin, and he has received a European architectural prize for the latter.

Hertzberger is also active in architectural training, being associated with the University of Technology in Delft since 1970, for example. He is also one of the founders and leading promoters of the Berlage Instituut in Amsterdam, started in 1990, an internationally-oriented institute for postdoctoral architectural training, housed in Van Eyck's Burgerweeshuis.

Wim G. Quist (1930)

Of the Rotterdam architect Willem Gerhard Quist it can be said that he continues the tradition of modernist building from the



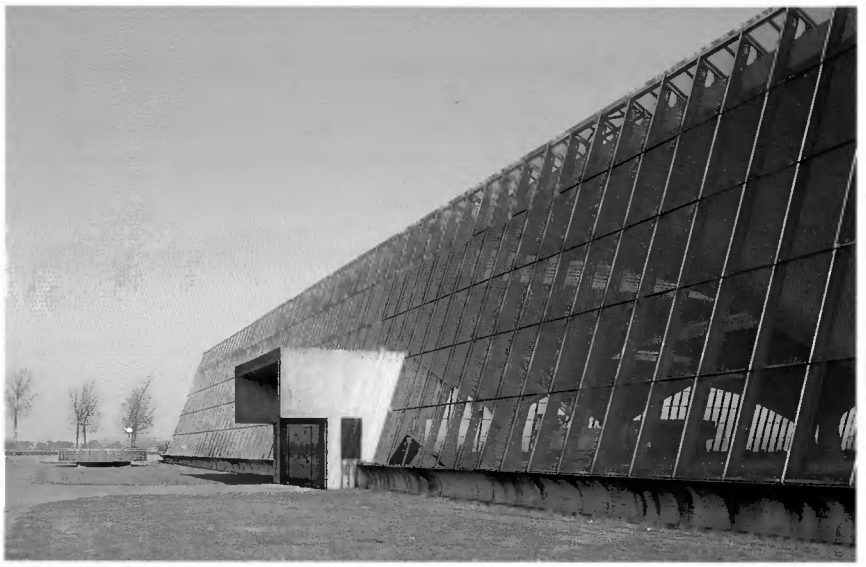
Wim G. Quist.

1920s. Not in the sense that he works in the forms and materials which were then favoured, but in the deeper sense that in his architecture Quist aims at a perfect synthesis of technology, function and form. This architecure must reflect its time, not be charged with meanings which were valid in the past.

Quist was born in Amsterdam and studied architecture there at the School of Architecture. The buildings which impressed him at an early stage included both work by Rietveld and buildings of the Amsterdam School, although these have nothing in common with each other apart from their great presence and the fact that they are both *Gesamtkunstwerk* in which every detail is inseparable from the overall effect.

In 1958, two years before he graduated, Quist won the silver prize in the 'Prix

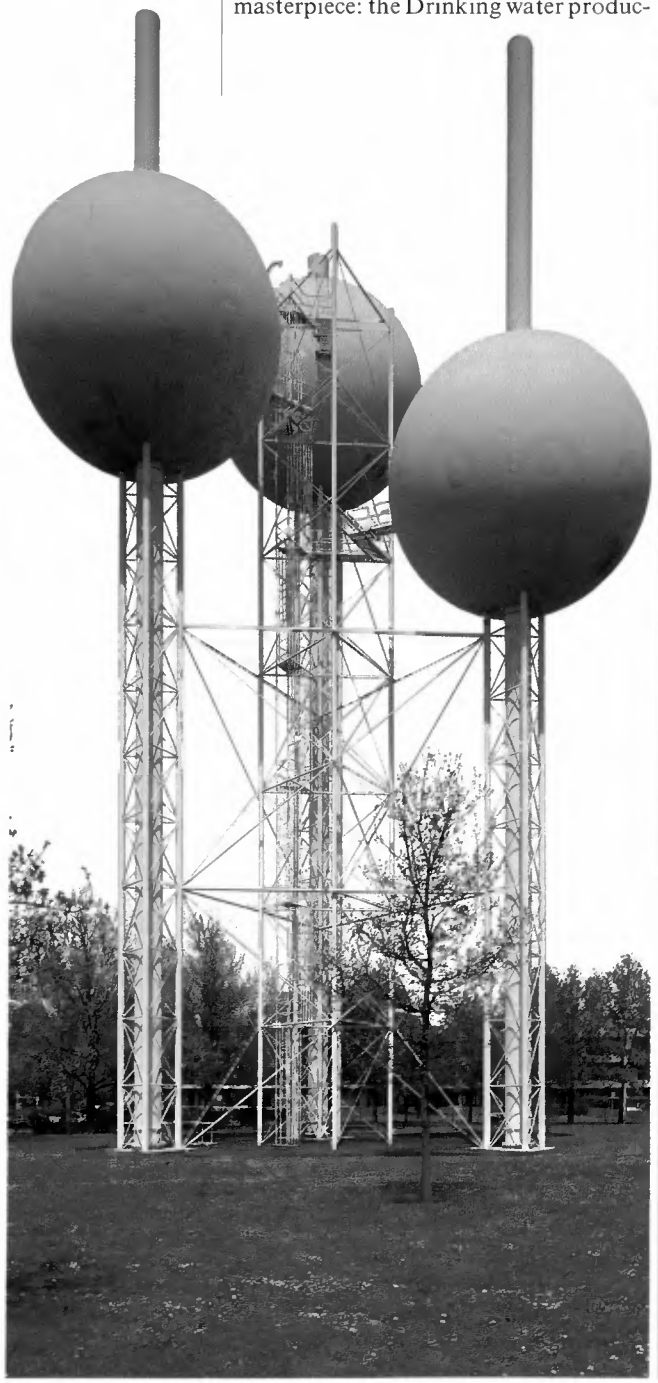
The filter room of the drinking water works De Beerenplaat. (Archiphoto)



de Rome', the student competition which Van Eesteren had once also won, and which consisted not only of a cash prize but a compulsory study trip. Quist went to Finland and found, particularly in the work of Alvar Aalto (1898-1976), architecture which had a special appeal for him, being both functional and expressive, practical and yet human, or to quote Quist himself – who is always trying to formulate what exactly he thinks architecture is about – naturalness combined with distinction.

Once back in the Netherlands Quist immediately received a large commission which enabled him to produce a masterpiece: the Drinking water production works Berenplaat (1959-1965). This is a complex of ten extremely diverse buildings with staff residences, where a purely functionalist approach has led to a sometimes extremely sculptural design. In the next two briefs for drinking water works Quist continued in this approach: the reservoirs in Biesbosch in Brabant (1970-1974) owe their strong expressive power to their austere, right-angled simplicity, while the reservoirs in Kralingen (1973-1977) have been given the eloquent form of giant drops of water. His water towers in Eindhoven (1968-1970) defy gravity: three spheres, each with a cubic capacity of 500 metres are supported by thin poles and frame standards. All these buildings reflect Quist's partiality for technology. However, this is never merely for its own sake, it is always at the service of the visual expressiveness.

Water tower in Eindhoven. (Archiphoto)



Apart from a long series of utility buildings and offices Quist has also designed a considerable number of cultural buildings and museums, the first of these being the extension of the Kröller-Müller (designed Henry van de Velde 1938; extension by Quist 1978). This brief led Quist to formulate his most important job as being the finding of the essence of the task.

Open-minded architecture, based purely on the inspiration of the particular site. At the Kröller-Müller this led to a transparent building which seems to fit naturally between Van de Velde's building and the surrounding woods. The educational museum, the Museon in The Hague (1970-1977) on the other hand, was partly determined by Berlage's adjacent Municipal Museum, with Quist adopting its colour and stratification but enlarging and simplifying its dimensions.

He has also carried out a number of extensive renovations of museums, such as the Amsterdam Rijksmusuem (P.J.H. Cuypers, 1885; Quist's renovation 1981-1990) which he stripped of many later additions and whose old spatial and architectural structure he made once again visible. As in his earlier buildings, here he also designed the moulding, the doors and furniture, in short all the things that can make a building a *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

In recent years Quist has been mainly occupied in designing big office buildings in a powerful formal language, like the Willemswerf office block in Rotterdam (1982-1988), the Randstad offices in Amsterdam South-east (1987-1990) and the extension of Rotterdam's Erasmus University (1987-1991).

Apart from through his buildings, Quist has also exerted a considerable influence on the architectural community through the various posts he has held. From 1969 until 1975 he was professor at the Technical University in Eindhoven and from 1974 until 1979 he was, as Government Architect, responsible for the architectural quality of all official buildings built by the Department of Public Buildings. In the latter post especially, Quist saw his task as being to discover and give opportunities to new talent, in which he explicitly did not support any architectural school, but wanted to select as purely as possible on the basis of 'architectural quality'. This meant that he gave briefs to both the most important representative of the anthroposophically oriented organic architecture, Anton Alberts (1927) and to the hi-tech architects Mels Crouwel (1953) and Jan Benthem (1952).

Willemswerf office block, Rotterdam. (Archiphoto)

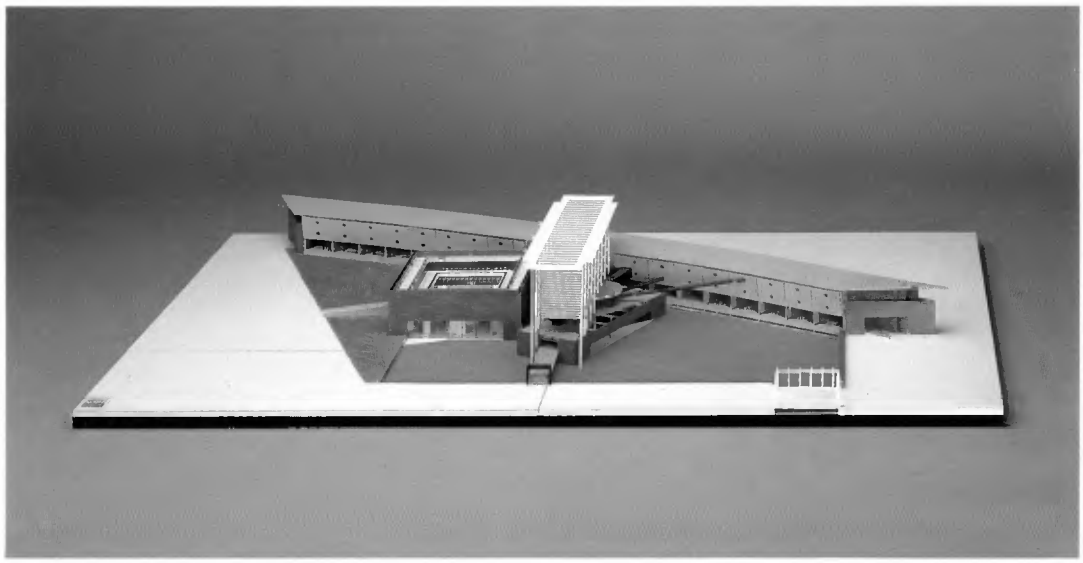
Jo Coenen (1949)

Jo Coenen is an architect from Eindhoven who in recent years has been very much in the limelight within his profession. Not only have the professional journals devoted much attention to a number of recent buildings by him, such as the public offices in Delft (1984-1986), the Heerlen library (1983-1986), a restaurant in Almere (1984-1988) and the Dutch Architectural Institute in Rotterdam (design 1988, currently under construction), the same is true of his urban designs and the ideas which are the basis for both.

In 1980, five years after he had graduated from the Technical University in Eindhoven and a year after he had started his own architectural bureau (besides which he was also a lecturer at the Technical University and gave guest lectures at various Schools of Architecture) he wrote a couple of polemical articles in which he made a plea for a more regionally based architecture.

He observed that there was something of a crisis in architecture and urban design, caused by the advent of the International Style in the 1920s and 30s. Through a conscious break with the past and the promotion of an honest use of materials, this had led to an over-cosmopolitan and abstract view of architecture. Something which applied even more to the followers of International Modern. While there had been a nostalgic reaction against this International Style since the end of the 1960s, he believed that this had led to little in the way of improvement.

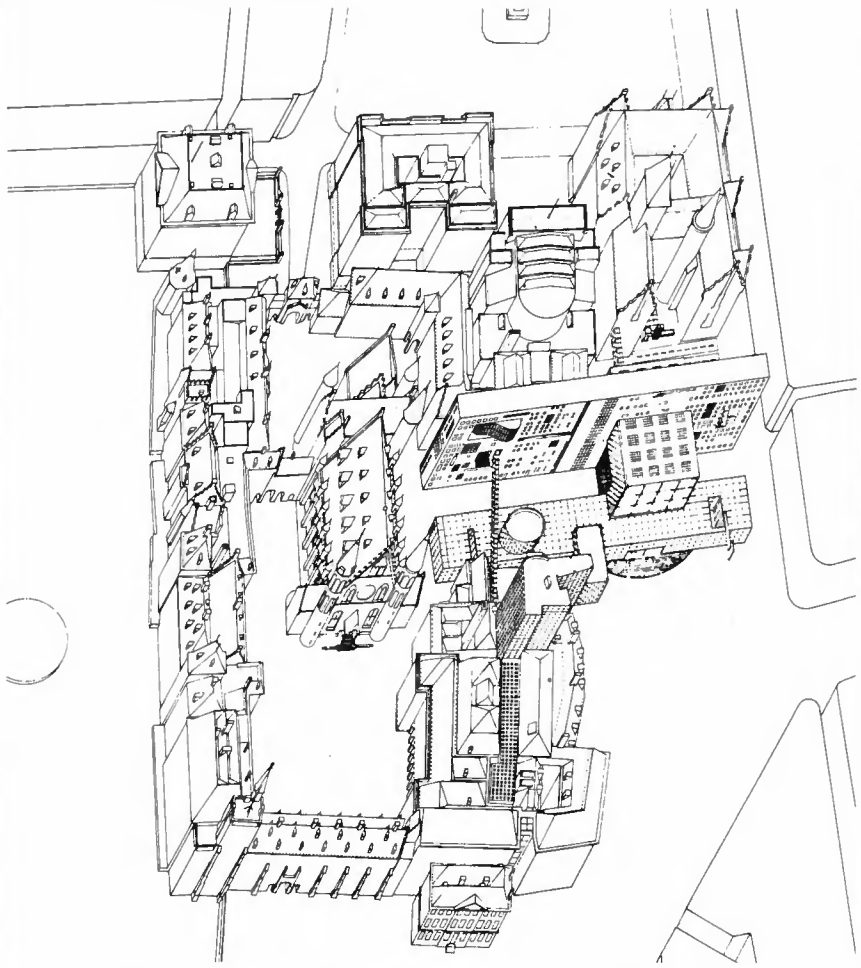
As opposed to this, Coenen proposed an architecture which 'follows the historical and cultural lines, in which can



Design for the Architectural Museum, Rotterdam. (Photo: Dutch Architectural Institute)

Library in Heerlen. (Photo: Van der Vlugt and Claus)

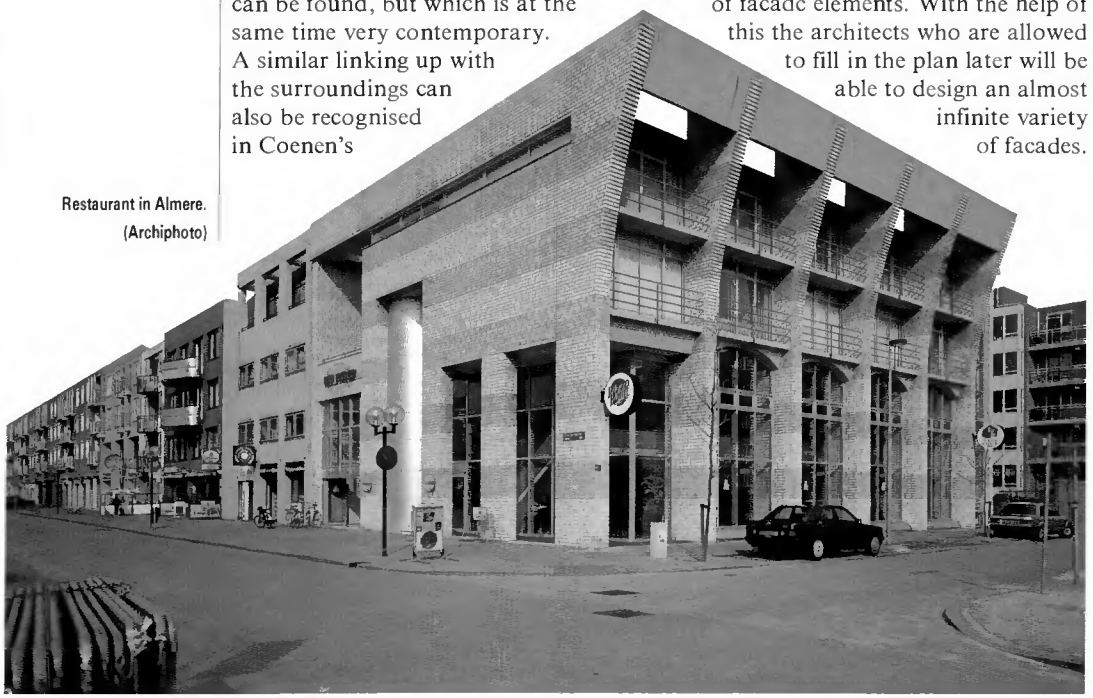
Competition design for extension of the parliament buildings.



be found the naturalness of human use and understanding and in which is expressed the continuity of time and space.' In this, he was not interested in returning to the past and imitating old building styles, on the contrary, he was in favour of an innovative architecture which must show understanding of the cultural value of the environment and a thorough knowledge of the craft. This was not a rational theory but a preference which he had intuitively developed. Born in Limburg as he was, he was surrounded from an early age by monumental buildings which reflected the traditional craftsmanship and history of the region. In search of similar experiences he made many trips abroad, visiting buildings by both anonymous builders and world famous architects.

In 1979, in the Swiss province of Tessin, he found the architects to whom he feels closest, such as Aldo Rossi (1931), Mario Botta (1943) and above all Luigi Snozzi (1932). The latter in particular stimulated him to acquire as much knowledge as possible, to amass as much culture as possible – only then could you distinguish the true from the false. Coenen is not, for that matter, the confirmed theoretician you might expect but is primarily a practicing architect. He still attaches much value to a large cultural and historical baggage, but this is subservient to a lively architectural practice. Characteristic elements in most of his designs are a clear overall image, careful linking up with the existing environment and a formal language in which references to all kinds of older architecture can be found, but which is at the same time very contemporary. A similar linking up with the surroundings can also be recognised in Coenen's urban designs, such as that for the Vaillantlaan in The Hague (1987). Here, on the basis of thorough analyses of size, design and colour use of the built environment, he developed a 'building kit' of facade elements. With the help of this the architects who are allowed to fill in the plan later will be able to design an almost infinite variety of facades.

Restaurant in Almere. (Archiphoto)



Rem Koolhaas (1944)

In the 1980s, Rem Koolhaas played an important role in two tendencies which are still having an effect: a new self confidence among architects, particularly younger ones, and more generally, a reevaluation of the phenomenon of the city.

In 1978 Koolhaas made a tumultuous entrance into the world of Dutch architecture. He first became the subject of general interest not through a building, but through his competition design for the new building for the 'Tweede Kamer', the Dutch Parliament. While the dominant idea was to carefully adapt new building in old inner cities to the surroundings in terms of use of material, scale and forms, Koolhaas planned a high, challengingly contrasting new building in the midst of the old parliament buildings. The design met with criticism, but also with great admiration: it was symbolic of the new élan the younger generation was looking for.

Koolhaas was born in Amsterdam, son of the poet, writer and film-maker Anton Koolhaas. He originally went into journalism, worked for a short time as a screenwriter and in 1968 made a sudden

intuitive decision to become an architect. He followed a four year course at the Architectural Academy (A.A.) in London and then received a scholarship to go to New York where he spent four years, as among other things visiting fellow at the Institute of Architectural and Urban Studies. In New York he became so enthusiastic about the metropolitan culture that he wrote 'Delirious New York', a book in which urban culture was, for once, not disparaged but described as a fascinating, contradictory phenomenon, completely formed by man, and which it was a challenge to continue building. Partly thanks to the illustrations by his wife Madelon Vriesedorp, in which the skyscrapers are given human features, the book appealed to many people's imaginations.

In New York too he laid the basis for the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), originally a collaborative project of Koolhaas and Vriesendorp with the Greek architects Elia and Zoe Zenghelis, which after 1976 also opened offices in Athens, London and Rotterdam (from 1980).

Koolhaas' design for the Tweede Kamer was not carried out, but he did become a lecturer at the Technical University in Delft for a few years. He also received a number of briefs in the Netherlands, such as for a Danstheater in Scheveningen, the renovation of the prison in Arnhem, and apartment blocks in Rotterdam. All these produced notable designs, but none of them were ever realised. Together with OMA member Jan Voorberg he also made an urban design for a former industrial site in Amsterdam North (design 1980-1982; built 1982-1989) where he put 'contextualism' into practice for the first time: givens from the immediate surroundings, in this case a neighbourhood of working-class housing by Berlage to the north and a location on the IJ waterway with a view of the city centre to the south, were incorporated into a completely individual architectural and planning layout. In this little neighbourhood Koolhaas introduced the phenomenon of the 'urban villa' (design: Hein van Meer, 1982-1984) into the Netherlands and here too, in 1989, as the final piece of the neighbourhood, a school and two extended blocks of housing designed by Koolhaas himself were realised.

For a long time Rem Koolhaas was in the frustrating situation where he had a great influence on the discussions in architecture, where students of architecture were enthusiastically adopting his ideas and style of presentation, but he himself had not yet realised a single building. This was to change towards the end of the 1980s and shortly after each other the following were built: a police station in Almere (1984-1986); the Danstheater in The Hague (1984-1987); flat blocks in Groningen (1988), housing in Amsterdam North (1989) and the prestigious Byzantium building with luxury apartments on the Vondelpark in Amsterdam (1985-1991). In this he continued to make emphatic use of a modern designing which on the one hand is rich in historical associations, and in which there are often references to modern traditions like Russian Constructivism, and which on the other hand expressed a glittering metropolitan 'lifestyle'.

Koolhaas continued to live in London, also when he already had a bureau in Rotterdam and even when from 1988 to 1990 he was professor at the Technical University in Delft. He participated in a great number of international competitions and in doing so won, apart from considerable fame, a number of briefs outside the Netherlands. For example, in the context of the Internationale Bauaustellung in West Berlin he designed a flat building at Checkpoint Charlie (1987-1990) and the Sea Trade Centre in Zeebrugge in Belgium (design 1990, still under construction). He also made urban designs abroad, for example for Melun-Senart near Paris and for the inner city of Lille.

Housing on the IJ-plein.
(Photos: Wim Ruigrok)

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Addresses

Berlage Instituut (Berlage Institute)
An internationally oriented post-academic training institute for architecture, urban design and landscape architecture, where according to founder and chairman Herman Hertzberger 'the best in the world will be invited to maintain a high-quality discussion of the professional field'. The number of students is restricted for the time being to a maximum of 16, possibly 32 later, but the institute aims to reach out further through public lectures, exhibitions and publications (Berlage Cahiers) etc.
The Berlage Instituut is housed in the former Burgerweeshuis of Aldo van Eyck, which to this end has been extensively renovated after a design by Van Eyck and Hannie van Eyck-van Roojen.
IJsbaanpad 3, 1076 CV Amsterdam,
phone 020-6755393, fax: 020-6755405.

Bond van Nederlandse Architecten (Royal Institute of Dutch Architects)
Professional society of Dutch architects whose main objective is to represent the interests of the profession. Has the most extensive address list of Dutch architects.
Keizersgracht 321, 1016 EE Amsterdam,
phone 020-6228111, fax 020-6232679.

Nederlands Architectuur Instituut (Dutch Architectural Institute)
Devotes itself to the collection and management of collections and archives of architects and promoting interest in architecure, and development of the profession. Its chief activities are holding exhibitions, organising lectures and publications like the journal Archis, a news bulletin and a Yearbook, Architecture in the Netherlands.
Until the new building, designed by Jo Coenen, has been completed, the DAI is housed in two places:

Offices, administration, exhibitions and publications:
Westersingel 10, 3014 GM Rotterdam,
phone 010-4361155, fax 010-4366975.

Archives, collections, library, documentation and Archis editorial:
Droogbak 1a, 1013 GE Amsterdam,
phone 020-6234188, fax 020-6242433.

Rijksdienst voor de Monumentenzorg (Department for the Conservation of Historic Buildings and Sites)
The Department is reponsible for supervising restoration and providing advice in all cases where the alteration or demolition of a listed building is proposed. It prepares the groundwork for the protection of monuments and historic buildings and the designation of conservation areas in towns and villages and also plays a role in implementation. It supplies general information on organs, farmhouses, churches, castles, country houses, town and village conservation areas, fortifications, mills, dwellings, the use of colour and painting in and on historic buildings, clocks and clocktowers, working class housing and historic street furniture.
Broederplein 41, P.O. Box 1001,
3700 BA Zeist
phone 03404-83211, fax 3404-16189.

ARTS

DUTCH