



HOTEL
THE GRAND
AMSTERDAM
Depuis 1578

SOFITEL
LEGEND

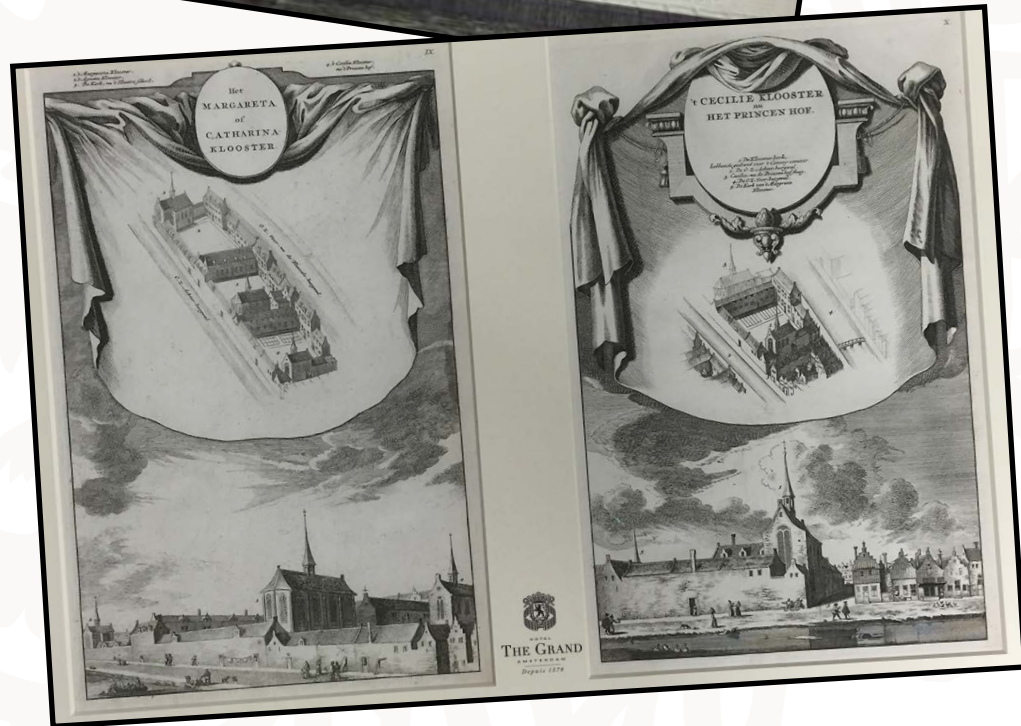
HISTORICAL BOOKLET

A SHORT JOURNEY THROUGH ONE OF
HOLLAND'S LANDMARK BUILDINGS

Original etching of our venue dating back to 1693, created by the famous Dutch poet, illustrator and engraver Jan Luiken.



OUDE ZUIDS VOORBURG WAL
HET STADHUIS | HÔTEL DE VILLE
DAS RATHAUS | TOWN HOUSE
Amsterdam G.W. Balkema



Two original antique prints of the former convents St. Catherine and St. Cecilia, dating back to the 15th century.

Successively a convent in the 15th century, a Royal Inn in the 16th century, headquarters of the Dutch Admiralty in Holland's "Golden Age", then Town Hall and in 1966 the setting for the wedding of Her Majesty Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, The Grand has certainly left its mark on the history of Amsterdam.



8 July 1959 - 11 July 1959
King Baudouin of Belgium
visits Queen Juliana
of the Netherlands.

A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF A LEGENDARY HISTORY

In these buildings that nowadays house this monumental hotel, the tradition of hospitality was already set in the early 15th Century. Originally the buildings were constructed as The Convents of St. Cecilia and St. Catherine. However, the reformation and the introduction of Protestantism as the official religion in 1578 was a turning point in the history of Amsterdam. St. Cecilia's Convent was transformed into De Princenhof (The Prince's Court) a lodgings for Princes and Gentlemen of Standing. Here the city housed and received its important guests, like the Princes of Orange, and also Maria de Medici in 1681. Part of St. Catherine's Convent was transferred to the Admiralty of Amsterdam, a board that managed the marine administration and the taxes to fund the safeguarding of the coast.

8 May 1945
The first wedding after
Liberation Day.
The newlyweds are Mt. M.B.
van den Houten and
Mrs. Annette T. van Dellen.



11 May 1946
The former British Prime Minister,
Winston Churchill, visits Amsterdam
to celebrate the first anniversary
of the liberation. In the Amsterdam
City Hall he is presented
with a medal.



In 1795, Holland was under French occupation. In 1806, the French Emperor Napoleon appointed his brother Louis King of Holland. Louis demanded the City Hall of Amsterdam on Dam Square, nowadays known as the Royal Palace, to be his residence and in 1808 the city authorities had to move from the Dam to the Princenhof. For the next 180 years the Princenhof was to serve as Amsterdam's City Hall. In 1992, the buildings became the site of The Grand Amsterdam reinstating the luxury hotel tradition.



1. CLOCK TOWER

The oldest reminder of a legendary history

1411

Courtyard, on top of the Prinsenhof building

In the fifteenth century Amsterdam was a city filled with monasteries and convents. On the premises where nowadays hotel The Grand is located were originally two convents; St. Cecilia's Convent at the northern part of the property and St. Catherine's Convent to the south.

The tiny tower perched so pertly on the north side of the rooftop is reminiscent of St. Cecilia's convent founded here in 1411.



2. TYMPAN AND IT'S SYMBOLISM

1662

Hotel façade at courtyard

The sculpture work in the façade triangle or better called tympanum after a design by Daniel Stalpaert symbolizes the power of the Admiralty; The Dutch Lion which protects the garden of Holland, flanked by Lady Justice, the god Mars and the sea god Neptune.

The logo of the hotel is based upon this.

In 1662, when the Admiralty took over the entire complex, this magnificent façade was completed by the master masoner Willem van de Gaffel.



3. THE GRAND COUNCIL CHAMBER

1926

1st floor

The old Council Chamber dates from the 17th century, at that time cold and uncomfortable. The new Council Chamber was built based on a design by W. Penaat and opened in 1926.

It was not until the City Hall was vacated in 1988 that there was a renewed interest, admiration and love for its cultural heritage.

The furniture of the Council Chamber, in real Amsterdam School Design, was also based on a design by Willem Penaat. He saw the Council Chamber as one joint work of art, all its parts based upon one and the same idea, executed by several artists and directed by one person to form a whole.



4. THE ROYAL WEDDING IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

1966

1st floor

On 10 March 1966 the Council Chamber was the setting of the royal wedding of HRH Princess Beatrix to Mr. Claus van Amsberg. This together with the visits of Legendary people such as Sir Winston Churchill make this room a true "Grand" room.

5. WOODEN STATUES BY MENDES DA COSTA

1926

At courtyard side of Council Chamber

The four statues by (1863-1939) are situated at the courtyard side of the Council Chamber. These wooden statues symbolize wisdom, decisiveness, unity and love.





5. WOODEN SCULPTURE OF THE “CITY VIRGIN” BY JOHN RÄDECKER

1926

At the back of Council chamber

This statue by John Rådecker (1868-1932) symbolizes the Patroness of Amsterdam. Standing in the middle she is flanked by two ladies each holding a boat, symbolizing Amsterdam's most important waterways, the river Amstel and the IJ-Lake. This sculpture is a fine example of 1920s Civic Art. Rådecker is well known for his creation of the war memorial at Dam Square.

7. WOODEN STATUES BY HILDO KROP

1926

At garden side of Council Chamber

In these works by Hildo Krop (1884-1970), we find ourselves in the glorious past of Amsterdam.

From left to right they depict:

“Gijsbrecht van Aemstel” and the 13th century Amsterdam story “Murder of the poor Clares”.

“Cornelis Houtman”: symbolizing the growth of the city.

“Labour”: symbolized by a male figure flanked by Industry, Science, Art and trade.

“The Future”: symbolized by a woman and child.





8. THE COUNCIL TABLE

1926

Centrally located at front of the room

The Council Chamber is dominated by the fixed massive council table partly carved with animals representing the four compass points: elephants, south; camels, east across the table, behind the curtains are the bison, west and polar bears, north.

Also at the front is a carved text, a strophe from a poem by Dutch poet Vondel. "The great ancient city renowned for battles at sea, for whom sea and streams moved".

On the high back of the burgomaster's chair are the words "Legi Gregi" ("for law and citizenry").



9. WALL PAINTINGS BY THORN PRIKKER

Behind Council Table

Thorn Prikker's (1868-1932) six painted figures behind the Council table, stand for the virtues befitting a municipal official: truth, justice, authority, harmony, hope and belief in love. Prikker's sudden death in 1932 left this work of art unfinished.



10. CHANDELIERS BY FRITS LENSVELT

1926

Council & St. Cecilia Chamber

The versatile and influential Dutch designer and artist Frits Lensvelt, who is best known in the world of theatre for his designs of stage decors, designed the chandeliers in both the Council Chamber and St. Cecilia Chamber.

Through the use of matt glass bowls and indirect light Lensvelt creates space and atmosphere.



11. THE MARRIAGE CHAMBER FIRST CLASS

1926

1st floor

This Marriage Chamber First-Class was decorated by Chris Lebeau (1878-1945), a master in numerous techniques such as Batik painting, damask and glass designing.

The Murals in this room tell a simple story: The pure virgin is carrying a lily, and is not seduced by gifts like a mirror (vanity) or the luxury of jewels, money and liquor.

The pure young man to the left of the door is carrying an owl that covers his entire torso symbolizing wisdom.

Boy meets girl and a burning heart reveals the outcome; they fall in love. Their wedding takes place on the stained glass windows.



12. WOOD CARVED “CITY’S VIRGIN” BY HILDO KROP

1926

Across the Council Chamber 1st floor

Enthroned above the canals of Amsterdam the City Virgin is at the centre of a Mahogany and Koromandel wood open work made by Hildo Krop (1884-1970) in 1926.

In this open work some important Amsterdam buildings and church towers can be recognized.

On top of the panel: signs of the zodiac.

Bottom of panel: fishes.

Left centre panel: labour and industry, man and woman.

Right centre panel; plants and animals.



13. THE GRAND STAIRCASE

1926

1st - 5th floor

The stained glass windows by R. Roland Holst (1868 - 1938) were given to the City of Amsterdam by the City of Rotterdam at the capital's 650th anniversary in 1925.

These windows go way up to the 5th floor.

The first 9 stained windows present the founder of Amsterdam Gijsbrecht van Amstel.

The other stained windows depict: dike constructors, fishermen, floral patterns, symbols of trade, education and symbols of jurisdiction.



14. THE WOOD CARVED ENTRANCE DOOR OF THE BURGOMASTER CHAMBER

1926

1st floor

Designed around 1925 when the entire wing on the Oudezijds Voorburgwal canal was built, this door used to be the entrance door to the Mayors office until 1988.

The Mayors Chain is part of the woodwork carvings in this door. On one side of the Mayors Chain the emblem of the police is carved and on the other side the emblem of the fire brigade.

The mayor is head of both emergency services.



15. GROUP SCULPTURE BY JACOB KAAS

1931

Garden

Jacob Kaas (1898-1972) Dutch sculptor who's sculptures can be found in different places in Amsterdam.

Kaas also worked for Artis Zoo where he produced sculptures of animals and therefore was named "sculptor of Artis".



16. INQUISITIVE CHILDREN (VRAGENDE KINDEREN) BY KAREL APPEL

1949

At entrance of Bridges restaurant

The famous Dutch painter Karel Appel painted a mural for the City Hall canteen.

It represents a sober composition of several large matte fields of colour, with strong black lines outlining the contours of hungry children.

The faces merely consist of two black dots showing the eyes. The inspiration to this painting was the hungry children of post-war Germany at the train stations begging for food.





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LEGEND

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