



The Dove (De Duif)

Prinsengracht 756, 1017 LD Amsterdam

History

Date and style of building: 1857-1858, neoclassical.
Architect: Theo Molkenboer (1796-1863). He also designed 'Hartebrugkerk' in Leiden and many other churches all over the Netherlands.
Commissioner: Diocese of Haarlem, Roman Catholic Church.
Parish: 'Parochie van den H. Willibrordus binnen de Veste'.
The last official mass was held in 1974. After that the building was squatted by an action group stemming from a group of parishioners who made out a case for conservation and restoration of 'De Duif'

Restoration

Commissioner: Stadsherstel Amsterdam NV (bought in 1995)
Year of restoration: 1999-2002
Restoration architect: Peters & Boogers, Amsterdam

At present

The building is available for concert, church service, congress, reception, and wedding ceremony for example. Information about renting: Stadsherstel, phone 020-5200090
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The way the building is heated is a noticeable result of the restoration. Warm air rises up from the floor through approximately 300 grids. A special system was developed to keep this warmth within the church room. Air is blown from holes below the balustrade at a height of about 4 meters. This layer of air forms a thermal ceiling which keeps the warmth down and makes it circulate in order to create a pleasant climate.

Why was 'De Duif' built?

A church was built in 1795 on the spot where the sugar refinery 'Het Fortuyn' burnt down. This church replaced the hidden church Peace Dove ('het vrede-duifje') in the nearby Kerkstraat. The new 'Dove church' was crumbling already 60 years later and was replaced by the current 'Duif'.

Interior

The altar table has the shape of St Willibrord's tomb and dates from 1905. It was designed by architect Peter Bekkers (who also designed the 'Boomskerk' at Admiraal de Ruijterweg in Amsterdam) and executed by sculptor Pierre van den Bossche of the Crevels & Van den Bossche Company.

The side altars. The Mary altar was sculpted by Pierre van den Bossche in 1905 as well. The 18th century sculpture of Mary and child on a cloud came from Modena (Sardinia) and was transported to the Netherlands by the consul. Building pastor Gerardus Kok's sister bought it and gave it to 'de Duif'. The Joseph altar is on loan from the Rijksmuseum since 1928. It comes from a church in Leur, North Brabant.

The organ is made by the famous company Smits from North Brabant. With its 45 voices, distributed among 3 manuals and free pedal, one of the largest from the Smits' workshop and the largest north of the rivers. The instrument was built in two parts because of financial reasons. The first part was ready in 1864. In 1882, some 25 years after completion of the church, there was enough money to finish the whole organ. In 1973 it was categorized in the highest class by the city of Amsterdam – superior, class A – comparable to the organs in the Old Church and the New Church. The organ was put into use again in the summer of 2006, after a restoration which took three and a half years. It is used regularly for organ concerts.
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The frescoes depict the Twelve Apostles. They suffered a lot from humidity. In the course of time several paintings have been made on top of each other. In the beginning of the 20th century eternit plates with new paintings have been put in front of them. During the all but last restoration in 1955/56 the paintings on the plates have been covered by a white layer of paint. During the renovation of 1999 the eternity plates have been removed because of asbestos and the old paintings reappeared.

The appearance of Amsterdam is largely characterized by monumental and historic buildings. 'Stadsherstel Amsterdam N.V.' takes care of sustainable preservation of disintegrating monumental and representative heritage within the defence line of Amsterdam ('Stelling van Amsterdam'). The main activities are restoring buildings, giving them a new purpose and managing them with care. Stadsherstel contributes considerably to the preservation of heritage for the next generations and helps to keep alive the craft of restoration.

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