

## The Posthoorn Church

(Posthoornkerk)

*Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception*

Haarlemmerstraat 124-126  
1013 EX Amsterdam



Date of building: 1861-1889  
Architect: Pierre Cuypers  
Restoration architect: André van Stigt, restoration in 1989

*The last official mass was held in 1976. The building was bricked up in 1978 because it was ruinous. The Council of State and the City Council gave permission for demolition and a plan for rebuilding was developed. The community centre 'De Gouden*

*Reaal' initiated the foundation 'De Posthoornkerk' in 1986 which dedicated itself to conservation and restoration.*

### At present

The building is available for concert, church service, congress, reception, and wedding ceremony for example. Information about renting: Stadsherstel, phone 020-5200090. Look at <http://www.stadsherstel.nl>

### This church

The Posthoorn church follows a hidden church with the same name. This hidden church had four different locations in the 17<sup>th</sup> century; the last one was Prinsengracht 7, where a post horn is still visible in the house front. When the freedom of religion was restored many hidden churches were already replaced by new buildings. The restoration of the Episcopal hierarchy in 1853 launched one of the greatest building campaigns in the Dutch history. New catholic churches mushroomed all over the country. An architectonic renewal movement which found inspiration in the Middle Ages developed in the same period. Cuypers was the main representative of this movement in the Netherlands.

### Architecture

Cuypers designed this church after a medieval example using modern techniques like cast iron columns for example. The church is a basilica with cruciform floor plan. The nave has two aisles and the choir is clover leaf shaped.

In order to create sufficient space two galleries were built on top of each other. This was revolutionary in church building but it was common in 17<sup>th</sup> Amsterdam houses serving as hidden church. 'A tower has to be high, a low tower is an absurdity', Cuypers used to say. Standing in the Haarlemmerstraat one can see clearly that both towers, particularly the spires are different. The third one, the crossing tower, is visible from the back. The cast iron gate at the Haarlemmerstraat is made around 1920. The height inside the church and the many coloured bricks are striking. Some of the bricks, like the black strips, have been painted afterwards.

### Church interior

The Stations of the Cross by Alexander Kläsener can be found in the corridors left and right, occasionally hidden behind black curtains. In the stained glass windows behind the choir we can see depictions of patron saints (St August in the middle below) and images from the Old and New Testament. At the right below we see the consecration of the church. The confessional was designed by Adrianus Bleys, the architect of the Nicholas Church.

Right of the choir was the Joseph altar. On the floor one can still see the original colourful English tiles. The pulpit was left of the choir. The damage of the column still shows where it was attached. Left of the choir was the Mary altar. There was a passage to the rectory.

### Particulars of the restoration

The galleries in the church have been shut off by glass windows and a two floor building-in has been made at the front, now housing the offices which enable the exploitation of the church by their rent income.

The coloured glass windows have been replaced by window glass to let more light in. The leaded windows are in storage. Look at <http://posthoornkerk.tumblr.com>

*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.*