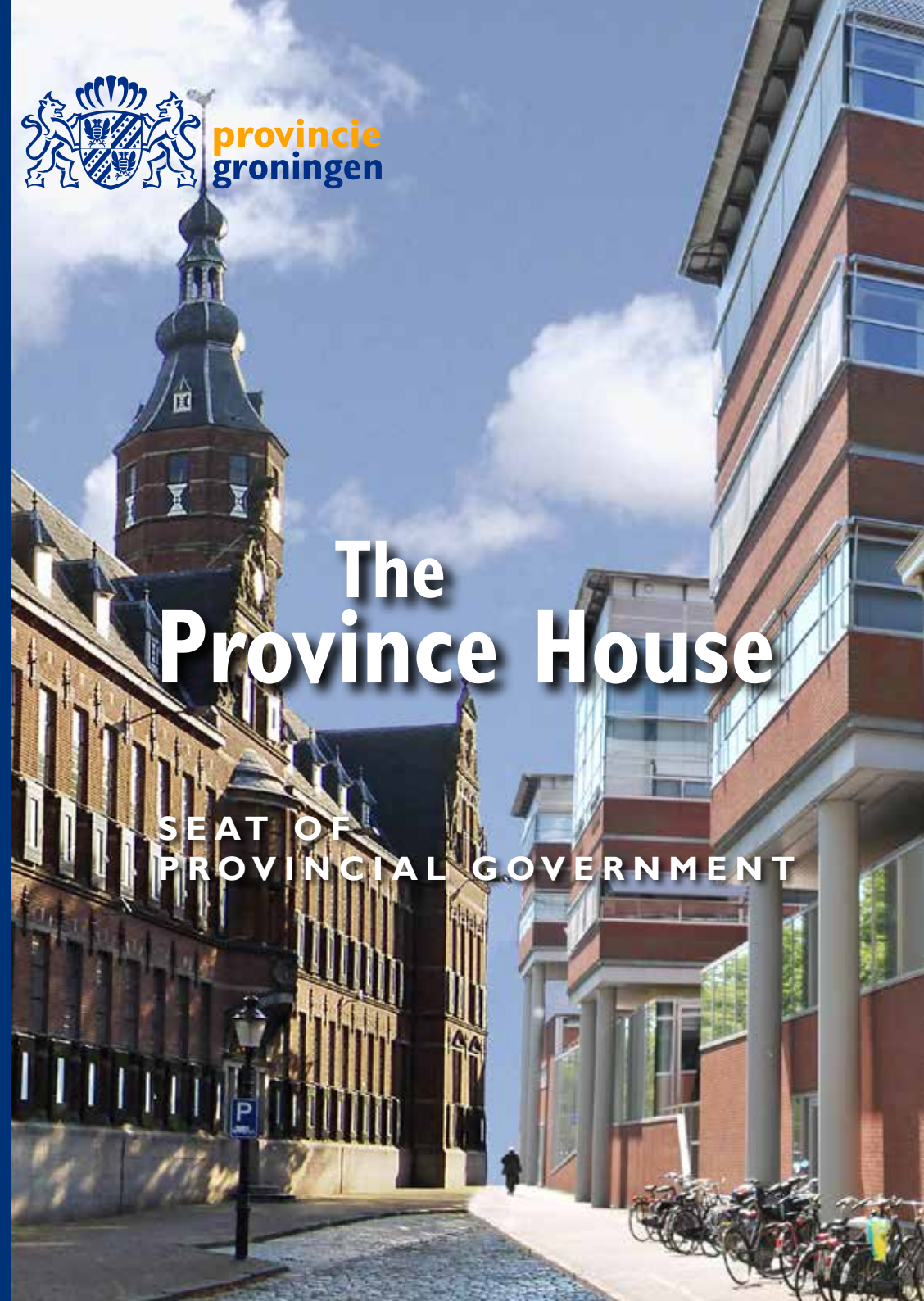


The Province House

SEAT OF
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT





Colophon

Production and final editing:

Province of Groningen

Photographs:

Alex Wiersma and Jur Bosboom (Province of Groningen),

Rien Linthout and Jenne Hoekstra

Province Groningen

Postbus 610 • 9700 AP Groningen

+31 (0)50 - 316 41 60

www.provinciegroningen.nl

info@provinciegroningen.nl

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The Province House

Seat of Provincial Government





PREFACE

The present and the past connected with each other. That is how you could describe the Groningen Province House.

No. 12 Martinikerkhof is the 'old' Province House, which houses the State Hall where the Provincial Council has met since 16 June 1602. That is unique for the Netherlands. No other province has used the same assembly hall for so long. The connection with the present is formed by the aerial bridge to the 'new' Province House. This section of the Province House was designed by the architect Mels Crouwel and was opened on 7 May 1996 by Queen Beatrix. Both buildings have their own ambiance, their own history and their own works of art.

The painting 'Religion and Freedom' by Hermannus Collenius (1650-1723) hangs in the State Hall and paintings by the artistic movement De Ploeg are in the building on the Martinikerkhof. The new section features work by contemporary artists such as Rebecca Horn.

Her 'The ballet of the viewers' hangs in the hall. The binoculars observe the entrance hall and look out, through the transparent façades, to the outside world. But there is a lot more to see. And this brochure tells you everything about the past and present of the Province House.

Naturally you are welcome to visit the Province House to experience the ambiance, to view the works of art and to enjoy its beautiful architecture.

CONTENTS

Preface	3
Province House Martinikerkhof 12	7
States Assembly Hall	9
Delegates Chamber	13
Atrium	16
Section Room 21	18
Ploeg Collection of Modern Art	19
The former archive building	20
Caretaker's Lodge, 'Cardinal's House'	21
Province House Sint Jansstraat 4	22
Architecture	23
Art in the Province House at Sint-Jansstraat 4	24
Coat of Arms	30
Flag	31
Groningen's Anthem	32



The Province House, Martinikerkhof 12

PROVINCE HOUSE MARTINIKERKHOF 12

The seat of the Provincial Government in Groningen, the Province House at Martinikerkhof 12, has a centuries-old history. The oldest part of the Province House, the former Sint Maartens School, was built in the fifteenth century. The earliest mention of this Latin School is in the fifteenth century in 1425 in the city of Groningen's 'Stadboek', the city records. The school flourished particularly between 1545 and 1559, when Praedinius (1518-1559) was rector. Many professors and students from all over Europe, for instance from Germany, France, Italy, Spain and Poland, came to the Sint Maartens School. After the death of Praedinius and after the outbreak of the war against Spain the building fell into disrepair. On 20 June 1601 the States of Groningen decided that they needed their own quarters, a Province House. Their eyes fell on the old Sint Maartens School. The school was renovated and expanded with 10,000 stones from the monastery at Selwerd, and other material from the monasteries in Thesinge and Sint-Annen. In 1594 all the religious houses in the province of Groningen had been secularized. On 16 June 1602 the first meeting of the States took place in the Statenzaal, the States Assembly Hall, of the new Province House.

Later there were many more renovations and restorations. For instance, in 1635 the façade of the Province House was altered and the interior improved. In the years 1686 and 1687 the States Assembly Hall was thoroughly reconstructed. The main contractor was master cabinetmaker Matthias Kruijff (16...-1673), subcontractor was master box maker and cabinetmaker Allert Meijer (1654-1723). In 1697 the tower was renovated. In 1698/99 the Chamber of Delegates was radically rebuilt by Allert Meijer (1654-1723) a cabinetmaker and the city's master builder. In the year 1700, the Delegates Chamber of that time, which was adjacent to the Reeken Camer (Chamber of Accounts), also underwent a radical reconstruction. This room no longer exist. Around 1800, during the French occupation, the old building was renovated and the extensions to the façade demolished. These were replaced by a low building. In the year 1850 the States Assembly Hall was renovated once more. The Hall was expanded because of the requirement to build a public audience gallery. The chimney piece was relocated and shortened. In 1869 a start was made with the demolition of the old buildings. By 1871 there was a new Province House. The style of this new building was in fact mockingly referred to as a 'confectioner's style'.

In 1880 the Master Builder Jacobus van Lokhorst designed the new archive building, which was inaugurated on 1st June 1883. In 1882 the gate was removed from the original pillars. In 1898-1900 the Province House, the former



The States Assembly Hall

Sint Maartens School, was comprehensively restored by the government architect Jacob van Lokhorst. In 1912-1917 the main building was demolished for the second time. The architect Jan Vrijman designed a new Province House in neo renaissance style which was taken into use on 15 January 1917. In 2005-2006 the former archive building was renovated, and the glazed vaulting to the inner court constructed.

The States Assembly Hall

The Provincial Council has convened in the States Assembly Hall since the 16th of June 1602. The Hall has been reconstructed several times. In the years 1686 and 1687 reconstruction proved spectacular. There was a need for additional space for storing books and files. These reconstructions were also meant to give the States Assembly Hall a prestigious and distinctive character. Thus, the Provincial Council could highlight its important position in society.

Allert Meijer, master box maker, was engaged with the planning and execution of the reconstruction works. Master cabinetmaker Matthias Kruijff was responsible for the technical and constructional measures. The States Assembly Hall was provided with a floor made from white Italian marble pieces, an impressive carved and gilded chimney piece and a painting, dedicated to the theme Freedom of religion, named 'Religion and Freedom'.

On both sides of the chimney breast three rows of white tiles were arranged. To the left and right of the chimney oak wooden cabinet walls with two gilded provincial coats of arms were realized. Gold leather tapestry was applied on the other walls. For the purposes of illumination twelve gilded wall lights were ordered. Two large copper candelabums were already present. Rectangular oak wooden railings were installed. Behind these, like in a theatre, the new seats made from polished oak were arranged.

In the year 1850 the States Assembly Hall was once more thoroughly rebuilt and expanded. The chimney piece, dating from 1686 was relocated and shortened. Due to the new provincial law from 1850 which emanated from the amendment to the constitution of 1848 a public audience gallery had to be built. The meetings of the Provincial Council had become accessible to the public. The Province acquired a little school, lying behind the Province House, which was thereupon pulled down. At its place a two-storey building was erected. The required public audience gallery was installed in the upper storey.

In the present States Assembly Hall only the carved chimney piece and two gilded provincial coats of arms from 1687 have remained preserved.

The main feature to catch the eye in the Hall of the States is the overmantel

holding the painting of Religion and Freedom by Hermannus Collenius (1650-1723). Plans to commission a painting on this subject were discussed for the first time in 1686. The members of the Provincial States wanted to give expression to the importance they attached to freedom of religion in this way. After the king of France had revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685, a number of Huguenots fled to Groningen, where there was freedom of religion. The Provincial States commissioned 'a very good painting, illustrating Religion and Freedom'. Collenius received 450 guilders for this commission. It is not quite clear why the painting was not delivered until 1712.

In the foreground the arms of the City and the Ommelanden, the surrounding countryside, are depicted; since 1998, on the restoration of the painting, they have become visible again. In the Batavian/French era (1795-1813) reorganizations of local government were carried out, resulting in the City and Ommelanden ceasing to exist as such. The arms were no longer thought suitable and were painted out.

The deeper significance of the painting was lost to the 'common man', such as market traders and craftsmen. Only the well-educated elite understood the allegory and the moral of it. The figures in the painting held up a mirror, as it were, of the authorities. The various individuals portrayed vices or virtues and together illustrated what was needed for a well governed province.

The sculpted overmantel was made in 1686. He was paid 315 guilders for it. The top part is of 'good best and sound wainscoting and the carved work of good northern limewood and the base of good Bremen stone'.



'Religion and Freedom', 1712, Hermannus Collenius

In the centre of the painting are two women. One is sitting down and with her left hand is raising high a Phrygian cap of Liberty. Her right arm rests on the shoulder of the second woman, who kneels beside her, holding a bundle of arrows, the symbol of the Union, in her hands. Together they illustrate Freedom and Concord, Libertas and Concordia. On the right are Hercules, recognizable from the lion's skin which he wears wrapped round him, and Minerva, with her helmet, spear and shield, on which an owl is depicted. Hercules is raising his club to strike at the two figures prostrate before him. One is Rebellion or Vice, a blindfold man, lying on his back with a broken sword in his right hand and an extinguished torch in his left; the other is Fraus, deceit, a woman sitting on hands and knees with a mask beside her. Now that the mask has dropped off she shows her true face. Hercules is depicted here as physical strength, and Minerva as its essential partner, moral strength or wisdom. On the left, standing behind a table covered with an oriental cloth, is a woman with a veil over her head, lit up from behind by a source of light hidden behind a drapery in the top left-hand corner. She is pointing to a Bible lying open on the table, which is held firm by the two women behind the table. In the bible the words 'Testament' and 'Jesu Christi' are some of those that can be read. The woman with the veil portrays 'Religio', the true religion. The two women behind the table represent the virtues 'Faith', holding a small cross, and 'Hope', with an anchor over her shoulder. In front of the table sits 'Love' in the shape of a woman with two small children beside her. On the right in the background is a view, under an arch, of the Province House at that time and the Martini tower in Groningen. On the left the surface of the picture plane is closed off by draperies.

The tiles by the fireplace were probably put there in the eighteenth century. It is not clear whether they were made in Rotterdam or in Friesland. On the wall hang portraits of the members of the house of Nassau and Orange, painted by Johannes Tideman. These works were bought in 1671 for 200 guilders. In 1795, at the time of the French invasion, the paintings were temporarily moved to the attic. Above the door are two provincial coats of arms, which belonged to the wall cabinet of the Hall, which was reconstructed in 1687. The provincial coat of arms as such dates from 1595 and is a combination of the arms of the city of Groningen, the double-headed black eagle, and the arms of the Ommelanden: three bends azure (slanted blue bars) and eleven red hearts. In 1900 the arms of the boroughs and water management boards in the province of Groningen were put in leaded glass in the windows. In the middle is a special memorial window which was presented by the State University of Groningen. The translation of the text in the window reads as follows: 'the Curators and Senate of Groningen State University, grateful for the hospitality extended to them for nearly three years, after the fire of 30 August 1906 until the inauguration of the new Academy Building on 28 June 1909, have presented these arms to the States of Groningen in remembrance, 12 July 1909.' In 1906 the Academy Building on the Broerstraat was burnt to the ground. The provincial authorities offered the States Assembly Hall to the State University from 1906 to 1909. The States Assembly Hall was opened for meetings of the Senate and the Faculties of the University. Students took their exams here.

The public gallery was built in 1850. The Thorbecke amendments to the constitution of 1848 had laid down that meetings of the Provincial States should be held in public. In the balcony of the public gallery an inscription is to be seen in memory of the States members Pannekoek, Dijksterhuis and Siemons, who died in the Second World War.

Delegates Chamber

The States Delegates started meeting in the Delegates Chamber on the first storey in 1603. In the years 1698 and 1699 the city master builder Allert Meijer was commissioned to carry out a comprehensive renovation of the Delegates Chamber. This had become necessary because of the bad condition of the ceiling and the lack of room for storage of books and files. The Provincial Council felt that the Delegates Chamber, in which the States Delegates convened, required a prestigious look. Allert Meijer conceived the plan for the three barrel vaults and prepared their design. He even had a true to scale model made, since his task involved a rather complex construction.

Contractor of the reconstruction project was Robert Wetter.

In the year 1699 Allert Meijer was the contractor for constructing the oak wooden cupboard walls, the wall covering around the hearth and the wainscoting on the window walls. He also designed the cupboard wall.

Delegates Chamber



The upper part consists of an arch-shaped frontispiece with two lions, holding the provincial coat of arms. The wood carvings were made by Jan de Rijk. Allert Meijer, assisted by woodcarver Waldeck, carried out the wood-carvings of the chimney-piece. Regrettably Bartheld Waldeck died at his work in the Delegates Chamber. Woodcarver Jan de Rijk made the pilasters of Bremen sandstone beneath the chimney-piece. The walls in-between the windows were covered with gold leather tapestry, applied to the paneling.

The furnishing of this chamber has roughly remained unchanged. The design of its interior is of exceptional great cultural-historical value because of its architectural history and art-history aspects. Its importance is increased by its completeness and uniqueness. The Delegates Chamber is one of the most beautiful examples of cabinetmakers' work of about 1700 in the Netherlands.

The overmantel picture 'Justice' was painted by Hermannus Collenius in 1699. This allegory was made specially for the meeting room of the college of States Delegates. The figures in the painting represented vices or virtues, and together told what was needed for a well-governed province. It was the intention that in their tasks of government the college would take to heart this mirror held before them by the painting. A good governor is righteous, prudent and truth-loving, and unmasks all deceit. He or she supports innocence and fights against everything that is not just. Collenius used the same gods, heroes and allegorical figures several times. As, for instance, Hercules, who portrays the power of government and fights everything that is bad, shown in the form of a man lying on the ground. Minerva, the symbol of intellectual wisdom, is often shown unmasking Fraus, an old woman who is the incarnation of deceit.

Delegates Chamber



'Justice', 1700, Hermannus Collenius

Under the arms of the City and 'Ommelanden', the surrounding territories, which are held by lions, Justitia or Justice sits on a throne. In her left hand she holds a pair of scales, and in her right she brandishes a sword. Behind the sword stands Nuda Veritas, the Naked Truth. She is a woman with an open book in her right hand and a kind of halo round her head. On the right of Justitia is Prudentia, Prudence, holding a circular mirror. On the far right of the painting is Minerva, the goddess of Wisdom, helmeted and in armour, with her spear and shield lying on the ground. She is holding the mask, which she has just taken off the old woman, Fraus, who kneels before her on the steps of the throne. Fraus represents deceit. On the other side a woman kneels before the throne with a lamb beside her. In her raised right hand she holds a heart. She is Innocence. On the left of the painting Hercules is depicted, the hero who personifies Power and Strength. Hercules is wearing a lion's skin and holds a club. He lashes out with this club. In front of him lies a man on his back, holding a broken sword. Here Rebellion or Vice is being punished. The scene is depicted against architecture with drapery. In the top left corner a piece of open sky can be seen. Four cherubs emerge from it, bearing a crown of laurel and a horn of plenty.

Family arms of M.J. van den Berg

In 1900 the family arms of the Queen's and King's Commissioners were inserted in the windows in leaded glass. It is usual for the Queen's and King's Commissioner to be asked if he will have his family arms displayed when he retires. Above the conference table hangs a copper chandelier which was presented by the province of Limburg as thanks for the humanitarian reception of the Limburgers evacuated in the winter of 1944-45. There is also a splendid grandfather clock with chimes and mechanism by Jan Henkels in 1780.



Atrium

In the period 2005-2006 the inner court was given a glazed vault. Excavations in the inner court revealed the remains of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century walls and an eighteenth-century water tank. This tank was unusually large, about two metres by three, and two and a half metres deep. In the past the rainwater coming off the roof used to be collected in a water tank. Later the water was pumped up again for use.

The architect of the Atrium is M.A.D. Moehrlein Van Delft. The vaulted inner court was taken into use on 25 August 2006. The Atrium is used, among other things, for meetings, receptions and exhibitions.

General view of the Atrium



'Good Government', 1700, Hermannus Collenius

On the right in the centre two women are sitting on a mound. The younger woman, Justitia, Justice, holds a yardstick in her left hand, and with her right a pair of scales in her lap. A little behind her sits an older woman, her right arm across Justitia's shoulder, holding a pair of compasses in her hand, and her left hand on the table beside her with a purse full of money. She represents a responsible way of running the finances. In the left foreground are a woman and a man. This woman, Abundantia, Abundance, clasps under her right arm a horn of plenty filled with gold and jewels, and in her right hand she holds a bundle of ears of corn. In her left hand she holds a chain with a medal and a laurel wreath above the head of the man standing in front of her. He has an hourglass in his left hand and is identified as a simple countryman by the beehive and the farm equipment at his feet. In the foreground are numerous objects, such as books, a terrestrial globe, a lute with a book of music, a helmet and a sword, a painter's palette, pair of compasses, a sceptre, the attributes of art and science. The background is formed by architectural elements on left and right, linked above by draperies hanging in front of them. In the midst of all this two women are to be seen who point upwards and look at a woman appearing on a cloud, holding a horse's bridle and a whip, who is called Temperantia, Moderation.



Section Room 21

In the year 1898 the Province House once again underwent a major reconstruction. The chimney piece in the Reeken Camer (Chamber of Book-keeping) was relocated to room 21, behind the States Hall, on the ground floor. It is likely that the former Reeken Camer was located near or next to the Delegates Chamber. On the 17th of June Allert Meijer was commissioned as contractor to make the chimney-piece paneling, the entrance portion and two cupboard walls for this chamber. There was a need for additional storage space. The oak wooden chimney-piece had two pilasters of Bremen sandstone. The wood carvings were made by Jan de Rijk. Recognizably incorporated into the woodcarvings was the year date, 1700. Hermannus Collenius (1650-1723) painted the oval chimney piece in 1700. The painting is an allegory on 'Het Goede Beheer', i.e. accurate bookkeeping. The bookkeepers were kept informed by this painting of the importance of agriculture, being the backbone of our society. When agriculture flourishes there is room for arts and sciences to come to their full development, and the honest farmer, and with him all who do their daily work well, is rewarded by abundance and a laurel crown. This is, of course, conditional upon Justitia being respected, that the finances are under control, and that Temperantia exercises supervision. The walls were covered with gold leather tapestry. Regrettably, the Reeken Camer has not been preserved.



'Garnwerd', 1954, Jannes de Vries

PLOEG COLLECTION OF THE PROVINCE OF GRONINGEN

The provincial authorities of Groningen bought works by the Groningen Art Society De Ploeg (The Plough), particularly in the 1950s and 1960s. These were at the time acquired with the intention to stimulate contemporary art in the province. The purchases were also made with an eye to the future: manifestations of art were in this way preserved for future generations.

J.J. Hangelbroek, the Registrar, the highest official in the provincial bureaucracy, fulfilled a central role in this. As an art lover he had during his period of office from 1951 to 1970 to a high degree determined the taste and colour of the provincial Ploeg collection. A frequently recurring theme in this collection is landscape. Particularly the Groningen landscape was an important source of inspiration for many of the Ploeg artists. In the corridors hang works by well-known members of the Ploeg, such as Jan Altink, Johan Dijkstra, Jannes de Vries, Jan van der Zee, Marten Klompien, Riekele Prins, Jan Koster, Anco Wigboldus and Jan Gerrit Jordens.

THE FORMER ARCHIVE BUILDING

The archive building is situated behind the Provincial House on Martinikerkhof. It was designed by Master Builder Jacobus van Lokhorst in 1880 and inaugurated on 1st June 1883. The archivist's office was located on the first floor at the front. At one time the well-known state archivist J.A. Feith (1858-1913). The archive was housed at the back. The archive warehouse had five low-ceilinged floors and a tower. This part was connected to the stateroom via fireproof iron doors.

In 1922 the state archive moved into the new building on Sint Jansstraat. The architects Van Line en Kleinjan and the interior designers Counsel undertook the renovation which took place in 1976/1977. At that time the ground floor next to the stateroom was adapted into a reception area. The house witnessed further comprehensive renovations in 2005/2006 on the basis of plans drafted by the architect M.A.D Moehrlein Van Delft. The magnificent ceiling paintings in the former archivist's office were revealed once again. Since 2006 the former archive building has housed various offices.

20

The former archive building



Ceiling paintings in the former archivist's office



Detail of a ceiling painting in the former archivist's office



CARETAKER'S HOUSE, 'CARDINAL'S HOUSE'

Beside the Province House on the north side is the caretaker's house. The front of this house was built of stones from the Cardinal's house of 1559. This house stood in the Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat and was demolished in 1893. After its demolition the stones were kept. The Cardinal's House was never lived in by a cardinal, but by Mr Cardinaal, a stockbroker. In 1927 the government archivist, Jonkheer J.A. Feith, arranged to have the 'Cardinal's House' entirely rebuilt. In the façade there are three portrait medallions. They are representations of Alexander the Great, Charlemagne and King David.

Cardinal's House



21

PROVINCE HOUSE SINT JANSSTRAAT 4

On 7 May 1996 the new part of the Province House was officially opened by Queen Beatrix. This new part (the eastern section) is linked by means of an elevated bridge to the old part (the western section) of the Province House. The eastern section consists of a newly built structure and an existing, but renovated, building. The renovated part was built as a Water Management building in 1965 and designed by the architect Professor Berghoef.

In December 1993 the first pile was driven by the then Queen's Commissioner, H.J.L. Vonhoff. The new building was constructed by Benthem Crouwel Architects (BCA) and main building contractors Lodewijk Geveke Bouw. The new building has 14,500 square metres of office space. About 550 staff work here. Special areas, such as the restaurant, fitness centre and parking garage have been designed in such a way that they are also suitable for semi-public use.



Three gardens have been laid out. The planting of one garden has been supplied by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries. In the years 2012 and 2013 this section of the Province House was completely renovated. All workplaces were thoroughly refurbished. Also created was a beautiful Plaza, a lively place for encounter and exchange.

Architecture

Architect Mels Crouwel's opinion is that a public building should be obviously open to the public. This is clear inside the building in the placing of the lifts, staircases, the various coffee corners, and the corridors. The various 'fingers' are in line with the Martini tower. In this sense we can talk of an encounter with the heart of the city. The Province House is a 1990s building that satisfies the demands made on it: public, flexible, transparent and accessible.

The Province House

Art in the Province House at Sint-Jansstraat 4

Rebecca Horn

In the hall hangs a work of art by Rebecca Horn (1944) called 'The Ballet of the Viewers'. The work consists of ten antique binoculars which hang on metal rods of various lengths. They are trained on the reception hall and look via the transparent façade onto the outside world. Rebecca Horn has bought the instruments herself at antique fairs and flea markets. Each of them has a character and history of its own.



Remko Posthuma

'The Song Thrush' (porcelain, 360 x 200 x 14 cm) was bought in 2002 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Noorderbreedte Foundation. In connection with this anniversary Noorderbreedte took steps to initiate an art collection under the title 'Noorderbreedte presents the Noorderbreedte Collection'. Businesses, institutions and authorities in the country were asked to buy a work of art for it. The province bought this work with the aim of stimulating young artists in the practice of their profession. The work of this artist has a very original style.



Walker Pachler



26

At the beginning of 2014, Walker Pachler's artwork 'Dynamically still' was placed in four new meeting rooms, named after the localities Zethuis, Jukwerd, Hefswal and Klei, in the staff restaurant, and in the meeting room Boerdam. 'Dynamically still' consists of an ensemble of individual, airbrushed objects. They represent the artist's interpretation of the aforesaid localities. The glass beads symbolise water drops that turn the world upside down. Walker Pachler created 'Dynamically still' on behalf of the Province of Groningen in the context of a talent promotion programme, organised by the Centre of Visual Arts (CBK) in Groningen.

Tymo Grijpma

Since the middle of 2014, the works of art created by the Groningen artist Tymo Grijpma are shown to the public in the meeting rooms Pasop, Foxham, Wierum, Hemert en Broek. His wall covering paintings are inextricably linked with these Groningen villages, after which they have been named.

Tymo Grijpma created his works of art on behalf of the Province of Groningen, within the framework of a talent promotion programme, organised by the Centre of Visual Arts (CBK) Groningen.



27

Guust Persoon



28

Three artworks made by Guust Persoon (1991) were placed in the Okswerd, Trimunt and Peebos meeting rooms at the end of 2015. These rooms derive their names from small localities in the Groningen countryside. The artworks are named 'De dragers van het landschap' (The bearers of the landscape), 'Het gemaakte land' (The manufactured land) and 'Eén materie' (One substance). The names relate to the aforementioned localities. Guust Persoon created these artworks on behalf of the Province of Groningen in the context of a talent promotion programme, organised by the Centre of Visual Arts (CBK) in Groningen

Klaas Hendrik Hantschel

The artworks '52°53 'NB 7°06'OL' and '53° 14'NB 6°14'OL' made by Klaas Hendrik Hantschel were placed in the Dorp and Roelage meeting rooms at the end of 2016. De artworks have been printed on glass and were generated by computer software using the coordinates of the localities Dorp and Roelage. Klaas Hendrik Hantschel created these artworks on behalf of the Province of Groningen in the context of a talent promotion programme, organised by the Centre of Visual Arts (CBK) in Groningen



29

COAT OF ARMS

On 30 December 1947 the arms of the Province of Groningen were officially granted by Royal Decree. The arms are in fact much older. After the capitulation of the city of Groningen and its incorporation in the Union of Utrecht (1594) the City and the Ommelanden became a single province. On 17 February 1595 the City and the Ommelanden signed an agreement and a coat of arms was designed for the province.



Combining the city coat of arms and the arms of the Ommelanden

It is not surprising that the arms of the province of Groningen are a combination of the arms of the city and the arms of the Ommelanden. The provincial arms are divided into four parts: top left and bottom right are the city's arms, and in the other quadrants the arms of the Ommelanden.

The city arms

The city arms are a gold shield on which a two-headed black eagle is depicted with a silver shield on its breast. On this silver shield is a bend vert. The city arms stood for the areas where the city was lord and master. That meant the areas of Gorecht, the two Oldambt areas (Wold-Oldambt, Klei-Oldambt), Reiderland and Westerwolde.

Ommelanden arms

The arms of the Ommelanden, a silver shield bearing three bends azure and eleven red hearts date from 1582 as the symbol of the independence of the Ommelanden.

The three bends represent the three Ommelanden (Westerkwartier, Hunsingo and Fivelingo) and the eleven red hearts the subsidiary districts of the three Ommelanden (four in the Westerkwartier: Vredewold, Langewold, Humsterland and Middag; five in Hunsingo: de Marne, Halfambt, Oosterambt, Ubbega and Innersdijk; and two in Fivelingo: Hogeland and Duurswold).

The shield is surmounted by a golden crown, five leaves and four pearls, and it is supported on either side by a golden lion, the symbol of the Low Countries.

FLAG

On 17 February 1950 the Delegated States confirmed the flag of the province of Groningen. The flag is elongated and the height of the flag is two thirds of its length. The flag is divided by an upright white cross. On the white cross there is again a green cross. The top left and bottom right panels are red and the two others blue. The colours of the flag are a combination of those of the arms of the province: white and green from the arms of the city and red and blue from the arms of the Ommelanden. The green cross symbolizes the central position of the city of Groningen.



GRONINGEN'S ANTHEM

The population of the province have a national anthem: 'Grönnens Laid'. The words of the song were written in 1919 by Geert Teis of Stadskanaal. The music was composed by G.R. Slager from Slochteren. The arrangement was by Frieso Molenaar.

Grönnens laid

*Van Laauwerzee tot Dollart tou,
van Drinthe tot aan t Wad,
Doar gruit, doar bluit ain wonderlaand
rondom ain wondre stad.
Ain Pronkjewail in golden raand
is Grönnen, Stad en Ommelaand;
Ain Pronkjewail in golden raand
is Stad en Ommelaand!*

The Groningen anthem

*From the Lauwerszee to the Dollard,
from Drenthe to the Wadden,
a wonderful landscape blossoms
and flourishes around a splendid town.
A jewel in a golden setting,
that's Groningen, town and land around;
a jewel in a golden setting,
that's Groningen and the land around!*

32

*Doar broest de zee, doar hoelt de wind,
doar soest t aan diek en Wad,
Mor rusteg waarkt en wuilt t volk,
het volk van Loug en Stad.
Ain Pronkjewail in golden raand
is Grönnen, Stad en Ommelaand;
Ain Pronkjewail in golden raand
is Stad en Ommelaand!*

*There the sea foams, there the wind howls,
whistling along the dyke and the shallows,
but the people calmly work and plough,
the people of village and town.
A jewel in a golden setting,
that's Groningen, town and land around;
A jewel in a golden setting,
that's Groningen and the land around!*

*Doar woont de dege degelkhaaid,
de wille, vast as stoal,
Doar vuilt t haart, wat tonge sprekt,
in richt- en slichte toal.
Ain Pronkjewail in golden raand
is Grönnen, Stad en Ommelaand;
Ain Pronkjewail in golden raand
is Stad en Ommelaand!*

*Sound and reliable are its people,
their will as strong as steel,
Their hearts feel what their tongues speak
in direct and simple language.
A jewel in a golden setting,
that's Groningen, town and land around;
A jewel in a golden setting,
that's Groningen and the land around!*