

## **The Royal Palace, Amsterdam**

Amsterdam's Royal Palace is in the heart of the city, on Dam Square. Like Huis ten Bosch Palace and Noordeinde Palace, it has been placed at the Queen's disposal by Act of Parliament.

### **1648: A new city hall**

The palace was originally built as a city hall for the burgomaster and magistrates of Amsterdam, who awarded the project to the celebrated architect Jacob van Campen in 1648.

Van Campen also had a hand in building Huis ten Bosch and Noordeinde Palace in The Hague.

The entire building is made of white stone, though centuries of weathering have left none of the original colour visible. On 29 July 1655, the city of Amsterdam opened the first section of the building.

### ***Decoration***

At that time, only two floors had been completed and decorated. Renowned sculptors were brought to Amsterdam and famous painters, such as Rembrandt and Ferdinand Bol, contributed to the interior. The central aim of the decoration was to symbolise the power of Amsterdam and the Dutch Republic.

### **1808: From city hall to royal palace**

The building served as the city hall for some 150 years.

It was first used as a palace for a few days in 1768, when Prince William V, stadholder of the Netherlands, and his wife, Wilhelmina of Prussia, were given a ceremonial welcome in Amsterdam.

In 1806 Louis Bonaparte, Emperor Napoleon's brother, became King of Holland. He first lived in The Hague, but in 1807 he moved to Amsterdam, which was of greater economic importance. In 1808, he took the city hall on Dam Square as his Royal Palace.

### ***Empire style***

The architect J.T. Thibault supervised its redecoration in the Empire style. A Royal Museum, the predecessor of the city's Rijksmuseum, was also established in the palace.

After Louis abdicated and the Netherlands was annexed by France, on 2 July 1810, the French governor, Charles François Lebrun, received permission from the Emperor to live in the palace.

### **King Willem I**

After the fall of Napoleon in 1813, Prince Willem of Orange, later King Willem I, returned the palace to the city of Amsterdam.

After his investiture, however, the new King realised the importance of having a home in the capital and asked the city authorities to make the palace available for royal use once again. It was not until 1936 that the building became state property.

### **The palace today**

The Royal Palace in Amsterdam is now used mainly for entertaining and official functions, such as state visits, the Queen's New Year receptions and other official receptions.

Every year, it provides the setting for the presentation of the Erasmus Prize, the Silver Carnation, the Royal Awards for Painting and the Prince Claus Award.

The foundation that manages the palace opens it to the public when it is not in use by the Royal House. Every summer, an exhibition highlights one historical or artistic feature of the building. Following the annual presentation of the Royal Awards for Painting in October, the prize-winning works of art are put on public display.

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