

Translated by Edam Museum volunteers. Original text and images available on the Amsterdam City website: <https://www.amsterdam.nl/kunst-cultuur/monumenten/publicaties/bijzondere/knob-bulletin/>.

Since 1899, the Royal Dutch Archaeology Association (KNOB) has been the platform for scientific and policy-based knowledge exchange in the field of spatial heritage, emerging as the national association for promoting knowledge of archaeology, architectural and construction history, cultural landscape and monuments. Since 1899, KNOB has been publishing a scientific journal, 'Bulletin KNOB', 6 times per year. In addition, a number of study days on a variety of (current) topics are organised annually.

- Freek Schmidt - Architectural history and building history in Amsterdam
- Dik de Roon - Carried by water. Floating cellars in Amsterdam and the surrounding area

[Schematic of floating basement]

A floating basement is a brick structure that moves with the groundwater level. It is a relatively unknown phenomenon with a history in which all sorts of fascinating issues merge. In addition to managing the water, technical issues related to mortar making, masonry and pumps, the final fixing of the floating basement basins and protection are ingredients which merit a closer look at the phenomenon.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, Amsterdam underwent impressive periods of growth which, among other things, led to the aim of maximising use of the available space in the merchant houses in the city. The cost of the limited amount of available land was generally more expensive than the cost of raising existing buildings or excavating basements. A recurring problem was that basement floors repeatedly burst open due to excessive water pressure caused by peaks in the groundwater level from tides and storm surges.

It is not entirely clear when the first real floating basement was installed in Amsterdam. It was probably around the mid-17th century. The earliest known drawing was published in 1674 by the well-known architect Philips Vingboons.

[Photograph of floating basement]

In 1701, the city council restricted the maximum depth of basement floors to just above the city level. Probably the floating basement only found a wider application as a result this regulation. Special characteristics of floating cellars are the bricks in 'clamp layers' of stones laid flat *[kamplagen: cement layers applied to a stone wall on an asphalt like substrate to make it waterproof]* and the use of tuff mortar *[finely ground tuff, volcanic rock, added to mortar]* to be able to make the brickwork waterproof. After 1871, when the construction of the Orange Locks stabilized the city water level, the floating cellars in Amsterdam were fixed.

Floating cellars have also been found in surrounding Dutch towns and villages. Without exception, these are located in low-lying areas with a relatively high and non-stabilized groundwater level. Most of them date from the 19th century. There is an older and still functioning version in Edam.

The phenomenon has been investigated systematically, for several years by the Bureau of Monuments & Archaeology in Amsterdam.

- Coert Peter Krabbe and Jos Smit - Effective beauty. Adriaan Willem Weissman and Lizzy Cottage (1901-1904)

[Photograph of Lizzy cottage]

In 1892, Adriaan Willem Weissman (1858-1923) designed the Stedelijk Museum on the Paulus Potterstraat in Amsterdam. Less than 10 years later he built the detached mansion with the 'Lizzy Cottage' painting room, on the corner of Hobbemastraat and Jan Luijkenstraat. In that short period, his architecture underwent fundamental changes: The main shape of the museum is based on Dutch architecture of the early 17th century, while Lizzy Cottage makes considerably less reference to historical designs. In the last decade of the 19th century, the work of fellow architects, including H.P. Berlage (1856-1934), Ed. Cuypers (1859-1927) and G. van Arkel (1858-1918) showed a similar development: They abandoned the decorations of the Dutch neo-Renaissance and searched for a new, more contemporary architecture.

From the start of his career, Weissman not only described himself as a designer but was also extremely skilled with the pen. A flood of publications started in the [18]80s that only stopped upon his death in 1923. His documents show that Weissman closely followed architectural developments and professional literature in Europe and the United States and readily commented on them. Thanks to his many articles in De Opmerker magazine, Weissman's quest for a contemporary architectural expression in the decade from 1892 to 1902 can be followed in detail. His interest consecutively focused on Dutch architecture from around 1600, contemporary American architecture (especially H. Richardson) and then contemporary English architecture, in particular the Queen Anne Movement.

[Photograph of interior of Lizzy cottage]

Lizzy Cottage is unquestionably indebted to the English architecture of that time. Despite the name, Weissman saw the house primarily as typically Dutch. For example, he omitted the "hall" and thereby distanced himself from Ed. Cuypers, who had included this space in the nearby house at Jan Luijkenstraat 2-2A (1898-1899). According to Weissman, the 'hall' was only useful in English society, a view he shared with Hermann Muthesius, who had lived in England for a long time. Weissman regarded the German architect as a kindred spirit; he introduced his views - in translation - in the Netherlands. Just like Muthesius, Weissman is one of the large group of architects with an eclectic, practical approach that was not based on ideological motives. Efficiency was their motto.

Until recently, architects such as Weissman have remained under reported in a history focused on the avant-garde. This article provides a building block for a less one-sided view of Dutch architectural history.

- Gabri van Tussenbroek - The Schreierstoren, inside and out. One of the last remnants of the Amsterdam city wall investigated by building history

[Photograph of Schreierstoren with notes]

The Schreierstoren is one of the few remnants of the late medieval wall of Amsterdam. Moreover, it is the only tower without a crown in the early 17th century, as was the case with the Montelbaanstoren and the Muntstoren. That is why the Schreierstoren is still in fairly original condition. During major repairs to the facades, in the autumn and winter of 2005, it was possible to investigate its building history from the outside as well from inside. The horizontal joint in the brickwork indicates an interruption in the construction of the tower. It was probably decided to close the ring around the city before building the towers.

[Photograph of the timber structure in Schreierstoren]

The assumption that the tower had already been finished in 1486 or 1490 is untenable. A dendrochronology investigation clearly showed that the wood used for the roof construction was only felled in the winter of 1498-1499, so that the tower could not have been completed before the summer of 1499 at the earliest.

- Ronald Glaudemans - 'Merchant Renaissance'. The interior of the Amsterdam residential home in the 16th century

[Photograph of the wood panelling in Schreierstoren]

Relatively little is known about the historical layout of the tower, due to the heavy-handed restoration between 1966 and 1968, with none of the pre-existing condition being recorded. The 18th century restoration by Abraham van der Hart was a previously undocumented project by this city architect, which also applies to the extension to the tower.

In the run-up to the Golden Age, Amsterdam had already experienced great growth and prosperity during the 16th century. Within the late medieval core, many houses were renovated or enlarged and the rear areas were largely closed off, with smaller homes for the many immigrants. Among them were many merchants from northern Germany and Flanders for whom the decor and finish of their houses was influenced by their origins. The relatively scarce remains of 16th century interior finishes in Amsterdam form the subject of this contribution. Wall paintings have hardly been preserved in Amsterdam; on the other hand, ceiling paintings and carved decorations on the timber frame are regularly found.

It has become clear that from the middle of the 16th century, new forms inspired by classical architecture emerged in Amsterdam on a large scale. It seems very likely that this emergence of Renaissance forms goes hand-in-hand with the rapid economic growth of the city during this period. Not only the trade relations and the traveling merchants, but certainly also the arrival of many immigrants and refugees, had an impact on this spread. The urge of wealthy merchants to express their power in the interior of the home contributed significantly to the development of the new forms. In this light, the influence of the southern Netherlands - in particular Antwerp - but also of the north of Germany and the Baltic Sea area on the development of Amsterdam's form should not be underestimated.

Editor KNOB | 2007 | Volume 106 | Number 4/5 | Publisher KNOB | ISSN 01660470

[Photograph of Amsterdam skyline]

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