



**KING'S
OFFICE**





KING'S OFFICE

The King is the head of state of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy. This means that the position of the monarch is laid down in the Constitution. The Constitution states that the ministers and the King together form the Government. The King's Office assists the King in the performance of his duties as part of the Government.

The King's Office is located at Korte Vijverberg 3 in The Hague.

Photo
© Hans Roggen

OUR TASKS

Contact with ministers and ministries

Article 42 of the Constitution states that the ministers, and not the King, are responsible to Parliament for acts of government. It is therefore important that the King and the ministers are in regular contact. The King's Office maintains contact with the ministries, for example to ensure that the ministers can accept ministerial responsibility in advance for a speech the King is going to give, or a post a member of the Royal House intends to assume. The King meets with the Prime Minister every Monday afternoon. The King's Office also prepares these meetings, as well as working visits that the King undertakes with ministers and state secretaries.

The King's Office helps ensure the King is well informed, allowing him to fulfill his unifying, representative and encouraging role as head of state as effectively as possible. Direct support is also provided to the King by the Royal Household and the Government Information Service.



Photo

At their Monday afternoon meetings the King and the Prime Minister discuss current affairs in politics and society, domestic and foreign policy, and matters relating to the Royal House.

© Patrick van Katwijk



Swearing-in ceremonies and international contacts

Certain senior officials in the judiciary and public administration must, by law, swear the oath of office or make the affirmation of office in the presence of the King before commencing their duties. The Director of the King's Office officiates at these swearing-in ceremonies. The Office helps the King prepare for the meeting with the official that follows the ceremony.

Foreign ambassadors who are posted to the Netherlands present their letters of credence during a special ceremony at Noordeinde Palace at the start of their posting. In the first letter the foreign head of state recalls the previous ambassador, while the second introduces the new ambassador as his or her country's highest diplomatic representative in the Netherlands.

The King speaks with the ambassador afterwards and is supplied with the necessary information by the King's Office. At the end of an ambassador's term, there is usually a farewell audience, too. Again, the King's Office provides the King with the necessary information. The King's Office makes use of background information supplied by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for these meetings with ambassadors, for preparing incoming and outward state visits, and for the King's correspondence with foreign heads of state, for example in the event of a natural disaster or the death of a prominent figure, or on celebratory occasions such as a country's national day.

Photo

King Willem-Alexander swears in Mr Marcel Beukeboom at Noordeinde Palace as Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome.
© Wesley de Wit

Petitions to the King

Each year the King's Office receives around 3.000 to 5.000 letters to the King from citizens. These letters are known as 'petitions'. The King's Office analyses and summarises the content of each one and, where necessary, forwards it to the relevant government minister or state secretary for processing. The letter writer, or 'petitioner', is informed of this. The relevant ministry answers the letter and sends a copy of its reply to the King's Office. This procedure enables the King's Office to monitor progress on petitions.

Acts of Parliament and Royal Decrees

Under the Constitution, all Acts of Parliament, Orders in Council and Royal Decrees must be signed by the King, who thereby gives his assent. They are then signed by the relevant minister or state secretary to reflect ministerial responsibility. The King signs several thousand acts and decrees each year. He signs any bill and proposal for which the democratic and constitutional requirements have been met. If the King is abroad and an act or decree needs to be signed urgently, he signs it digitally using his tablet. On his return to the Netherlands he signs the original document in pen. The King's Office ensures the procedures for signing these documents run smoothly and attaches a brief summary note for the King to each one, setting out not only the main points of the document, but also anything of note in the preceding legislative process, for example the advisory opinion of the Council of State and the minister or state secretary's response. This enables the King to stay abreast of any new legislation on a day-to-day basis. All state documents signed by the King are then registered and archived by the King's Office.



Photo

The King gives assent to Acts of Parliament, Orders in Council and Royal Decrees by signing them.

© Patrick van Katwijk

KORTE VIJVERBERG 3



Photo
© Dick van Duijn

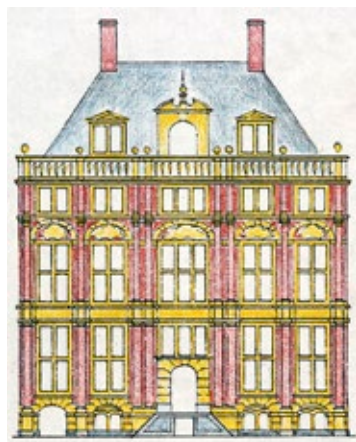
Patrician mansion

The house at Korte Vijverberg 3, one of the most beautiful mansions in The Hague, was built in the 17th century (1633-1635), when the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands was flourishing.

The city was developing rapidly at that time, so a connection was needed between Plein and Voorhout. A street called Korte Vijverberg was built on the grounds of The Hague's St Sebastian civic guard. These origins are reflected in the name of nearby Doelenstraat, doelen being the Dutch word for 'target range'. The grounds of the St Sebastian target range were divided up into lots, and lot number 3 was purchased by Reynier Pauw, a justice of the Supreme Court. Of all the houses built on Korte Vijverberg at that time, number 3 is the only one that still has seventeenth-century elements in its façade.

The building acquired its present appearance in 1724. Inspired by his brother Cornelis' home at Lange Vijverberg 7 (currently the official residence of the German ambassador), the then owner of number 3, Johan van Schuylenburch, made alterations to his home in the style of Dutch engraver and architect Daniel Marot. An extra floor was added, and the 17th-century façade was crowned with a sizeable cornice, balustrade and coat of arms. A balcony was constructed above the entrance. Two small garden wings were added to the rear of the building, creating a courtyard.

The interior, which Johan van Schuylenburch had redecorated in late Louis XIV style, remains beautifully preserved to this day. The ornate stucco work was done by Italian plasterers from the Como region. The marble chimney breasts in the two front rooms on the piano nobile are decorated with bas-reliefs by Jan Claudius de Cock. They came from Van Schuylenburg's personal art collection and depict scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The best-known decorative elements in the house are the magnificent wall canvases in the left front room on the piano nobile. They were painted by Dirk Dalens III in 1725 and also depict scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. This room is therefore also known as the Dalens Room.



Reconstruction of the original façade from 1635.

Drawing: © Ir. H.C. Brouwer



Apollo and Daphne, bas-relief by J.C. de Cock, 1707.

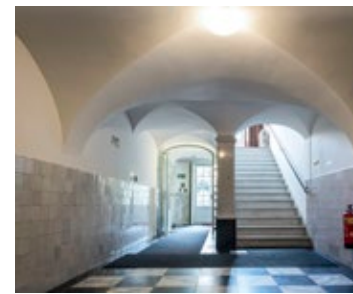
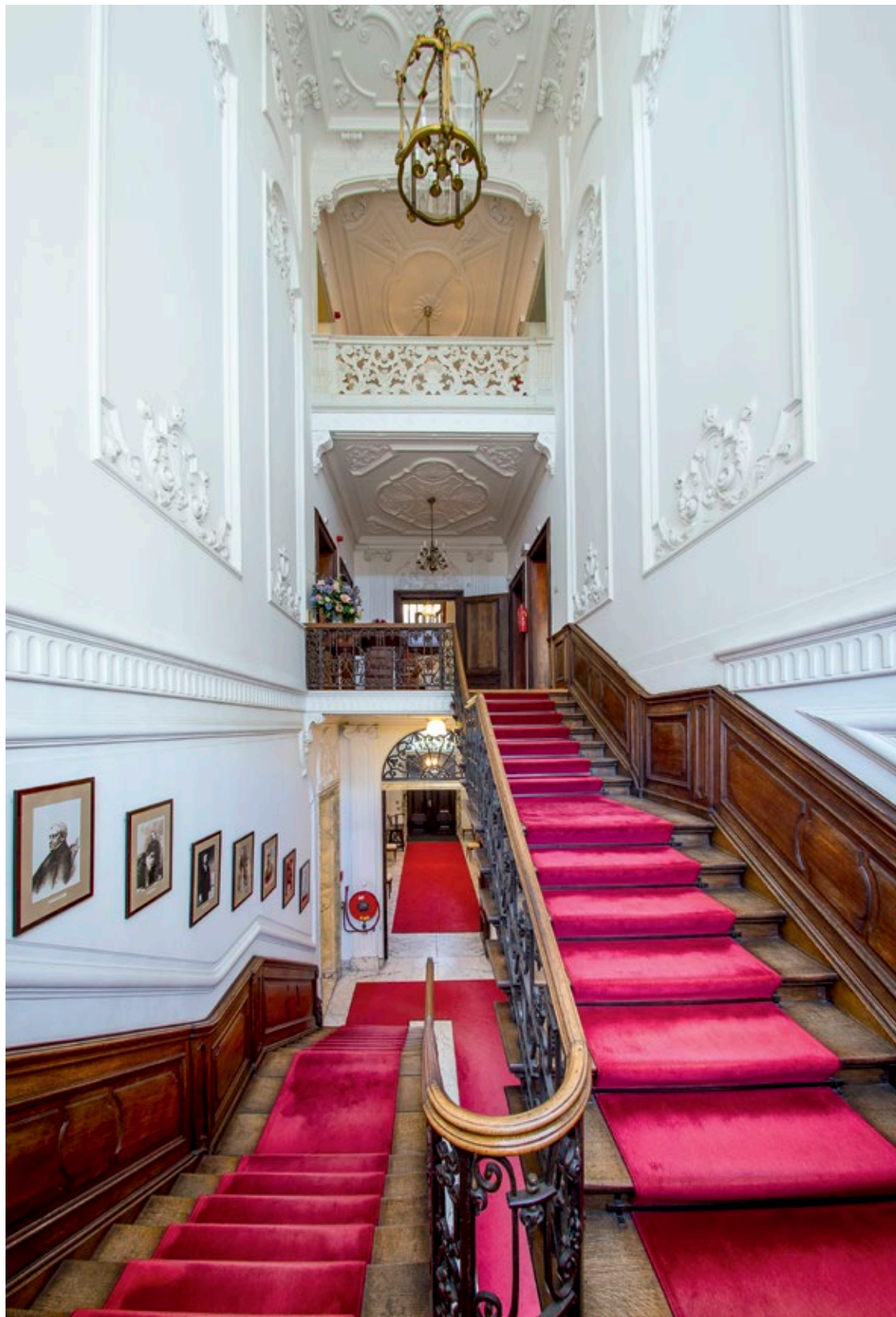
Photo: © Maarten Fleskens

Photo

The interior of the left front room on the piano nobile.

© Frank van Beek





Historic vaulted ceiling in the basement.
Photo: © Frank van Beek

In the century and a half that followed, very few alterations were made to the building. Its owners and residents – wealthy people of high rank – stood for stability and continuity. The original state of the building's interior and exterior has been preserved surprisingly well.

From private residence to State property

The most notable residents during this period were Hendrik van Slingelandt (1735-1759) and Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer (1801-1876). The death of Groen van Prinsterer's widow in 1879 marked the end of two-and-a-half centuries of private ownership. After the mansion was sold to the state, it was used to house the district court, various departments of the Ministry of Justice and occasionally for cabinet meetings.

In 1913 the state was searching for new premises for the Queen's Office, which had until then been housed in the Binnenhof complex, but needed to be moved due to a lack of space. Groen van Prinsterer's former home was the best option.

Before the Queen's Office moved in, some alterations had to be made. In the courtyard between the two garden wings, an archive room and toilets were built, with a roof level with the window sills on the piano nobile. The basement was also to be used for the archive, which meant that some of the seventeenth-century vaulting had to make way for a more modern ceiling. Parquet flooring was put in on the piano nobile.

On 13 May 1940, following the German invasion, the director of the Queen's Office, *jonkheer* G.C.W. van Tets van Goudriaan, followed Queen Wilhelmina into exile in England. The Office's staff were suspended and, to protect the building during the war, iron shutters were installed, some of which were never taken down. In September 1941 the German Wehrmacht requisitioned the building and set up an officers' mess in it. Eighteen months later, the leader of the Dutch National Socialist Movement (NSB), Anton Mussert, established his state office there. As the building had fallen into disrepair, the architect G.A.C. Blok was engaged to restore it. The restoration took place in the period from 1943 to 1944.

Photo

The grand staircase.
© Frank van Beek

The architect's aims were twofold: to return the building as much as possible to its original state, while at the same time adapting it to the demands of a modern office. Blok replaced the Empire windows with reproductions of eighteenth-century ones with smaller panes, which restored the building's original appearance. The early twentieth-century annexe for the archive was demolished, and a small French garden was laid in the space created between the wings.

Inside, thick layers of paint were removed from the woodwork, revealing the fine carvings beneath. The bare oak was not repainted. Paintings above the fireplaces and doors were either restored or redone. The installation of central heating meant that the nineteenth-century enclosed porches in the hall could be torn down, returning the grand staircase to its old style. The old wooden stairs to the basement were replaced by marble ones with a cast-iron balustrade. Modern sanitary facilities were added in the left section of the building.



Photo
Room in the left-hand garden wing.
© Frank van Beek

Photo
Bird painting by Aert Schouman in the garden wing.
© Frank van Beek

OWNERS & RESIDENTS



Photo

This splendid room is used as an office and meeting room.

© Frank van Beek

Reynier Pauw

1635

In 1635 Reynier Pauw, justice of the Supreme Court, and his second wife, the rich widow Stijntje van Ruytenburch, together with their children from previous marriages, moved into the house, which has also been known as Pauw House since that time. Reynier's son, Diederik, and Stijntje's daughter, Alida, married and had two sons. After Alida's death at the age of 25, Diederik married the widow Elisabeth Cats, daughter of poet, jurist and politician Jacob Cats. Reynier died in 1676 and the house was inherited by his eldest grandson Reynier Pauw II.



Reynier Pauw

Agneta de Graeff

1703

When Reynier Pauw II died in 1693, the house passed to his brother Joan, who sold the house in 1703 to Agneta de Graeff of Amsterdam for 25,000 guilders. Agneta, 40 years old and very wealthy, is thought to have bought the house to further the political ambitions of her fiancé, Jan Baptista de Hochepped, who was six years younger. Following his marriage to Agneta, Hochepped did in fact acquire a position on the Chamber of Accounts in 1706. It is unknown whether the couple ever lived in The Hague. In any case, when Agneta sold the house in 1711, two years after Jan Baptista's death, it was under lease.



Joan Pauw, who inherited the house from his brother Reynier Pauw.

Johan van Schuylenburch

1711

In 1711 Agneta de Graeff sold the house to Johan van Schuylenburch for 27,000 guilders. Van Schuylenburch sat on the board that was in charge of settling the estate of the stadholder William III. In 1719 he became alderman of Haarlem, subsequently holding a number of other leadership positions in that city. Van Schuylenburch, a widower, moved into the house with his two sons. His second wife was Cornelia Jacoba Kemp, with whom he had two children.

Johan van Schuylenburch took a great interest in the fine arts. His extensive art collection contained paintings by Rembrandt, Veronese, Van Dyck, Poussin and other celebrated masters.



Cornelia Jacoba Kemp, the second wife of Johan van Schuylenburg

Hendrik van Slingelandt

1735

After the death of Johan van Schuylenburch in 1735, the house was bought by Hendrik van Slingelandt for 40,000 guilders. A member of a regent family in Dordrecht, Van Slingelandt served as alderman and mayor of The Hague. In his time Van Slingelandt was a reputed collector of prints, drawings and documents. He installed a library on the first floor of the house which was decorated with grisailles of allegorical representations of history and geography. The famous painter Aert Schouman, whom he had commissioned to make two bird paintings for the house, described Van Slingelandt as a 'great art lover and connoisseur of the art of painting'. Hendrik van Slingelandt died in 1759, and his wife two years later. Their two daughters inherited the house and continued to live there.



Hendrik van Slingelandt

Agatha van Slingelandt & Willem Bentinck

1762

Following Agatha van Slingelandt's marriage, the house in which she and her sister Elisabeth had been living came into the possession of her husband Willem Bentinck, a nobleman from the province of Overijssel. Bentinck was a captain of the Dutch Guards in The Hague. The couple lived in the house on Korte Vijverberg with their young son Adolf Carel until Agatha's death in 1775.

Willem August Sirtema van Grovestins

1786

In 1786 Willem August Sirtema van Grovestins rented the house from the Bentinck family, but spent little time at Korte Vijverberg. In 1789, he was sent by the Prince of Orange and the States General to look into the possibility of reorganising the Dutch administration in the colony of Demerary (in present-day Guyana). His wife Jacoba Bouwens died in The Hague in 1793.

Abraham Gijsbertus Verster

1796

In 1796 the house was leased to Abraham Gijsbertus Verster, who had become a member of the National Assembly a short time earlier. Verster, who was a tapestry dealer from Amsterdam, did not stay in politics long. He left The Hague the next year.

Petrus Jacobus Groen van Prinsterer

1797

The young physician Petrus Jacobus Groen van Prinsterer, who had recently married Adriana Hendrica Caan, leased the house in 1797. He would become one of the most famous doctors of his time, the founder of the health inspectorate and personal physician to King Willem I. He was also active in local government, including as a member of The Hague town council.

In 1805 Groen van Prinsterer bought the house from the Bentinck family for 20,000 guilders, half the amount Van Slingelandt had paid in 1735. The drop in value was the result of decades of economic stagnation.



Petrus Jacobus Groen van Prinsterer

Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer

1838

The son of Petrus Jacobus and Adriana Hendrica, the eminent Guillaume (or Willem) Groen van Prinsterer, started out as a lawyer before being appointed referendary in the King's Office in 1827. He was dissatisfied with his career in the civil service. Thanks to the financial independence he acquired after his mother's death, he was able to pursue his main interests: historical research and publishing. In 1833 Willem I appointed him keeper of the royal archives.

In 1828 Guillaume married Betsy van der Hoop. The couple moved into Korte Vijverberg 3 in 1838. Betsy, who was also from a wealthy family, loved the house but sometimes found the luxury oppressive. 'This is a very beautiful house - I often think it too beautiful for travellers, foreigners and sojourners, but then there are also times that my vain heart takes pleasure in it...'

Betsy was one of the founders of Bronovo Hospital in The Hague. Groen van Prinsterer emerged as the leading representative of the anti-revolutionary movement in the Netherlands of the mid-19th century, a group which believed that the Bible was the final authority in matters of governance. In 1849 he was elected to parliament, and served on and off until 1865.



Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer

He died in 1876. His coffin was laid in the Dalens Room. His wife died three years later. Their names are carved into the building's façade.

Patrician residence becomes State property

1881

In 1879, Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer's niece Elisabeth Philipse inherited the house. She and her husband Bonifacius de Jonge, the president of the district court, had no desire to take up residence in the house. In 1881 they sold it to the State for 70,000 guilders, and it was used as extra premises for the justice ministry.

○	○	○	○
1882	1902	1912	1914
District court	Offices for various departments of the Ministry of Justice	Meeting rooms for various ministries and the cabinet	Queen's Office
○	○	○	○
1940	1945	2013	
Second World War. Director follows Queen into exile in London	Return of the Queen's Office	King's Office	

The building at Korte Vijverberg 3 remains the property of the State to this day. It is managed by the Central Government Real Estate Agency and used by the King's Office. Keeping this historic building in daily use helps to maintain it and allows this piece of cultural heritage to be preserved for future generations.

Photos

Portraits of former residents.

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KING'S OFFICE

www.kabinetvandekoning.nl

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