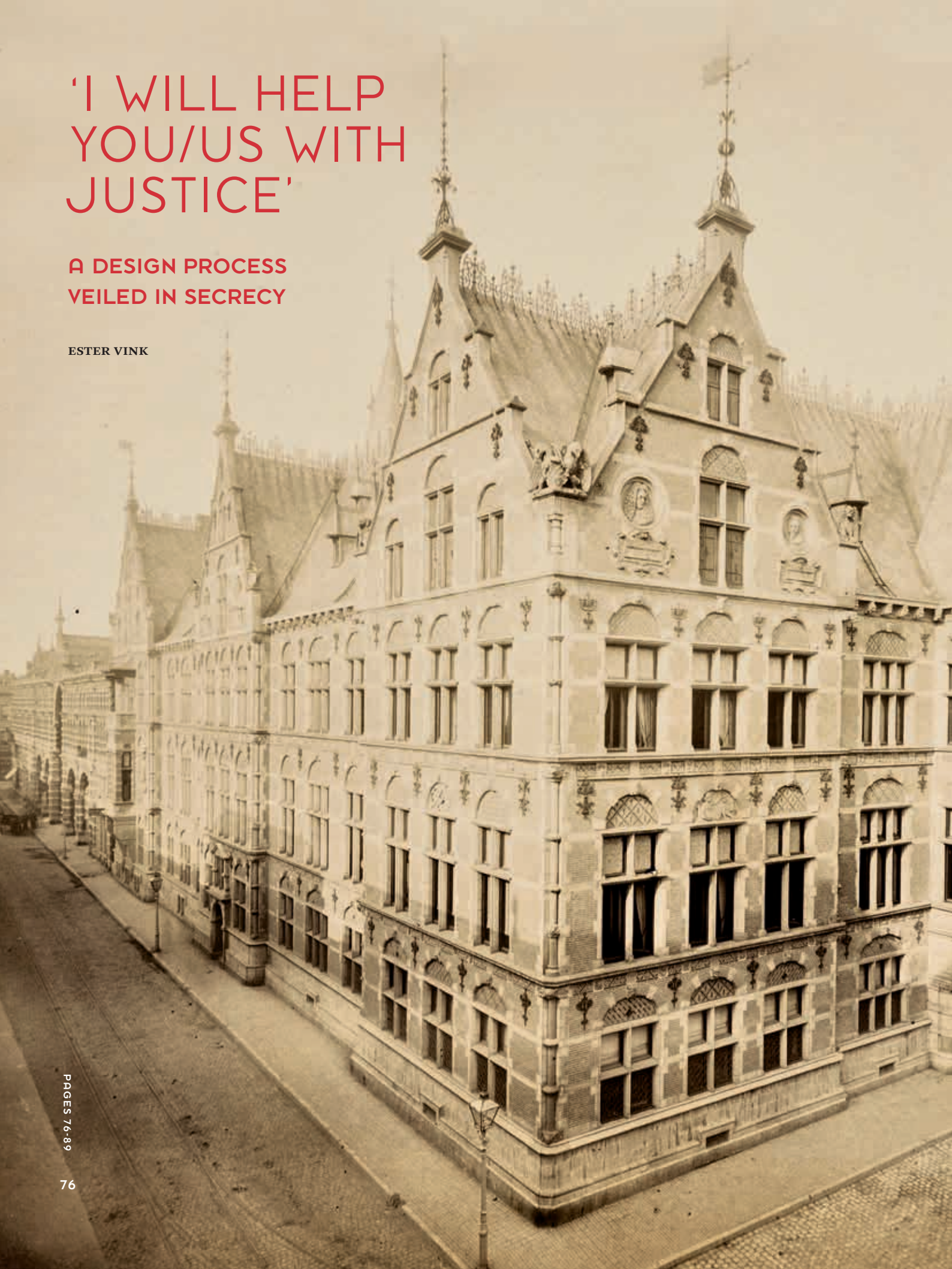


'I WILL HELP YOU/US WITH JUSTICE'

A DESIGN PROCESS
VEILED IN SECRECY

ESTER VINK





A stone's throw from the Binnenhof stands a building long known as the 'Palace of Justice' (fig. 1).¹ 'A medieval fairy-tale palace' was how one journalist described it in 1880, and he didn't intend it as a compliment.² The actual Hague Palace of Justice stood on Korte Voorhout, whereas this building had been constructed between 1876 and circa 1885 to house the Ministry of Justice. Its design has traditionally been attributed to Cornelis Hendrik Peters (1847-1932).³ However, there are doubts about his authorship. Obvious is that apart from Peters, the architect Pierre Cuypers and the civil servant Victor de Stuers played a significant role in its creation.⁴ Recent archival research has made it possible to shed light on their contribution, and to explain how this murky situation surrounding the authorship could have arisen.

DEBATE AND CONFLICT

During the second half of the nineteenth century high-profile Dutch architects became embroiled in a heated debate. Proponents of various revivalist styles or combinations of these styles were locked in battle. Also within the main schools of thought opinions were divided and often expressed in barbed language.⁵

The well-known architect Pierre Cuypers (1827-1921) and his younger ally and friend Victor de Stuers (1843-1916) were prominent participants in this debate.⁶ While Cuypers was inclined to ignore thorny topics for the sake of his livelihood, De Stuers, who came from military stock, enjoyed a good contretemps.⁷ One of the arenas where the debate led to heated clashes, was the Board of Government Advisers on Historical Monuments and Art (College van Rijksadviseurs voor Monumenten van Geschiedenis en Kunst). Cuypers sat on this board as a member, De Stuers initially as secretary and from July 1875 as the representative of the Ministry of the Interior. Both were heavily involved in the many buildings the government commissioned in this period.⁸ And they had very definite ideas on this subject: government buildings should be fit for purpose and be built in what was called an 'Oud-Hollands' or 'traditional Dutch' style.

In the strongly polarized society of the late nineteenth century Cuypers in particular was a ready target of accusations that as a Limburg papist his preoccupation with neo-Gothic architecture was a covert attempt to revive medieval Roman Catholicism. Writing in *De Gids* in 1877, De Stuers argued that the traditional Dutch style was emphatically not the same as the 'medieval' style or, as some critics had written, the 'antiquarian' style.⁹ By insisting on an architectural

◀ 1. The Ministry of Justice building shortly after completion of the exterior in 1883 (photo H.W. Wollrabe, Cultural Heritage Agency)

style acceptable to all denominations, Cuypers and De Stuers hoped to take the wind out of their opponents' sails. A shining example for both men was the Maarten van Rossum House in Zaltbommel, a basically late gothic building from 1535 with stepped gables, turrets and decorative sculpture work in an early Renaissance style.¹⁰

Whether it be neo-Gothic or neo-Renaissance, Cuypers and De Stuers' motives were conservative, in the sense that they sought to reinstate elements from the past, or rather, those aspects of the past that suited their purpose. According to De Stuers, when it came to ornamentation and national character, the seventeenth century was 'the best era'.¹¹ By which he did not mean the seventeenth-century Dutch Renaissance style of the Amsterdam architect Hendrick de Keyser. De Stuers and Cuypers regarded De Keyser as too representative of successful Protestantism during the young Republic. Their preference was consequently for the *pre-Reformation Renaissance style*.¹²

The appointment of De Stuers as head of the Department of Arts and Sciences within the Ministry of the Interior in 1875 was a boost for supporters of traditional building styles. The flip side was that De Stuers' input intensified the rift within the Board of Government Advisers. Ranged against one another were those who followed the utilitarian line oriented towards modern architecture, and the Cuypers and De Stuers camp with their more historicizing ideas. During an increasingly heated committee meeting on 12 April 1876, where the topics for discussion included the Binnenhof and the new Justice building, it emerged that the chairman, C. Fock, contrary to De Stuers' views on the matter, wanted to have some of the Binnenhof buildings demolished because they were allegedly not suitable for 'the [civil] service'. Nor could he agree with De Stuers' proposal to align the style of the new Justice building with the rest of the Binnenhof. Fock received support from De Stuers' fiercest opponent on the committee, C. Vosmaer. It was not just De Stuers and Cuypers' views on architecture that provoked irritation in this company, but also their overtly Catholic identity.¹³ The course of events surrounding Cuypers' participation in the competition for the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam did not improve matters.¹⁴

APPOINTMENT OF THE ARCHITECT C.H. PETERS

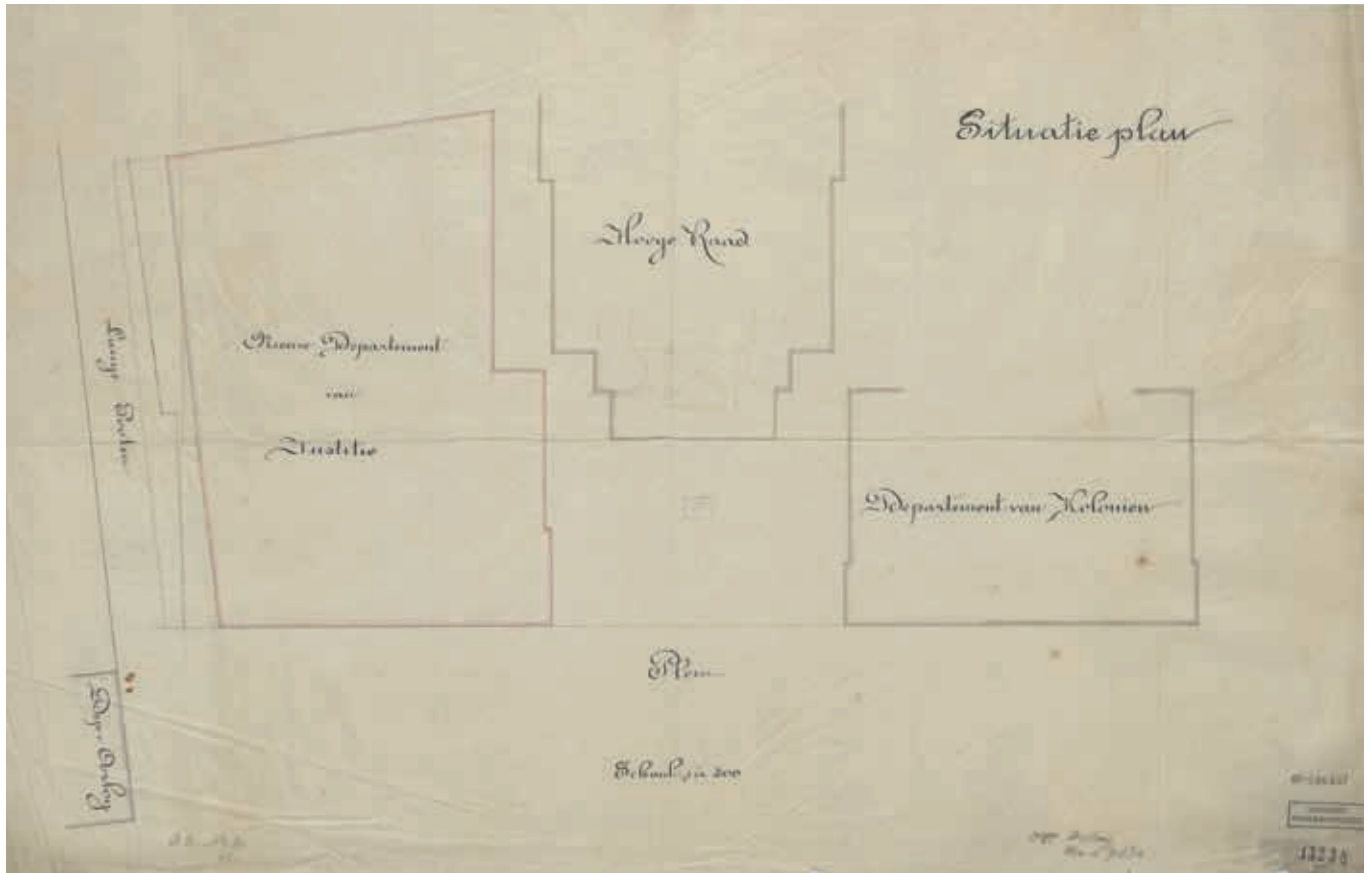
When the position of architect in the ministry of Finance fell vacant, Cuypers appealed to De Stuers to ensure that someone acceptable to them was appointed. One of his arguments was that it would relieve him (Cuypers). As a member of the Board of Government Advisers Cuypers was tasked with assessing and adjusting numerous plans, which he sometimes found burdensome. Accordingly he wrote to De

Stuers: 'It would be a good thing if we could get one of my tractable underlings appointed, then I would be able to exert my influence without repeatedly having to set to work making an entirely new plan as a replacement for all the nonsense.'¹⁵ He recommended C.H. Peters, one of his former students and ex-director of his studios in Roermond. Peters was, in Cuypers' words, 'my creature, a diligent worker, energetic, very subservient and attached to me, and last but not least Reformed!!! (which in the appraisal is certainly not his least quality)'.¹⁶ In other words, Cuypers regarded Peters' Calvinist identity as an advantage. The political situation was such that the Protestant section of the population was feeling increasingly under pressure from their Catholic fellow citizens. After centuries of being second-class citizens, Catholics were now laying claim to power and influence, including in government. With a show of self-knowledge, Cuypers added that it might be better for him politically (i.e. tactically) if he were not the one to nominate a candidate.¹⁷ He was referring to the situation in which his controversial design for the Rijksmuseum had landed him.¹⁸

A NEW BUILDING FOR JUSTICE

Cuypers and De Stuers' scheme succeeded: Peters was appointed architect in the Finance ministry. But after a good six months he was seconded to the Ministry of the Interior, a development his mentors may have already foreseen in early 1876.¹⁹ Within that ministry, the Waterstaat department was in the process of developing plans for numerous government buildings, including a new building for the ministry of Justice on Het Plein in The Hague. De Stuers and Cuypers, as top bureaucrat and government adviser at Interior respectively, were closely involved. Part of the new building would be built on the site of the Huygens House, the fine seventeenth-century mansion of a famous statesman, known at the time as 'Oud-Koloniën' (former colonies). The other part of the building was intended to occupy the site of the 'Hotel van Brunswijk', the then premises of the Justice ministry. In other words, two visually defining buildings in the vicinity of the Binnenhof were destined to disappear. The new Justice building would stand next to the Supreme Court, on the other side of which stood the Colonial Office building, both designed by the former government architect W.N. Rose and both detested by Cuypers and De Stuers (fig. 2).

Cuypers and De Stuers offered little resistance to the demolition of the Huygens House, arguing that the building would have had to be partially demolished anyway for the laying of a tram track along Lange Poten. Sections of the ceilings from the Huygens House and the Hotel van Brunswijk were to be relocated to the new Justice building.²⁰



2. Site plan drawing of the buildings on Het Plein and Lange Poten (Cultural Heritage Agency)

DESIGNERS

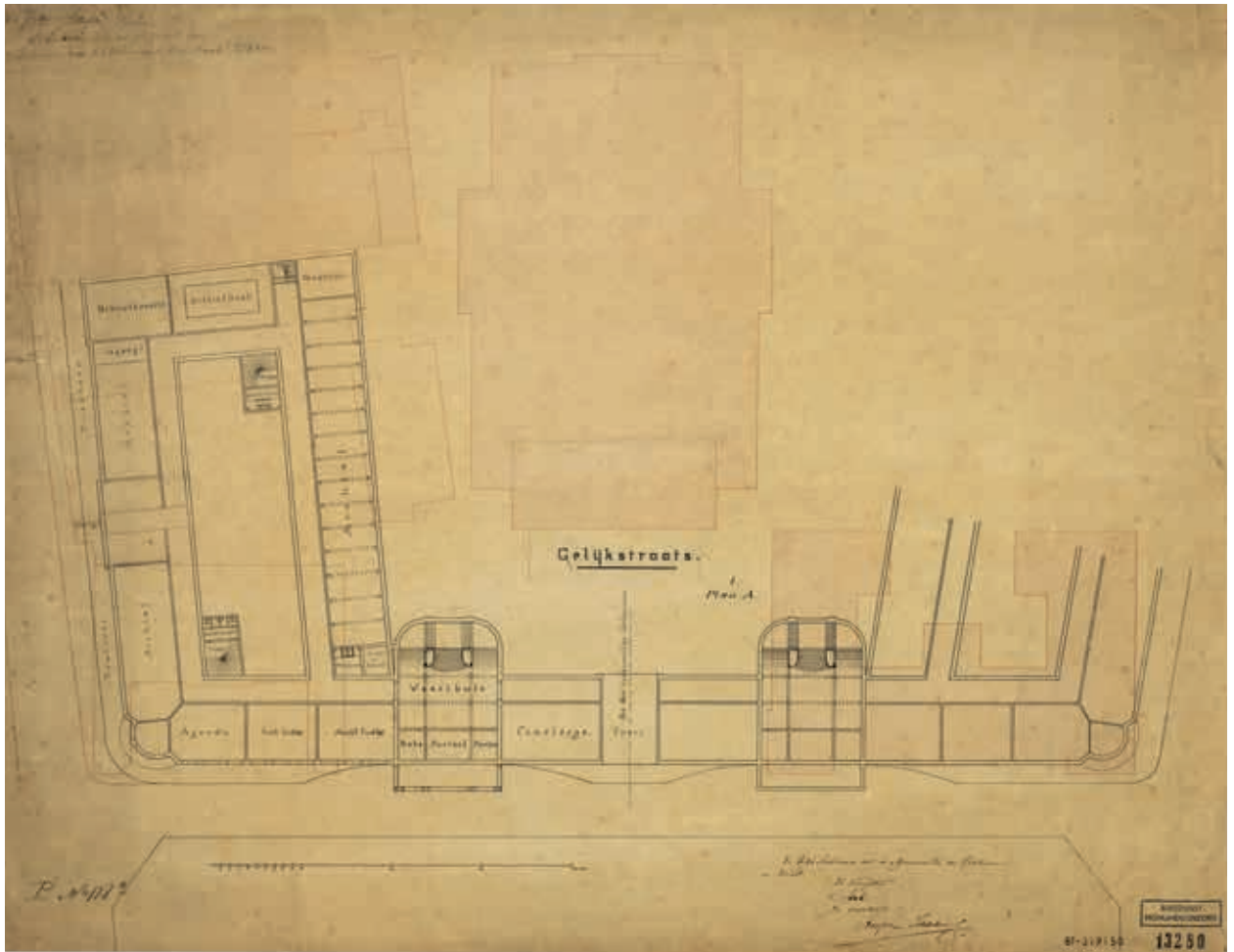
The earliest design for the new Justice building was by J.F. Metzelaar (1818-1897), engineer-architect for prisons and court buildings in the Justice ministry. In 1875 his design was rejected by L.H.J.J. Mazel, chief engineer in charge of the Government Buildings department at Waterstaat. Mazel took over the project, leaving the practical design to his right-hand man J. Singels, another Government Buildings engineer-architect.²¹

Mazel and Singels worked on the building behind the elevations, which according to the initial plans was to include a magistrates' court. The Minister of the Interior had delegated the design of the elevations to an independent architect of note, Hugo Pieter Vogel, who worked in the classicist tradition.²² Vogel's task was to raise the architectural profile of the ministerial building. Singels described Vogel's design as a 'French building', but not in the style of the 'regal structures of the French monarchs' (fig. 3).²³

De Stuers later revealed what he thought of the two Government Buildings engineers, claiming that they themselves had admitted to being insufficiently proficient in architecture. According to De Stuers, Mazel's expertise lay in water management structures, Singels was simply incompetent, a nonentity, and on top of



3. H.P. Vogel, design for the front on Het Plein, November 1875 (Cultural Heritage Agency)



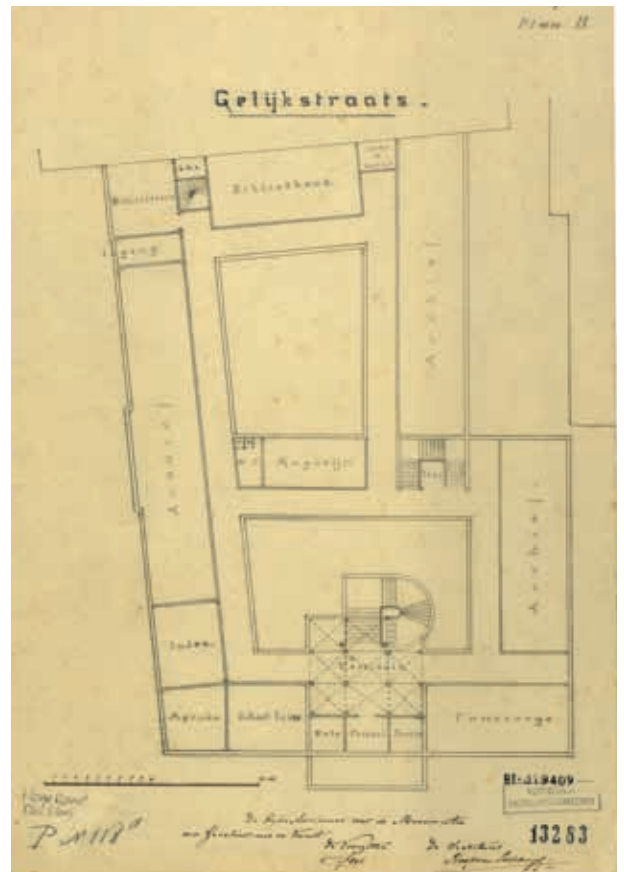
4. Design drawings of the ground floor of the Justice building according to plan A and plan B, signed by the chairman and secretary of the Board of Government Advisers, 1876 (Cultural Heritage Agency)

that lazy as well.²⁴ A harsh judgement that resonated with his dislike of civil engineers and of Mazel in particular.²⁵ Unsurprisingly, the plans produced by Mazel and Singels found no favour with Cuypers and De Stuers, or later on with the officials in the Ministry of Justice. Whether that was justified or not is destined to remain a mystery: the drawings have unfortunately not been preserved.

Within the Board of Government Advisers the project generated a lot of bickering that would eventually – as of 1 January 1879 – contribute to the dissolution of that committee. But it had not yet come to that when Cuypers and De Stuers apparently decided to design the floor plans themselves. They would, De Stuers initially insisted, be realized behind Vogel's elevations.²⁶

BEHIND THE SCENES

There followed a secretive phase during which, as far as the outside world was concerned, the two gentlemen kept their own counsel. Cuypers probably because he was in the final stage of his appointment as



architect of the Rijksmuseum and did not want to step on any toes. He had won the design competition, at the expense of Vogel among others, but there were suspicions that he had managed to manipulate the procedure in his favour with the help of De Stuers and his brother-in-law, the influential Catholic thinker J. Alberdingk Thijm. Unjustified, as turned out later.²⁷ In any case, relations were so poisoned that De Stuers and Cuypers could ill afford any problems with the new Justice building. They acted cautiously, even after Cuypers had been officially appointed architect 'of the Rijksmuseum buildings' in July 1876.²⁸

From a number of letters by De Stuers and (sketch) plans it is possible to deduce that Cuypers sent De Stuers his designs for the floor plans of the Justice building on 25 April 1876. He had sketched an A and a B version. Design A provided in passing for the possibility of hiding what he regarded as the outrageously ugly Supreme Court building and of 'making a tolerable whole' of the neighbouring Colonial Office.²⁹ The latter was earnestly desired by both De Stuers and Cuypers, who were keen to harmonize the street frontage on this side of Het Plein with the Binnenhof complex. The Ministry of Justice was to be built in the traditional Dutch, or 'national', style inspired by the complex.³⁰

Displaying a keen instinct for civil service–political relations, Cuypers suggested the following strategy to De Stuers: 'Try to steer the matter in such a way that we supply the drawings and that Singels, i.e. Landsgebouwen, "takes care" of the execution. Could you perhaps have me officially appointed Senior Adviser, like de Klerck was for Railways, that would be a less conspicuous title and it would allow me to discuss officially the sketches I'm now providing anyway with those people and get them accepted more easily, in so doing the task of the Advisers would be lightened and conflict avoided. It goes without saying that I should continue to sit on the Board of Advisers. Give it some thought.'³¹

The course that Cuypers sets out here was largely followed. In 1876, Singels and Mazel elaborated versions based on Cuypers' sketches. The draughting could just about be left to Singels as long as he was supervised. A fair copy of the sketches was made for the benefit of the Board of Government Advisers. Beneath the presentation drawings are the signatures of the chairman and secretary of the Board (fig. 4).³² The latter, J.E.H. Hooft van Iddekinge, would turn out to be a dogged adversary of Cuypers and De Stuers and was the author of vitriolic newspaper articles about the Justice building and the Rijksmuseum.³³

Vogel, the architect of classical symmetry, was tasked with adapting his facade designs to the revised floor plans. He found himself confronted with a facade that, horror of horrors, was supposed to have a rounded cor-

ner on the Plein and Lange Poten side. It was designed to conceal the irregular shape of the plot on that side. De Stuers and Cuypers had also toyed with the idea of erecting a counterpart to the Justice building on the other side of Het Plein, on the site of the "frightful" Colonial Office, also with a rounded corner.³⁴ Later on the rounded corner requirement lapsed, but the fact remained that Vogel had to adjust the arrangement of this Justice building facade to match the revised spatial layout the ministry came up with.³⁵

Against his better judgement, Vogel started on a new version of his plans, only to promptly throw in the towel. He got his own back in a blistering letter to the House of Representatives. Vogel was particularly exercised about an 'delusional print' sent to him by De Stuers. He was under the impression that De Stuers wanted him to produce a design that matched the buildings as shown in the print and was naturally dead set against complying.³⁶ Writing after the event, De Stuers said that the bone of contention was a bird's-eye view of the Binnenhof that he had sketched as a 'kindness' and sent to Vogel to give him an impression of the style desired for the facades (fig. 5).³⁷

WORKING IN SECRECY

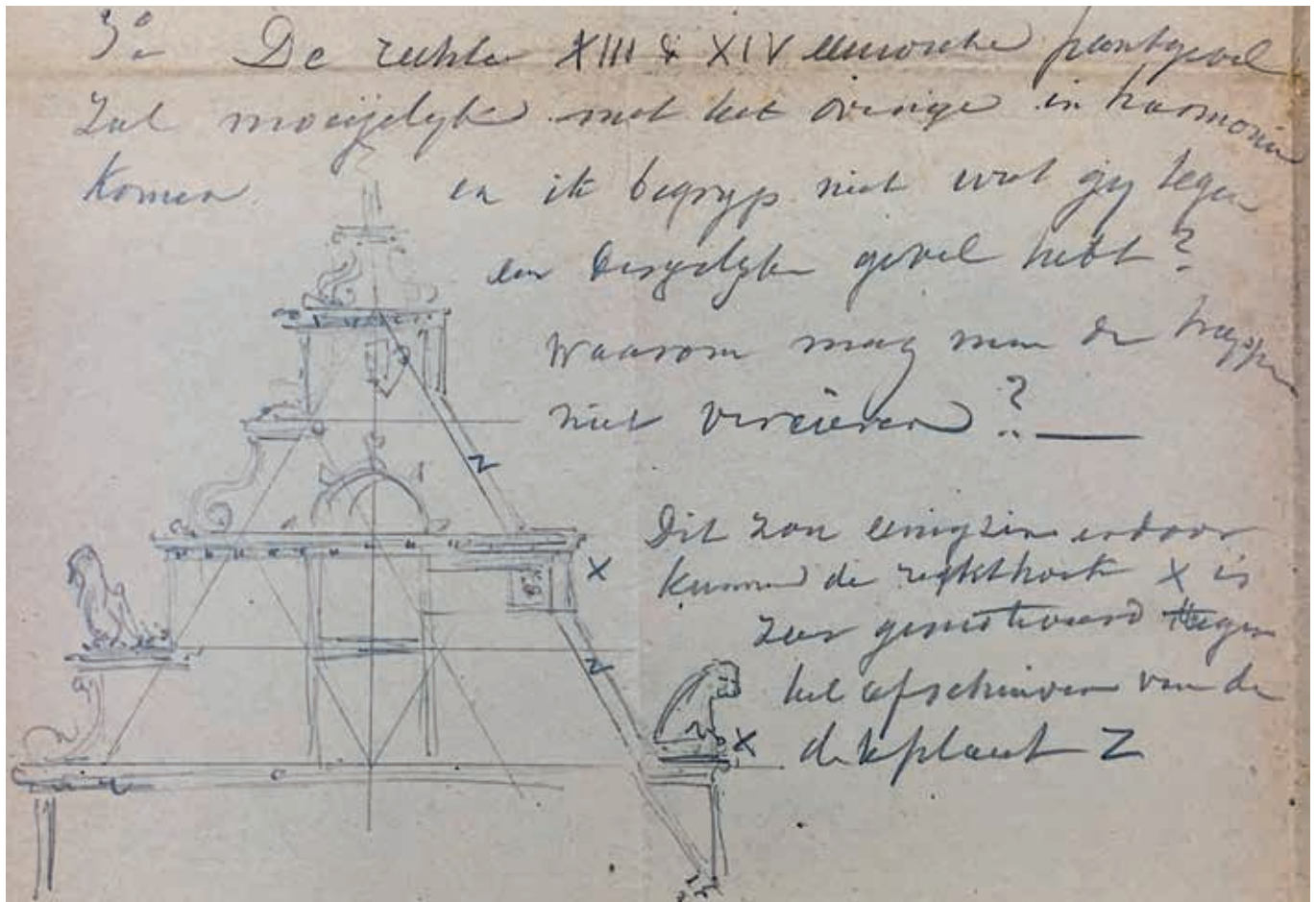
Meanwhile, the Minister of the Interior, Jan Heemskerk Azn., had written to De Stuers on 17 October 1876, expressing his concerns about the unprecedented 'civil war' within his ministry.³⁸ The battle between two camps, that of Waterstaat and that of Arts and Sciences, threatened to paralyse the tender process for the substructure of the Justice building, which was supposed to be finalized by the end of that year. Both departments were incidentally led by De Stuers between June 1876 and January 1878.³⁹ Unlike Heemskerk, who wanted to make one last attempt at reconciliation with Vogel, De Stuers saw no point in further collaboration. It would fall to him to deliver the facade drawings, together with the sections and details of the substructure.⁴⁰

De Stuers and Cuypers were already frenetically busy with them. On that same seventeenth of October 1876, Cuypers had written to De Stuers: 'I will help you/us with Justice'.⁴¹ He kept his word, despite his own heavy workload, which included the Rijksmuseum. But he did have help. Under acute pressure of time he enlisted the aid of Peters, the promising architect who had already designed quite a few buildings for the Ministry of Finance. At least, that was what Cuypers afterwards wrote to De Stuers about this period. De Stuers acted more or less as if the facade drawings for Justice had simply arrived in an instant from Peters' drawing board.⁴²

At the same time, the specifications for the ground works and foundations needed to be drawn up. Mazel



5. V. de Stuers, bird's-eye view drawing of the Binnenhof as he would have liked it to be, with the future Justice building indicated by the number 6, around 1876 (The Hague City Archives)



6. Page from a letter from Cuypers to De Stuers, early January 1877 (National Archives)

and Singels were not capable of tackling that on their own, according to De Stuers and Cuypers; others would have to take the lead. A valuable contribution was made to these specifications by a certain 'Nemo', who penned memoranda about various components, accompanied by handy sketches.⁴³ Nemo wrote in the distinctive handwriting of Peters and drew in his style. De Stuers incorporated these memos, sometimes word for word, in the notes on the substructure he sent to Mazel and Singels. It appears that the facade drawings of the Justice building presented to the Board of Government Advisers were also signed by Nemo. In 1881 the former secretary of the Board, Hooft van Iddekinge claimed to have seen the words 'nemo fecit' or 'no one made this' below those drawings. According to him, the tender for the Justice building substructure had already been issued at this point.⁴⁴ Notwithstanding the fact that Hooft van Iddekinge was one of Cuypers and De Stuers' most fanatical opponents, he was probably right, given the existence of the aforementioned memoranda with the specifications.⁴⁵

In the correspondence with De Stuers and Cuypers, Peters did not need to disguise his identity. Looking at all the letters, sketches and scribbled notes from late

1876, it is clear that the trio worked together diligently and in close consultation on the facade drawings. Peters provided rough sketches and drawings that Cuypers radically reworked while also taking De Stuers' ideas into account. Cuypers placed himself at De Stuers' service and was mindful when designing of Peters' level of technical skill, aware that the young architect had yet to master certain aspects. De Stuers sent detailed instructions, sometimes accompanied by sketches, to clarify his ideas. The gentlemen did not shy away from discussing the desired style. When De Stuers proposed an alternative to Cuypers' stepped gable with 'curlicues', Cuypers wrote back: 'The right-hand XIII & XIV century pointed gable will be difficult to harmonize with the rest and I don't understand what you have against such a gable? Why shouldn't one be able to decorate the steps?' (Fig. 6).⁴⁶

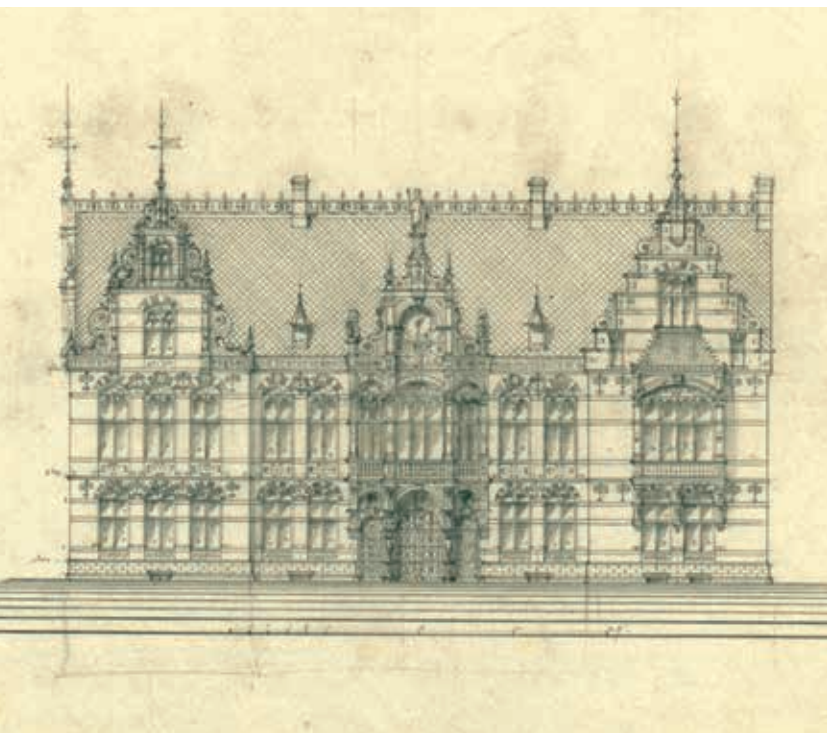
After working more or less non-stop for two-and-a-half days on Peters' facade design, Cuypers wrote of the result: 'It doesn't express any particular historical style, but these are structural principles that satisfy current needs.'⁴⁷ The final fair copy of the facade drawings was completed on 31 January 1877.⁴⁸

NEMO

Looking back on the course of events, De Stuers stated that when Vogel proved unable to design a facade that met the requirements, the minister – meaning, as so often, himself – saw an opportunity ‘to resolve the artistic issue satisfactorily with a much finer and more national facade than the previous one by Vogel. (I consider it undesirable to name the designer, especially given that m. vd Heim [H.J. van der Heim, Minister for Finance, EV] does not know about it. It is Mr Peters, the new architect at Finance, who made the drawings in consultation with me.)’⁴⁹ This was the origin of a plan with ‘a truly fine facade’ (fig. 7). De Stuers understood that Vogel was angry about this, ‘but is that any reason to keep brooding and, as he wanted, to sacrifice the layout, the efficiency to a preconceived facade?’⁵⁰ Peters later wrote that Vogel’s facade reminded him of a large residential building. It did not convey the fact that there was a ministry behind it, which in his view was a serious flaw.⁵¹

De Stuers did not mention that when Peters was already hard at work in October and November 1876 he was also in close contact with Cuypers. He allowed Peters’ activities to disappear discreetly behind a smokescreen. Along with the rather childish mystification of Peters as Nemo, these were all attempts to avoid problems with the ministries, the Board of Government Advisers and numerous opponents in the architectural world. That caution was justified, as it would turn out years later, when Nemo cropped up in a

7. The facade on Het Plein, pencil drawing, probably by Peters (Cultural Heritage Agency)



letter to the editor of *Het Vaderland* of 6 January 1881, written by Hooft van Iddekinge.⁵² He wondered why Peters, in a recent article about the Justice building in the *Nederlandse Kunstbode*, had failed to mention who had designed this ‘dazzling product of the so extremely precious so-called traditional Dutch architectural style’ (the sarcasm is far from subtle).⁵³ He claimed that this was all aimed at disguising the fact that Cuypers was the designer of the building. Hooft quoted from a letter dated 20 April 1876, in which Cuypers had explained to him that he had not had time for his committee obligations because ‘in the midst of all his regular work he also had to deliver a Min. of Justice concept project’. Given the content of the correspondence in 1876 it is not at all unlikely that such a letter did indeed exist.

A PROTRACTED PROJECT

The collaboration among the three gentlemen continued during the construction of the substructure of the Justice building, in which Cuypers had a decisive say from the outset. In November 1876, Singels, who was the project manager for this phase of the construction, had collected samples of bricks for consideration from the Rijksmuseum building site. In the end it was Cuypers who decided which bricks would be used for the foundations.⁵⁴

Peters was appointed architect in charge of part of the works on the Justice building, as from 1 February 1877. He was the arm’s length expert who was supposed to supervise Singels, an arrangement that was wholly unsatisfactory. It was mainly Peters who, following the substructure, elaborated the plans for the superstructure. This was to be carried out in two phases, beginning with the section on the Plein side. Peters made a number of miscalculations. For example, against the urgent advice of Mazel, he allowed the specifications of April 1877 to include the commitment that the building would be roofed before 1 December of that year. A difficult feat considering that the substructure would not be completed until 1 June 1877. By the beginning of the winter of 1877-1878 the top of the breastwork had with great difficulty been finished. The building’s extremely complicated stonework was a major impediment to progress.⁵⁵

Commencing January 1878, Peters was appointed ‘architect for National buildings’ and he came under the newly established Ministry of Water, Trade and Industry – in other words, no longer under De Stuers. However, he was able to put his work on post and telegraph offices on hold for most of 1878, in order to keep working on the Justice building. He no longer had to put up with the reluctant Singels and Mazel; Singels had been put in charge of the maintenance of Binnenhof buildings while Mazel had been dismissed in



8A. V. de Stuers, sketch of frieze above the oriel overlooking Het Plein (National Archives)

8B. The facade section in question shortly after completion in 1883 (photo H.W. Wollrabe, Cultural Heritage Agency)

November 1877. He had requested this a year earlier, disgruntled with De Stuers' interference.⁵⁶

The superstructure was completed in June 1879, after which work commenced on the interior. In August 1880, construction of the rear section on Lange Poten commenced. Reports state that it was completed in 1883 but that is not strictly true.⁵⁷ The finishing at any rate continued into the second half of 1885. In 1883 the building costs were estimated at 900,000 guilders, over three times as much as the 1876 costing. And at that point the work was not even finished.⁵⁸

The construction operation was actively supervised by De Stuers and Cuypers. The former was chiefly involved in the decorative programme for which he also produced design sketches (figs. 8 and 9). Peters sent De Stuers regular progress reports. On 14 August 1878, for example, he wrote that contrary to the contract drawing, there would be no clock face housing in the front facade on Het Plein, but a niche with a sculpture of Justitia. The Plein elevation would be rather full, 'but always better than with the clock face housing that didn't belong there, was too much like a piece of furniture'.⁵⁹ In the event, there *was* a clock face in a 'housing'. The result is a good deal more elegant than in the contract drawing and less full than Peters had suggested.

In December 1879 Cuypers wrote to De Stuers, whom he steadfastly addressed as 'Dear Sir', that at Cuypers' atelier in Roermond, Peters had submitted exceptionally tasteless designs of mantelpieces for Justice. He



urged De Stuers to 'Make sure those things are not carried out, especially the quasi-monumental one, which is beneath all criticism!'⁶⁰ In his government adviser role Cuypers regularly dropped by the Justice building site, often in combination with visits to the Binnenhof.⁶¹ In September 1881 he noticed errors in the circular stair of the library tower. He passed this, too, on to De Stuers along with sketches for solving the problem with the stipulation that De Stuers should not reveal to Peters the source of all these sketches.⁶²

MAN OR MEN BEHIND THE JUSTICE BUILDING

De Stuers' archive includes a list of twenty 'Semi-official and unpaid official commissions to Mr Cuypers' in De Stuers' handwriting.⁶³ Number fourteen is the Justice building. So according De Stuers it was Cuypers who at the very least made a substantial contribution to the realization of the building. That is corroborated by the contemporary archival material and articles cited here.

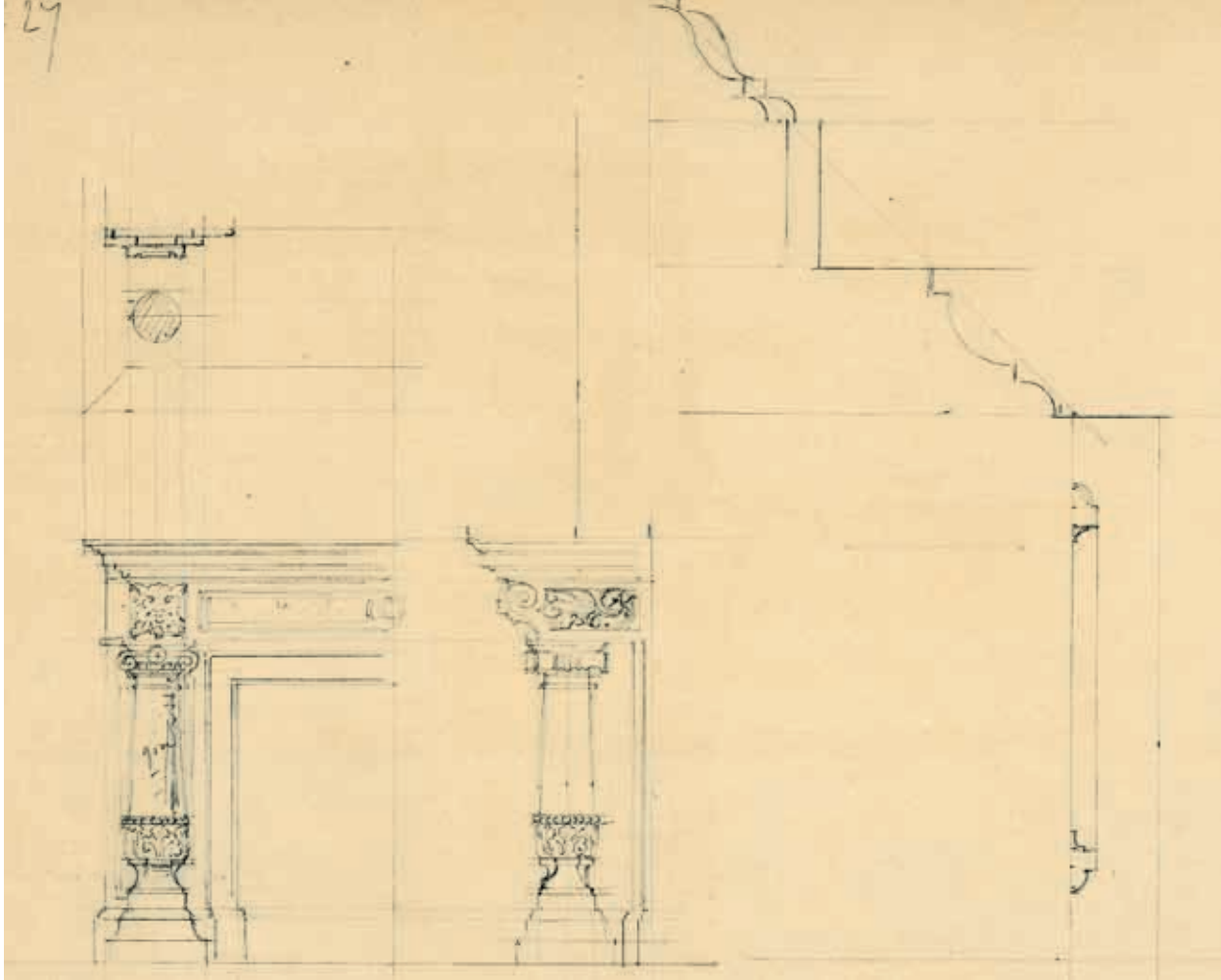
The mere fact that Peters, as Hooft van Iddekinge



9A. V. de Stuers, sketch of female figure in niche, representing Faith (National Archives)

9B. A similar figure in the tympanum in the facade on Lange Poten (photo author)





10A. P.J.H. Cuypers, sketch of mantelpiece with bottom right 'Pal v. Justitie' (Nieuwe Instituut)

10B. A very similar mantelpiece in the former Ministry of Justice (photo Bureau Vlaardingebroek)

had rightly remarked, was vague about his role as designer of the Ministry of Justice in his published articles about the Justice building, is highly significant. In addition, the formal language of the building differs markedly from that of the buildings that can indisputably be attributed to Peters. Conversely, the Justice building exhibits striking similarities with the Cuypers-designed Rijksmuseum and Central Station in Amsterdam.⁶⁴

From the many letters, sketches and scribbled notes written by De Stuers, Cuypers and Peters it is clear that the costly and prestigious 1876 Justice building project was not entrusted to the inexperienced Peters, who was still regarded as one of Cuypers' 'tractable underlings' at that stage, someone who moreover had only a couple of government buildings to his name. The Justice building was the product of close collaboration. Cuypers sketched the plans with input from De Stuers and those plans were elaborated under their dual supervision by others. Initially that was Singels, later Peters. Cuypers then concentrated on the design of the facades, inspired in this by De Stuers. The latter made his mark with the decorative programme, as he had also done with the Rijksmuseum and Central Station.⁶⁵ But he couldn't resist expounding on other aspects, as can be seen in his sketches and comments



during the Justice building design phase. Cuypers, too, fleshed out a number of interior decorations (fig. 10). Peters was primarily the project architect tasked with realizing this duo's ambitions.

Cuypers and De Stuers saw the project as a perfect opportunity to erect a specimen of what they regarded as an aesthetic and historically justified national architectural style that, with its neo-Renaissance elements, blended in with the other buildings in the vicinity. A building, moreover, that would occupy a prominent location close to the Binnenhof where it would overshadow the reviled creations of W.N. Rose.

Cuypers enlisted De Stuers' aid with the logistical side of the work while he himself stayed under the radar.

Let sleeping dogs lie must have been the motto of Cuypers, De Stuers and Peters. If it had become generally known that the controversial figure who had built the costly Rijksmuseum had also played a major role in determining the appearance of the eye-wateringly expensive 'Palace of Justice', it could have had negative repercussions for them and for everything they stood for. The trio's shrewd conduct prevented that from happening. Afterwards they were able to look back on a brilliantly successful mission.

NOTES VINK

- 1 For example, an 1877 's-Gravenhage city council drawing relating to the widening of Lange Poten refers to 'the projected Palace of Justice', Cultural Heritage Agency (RCE), Image Library, BT 024980.
- 2 *Arnhemsche Courant*, 15 November 1880.
- 3 R. Stenvert et al., *Monumenten in Nederland. Zuid-Holland*, Zeist/Zwolle 2004, 213.
- 4 P.T.E.E. Rosenberg, 'Peters, een gewetensvol historicus', in: C.J. van der Peet and G. Steenmeijer (eds.), *De Rijksbouwmeesters. Twee eeuwen architectuur van de Rijksgebouwendienst en zijn voorlopers*, Rotterdam 1995, 267-299, q.v. 276-277.
- 5 A. van der Woud, *Waarheid en karakter. Het debat over de bouwkunst, 1840-1900*, Rotterdam 1997.
- 6 For one episode from that debate, see the article by Mark van Gend in this thematic issue.
- 7 P.T.E.E. Rosenberg, 'De Stuers, spin in het web', in: Van der Peet and Steenmeijer 1995 (note 4), 197-213, q.v. 197.
- 8 P.T.E.E. Rosenberg and C.J. van der Peet, 'Overzicht', in: Van der Peet and Steenmeijer 1995 (note 4), 107-127, q.v. 119.
- 9 V. de Stuers, 'Een bouwkunstig spook', *De Gids* 41 (1877), 521-549, q.v. 522-523; J.A.C. Tillema, *Schetsen uit de geschiedenis van de monumentenzorg in Nederland*, The Hague 1975, 283-284; Van der Woud 1997 (note 5), 220-221.
- 10 P. Alberts S.J., 'Cuypers en De Stuers', *Gildeboek* 9 (1921), 102-112, q.v. 109, with reference to V. de Stuers, 'Hoe een monument gered wordt', *Eigen Haard* 1903, 524-527.
- 11 National Archives (NA), 2.21.355, Work archive of V.E.L. de Stuers (De Stuers), inv. no. 1252.
- 12 A. Oxenaar, P.J.H. *Cuypers en het gotisch rationalisme. Architectonisch denken, ontwerpen en uitgevoerde gebouwen 1845-1878*, Rotterdam 2009, 297-299, 316, 417; P.T.E.E. Rosenberg and C.J. van der Peet, 'Overzicht', in: Van der Peet and Steenmeijer 1995 (note 4), 165-195, there 173.
- 13 NA, 2.04.40.06, Archive of the Committee for Historical Monuments and Art (Government Advisers), inv. no. 2: minutes of meetings of the Government Advisers, 158: 24th meeting on 12 April 1876; Tillema 1975 (note 9), 280-292.
- 14 Tillema 1975 (note 9), 283-284.
- 15 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 62.
- 16 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 62.
- 17 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 62.
- 18 Correspondence on this in: NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 62.
- 19 Rosenberg 1995 (note 4), 272-273.
- 20 C.H. Peters, 'Het nieuwe departement van Justitie te 's-Gravenhage', *Bouwkundig Tijdschrift* 3 (1883), 38-46 and plate xxii.
- 21 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1251.
- 22 For Hugo Pieter Vogel's body of work, visit the Nieuwe Instituut website: zoeken.hetnieuweinstituut.nl/nl/personen/detail?q=Hugo+pieter+Vogel&page=1 (accessed 2 September 2022).
- 23 NA, 2.04.13, Archives of the Ministry of the Interior, Department of Arts and Sciences (BiZa, k&w), inv. no. 688; NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1251.
- 24 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. nos. 1216 and 1251; Rosenberg and Van der Peet 1995 (note 8), 115-116.
- 25 V. de Stuers, 'Holland op zijn smalst', *De Gids* 37 (1873), 320-403; Rosenberg 1995 (note 7), 203.
- 26 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1251.
- 27 P.T.E.E. Rosenberg, 'Cuypers, een gediensig man', in: Van der Peet and Steenmeijer 1995 (note 4), 215-233, q.v. 223, esp. note 16; Tillema 1975 (note 9), 283-284.
- 28 Rosenberg 1995 (note 7), 217. This competition was held in 1875 after an earlier competition had failed.
- 29 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1251; the Archives of Bureau Cuypers contain sketches of the ground floor of the Justice building with comparable design versions: Nieuwe Instituut (HNI), CUBA t84.
- 30 Rosenberg 1995 (note 7), 202-204.
- 31 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1251.
- 32 RCE, Image Library, BT-019405-019409 and 019150.
- 33 *Het Vaderland*, 11 December 1878; the letter to the editor dates from 9 December 1878; *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 12 and 14 December 1878.
- 34 Terms of reference for the Justice building in a letter from Mazel to Vogel d.d. 21 June 1876; enclosure 1 in: H.P. Vogel, 'Ontwerp voor het nieuw te bouwen Ministerie van Justitie te 's-Gravenhage', *De Opmerker* 11 (1876) 49, 3 December 1876.
- 35 NA, 2.04.13, BiZa, k&w, inv. no. 688; NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1252.
- 36 NA, 2.04.13, BiZa, k&w, inv. no. 688.
- 37 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1251; Van der Woud 1997 (note 5), 162.
- 38 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1251.
- 39 Rosenberg 1995 (note 7), 203.
- 40 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1251.
- 41 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 62.
- 42 NA, 2.04.13, BiZa, k&w, inv. no. 689; Peters 1883 (note 20), 40.
- 43 NA, 2.04.13, BiZa, k&w, inv. no. 688.
- 44 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1251; *Dagblad van Zuid-Holland en 's-Gravenhage*, 15 December 1880 and *Het Vaderland*, 15 December 1880 and 6 January 1881. There is a cutting of the last article in: NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1251.
- 45 Tillema 1975 (note 9), 287, 292.
- 46 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 253.
- 47 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 62.
- 48 NA, 2.04.13, BiZa, k&w, inv. no. 688; NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. nos. 62, 1251, 1253.
- 49 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1251.
- 50 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1251.
- 51 Peters 1883 (note 20), 39.
- 52 *Het Vaderland*, 6 January 1881. Newspaper cutting in: NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1251.
- 53 C.H. Peters, 'Het nieuwe departement van Justitie', *Nederlandsche Kunstbode* 38 (1880), 297-299.
- 54 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1251; NA, 2.04.13, BiZa, k&w, inv. no. 688.
- 55 NA, 2.16.05, Archives of the Ministry

- of Waterstaat, dept. Waterstaat (Waterstaat), inv. no. 1781.
- 56 NA, 2.16.05, Waterstaat, inv. no. 1781; NA, 2.04.13, BiZa, K&W, inv. no. 688: letter of resignation from Landsgebouwen 20 December 1876, with a view to continuing at Waterstaat, evidently not honoured. NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. nos. 1216, 1251. See also Rosenberg 1995 (note 7), 203.
- 57 Peters 1883 (note 20), 38-46.
- 58 NA, 2.16.05, Waterstaat, inv. nos. 1782-1787; NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1254.
- 59 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 241.
- 60 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 64.
- 61 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1216.
- 62 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 66.
- 63 NA, 2.21.355, De Stuers, inv. no. 1216.
- 64 Rosenberg 1995 (note 7), 202-203; Oxenaar 2009 (note 12), 496-507.
- 65 Rosenberg 1995 (note 7), 199.

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'I WILL HELP YOU/US WITH JUSTICE'

A DESIGN PROCESS VEILED IN SECRECY

ESTER VINK

The Department of Justice on Het Plein in The Hague eventually came into being between 1876 and circa 1885 after a turbulent design history characterized by quarrels, backbiting and posturing.

The design has traditionally been attributed to Cornelis Peters, even though its style is not typical for him. It was suspected at the time that the architect Pierre Cuypers and the civil servant Victor de Stuers were involved to some degree. Now new archival research has made it possible to confirm their role and to clear up the uncertainty surrounding the design's authorship.

After an initial design for the new Justice building by J.F. Metzelaar had been rejected, L.H.J.J. Mazel, head engineer in the Waterstaat (civil engineering) department of the Ministry of the Interior, and his deputy, J. Singels, produced a basic concept and ground plans. Hugo Pieter Vogel, an architect of note, was engaged to design the visually defining facades.

In April 1876 these plans were considered by a Board of Government Advisers dominated by Cuypers and De Stuers. After lengthy discussions, the advisers rejected Mazel and Singels' plans. Behind the scenes Cuypers proceeded to sketch new plans, in two versions, which were then elaborated by Mazel and Singels.

Vogel, who was supposed to adapt his elevation designs to suit the new ground plans, felt under pressure from De Stuers to work in the traditional Dutch archi-

tectural style. As an architect in the classical tradition, Vogel took exception to this and withdrew acrimoniously. This cleared the way for Cuypers and De Stuers to impose their own elevation designs via Cuypers' ex-pupil Cornelis Peters, whom they had managed to get appointed as architect in the Department of Finance in early 1876. Peters, who was recruited in October 1876, initially signed his drawings and memos with the pseudonym 'Nemo' ('nobody'). As far as the outside world knew, De Stuers and Cuypers were not involved in the design. Once Peters had been officially appointed to oversee the construction of the Justice building in February 1877, he no longer needed to be so reticent, but the other two continued to influence the design from the wings.

Thus the Justice building was designed under a cloak of secrecy, an artifice intended to conceal De Stuers' contribution and, more especially, the far-reaching involvement of Cuypers. The main reason for putting Peters forward as designer lay in the seriously impaired relations following Cuypers' controversial appointment as architect of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam in 1876. Cuypers could ill afford another scandal. Although a few contemporaries expressed their suspicions and displeasure, the three gentlemen's machinations had the desired effect: a Ministry of Justice in their own preferred 'national' style.