

## **Huis ten Bosch Palace**

Huis ten Bosch Palace, the Queen's home since 1981, is located in the north-eastern part of The Hague. Like Noordeinde Palace and the Royal Palace in Amsterdam, the State has placed Huis ten Bosch Palace at the Queen's disposal by Act of Parliament.

### **Summer residence and memorial (1645-1652)**

Huis ten Bosch Palace began its life as the Sael van Oranje (Hall of the Oranges), a summer residence for Stadholder Frederik Hendrik and his wife, Amalia van Solms. It was Princess Amalia herself who was the driving force behind its construction.

On 2 September 1645, the corner stone was laid by Elizabeth, the former Queen of Bohemia. The palace was designed by Pieter Post, an architect who had also had a hand in the Mauritshuis, the assembly hall of the States of Holland (now the assembly hall of the Senate) and the Oude Hof (now Noordeinde Palace).

### **Memorial**

When Frederik Hendrik died in 1647, his widow converted Huis ten Bosch from a summer residence to a memorial to her late husband. Under the supervision of the painter and architect Jacob van Campen, the central chamber – known as the Oranjezaal – was dedicated to the Prince's life and work. The largest and most striking painting in the room, a 1652 work by Jacob Jordaens, depicts Frederik Hendrik triumphant.

### **Residents (1675-1795)**

In this period, the palace had four owners. It was renovated under the last of these, Prince William IV.

#### **Albertine Agnes (1675)**

When Princess Amalia died in 1675, the palace became the property of her daughters. It was used by Albertine Agnes, the wife of Willem Frederik of Nassau, stadholder of Friesland, the only one of Amalia's daughters living in the Netherlands.

#### **Prince William III (1686)**

In 1686 Albertine Agnes sold the usufruct of the palace to Frederik Hendrik's grandson, Prince William III, who was in need of a summer residence near the seat of government in The Hague. He made some changes to the furnishings and the gardens.

#### **Prince William IV (1732)**

On the death of William III without issue in 1702, Huis ten Bosch passed to the King of Prussia, a grandson of Frederik Hendrik's. However, in 1732, he returned it to the House of Orange-Nassau, in the person of Prince William IV, who undertook large-scale renovations. Two wings were added to the building, under the supervision of the architect Daniel Marot. Thus enlarged, the Palace was frequently the residence of the last two stadholders, William IV and William V.

### **French period (1795-1813)**

During the period of the French occupation, the palace became the property of the nation. Louis Bonaparte changed the interior, bringing the Empire style to the Netherlands.

### **State property**

When the French invaded in 1795, all the stadholder's residences were seized as the spoils of war. The French made a gift of Huis ten Bosch to 'the Batavian people'. Most of the furniture and works of art were sold and the palace became state property, which it remains to this day.

### **King Louis Bonaparte**

Following a coup d'état in 1798, some members of the National Assembly were interned in the palace. The east wing was rented out. The building then served as a museum until 1805, when Rutger-Jan Schimmelpennick, appointed grand pensionary by Napoleon, moved in. Fifteen months later, Napoleon's brother Louis Bonaparte, elevated to the throne of Holland, took up residence there. In 1807, Louis moved to Utrecht, where he lived until he could take possession of Amsterdam town hall on the Dam, which had been refurbished as a palace. Although he occupied it for only a short time, Louis Bonaparte left his mark on both the interior and exterior of Huis ten Bosch. The expansions and renovations he initiated introduced the Empire style into the Netherlands, and many pieces of Empire furniture are still in use in the palace.

### **Royal summer residence (1815-1940)**

After Willem I was proclaimed King of the Netherlands in 1815, members of the royal family often lived in Huis ten Bosch, among them King Willem I himself and his wife, Queen Wilhelmina.

Later, it became the summer home of Queen Sophie, the first wife of Willem III. During the First World War, Queen Wilhelmina exchanged her summer residence at Het Loo near Apeldoorn for Huis ten Bosch. There she remained until she, Princess Juliana and the latter's children had to flee to England after the German invasion in May 1940.

### **Second World War (1940-1945)**

Huis ten Bosch suffered serious damage during the Second World War.

The comptroller succeeded in foiling plans by the German occupying forces to demolish the palace to make way for tank traps.

At the end of the war the palace was uninhabitable. Though the art treasures had been removed and taken to a safe place, the walls, ceilings and floors had been damaged by bullets, shells and shrapnel.

### **Royal residence**

Between 1950 and 1981, there were two rounds of restoration.

Following three years of restoration work, the Oranjezaal was again opened for royal functions.

On 10 August 1981, Queen Beatrix, Prince Claus and their children took up residence in Huis ten Bosch. It is still the home of the Queen, and her private apartments are in the Wassenaar wing.

The main building is sometimes used for public functions and entertaining, while the Hague wing contains guest quarters.

August 2008