

PAN

AMSTERDAM

REDRES DE BOUWKUNSTMAKELAAR



Hamtoren

Eight hundred years ago, people stood here, and for centuries, hands worked tirelessly, building and rebuilding.

We suspect that the first part of Den Ham Castle was built in 1225, but trying to compress 800 years of history into this description would, of course, not do it justice. Therefore, we'll walk through it in broad strokes. Den Ham Castle, of which the Ham Tower was a part, is first mentioned in 1325. From then on, the castle underwent one transformation after another. We have divided this period into 14 construction phases. The first donjon, of which only the cellar still exists, was one of the earliest structures. Castles were originally often residential towers, eventually rebuilt in stone where wooden towers once stood.

Castles are symbols. A castle represents power. And that had multiple aspects. First, such castles were expensive—who could afford that, after all? Second, they were sturdy because they had thick, stone walls (hence 'stienhuys,' meaning 'stone,' which could evolve into the suffix 'stein'), and arrows or a bit of fire wouldn't do much harm. Third, they were tall; they towered above common folk, visible from afar, with their tops rising between heaven and earth. The inhabitants were not only wealthy—and thus likely of noble status—but they were also safe, had a good view over the surrounding area, and were, quite literally, closer to God.

Over time, parts of the house were added, with the current Ham Tower from 1450 being one of the most prominent. In the 17th century, the castle reached its largest extent: the original residential tower (13th century), a hall (14th

century), and the Ham Tower (1450). The entire castle was then covered and equipped with two additional bay towers on the façade. In the 18th century, the castle received a fashionable layer of stucco, making the white house visible from afar. Who could have imagined that a century later, demolition was in the cards for the tower? Fortunately, during the demolition in 1871, the Ham Tower and part of the old cellars were preserved, but the glorious house of the past was merely a shadow of itself.

Afterward, restoration work began on the house. Between 1871 and 1942, these were minor interventions that didn't do much to restore its grandeur. From 1942 to 1972, the work became more rigorous. A structure was added to the lower building, and modern amenities like plumbing were installed. In 1979, the house was further remodeled to make it more comfortable as a residence. Bedrooms with dormer windows were created in the upper part. In 1998, the house took on its current form, with the upper structure raised in two places, creating a full living floor. A hallway in the middle connects four bedrooms, bathrooms, and the boiler room. The kitchen was also moved to its current location.

In the following years, more improvements were made to the house, but it wasn't until 2016 that a major overhaul took place. A synergistic project involving the province, heritage conservation authorities, and the owner resulted in a thorough plan to prepare the Ham Tower for the future. This included the installation of a heat pump, roof insulation, underfloor heating, a new staircase, LED lighting, smart home technology, and an intensive restoration of the original details, such as the roof, floors, fireplaces, and ceilings. The exterior walls were also meticulously restored, ensuring that the tower would require minimal maintenance in the coming decades.

The castle has a living area of approximately 639 m², providing ample space. Space for you, your family, guests, or business activities—anything is possible here. Naturally, the tower imposes a certain style of living, but it has been magnificently shaped by the restoration and renovation. Where contemporary design often compromises the character of a building, here, there is a remarkable marriage between old and new. There is space, great attention has been paid to the furnishings and woodwork, and every detail has been carefully considered; it's a whole new vision of luxury—distinctive and breathtakingly beautiful.