

BUILDING A LEGACY BRICK BY BRICK:

*The Metzelaars contribution to courthouse
architecture in the Netherlands during the
19th and 20th century*

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Abstract

The architectural history thesis *"Building a legacy brick by brick: The Metzelaars contribution to Courthouse Architecture in the Netherlands during the 19th and 20th Century"* investigates the impact of Johan Frederik Metzelaar and Willem Cornelis Metzelaar on the design and construction of courthouses in the Netherlands. The thesis poses the research question, *"What did father and son Metzelaar contribute to courthouse architecture in the Netherlands?"* The four case studies in this thesis delve into the design and history of courthouses, examining the architectural style, spatial program, layout, and function of the buildings. Additionally, the research considers the historical context in which the Metzelaars worked, including the architecture style debate of the 19th century.

The study fills a gap in the literature on the Metzelaars and their impact on courthouse architecture using a combination of primary and secondary literature, archival research, and site visits.

Overall, this thesis provides valuable insights into the evolution of courthouse architecture in the Netherlands during the 19th and early 20th centuries. It highlights the role of the Metzelaars in shaping the architectural landscape of the country, while also providing a historical context for their work.

Contents

Abstract	1
Prologue	3
Introduction	4
Chapter 1: Historical background	6
Chapter 2: The Metzelaars	7
2.1. Johan Frederik Metzelaar	7
2.2. Willem Cornelis Metzelaar	9
2.3. Chief engineers of prisons and court buildings	10
Chapter 3 Subdistrict court Alphen aan den Rijn (1879)	12
3.1. Historical background	12
3.2. Location	12
3.3. Style	14
3.4. Spatial program & Lay-out	14
Chapter 4 Courthouse Tiel (1882)	16
4.1. Historical background	16
4.2. Location	16
4.3. Style	18
4.4. Spatial program and Lay-out	18
Chapter 5 Courthouse Zutphen (1888)	20
5.1. Historical background	20
5.2. Location	20
5.3. Style	20
5.4. Spatial program & Lay-out	22
Chapter 6 Courthouse Rotterdam (1897)	24
6.1. Historical background	24
6.2. Location	24
6.3. Style	24
6.4. Spatial program & Lay-out	26
Chapter 7 Conclusion	28
Bibliography:	30

Prologue

As an architecture student, I have always been fascinated by how buildings are designed and constructed. However, my interest goes beyond the built environment. I have a deep fascination for the law and the justice system, and how the architecture of courthouses can play a crucial role in the delivery of justice. To further my interest, I even pursued courses in Criminology as part of my minor. My interest in both architecture and the law led me to explore a possible connection between the two for my thesis. Initially, I wanted to investigate why the architecture of courthouses in the Netherlands had shifted from open to enclosed designs. However, the complexity and sheer size of the topic and research question proved to be a hindrance. Nevertheless, my passion for the subject kept me going, and I continued to search for a more focused and feasible topic.

Eventually, I stumbled upon the works of J.F. Metzelaar and W.C. Metzelaar, father, and son architects who had designed numerous courthouses in the 1800 -1900s. Their story and involvement in this specific field of architecture intrigued me. I became fascinated with how they had become pioneers in courthouse architecture and what their contribution was.

As I delved deeper into my research, I discovered that there was a lack of extensive studies on the Metzelaars and their courthouse architecture in the Netherlands. This realization prompted me to pursue my research and fill this knowledge gap by exploring the lives and works of the father and son duo. The study will focus on the architecture style prevalent during 1800 -1900 and investigate the background of the Metzelaars. Moreover, my thesis will analyse several case studies to gain a deeper understanding of the Metzelaars contribution to courthouse architecture. I hope that this research will shed light on the little-known history of courthouse architecture in the Netherlands and provide insight into the Metzelaars role in shaping it.

In conclusion, I invite you to join me on this journey of exploring the fascinating world of courthouse architecture in the Netherlands. I am excited to share my research with you and delve deeper into the Metzelaars.

Introduction

Throughout history, the design and construction of courthouses have undergone significant changes, reflecting evolving societal values and architectural trends. Because of the radical development in nineteenth-century society there was a need for new building types especially courthouses (Floor, 2009). One name often comes up in this regard: Metzelaar. Johan Frederik Metzelaar was a renowned architect in the 19th century and was responsible for the design of several important courthouses in the Netherlands. His son, Willem Cornelis Metzelaar, followed in his father's footsteps and continued to design courthouses in the early 20th century. Both father and son Metzelaar have played a significant role in the designs of courthouses, and when Willem Cornelis Metzelaar ended his chief engineer ship at the department of justice, a body of work had been created that defines the "face" of justice in the Netherlands still to this day (Van Der Peet, 1995).

In 1870, Johan Frederik Metzelaar was appointed as the head engineer-architect for prisons and court buildings at the Ministry of Justice. Prior to this appointment, he has had a successful career as a private architect in Rotterdam (Floor, 2009). J.F. Metzelaar's son, Willem Cornelis Metzelaar, later continued the independent design approach of the office of justice that his father started. While he started as a municipal architect in Deventer from 1872 to 1883 (Van Der Peet, 1995).

The aim of this history thesis is to provide insight into the architecture of courthouses in the Netherlands through the works of Johan Frederik Metzelaar and Willem Cornelis Metzelaar. The research question that will be answered is: **What did father and son Metzelaar contribute to courthouse architecture in the Netherlands?**

A better overall understanding of how they contributed to courthouse architecture will be achieved by focussing on the period between the 19th and 20th century in which the courthouses carried the signature of a father and son in architecture. The research will analyse four case studies, examining the differences and similarities in the architectural style, spatial program, layout, and function used by the two architects. Additionally, the study will explore the factors that influenced the evolution of courthouse architecture over time. By answering this research question, this thesis will enhance our knowledge of the development of courthouse architecture in the Netherlands and its place in architectural history.

The literature on both the Metzelaars is limited, with art historian Ros Floor being one of the few researchers who has written about them. Despite their significant contributions to the design of courthouses and prisons, there is still little to be found about their work. Even less research has been done on the relationship between the father and son and their combined contribution on courthouse architecture in the Netherlands. Therefore, this history thesis aims to address this gap by conducting archival research and site visits to investigate the connection between the Metzelaars and their impact on courthouse architecture. This thesis will focus on four case studies to fill this research gap. These case studies are carefully selected and contain projects designed by either one of the two Metzelaars.

In addition to the main research question, there are several sub questions that will be explored in this research: Why were both father and son the designated courthouse designers for a period? Was W.C. Metzelaar educated by his father? And was he an inspiration? Did father and son collaborate on projects? What were the characteristics of these projects? And what were differences in style and how are these differences connected to external circumstances? By answering these sub questions, this research will provide a more nuanced understanding of the changes in Metzelaar courthouse architecture between the 19th and 20th century while simultaneously shedding light on the relationship between the two architects. To address the research question and sub questions, a combination of primary and secondary literature will be used. The primary source will be based on four case studies, which will be supported by archival materials such as original floor plans and photographs. Additionally, the research question will be further explored using literature, mainly consisting of books on the works and careers of both the Metzelaars.

The first chapter of the paper will delve into the historical background of the architecture style debate that took place in the 19th century in the Netherlands. It will provide information about the various architectural styles and trends that emerged during this period, including the Gothic, neo-Gothic, and eclecticism styles, and the prominent figures who were proponents of these styles. Overall, the first chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the historical background of the architecture style debate in the 19th century, setting the stage for the subsequent chapters that delve into specific aspects of the debate and its key players.

The second chapter will serve as a historical background on the Metzelaars for the rest of the paper. Here the relationship between father and son will be explored, specifically how Johan Frederik Metzelaar played a role in his son's education and whether he served as an inspiration for his son's work. It also aims to investigate the circumstances that led to both Johan Frederik Metzelaar and Willem Cornelis Metzelaar being selected to design courthouses.

Chapters three to six will provide answers to several sub-question related to the individual and collaborative work of father and son Metzelaar on different courthouse projects. To answer these sub-questions, the four chosen case studies will be examined in detail. These cases are in a chronological order, to be able to trace the development of this architecture over time within the framework of the father and son as architects. Chapter three will analyse the Alphen aan den Rijn courthouse, designed by Johan Frederik in 1879. Chapter four will focus on the Tiel courthouse, built by Johan Frederik Metzelaar in 1882. Chapter five will explore the Zutphen courthouse, which was exclusively designed by Willem Cornelis Metzelaar in 1888. Finally, chapter six will examine the Rotterdam courthouse, also designed by Willem Cornelis Metzelaar in 1897. Each chapter will provide an overview of the project, which will include the history of the building and why it was designed.

Each case study will be analysed on several aspects, including the architectural style, spatial program, layout, and other relevant factors. The analysis will be based on the original drawings of the architects retrieved from archival research and will incorporate literature research to provide a comprehensive understanding of the design and construction of the courthouses. Finally, in chapter seven, a conclusion will be drawn to answer both the main research question as well as the sub questions.

Chapter 1: Historical background

During the 1870s, the Netherlands experienced a period of architectural polarization caused by a disagreement over styles (Colenbrander, 1993). The leaders of the Catholic emancipation movement, V.E.L. de Stuers and P.J.H. Cuypers, were proponents of neo-Gothicism and followers of E.E. Viollet-le-Duc. Their influence on the trend of state buildings in this period was significant (Der Woud, 1997). In contrast, the Metzelaar family had an independent line in their designing and did not adhere to the style and approach promoted by De Stuers and his group of state advisors. This sets the Metzelaars apart from the three later appointed government architects who followed the style promoted by De Stuers for State architecture (Van der Peet, 1995). Understanding this background is crucial to recognizing the distinct position of the Metzelaar family in the architectural landscape of their time.

Metzelaar Senior fiercely disagreed with De Stuers and Cuypers, arguing that their style would disgrace Holland and its architecture. He saw their style as excessively ornamental, characterized by overly complicated baroque forms (Bouwkundig weekblad, 1897). At the time, the Neo-Renaissance style was just emerging and would eventually become the dominant national architectural style in the last two decades of the 19th century (Vink, 2022). Initially, “the society for the advancement of architecture” responded with reluctance to the new style, which drew inspiration mainly from Dutch architecture of the late 16th and early 17th centuries and was called the Old Dutch Renaissance. However, Metzelaar senior believed that the Netherlands should follow the trends of Europe and avoid excessive and unnecessary decorations while tending more towards the eclectic style approach used, for example, in Germany (Van Der Peet, 1995).

The Metzelaars were more inspired by the eclecticism style that originated in Germany and was loosely based on the German classicist Schinkel (Keuzenkamp, 1960). Schinkel, a German classicist, based his style on classical canons but also incorporated elements from other styles such as Romanesque, Gothic, and early Renaissance. The German approach to stylistic pluralism led to eclecticism in Holland during the 19th century, which incorporated a diverse array of historical forms into architectural design (Colenbrander, 1993). J.F. Metzelaar later adopted this more eclectic approach, perhaps influenced by his friend William Nicholas Rose, who was also a friend of J.F. Metzelaar and a prominent member of “the society for the advancement of architecture”¹ (Floor, 2013).

Rose can be regarded as one of the pioneers of eclecticism in the Netherlands. His significant roles during the mid-nineteenth century granted him immense authority within architectural circles. His influence on his peers was notable, having been involved in teaching architecture and co-founding both the Rotterdam and Hague branches of the Society for the Advancement of Architecture. Although Rose inspiration was mainly focused on Germany, where he greatly admired Karl Friedrich Schinkel, his views have been significantly obscured. This was mainly because Victor de Stuers, the driving force behind the surge in empire building after 1875, expressed negative views about Rose in various writings (Van Der Peet, 1995).

Chapter 2: The Metzelaars

Johan Frederik Metzelaar (1818-1897) and his son Willem Cornelis Metzelaar (1848-1918) were two renowned architects who left a lasting mark on Dutch architecture. Both were designated as courthouse designers for the Ministry of Justice, but their paths to this position differed.

Johan Frederik Metzelaar had already established himself as a successful private architect in Rotterdam before being appointed as the chief engineer-architect for prisons and court buildings in 1870 (Floor, 2009). His son Willem Cornelis Metzelaar received formal training at the Delft Polytechnic School and graduated in 1870. After graduating he started his own architectural practice before he became his father’s assistant in 1883 (Van Der Peet, 1995).

Metzelaar senior and junior are from different generations. This difference is to be seen in their educational background. Metzelaar senior was first classically trained as a carpenter before he became an architect.

In this time period a formal education was not a condition for a professional career in architecture.

Metzelaar senior took extra drawing lessons on the side and was more trained in the aesthetics and style of architecture than in the technical background of it (Floor, 2009). His son on the other hand, Willem Cornelis Metzelaar was formally trained in a more modern society and a modern building required a certain type of technical knowledge and qualifications. One could argue that with this form of education, the master-apprentice form of teaching that was most common in the Middle Ages was disappearing.

This chapter will explore the circumstances that led to the Metzelaars selection as courthouse designers and examine their individual architectural backgrounds. The relationship between father and son will also be explored, including how Johan Frederik Metzelaar played a role in his son’s education and whether he served as an inspiration for his son’s work. Ultimately, this chapter aims to understand this family business dynamic or collaboration through both their architectural careers.

2.1. Johan Frederik Metzelaar

2.1.1. Personal history

Johan Frederik Metzelaar was born on July 21, 1818, into a Protestant family in Rotterdam (Floor, 2009). His family had two sons and two daughters in addition to Johan (Floor, 2013).

The late 1830s and 1840s were turbulent times in Johan Frederik Metzelaars personal life. He had endured multiple losses and remarried after the loss of his first wife. W.C. Metzelaar was the only son out of the second marriage (Floor, 2013). The dedication that Johan Frederik showed in the education of his son in adolescence can be contributed to all the losses of children he had endured. Vice versa, because of this input and dedication from his father, it may be that W.C. Metzelaar chose to become an architect just like his dad (Floor, 2009).

Around 1868, Metzelaar decided to move from Rotterdam, where he had spent most of his life, to Delft. The reason for this decision is unclear, but it is possible that it was influenced by his son, Willem Cornelis Metzelaar, who had begun studying architectural engineering at the polytechnic school in Delft in 1867 (Floor, 2012).

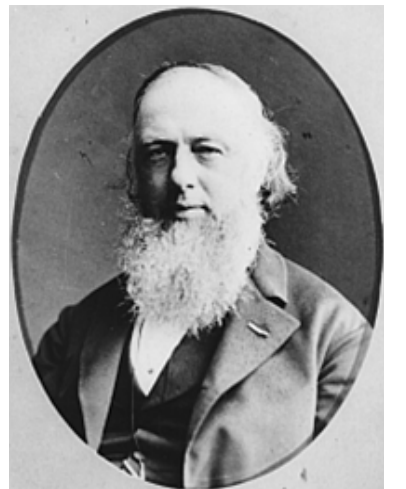


Figure 1:
Johan Frederik Metzelaar
(Floor, 2013).

1: “De Maatschappij tot bevordering der bouwkunst” original Dutch name, translated by author.

2.1.2. Education history

Johan Frederik Metzelaar began his career as a carpenter in 1833, working under Kempe Valk in Rotterdam, who was associated with the drawing school of the Society “Because of this until Higher”². Alongside his practical training with Kempe Valk, Metzelaar attended drawing classes at the school, which later became “the Academy of Fine Arts and Technical Sciences”³ (Floor, 2013). After completing his apprenticeship in 1838, Metzelaar became an independent carpenter and trained others in the trade. He aimed to provide practical training on a small scale, leading by example in work activities and organization, even taking in apprentices to live in his home. A case can be made that he was acting like a master for his apprentices, building bridges between the old and the new generation of architects and between the old and new form of education. This was a valuable form of training as there was no official practical or artistic training available for architects at the time, making it a potential pathway towards an architectural career (Floor, 2009). Although little is known about the specific ambitions J.F. Metzelaar had, education was an important part of the practice, therefore it could be argued that his ambition went beyond the carpentry profession and more towards designing buildings. The decision to continue his education also meant that Metzelaar senior would be older than his peers, who had pursued architecture in a later generation and without the background in carpentry.

In 1839, J.F. Metzelaar graduated from “the Rotterdam Academy of Fine Arts and Technical Sciences”⁴ as one of the top graduates. He then became a teacher of architecture, a position he held until 1850. In 1842, he became a member of the newly established “the society for the advancement of architecture”⁵ where his friendship with W.N Rose started (Floor, 2009).

In 1846, Johan Frederik Metzelaar received his certificate for architecture from “the Royal Academy of Fine Arts”⁶ in Amsterdam. J.F. Metzelaar founded his architectural firm a year later, and initially, his designs were influenced by the classicism of Schinkel. J.F. Metzelaars career also included teaching at “the Rotterdam Academy of Fine Arts and Technical Sciences”⁷, where he was appointed as a professor of architecture history from 1860 to 1868 (Floor, 2013). J.F. Metzelaar believed that the fields of painting, architecture, and sculpture should have a close connection in education. He emphasized that the three visual arts should be well-matched and integrated with craft and industry so that everything in our daily environment would bear the stamp of art. Additionally, practical applications of aesthetics should be included in the education. The idea that style is an essential element of architectural art was popularized by the architect Violet-le-Duc during the 1960s (Der Woud, 1997). J.F. Metzelaar was highly interested in architectural education throughout his career. This is concludable through the publications he made in the magazine of “the society for the advancement of architecture”⁸. Here he expressed his concern in the downfall of architectural education, and sometimes his opinion on other architects. This passion was passed down to his son. Like his father, the younger Metzelaar was a strong supporter of education in the industry. Metzelaar junior, on contrast, was not so vocal about it as his dad (Floor, 2009).

2: “Hierdoor tot Hoger” original Dutch name, translated by author.

3: “Academie van beeldende kunsten en technische wetenschappen” original Dutch name, translated by author.

4: “Academie van beeldende kunsten en technische wetenschappen” original Dutch name, translated by author.

5: “De Maatschappij tot bevordering der bouwkunst” original Dutch name, translated by author.

6: “De Koninklijke Academie voor Beeldende Kunsten” original Dutch name, translated by author.

7: “Academie van beeldende kunsten en technische wetenschappen” original Dutch name, translated by author.

8: “De Maatschappij tot bevordering der bouwkunst” original Dutch name, translated by author.

2.2. Willem Cornelis Metzelaar

2.2.1. Personal history

Willem Cornelis Metzelaars personal life has not been extensively documented, and there are gaps in his childhood history. He was born on August 9, 1848, in Rotterdam (Floor, 2012). After presumably living in the Hague during his studies in Delft, he returned to Rotterdam in 1871 and married two years later. Sadly, both mother and child died soon after. In a letter, Willem expressed his profound grief at this double tragedy and found comfort in his sister, who came to live with him at the time. He also found distraction and comfort in his work. So, it could be argued that this led him to focus on his work and the development of becoming a successful architect. This is why he was a successful architect at quite a young age.



Figure 2:
Willem Cornelis Metzelaar
(Floor, 2012).

2.2.2. Education history

More information about the educational history of W.C. Metzelaar may be found. He performed several functions before working as an assistant for his father. In 1867, Willem Metzelaar enrolled in the civil and structural engineering program at the Polytechnic School in Delft, which had only been in existence for three years. The addition of an engineering course in 1864 with E.H. Gugel as the first professor of architecture at the institution (Blijdenstijn & Stenvert, 2000). Metzelaar junior’s exceptional skills as an architect were evident right from the start of his career, as indicated by his swift appointment to help in the construction of the new main post office in Rotterdam by his professor Gugel right after graduation. It’s unlikely that his professor would have entrusted him with such a project if he had not demonstrated remarkable potential and skill during his studies. This suggests that he was among the most talented architects of his year. Metzelaar senior felt that the polytechnic in Delft was appropriate for engineering and scientific training, but on the other hand he believed that future site architects also needed a comprehensive artistic education (Floor, 2009). It is possible to argue that this opinion emerged from the difference in education between father and son. Metzelaar senior his education was one of more practice, aesthetics, and fieldwork while in comparison junior was of course more technically schooled. This could have come to the surface when W.C. Metzelaar started to work with his father on projects later in his career. Metzelaar junior’s impressive career trajectory can be attributed not only to his passion for architecture and his father’s influence but also to his natural talent and dedication to his craft.

From 1872 to 1883, Metzelaar junior served as a municipal architect in Deventer (Van Der Peet, 1995). During the nineteenth century, being a municipal architect or city architect was a highly esteemed position for architects, and it was common for them to have their own architectural practice, as W.C. Metzelaar did (Van der Woud, 1987). From the outset of his career, Metzelaar junior exhibited an interest in the building trade and architectural education, possibly due to his father’s background, as previously discussed in this chapter. J.F. Metzelaar was classically educated and was vocal about the lack of aesthetic education in architecture, which may have influenced his son’s perspective. In contrast to his father, Metzelaar junior seldom expressed his artistic opinions. Whenever he did publish, it was typically related to technical matters or architectural education (Floor, 2012). During his time as a municipal architect, Willem Cornelis Metzelaar was also appointed as the director of the architectural evening drawing school, a highly esteemed position in the 19th century (Floor, 2009).

Metzelaar sought the position of state architect for educational buildings in 1878 by applying to the Ministry of the Interior, Department of Arts and Sciences. Prior to this, he had already completed the design and construction of two schools in Deventer, demonstrating his interest and experience in school building. W.C. Metzelaar had his own style that showed a mix of austerity and eclecticism, which was a clear contrast to the neo-medieval style of architect P.J.H. Cuypers and his kindred spirits, which was favoured by the secretary V.E.L. de Stuers of the interior and education (Blijdenstijn & Stenvert, 2000).

Metzelaar was not selected for the position probably because his technical background and unconventional style, did not appeal to De Stuers and Cuypers, and his designs were considered unsuitable. His application did reveal his willingness to collaborate with architects from a different background and style, which he referred to as “the other camp” (Floor, 2009). This assumption can be made because the department of arts and sciences, was the department of de Stuers, this vacancy had been created after de Stuers had proposed by letter to the minister in January in 1987 to appoint a second structural engineer in the department. While W.C. Metzelaar was opposed to working in this style, he still applied for the job. Despite not being selected for the position, Metzelaar joined the departmental construction office in The Hague after five years. While it was not his preferred field, he accepted the job and went on to assist his father in the Justice Department, eventually succeeding him in the role (Floor, 2012). It is highly probable that he agreed to take up this job because it provided him with the chance to create a diverse and extensive portfolio of work while still at a relatively young age.

2.3. Chief engineers of prisons and court buildings

In 1870, the 52-year-old Metzelaar Senior joined the Ministry of Justice as engineer-architect for prisons and court buildings. J.F. Metzelaar came to the attention of the government through his collaboration with friend William Nicholas Rose. He was the first departmental government architect and probably appointed because of his experience (Van Der Peet, 1995). Metzelaar senior frequently clashed with de Stuers and his College of State Advisors but stuck to his independent course. His position as official head of a departmental building office was ground-breaking and would remain so until the State Building Department was created in 1924. It is interesting to note that the later government building masters did follow the style designed and actively promoted by Stuers for the empire, which clearly differed from Metzelaars position (Van Der Peet, 1995).

The appointment of J.F. Metzelaar as the new justice architect was an official confirmation of a role that had already been expanding for years. Previously, Pierson had held the responsibility for water authority involvement in building projects, but with the appointment of Metzelaar senior, the focus shifted towards justice architecture. While the water authority was critical player in national building projects before, now architects were chosen to handle the challenging tasks. Pierson had taken on responsibilities beyond his assignment, by already involving himself in designing courthouses. J.F. Metzelaars appointment was unique because he was given a permanent position, unlike previous engineers who only held temporary appointments due to budget constraints (Floor, 2012). Additionally, while previous functionaries were only responsible for designing new prisons, in 1870, it was decided that the engineer-architect would also become responsible for designing court buildings (Van Der Peet, 1995). Overall, the appointment of J.F. Metzelaar was a significant development in the expansion of the justice architect’s role, with a focus on designing buildings for the justice system. J.F. Metzelaars permanent position and expanded responsibilities reflected a growing recognition of the importance of justice architecture in the Netherlands (Floor, 2009).

The Minister of Justice introduced a bill in 1881 to establish a new penal code. The bill extended the period of solitary confinement for long-sentenced prisoners from three to five years, primarily due to the preference for cellular confinement over communal confinement (Smidt, 1886). The Minister of Justice elaborated on the implications of the new law in the second chamber, stating that approximately 1100 new cells would need to be constructed to accommodate the shift from communal to solitary confinement. Since J.F. Metzelaar was already over sixty years old before this new construction campaign began, the minister thought it wise to appoint a second engineer-architect in addition to him. Together they could deal with the greatest cell shortage in a short time and for the period thereafter there was immediately a successor. The minister proposed the appointment of the then 32-year-old W.C. Metzelaar as assistant (Floor, 2009). Despite some objections, which were that there were concerns about the potential influence of family politics since W.C. Metzelaar was the son of J.F. Metzelaar, which could lead to much power in this sector. But eventually the appointment of Metzelaar junior as second engineer-architect for prisons and court buildings was officially approved in 1883 (Van Der Peet, 1995). While Johan Frederik Metzelaar designed and oversaw the construction of most of the Justice Department’s buildings during his final years in office, his son Willem Cornelis Metzelaar designed and completed a significant number of buildings continuously from the beginning of his tenure (Floor, 2009).

2.3.1. Conclusion

In conclusion, the elder Metzelaar worked his way up from craft practice, while the younger Metzelaar was prepared for a career as an engineer-architect at an early age through the main architectural course (Floor, 2012). Interestingly, despite the seven-year age gap between their graduations, J.F. Metzelaar brought his rich experience in carpentry to his work, while W.C. Metzelaar entered the field of architecture at a relatively young age with a technical background. Their different approaches to the profession highlight the diverse paths that architects can take and demonstrate the evolving nature of the architectural profession over time. There is a clear link between the father and son in terms of their shared opinions on architectural education. The unfortunate loss of several family members may have played a role in the senior Metzelaars involvement in the education of his son. While it is uncertain whether he served as an inspiration at that point, both father and son eventually became accomplished architects in their own right, leading them to secure positions as architect-engineers for the Justice department.

Chapter 3 Subdistrict court Alphen aan den Rijn (1879)

The district court of Alphen initially found its home within the town hall back in 1861. However, with the passage of time, the limited space proved to be insufficient for the growing needs of the court. The municipality of Alphen recognized the pressing need for a new building and generously offered a site free of charge to the justice department in 1880 (Nationaal archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Justitie: Gebouwendossiers, nummer toegang 2.09.35.05 Inventarisnummer 35). The proposed location was near the previous courthouse, but this time the focus was on constructing a purpose-built subdistrict court. This decision marked the beginning of an exciting new chapter for the district court of Alphen, as plans were set in motion to construct a modern building that could better serve the evolving needs of the community (Floor, 2009).

3.1 Historical background

In the late 19th century, there was a push to construct new court buildings in the Netherlands. In fact, between 1879 and 1885, fourteen new district court buildings were erected. This effort was supported by a form of serial production that aimed to encourage the creation of new buildings by making designing and building simpler and cheaper. The law of 1877 specified not only the location of the district courts, but also the location of 106 subdistrict courts, which were situated not only in large cities, but also in smaller towns and villages. The function of district court also changed with the implementation of this law, they got to deal with special cases (3.03.20.03 Inventaris Van Het Archief Van Het Kantongerecht Te Alphen Aan Den Rijn, 1940-1979 (1988), n.d.). The judges in subdistrict courts were always a single judge, and due to the absence of compulsory legal representation, the subdistrict court was more accessible to the public. The architecture of these courts was often modest and not too lavish and grand, because they had to remain accessible to the people (Van Rijckevorsel, 1888). This was also evident in the architecture of the Tiel courthouse which we will get into in the next chapter.

Of the fourteen district court buildings established before 1886, the first nine were constructed according to a single standard design by J.F. Metzelaar in 1879. The idea of series production was not new in the 19th century, as it had been employed for schools, churches, and station buildings that could be adapted to different circumstances if necessary (Bosma et al., 2007). It is worth noting that in 1870, J.F. Metzelaar expressed his criticism towards the use of standardized designs for railway stations. He believed that architects, who were qualified construction artists, should have been employed instead of engineers in the construction of these stations. Metzelaar argued that such a shift would have provided a significant boost to the field of architecture (Bosma et al., 2007).

Allard Pierson had developed two standard designs for district courts and a house of detention before in 1860. This design came to be because before 1886, municipalities were responsible for furnishing and maintaining houses of detention, and Pierson's design often allowed them to be combined with the courts. As a result, this became a common practice. Pierson's standard design included a courtroom, a jailer's house with an office and visiting room, and behind it, the house of detention. The standard design made it cheaper and easier to build new courthouses (Van Der Peet, 1995). Metzelaar senior used Pierson's design as a starting point for his own standard design, which was used in most of the district courts he designed (Floor, 2012).

3.2 Location

The building was constructed on the outskirts of the urbanized area known today as Wilhelminalaan. Since a standard design was used, no significant modifications were needed to integrate the building into the urban context, nor was there much flexibility for such modifications. Nevertheless, the standard design was deemed adequate for conveying the authority of the jurisdiction. The lot on which the building was erected measured approximately 20 meters by 20 meters (Nationaal archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Justitie: Gebouwendossiers, nummer toegang 2.09.35.05 Inventarisnummer 35). It can be inferred that the location was chosen for its proximity to the original district court site and the availability of a suitably sized plot of land.



Figure 3:
Town hall Alphen, the initial home of the court of Alphen.
(Photo taken by author, 2023)



Figure 4:
Subdistrict court Alphen
(Photo taken by author, 2023)

3.3 Style

In the upcoming chapter, it will be evident that the Alphen courthouse shares a comparable organization and style with the Tiel district court. However, the Alphen courthouse is smaller and less imposing than the Tiel courthouse. The variation in function between the two courthouses accounts for the difference in their architectural design. While Tiel served as a district court, Alphen functioned as a sub-district court. As previously noted, sub-district courts were intended to be more approachable to the public, resulting in less imposing architecture (Floor, 2012). This while still having a decorated facade and a first floor located above street level, which was also the case in Tiel. The asymmetrical facade detracted from the classical ideal of beauty and emphasized the utilitarian aspect of the building (Osborne, H, 1986). This was mostly because the entrance of the building broke the symmetry as to be seen in figure 5 (Alphen 4.RGD Inventaris Van Het Tekeningenarchief Van De Rijksgebouwendienst (RGD) En Rechtsvoorgangers, (1761) 1824-1945 (1980), n.d., sec. alphen aan den rijj)). Nonetheless, despite the use of a standard model design, aesthetics was also considered. Decorative anchors, gable arches, eyes and racks above the windows, and the entrance on the front facade were included in the design as can be seen in figure eight. To sum up, the Alphen district court can be characterized as both dignified and modest, with many similarities to the Tiel courthouse in terms of spatial layout and courtroom layout, albeit executed in a smaller and more unassuming manner (Floor, 2012).

3.4 Spatial program & Lay-out

The courthouse is a relatively small building. The building is a two-story structure with a gabled roof that measures 13 meters wide and 11 meters deep (Nationaal archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Justitie: Gebouwendossiers, nummer toegang 2.09.35.05 Inventarisnummer 35). The ridge of the roof runs parallel to the street. The first floor is about one meter raised above street level. The raising of the first floor can have different reasons, it could be practical or to exaggerate the justice appearance of the building. The five-bay wide building has a slightly asymmetrical facade, with the main entrance located in the left bay, which breaks the symmetry and detracts from the stately, classical character of the courthouse like mentioned before. The walls are made of clean masonry with matching ribbons and window bars.

On the first floor, there is the janitor's residence and a detainee cell, while the second floor houses the courtroom, clerk's office, witness room, and the room for the state field officer. This was the same as in the standard design that Pierson had made. The six-pane sash windows on the second floor and the four-pane window on the dormer are of the round type and are crowned with an arch (Nationaal archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Justitie: Gebouwendossiers, nummer toegang 2.09.35.05 Inventarisnummer 35). This architectural feature later known as the Metzelaar arch, is an arch which is round on the inside and somewhat pointed on the outside. It was often utilized in buildings designed by both Metzelaar architects. This characteristic can aid in identifying their work (Floor, 2009). In the specific case of the building in question, the arch was constructed using brick and cement, see figure six. The entrance to the courthouse is through a double door on the left side of the building, which leads to a corridor and a staircase. The design of the floor plans reflects the functions of the courthouse at the time and the activities of the organization that performed its duties there. The second floor contains the courtroom and the necessary rooms for court proceedings, while the first floor is used for detention purposes. The overall design of the building is dignified, but its asymmetrical facade and utilitarian features give it a modest appearance (Floor, 2012).

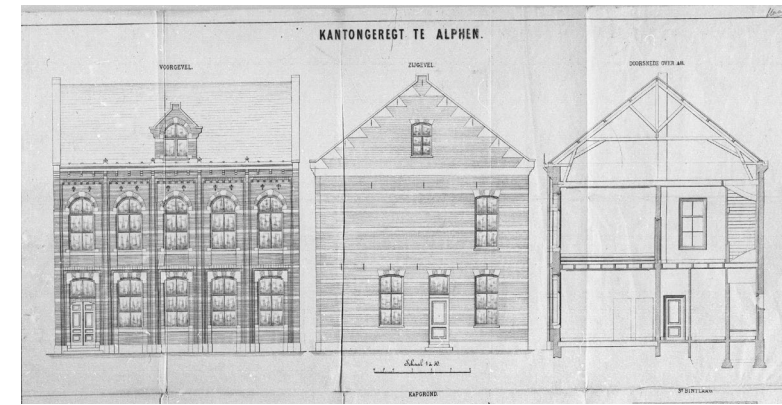


Figure 5:
Elevations of the courthouse in Alphen
(4.RGD Inventaris Van Het Tekeningenarchief Van De Rijksgebouwendienst (RGD) En Rechtsvoorgangers, (1761) 1824-1945 (1980), n.d., sec. alphen aan den rijj)).

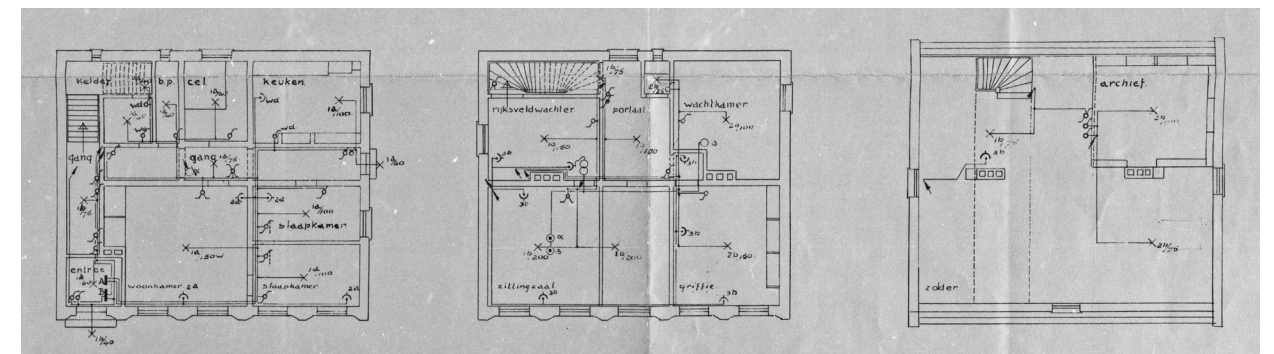


Figure 6:
Floorplans of the courthouse in Alphen
(4.RGD Inventaris Van Het Tekeningenarchief Van De Rijksgebouwendienst (RGD) En Rechtsvoorgangers, (1761) 1824-1945 (1980), n.d., sec. alphen aan den rijj)).



Figure 7:
Decorations and details
(Photo taken by author, 2023)



Figure 8:
Decorations and details
(Photo taken by author, 2023)

Chapter 4 Courthouse Tiel (1882)

The completion of the Tiel courthouse in 1882 marked a significant event in the history of courthouse architecture in the Netherlands. It was the first time in over thirty years that a new courthouse had been built and designed (Nationaal archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Justitie: Gebouwendossiers, nummer toegang 2.09.35.05 Inventarisnummer 27). The creation of the Tiel courthouse had two underlying causes. The first was the enactment of the legislation on the judicial division in 1877, which was a necessary precondition for building the new courthouse (Van Rijckevorsel, 1888). Before that it was uncertain whether the court in Tiel would continue to exist because the districts would be rearranged, in 1877 it was determined that the district in Tiel would be kept (Van Der Peet, 1995). The second cause was the poor structural condition of the old building, which was no longer fit for purpose and posed a fire hazard to the archives and the safety of the public. The courthouse was previously housed in the town hall from 1811 and later in a former residence on Kerkstraat, which was remodelled for court sessions in 1835. Discussions on improving the building were held in 1875, but a decision was postponed due to the imminent new legislation on the territorial judicial division in 1877 (Nationaal archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Justitie: Gebouwendossiers, nummer toegang 2.09.35.05 Inventarisnummer 27). After an on-site investigation, complaints were fully endorsed by J.F. Metzelaar, who was commissioned later to design the new courthouse in June 1878. The municipality provided a terrain free of charge for the construction of the courthouse in the same year (Floor, 2012).

4.1 Historical background

Initially, the construction of new buildings for the justice department progressed slowly due to the 1811 legal system reform that divided the country into departments and districts, providing little incentive for new construction. As a result, court officials held sessions in abandoned buildings, such as shared city halls or other public buildings (Van Der Peet, 1995). However, the courts themselves usually had better housing as successors to the provincial courts, which were almost always municipal or provincial property ('s-Gravenhage, algemeen rijksarchief, archief ministerie van justitie, archief Gebouwen, inv. 580-3). Despite the state's decision in 1855 to provide financial assistance to municipalities, new buildings were not being constructed as the municipalities were reluctant to bear their share of the costs. Moreover, the reduction in the number of arrondissements and cantons over the years created uncertainty about the continued existence of a particular court, which discouraged new construction (Van Der Peet, 1995). To encourage new construction, in 1860, A.C. Pierson produced two standard designs for a district court, mentioned in the previous chapter. These designs were simple and could be built by a local architect or staff from the Department of Waterways and Public Works (Van Der Peet, 1995). During J.F. Metzelaar's tenure, the series of buildings with standard designs was expanded. The Alphen aan den Rijn district court, which was discussed in the preceding chapter, serves as an excellent illustration of a design based on the standard design Pierson made.

The subdistrict courts were usually smaller and basic in structure. However, court buildings with combined district court and normal court were a different story. These buildings were often exemplary of government architecture and among the most significant works of J.F. and W.C. Metzelaar. In fact, they were known for their grandeur and served as a symbol of representative government architecture. J.F. Metzelaar designed only one of such a courthouse, Tiel (Floor,2012) (Nationaal archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Justitie: Gebouwendossiers, nummer toegang 2.09.35.05 Inventarisnummer 27).

4.2 Location

When selecting a location for the courthouse, both its symbolic significance and functional needs were considered (Van Der Peet, 1995). The site chosen was situated between the old town and the Waalband dike, with its main entrance facing the city to the northeast. However, due to the site's low elevation, it needed to be raised by one meter to ensure the building was visible from the surrounding roads. To achieve this, Metzelaar utilized a substructure, which not only raised the building but also gave it a terraced appearance. The location was also chosen to maintain a similar distance between the courthouse and the house of judgment, allowing for efficient transportation of prisoners and pre-trial hearings.

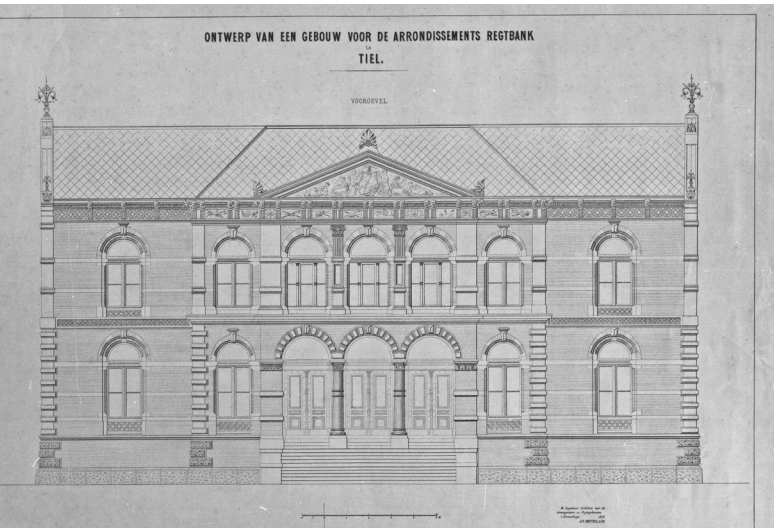


Figure 9:
Elevation of the courthouse in Tiel
(4.RGD Inventaris Van Het Tekeningenarchief Van De Rijksgebouwendienst (RGD) En Rechtsvoorgangers, (1761) 1824-1945 (1980), n.d., sec. Tiel)).



Figure 10:
Entrance to the Courthouse
(Photo taken by author, 2023)

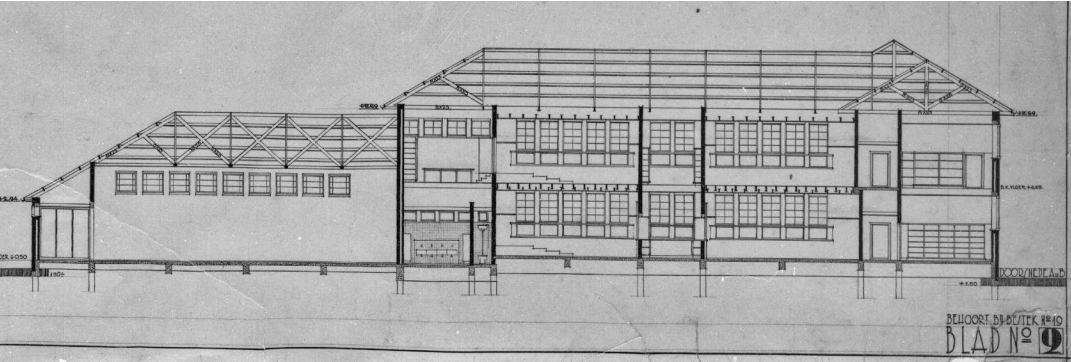


Figure 11:
Section of the courthouse in Tiel
(4.RGD Inventaris Van Het Tekeningenarchief Van De Rijksgebouwendienst (RGD) En Rechtsvoorgangers, (1761) 1824-1945 (1980), n.d., sec. Tiel)).



Figure 12:
Decorations and details
(Photo taken by author, 2023)

Additionally, the building’s proximity to the city ensured good connections, as it was located just outside the old town (4.RGD Inventaris Van Het Tekeningenarchief Van De Rijksgebouwendienst (RGD) En Rechtsvoorgangers, (1761) 1824-1945 (1980), n.d., sec. Tiel)).

4.3 Style

The courthouse in Tiel is a remarkable piece of architecture and design, and it is considered to be J.F. Metzelaars most significant creation during his time working for the Department of Justice (Van Der Peet, 1995). Metzelaar Senior was greatly influenced by the views of the Rotterdam branch of “the society for the advancement of architecture”⁹ and this can be seen in his designs from the 1850s and 1860s. The eclectic building style used in the Tiel courthouse is an excellent example of this influence, drawing on elements from Lombard and Byzantine architecture (Van Der Peet, 1995). Metzelaar opted for an eclectic architectural style for the courthouse in Tiel, blending classical design with a mix of old-fashioned and modern motifs on the facades. The interior of the building follows the same style as the facades, with the grand courtroom being a standout example of state architecture from the late 1800s (Van Der Peet, 1995). Despite the courthouse’s departure from the classical canon and its incorporation of various styles, it still preserves several essential classical features, including symmetry, well-proportioned design, and a fonton situated above the central risalite (Blijdenstijn & Stenvert, 2000).

4.4 Spatial program & Lay-out

As mentioned previously, the Tiel courthouse completed in 1882, showcases classicist architecture that incorporates elements of eclectic, neo-renaissance, and classicist styles (Van Der Peet, 1995). The building’s design is characterized by a highly organized layout featuring a spacious rectangular courtroom situated in the centre and smaller rooms symmetrically arranged around it, serving less prominent purposes. Figure 5 displays the floor plan, which illustrates the building’s layout and its connection to the classicism style, as noted by Blijdenstijn and Stenvert (2000). The district court is located in the front left corner, while the judge office is in the corresponding corner on the right. The hall, which is higher than the surrounding areas, is well-lit by a dozen tall windows and has side entrances and entrances on both short sides that provide access to the hall. The main entrance with a vestibule is at the front, and the council chamber is at the back of the building, forming the hall’s axis.

The floor plan is strictly symmetrical, similar to W.N. Rose’s Supreme Court building in The Hague (Van Der Peet, 1995). Every aspect of the courthouse’s layout reflects the practical and functional requirements of a modern court system. The ground and main floor’s longitudinal axis are formed by the staircase at the front, followed by the landing, portico, courtroom, and passageway leading to the council chamber at the back. The two wings on the left and right sides of the building are nearly identical, each one storey high and separated from the hall by corridors leading to the back of the building. The courthouse is designed with a clear separation of functions, with the left wing dedicated to the district court and the right wing to the court, as evident from the building’s layout. The courtroom was designed with a light beam, similar to that of the classical Roman basilica (Blijdenstijn & Stenvert, 2000). J.F. Metzelaar likely chose a more conventional and classical plan for the courthouse, featuring a basement throughout the building and the primary floor elevated a few steps above the ground level. This design choice was consistent with the courthouse in Alphen aan den Rijn, emphasizing the building’s purpose as a judicial facility.

The Tiel courthouse exemplifies eclectic architecture, combining classical architectural elements with a blend of different styles to create an impressive appearance. Its proportions, detailing, and layout all contribute to this effect. The main axis of the building, encompassing the entrance, vestibule, large courtroom, and council chamber, runs perpendicular to the axis of the new Tielseweg. This design feature was likely a deliberate choice, intended to establish a clear visual connection between the courthouse and the city’s primary road.

9: “De Maatschappij tot bevordering der bouwkunst” original Dutch name, translated by author.

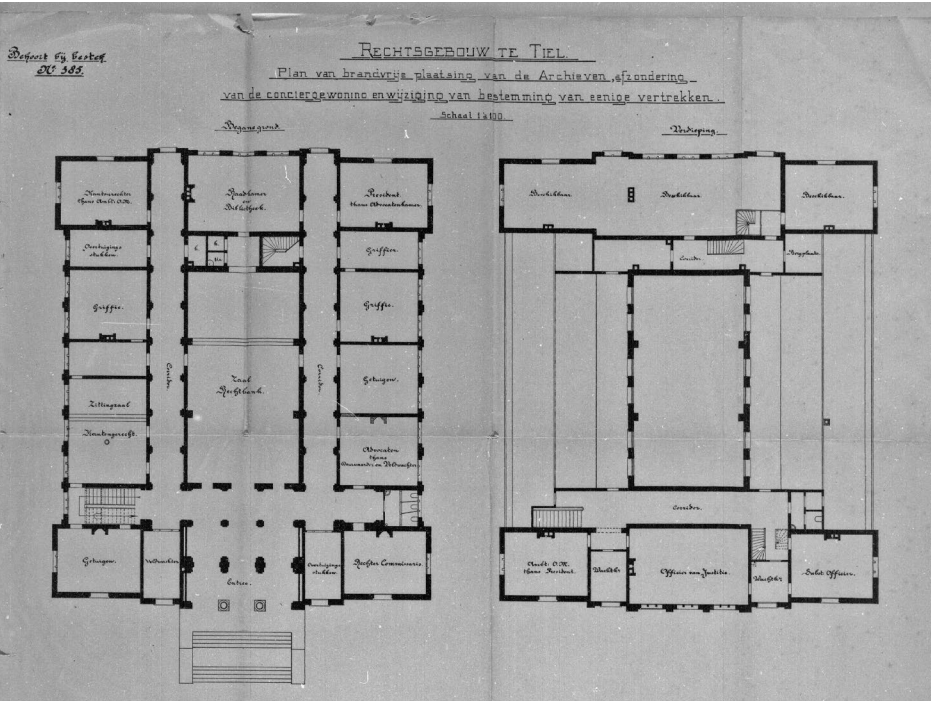


Figure 13:
Floorplans of the courthouse in Tiel
(4.RGD Inventaris Van Het Tekeningenarchief Van De Rijksgebouwendienst (RGD) En Rechtsvoorgangers, (1761) 1824-1945 (1980), n.d., sec. Tiel)).



Figure 14:
Left side of the building.
(Photo taken by author, 2023)

Chapter 5 Courthouse Zutphen (1888)

W.C. Metzelaar was a renowned architect with a vast and varied oeuvre spanning several decades. Although it is impossible to discuss all his accomplishments, one notable achievement was the construction of a courthouse with a house of judgment in Zutphen. This project was also significant as it marked the first independent assignment that Metzelaar Jr. undertook after his father’s retirement in 1886 (Van Der Peet, 1995).

The courthouse and house of judgment were built on the grounds of the fortress that was dismantled after the municipality of Zutphen and the state reached a mutually beneficial agreement in July of 1886 (‘s-Gravenhage, algemeen rijksarchief, archief ministerie van justitie, archief Gebouwen, inv. 31). Under the agreement, the municipality ceded the Slijkbolwerk to the state, while gaining control of the rooms in the city hall that previously housed the court and house of judgment. The law approving this exchange was passed on January 22, 1887, and the groundwork for the courthouse and house of detention was initiated in the summer of 1887 (Montijn et al., 1989b). After two years of construction, both buildings were officially occupied on November 23, 1889.

5.1 Historical background

In Zutphen, like many other cities, the city hall was originally used to house the district court, county court, and its house of judgment. However, as time passed, the building became too small to accommodate the growing need for more space and serve all the functions properly (Montijn et al., 1989b). The Zutphen courthouse and house of detention were built and designed simultaneously. The need for better court housing in Zutphen was recognized as early as 1878 when the municipality sought to terminate the lease of the district court premises due to space constraints (‘s-Gravenhage, algemeen rijksarchief, archief ministerie van justitie, archief Gebouwen, inv. 31).

To address this issue, Willem C. Metzelaar was tasked with constructing a new courthouse and house of judgment in Zutphen. This project was the first independent assignment undertaken by Metzelaar Jr. after his father’s retirement. With the enactment of the penal code in 1886, the district courts and courts of justice were given additional responsibilities, which could result in a greater need for space (Invoeringswet Wetboek Van Strafrecht, Artikel 11 (01-09-1886), n.d.). Especially in cases where courts were not situated in a palace of justice, there was no possibility of reallocating duties within the same building. As a result, five new courthouses were constructed after 1886, all of them being designed by W.C. Metzelaar (Floor, 2012).

5.2 Location

The courthouse’s main entrance was situated on Martinetsingel, facing the city, while the house of detention was located behind it, on the former bulwark near the main canal. This location was likely chosen to ensure the courthouse’s proximity to the house of detention, which was beneficial from a judicial perspective. This arrangement would have made it easier to transport prisoners to and from the courthouse. Similar to the courthouse in Tiel, there was no requirement to incorporate the Zutphen courthouse into the existing built environment, so no other buildings beside the house of detention had to be taken into account while designing this particular courthouse (Floor, 2012).

5.3 Style

In designing the courthouse in Zutphen, W.C. Metzelaar adopted a classical concept, with rooms symmetrically arranged around a rectangular courtroom. This courtroom extended over two floors and received natural light through high windows (Montijn et al., 1989b). The design was heavily influenced by his father’s courthouse in Tiel, which had a nearly identical plan and layout. However, the Zutphen courthouse had some differences in architectural detailing. Metzelaar Jr. opted for a low front wing with an entrance, while the high courtroom protruded above it with three front windows and a pediment adorned with a statue of Justice. Unlike the Tiel courthouse, the main hall played a crucial role in the front view of the building, see figure 8. The style of the Zutphen courthouse was classical and reminiscent of the work of Schinkel (Blijdenstijn & Stenvert, 2000). By combining this classical style with the eclectic neo renaissance style for the exterior architecture, the building had a stylish yet somewhat old-fashioned appearance.



Figure 15:
Picture of the Courthouse in Zutphen
(4.RGD Inventaris Van Het Tekeningenarchief Van De Rijksgebouwendienst (RGD)
En Rechtsvoorgangers, (1761) 1824-1945 (1980), n.d., sec. Zutphen)).

5.4 Spatial program & Lay-out

The original layout of the Zutphen courthouse closely resembled the courthouse in Tiel, which had been built roughly seven years earlier. Both buildings had a two-story rectangular courtroom in the centre, surrounded by one-story rooms. However, there were some differences between the two buildings. The Zutphen courthouse had front and rear sections that were only one story high, while Tiel's had two-story sections. The similarities between the Tiel courthouse and Zutphen's building can also be attributed to the fact that both were constructed on a podium, likely for practical reasons. Its classicist entrance was in the middle of the front facade, with a staircase inside the portico (Floor, 2012).

The entrance porch of the Zutphen courthouse had a central risalite with three bays, with the middle bay slightly forward and topped by a pediment with the word "Justitia" underneath. On either side of the central part were smaller one-story wings. The basement housed the archives and the janitor's residence. The courtroom was well-lit and furnished simply but efficiently, with paneling and a panelled ceiling (Floor, 2009) (4.RGD Inventaris Van Het Tekeningenarchief Van De Rijksgebouwendienst (RGD) En Rechtsvoorgangers, (1761) 1824-1945 (1980), n.d., sec. Zutphen)).

The layout and design of the Zutphen courthouse bear a striking resemblance to those of the courthouse in Tiel. It is evident that the younger Metzelaar drew inspiration from his father's work, and this influence can be observed in the similarities between the two buildings. Despite being constructed in 1889, the Zutphen courthouse's classicist style was already considered somewhat old-fashioned at the time. Nevertheless, it remains an impressive example of this architectural style. We can conclude that J.F. Metzelaar functioned as a source of inspiration for his son, as the design of the Zutphen courthouse closely resembles that of the Tiel courthouse.

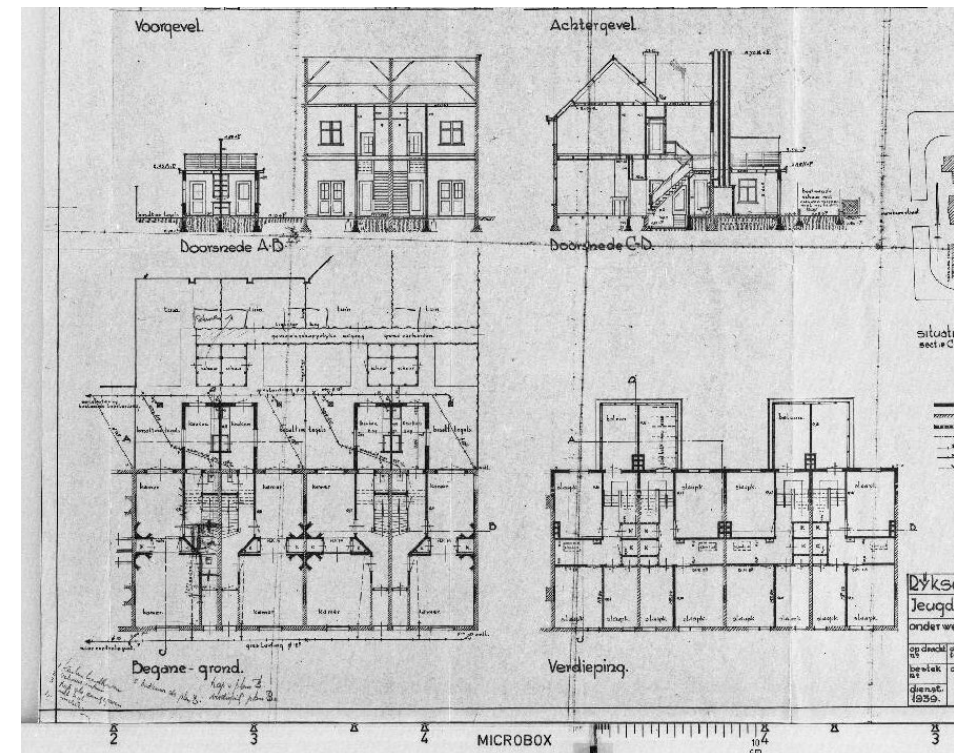


Figure 16:
Elevation & Floorplans of the courthouse in Zutphen
(4.RGD Inventaris Van Het Tekeningenarchief Van De Rijksgebouwendienst (RGD)
En Rechtsvoorgangers, (1761) 1824-1945 (1980), n.d., sec. Zutphen)).

Chapter 6 Courthouse Rotterdam (1897)

In the late 19th century, the city of Rotterdam was experiencing rapid growth and modernization. The decision to build a new courthouse was made in 1880, when the rent for the existing court building was raised, prompting the city to explore alternative options. After a thorough search for a suitable location, the municipality settled on a site on the Noordsingel, near the penal prison (Nationaal archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Justitie: Gebouwendossiers, nummer toegang 2.09.35.05 Inventarisnummer 26). The building was designed by W.C. Metzelaar, the Courthouse in Rotterdam is seen as one of the most important works in his body of work. Construction of the new courthouse began in 1896, and the building was completed in April 1900. The building featured several impressive design elements, including a grand central hall with a large stained-glass dome, spacious courtrooms, and ornate decorations throughout (Van Der Peet, 1995).

6.1 Historical background

The Rotterdam courthouse is one of three buildings that make up the justice complex on the Noordsingel, along with the archive building and the house of detention. Situated directly on the Noordsingel, the courthouse and archive building are followed by a courtyard and then the penal prison complex with its own courtyard. The house of detention is located behind the courthouse on the left (Nationaal archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Justitie: Gebouwendossiers, nummer toegang 2.09.35.05 Inventarisnummer 26). Its purpose was to house the district court and the three Rotterdam canon courts. The courthouse was also intended to be linked to the prison designed by A.C. Pierson and executed by J.F. Metzelaar from 1870 (Floor, 2012).

6.2 Location

The courthouse, constructed between 1898 and 1899, was built on a narrow plot of land running parallel to the Noordsingel. To seamlessly integrate the new courthouse with the existing built environment, architect W.C. Metzelaar had to take into account its location on the forecourt of the adjacent penal prison. This design stands in stark contrast to the other courthouses discussed in this thesis (Nationaal archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Justitie: Gebouwendossiers, nummer toegang 2.09.35.05 Inventarisnummer 26). The proximity of the courthouse to the penal prison, as seen in many other courthouses, was a deliberate decision made for practical reasons and was discussed in the previous chapter. The central risalite of the building features a gateway passage on the ground floor that leads to a courtyard, connecting it to the gatehouse of the prison, which was designed by A.C. Pierson and executed by J.F. Metzelaar in 1870. This adaptation to the surrounding architecture demonstrates the thoughtfulness and attention to detail that went into the design of the courthouse.

6.3 Style

The Rotterdam courthouse, built in 1898-1899, was designed with a clear layout of the floor plan, keeping in mind its dual function as a court and district court building. The main wing runs parallel to the Noordsingel and has two floors with an attic, with a gateway to a courtyard on the first floor leading to the house of detention and penitentiary behind it. The left and right sides of the courtyard adjoin the building’s former courtrooms for the court and district court, respectively. The left portion of the building was added later (Nationaal archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Justitie: Gebouwendossiers, nummer toegang 2.09.35.05 Inventarisnummer 26). The building facades are composed of yellow glazed brick, adorned with red glazed brick decorations, and two varieties of natural stone, as seen in figure twenty. The main entrance, located in the centre of the front facade, features a large portal leading to the courtyard behind the building. Two risalites are present on the lofts of the building, and two smaller risalites are located halfway through each of the two wings, each with their own entrance for the court and the district court. All risalites are crowned with a classical pediment and have pilasters. Small tops can be found at the level of both main entrances, and the building levels are marked by framework with decorative brickwork.



Figure 17:
Decorations and details
(Photo taken by author, 2023)



Figure 18:
Signature of W.C. Metzelaar on the building
(Photo taken by author, 2023)



Figure 19:
Elevation of the courthouse in Rotterdam
(4.RGD Inventaris Van Het Tekeningenarchief Van De Rijksgebouwendienst (RGD) En Rechtsvoorgangers, (1761) 1824-1945 (1980), n.d., sec. Rotterdam)).



Figure 20:
Decorations and details
(Photo taken by author, 2023)

Furthermore, the Rotterdam courthouse is regarded as one of W.C. Metzelaars most exceptional works due to its well thought out and original design, balanced facade composition, and precise architectural detailing. As a result, it stands out from the eclecticism prevalent at the time (Van Der Peet, 1995). The courthouse is considered a prime example of the international neo-Renaissance style in the Netherlands, with its well-balanced composition, fine detailing, and classicist elements that deviated from the Dutch variety of neo-Renaissance. It is one of W.C. Metzelaar's most successful creations, which marked his break from eclecticism (Van Der Peet, 1995; Floor, 2009; Blijdenstijn & Stenvert, 2000).

6.4 Spatial program & Lay-out

The layout of the courthouse was thoughtfully designed to suit its various functions. This is clearly illustrated in the building's layout plan, and the distinction is even visible in the facade. The district court and subdistrict court were strictly segregated and located in the wings on either side of the central risalite, each with its own entrance. Each wing had a spacious hall with a skylight and a staircase leading to surrounding galleries, made of bluestone and supported by freestanding stone columns.

The building's floor plan was symmetrical, the main wing was contained office spaces and two sizable courtrooms located on opposite sides of a courtyard that led to the prison gate. The wing of the courthouse in question comprised two floors and an attic. On the main floor, the court occupied the left and central sections while the subdistrict courts and janitor's house were located on the right. It was reasonable for the court to have more space than the subdistrict courts on the first floor, considering its higher hierarchy. One distinct feature of this courthouse, unlike others, was that it had separate circuits for defendants, the public, and other litigants. Additionally, it was larger in size due to its multiple functions, distinguishing it from the Tiel courthouse, for instance (Van Der Peet, 1995; Floor, 2009; Nationaal archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Justitie: Gebouwendossiers, nummer toegang 2.09.35.05 Inventarisnummer 26).

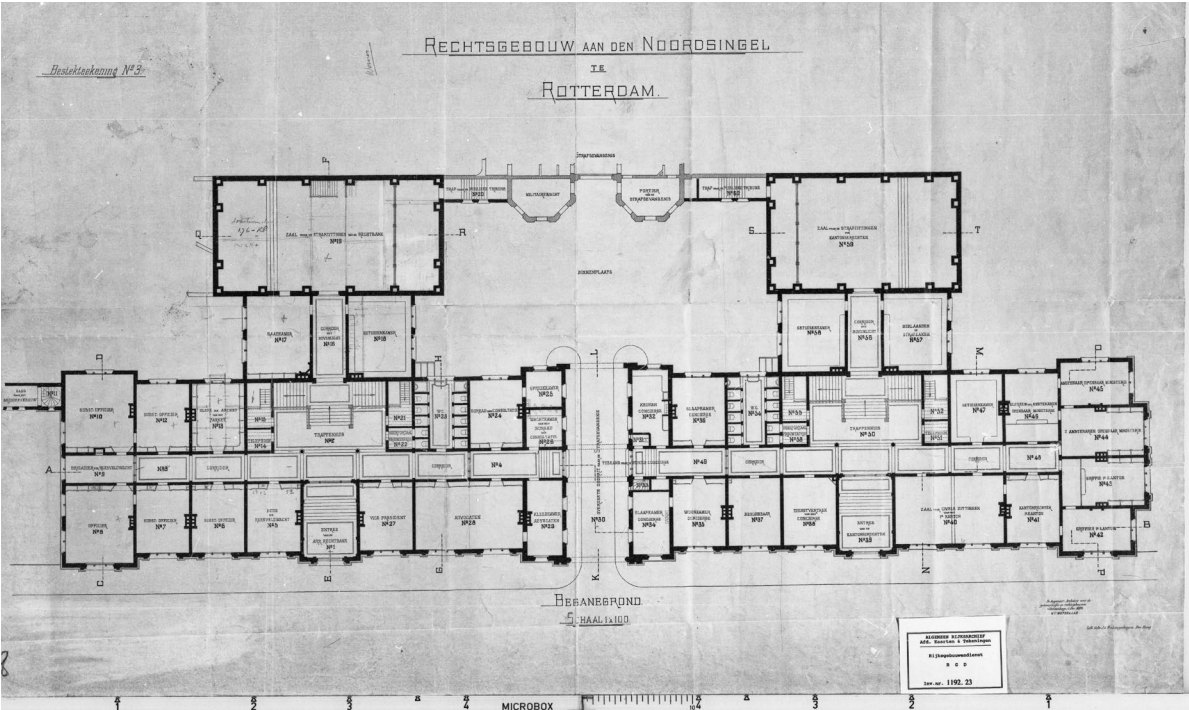


Figure 21:
 Floorplan of the courthouse in Rotterdam
 (4.RGD Inventaris Van Het Tekeningenarchief Van De Rijksgebouwendienst (RGD) En Rechtsvoorgangers,
 (1761) 1824-1945 (1980), n.d., sec. Rotterdam)).

Chapter 7 Conclusion

This historical thesis has comprehensively examined and presented the Metzelaar courthouse architecture that was prevalent in the Netherlands during the 1800-1900s. It has not only delved into the architectural style argument that was present during this period but also provided an in-depth background on both J.F. Metzelaar and W.C. Metzelaar. The study analysed four case studies, meticulously researched through archival sources, literature reviews, and site visits. Each case study focused on several themes, including historical context, location, style, spatial program, and layout. Through this, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the Metzelaar courthouse architecture and the underlying factors that influenced its development. Through this research, several conclusions can be drawn with the use of these research questions:

What did father and son Metzelaar contribute to courthouse architecture in the Netherlands?

Why were both father and son the designated courthouse designers for a period? Was W.C. Metzelaar educated by his father? And was he an inspiration? Did father and son collaborate on projects? What were the characteristics of these projects? And what were differences in style and how are these differences connected to external circumstances?

The question of why both father and son were designated courthouse designers for a period can be attributed to multiple factors. J.F. Metzelaar had initially pursued carpentry as a profession, but his ambition went beyond that and he started designing buildings. His decision to continue his education meant that he was determined to become a successful architect. J.F. Metzelaar came to the attention of the government through his collaboration with friend William Nicholas Rose who had done some architectural jobs for the government before. J.F. Metzelaar was appointed at the age of 52 because of his experience and accomplishments as an architect. His son, W.C. Metzelaar, was appointed because the minister thought it wise to appoint a second engineer-architect in addition to his father, who was already over sixty years old when the need for a lot of new courthouses had to be designed. As the Department of Justice's buildings became more important and complex, they switched to architects with more technical knowledge, which was also a likely reason for the change. Metzelaar junior got on their radar because he had previously sought the position of state architect for education buildings. Together they could deal with the greatest shortage in a short time and ensure that there was immediately a successor to J.F. Metzelaar senior for the period thereafter.

Metzelaar senior and junior had different educational backgrounds. Metzelaar senior began as a carpenter and gained knowledge in aesthetics, while his son, Willem, received formal technical education. Nevertheless, the Zutphen Courthouse design suggests that W.C. Metzelaar drew inspiration from his father's work, implying that J.F. Metzelaar did influence his son's style. Both architects shared similar views on architectural education. Senior Metzelaars involvement in and opinions on his son's education may have played a role in this influence, although W.C. Metzelaar was not directly educated by his father. The loss of several family members may have played a role in senior Metzelaars involvement in his son's education, which likely included exposure to courthouse architecture through working for his father.

After conducting case studies, it was discovered that the Metzelaars did not have a significant amount of collaboration on projects, despite initial assumptions. It is possible that Metzelaar Junior assisted his father on several projects, but there is little evidence of this in the architecture. This could be attributed to the fact that Metzelaar Senior's work primarily involved small buildings with standard designs, whereas Metzelaar Junior focused on larger projects with more emphasis on context, necessitating more technical knowledge. Additionally, external factors such as changes in the law greatly influenced the design of courthouses, as they had to accommodate more space and take other buildings into consideration. For instance, the courthouse in Rotterdam was designed with the already existing house of detention in mind. Metzelaar Junior's designs often incorporated older styles, which may have been inspired by his father's work. The Zutphen Courthouse, for example, had numerous similarities in style and floorplan design to the courthouse in Tiel, indicating that Tiel may have served as an inspiration for this design. A shift in style was also generally observed between the two architects. Metzelaar Senior began with classical designs but later adopted a more eclectic style, while Metzelaar Junior initially favoured eclectic designs but ultimately moved towards more classical styles.

To conclude this thesis and answer the main research question, it can be said that Father and son Metzelaar made a significant contribution to courthouse architecture in the Netherlands. J.F. Metzelaar worked mostly with standard designs and his most significant contribution to courthouse architecture was the Tiel Courthouse. Which turned out to be an inspiration for many other later designed courthouses. In contrast, W.C. Metzelaar focused on creating his designs and constructing more extensive buildings. Which was connected to external circumstances at the time in which it was designed such as the already existing build environment and the changing of the law. His most notable contribution was the Rotterdam Courthouse, which incorporated multiple functions. This courthouse was a significant departure from the standard designs of the time and was regarded as a masterpiece of architecture.

To end this architectural history thesis, it should be noted that finding sources on the Metzelaar family and their contributions to courthouse architecture was a challenge. Most of the available literature was based on the works of Ros Floor, and there was a scarcity of primary sources. To fill the research gap, I had to conduct my own research and carefully analyse the available information. Despite these challenges, I am satisfied with the outcome, and I believe that my research will make a valuable contribution to the knowledge of the Metzelaar family's legacy in Dutch courthouse architecture.

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