



Castrum Peregrini

Herengracht 401 Amsterdam

This is a summary of the report about Castrum Peregrini, a hiding place during the WWII. The apartment is located at Herengracht 401 and owned by Gisèle van Waterschoot van der Gracht; she lived there during the war with Wolfgang Frommel and two men in hiding: F.W. Buri and Claus Victor Bock.

Group 08

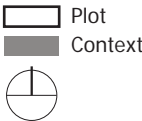
| | |
|---------|-----------------|
| 0590687 | Maarten Klont |
| 0883552 | Naznin Parvin |
| 0651823 | Franek Prevoo |
| 0741312 | Lenne van Schie |



Figure 8.1 Context 1:500



Figure 8.2 Façades 1:200



The residents

In 1940 the 26 year old painter Gisèle van Waterschoot van der Gracht rented an apartment at the Herengracht 401 and became good friends with her upstairs neighbours Miep and Guido Theunissen.

In the summer of the same year, Gisèle met the 38 year old German poet Wolfgang Frommel. They immediately became good friends. At that same time Wolfgang Frommel started to establish a new circle of friends and came in contact with the Quaker School Eerde in Ommen. Here, Frommel became a sort of artistic-intellectual tutor for the young men on the school. Frommel was often visiting the school and because the influence of the German race police was increasing very fast,

Wolfgang pushed the school management to let the Jewish pupils go into hiding. Unfortunately the school decided to cooperate with the German policies in the hope the situation would not get as bad as in Germany. All the student had to promise the school that they would not try to hide and had to stay in the Quaker School Eerde. So Wolfgang Frommel decided to take action himself, together with, amongst others, Gisèle. During the hiding process Miep and Guido were also involved in the hiding activities.

1. Defuser M., Somers E. (2008). Gisèle en haar onderduikers. Castrum Peregrini Press, Netherlands, Amsterdam. p 113-114
 2. Van Ertvelde A. (2012) The Many Manifestations of Castrum Peregrini. Historiography, heritage and the possibility of representing the past. <http://castrumperegrini.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/The-Many-Manifestations-of-Castrum-Peregrini.pdf>



Figure 8.3 Interior

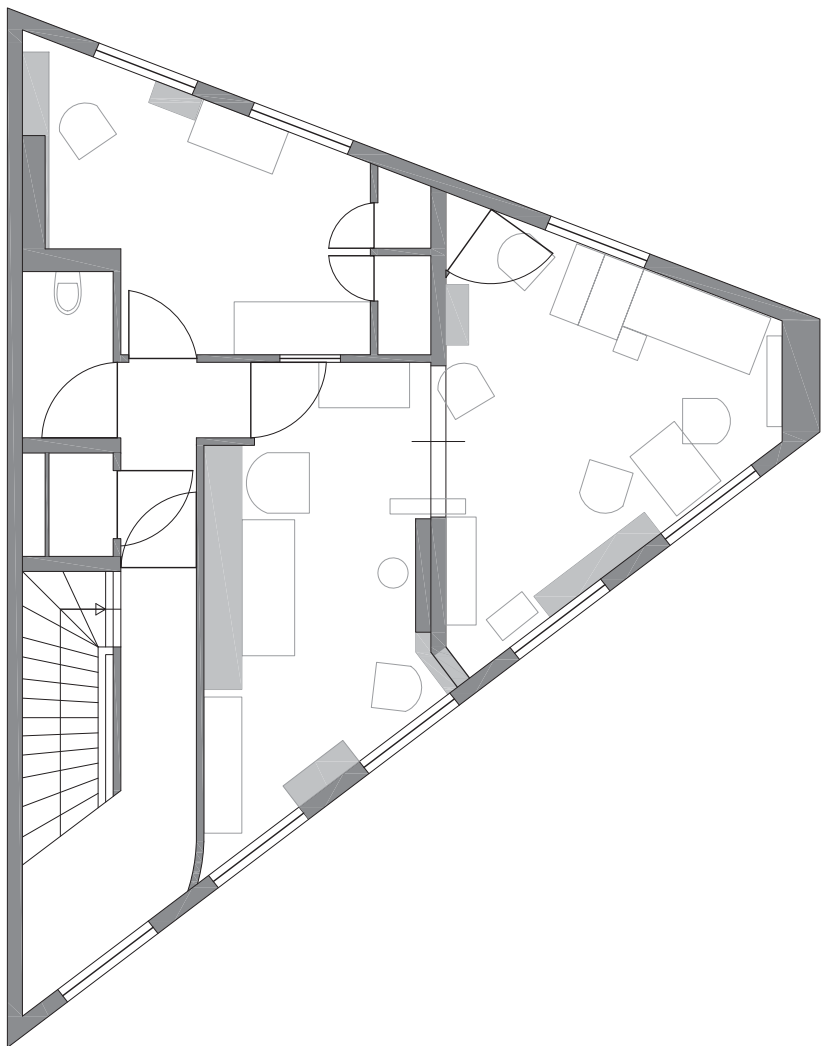


Figure 8.4 Floor plan 1:100



Figure 8.5 Hiding place

People in Hiding

In 1942 Gisèle and Wolfgang took a few German-Jewish students and teachers in from the Quaker School Eerde in Ommen to give them a place to stay at the Herengracht 401.

In July 1942 after the razzia's grew more intense the 23 year old F.W. Buri, who was a teacher on the Quaker school, was the first real hider to arrive at the Herengracht. He had to leave his former hiding place. With the help of, amongst others, Wolfgang Frommel, Buri found his way to Castrum Peregrini. Guido Theunissen, the upstairs neighbour, had created a hiding place for him in the pianola in Gisèle's apartment, by hollowing it out. The pianola is in the apartment they lived and it is marked in the drawing.

In February 1943 the 16 year old Claus Victor Bock, who was a student on the Quaker school, was helped by Frommel to escape to Herengracht 401. Guido Theunissen was building a hiding place for him as well. This time he built the hiding place in the wardrobe of his own apartment. This wardrobe could be reached by the apartment of Gisèle via the staircase that was built in the closet.

1. Defuser M., Somers E. (2008). Gisèle en haar onderduikers. Castrum Peregrini Press, Netherlands, Amsterdam. p 113-114
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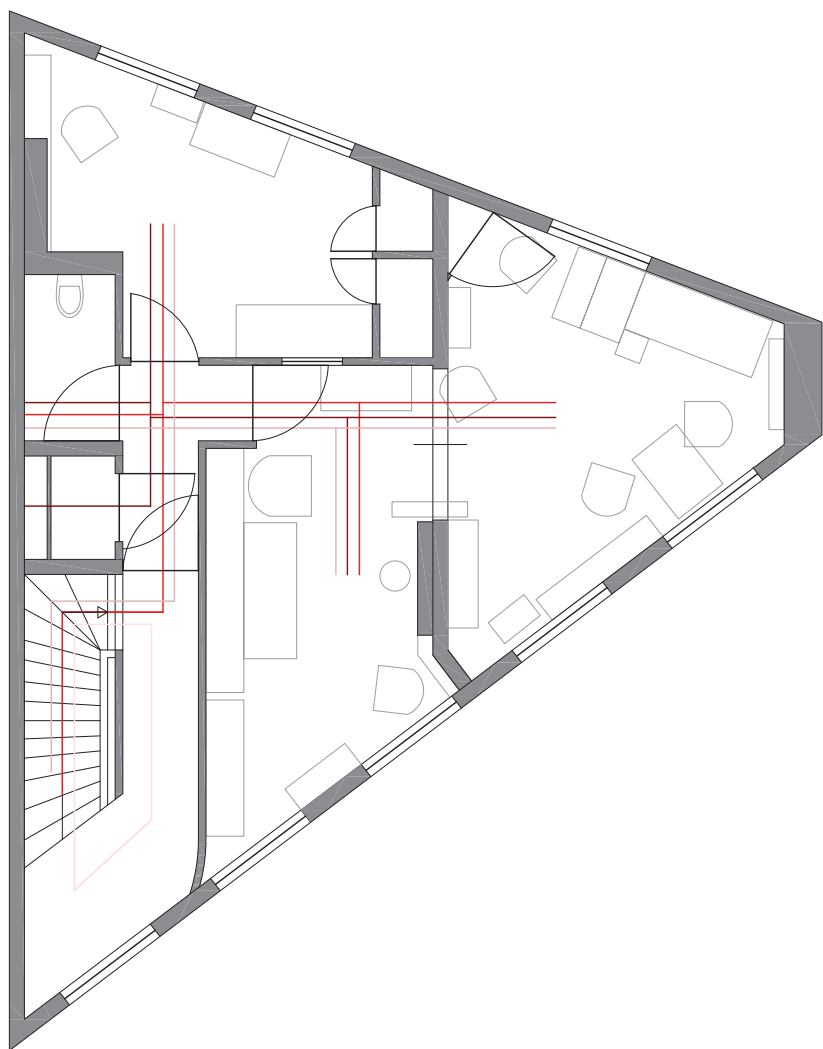


Figure 8.6 Routing 1:100

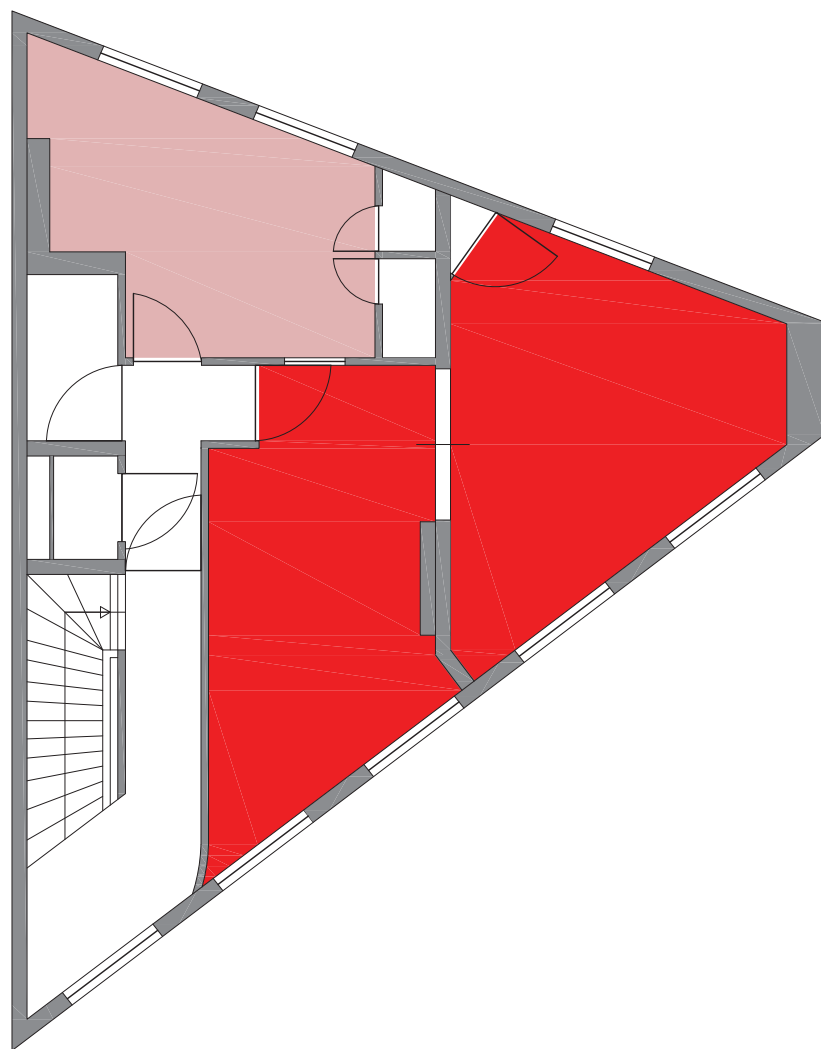


Figure 8.7 Rooms 1:100

- Unfamiliar people
- Trustworth people
- Residents
- People in hiding
- Bedroom
- Living room

Way of living

Gisèle van Waterschoot van der Gracht and Wolfgang Frommel had a way of living that was comparable with the mind behind the Quaker School Eerde.

Gisèle was an artist, she first made stained glass windows, but to continue during the war she had to be part of the Reichskulturkammer. This was something she did not wanted at all, and therefore stopped accepting assignments. She changed her job into painting portraits, because there was no regulation for that. She practiced painting at her apartment, together with the hidens.

"Gisèle had a simple role during the war, the host- patroness without any restrictions. She took in her house whoever was

looking for one. She did not believe that every person was good, but took her bicycle to save a guy from murder by Nazi's or suicide. She did not negotiate silently with the occupier, no she spoke to them on her own aggressive way. <...>

She saved however and wherever she could. She put energy, art and live to provide the hiding community of bread and other necessities. She shows this boundless hosting even today."¹

The space of the apartment was optimal used to be able to help the hidens. One of the rooms was designed as bedroom for Gisèle, but during the war this was not the only function. The room was used as bedroom, kitchen and study room

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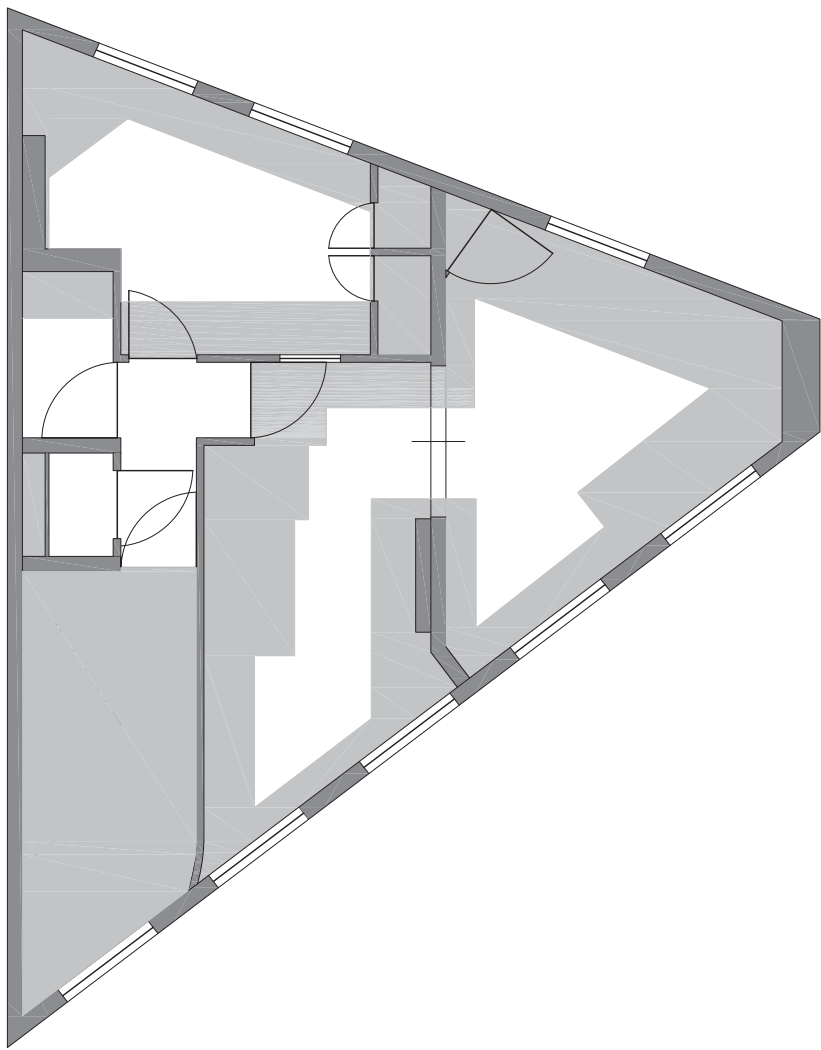


Figure 8.7 Emotional space 1:100

The other two rooms, connected by the bow, are designed as living room. This already means it has multiple functions. But all the people living in the apartment had to sleep somewhere, the living room is therefore also used as bedroom for the hiders or other visitors. In this room the people in hiding also studied, read books, wrote poems and made art to past the time.

Because of all the furniture, the room feels much smaller than it actually is. The two men in hiding don't even have more space than the apartment. The white space shows the emotional space the two hiders had during the war.

Hiding space

After analysing the building, it showed the building is a good hiding place. Because there were no people living beneath the hiders, there was a close community that knew that there were people hiding and the apartment was at one of the top floors of the apartment. The hiders could hide in time if Nazi's stood at the entrance door, because the apartment is so high located. The people in hiding were also able to have a life in the apartment because of these reasons.

The real hiding place was not in the architectonic space, but in the furniture. In a normal situation a pianola stands out, but the life style and the amount of furniture make it not strange there stood a pianola and nobody was going to test if it was hollow.

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