

JAN WILS NED
* 22 February 1891 †11 February 1972



Jan Wils



Amsterdam Stadium during the Opening of the 1928 Olympic Games

Jan WILS is one of prominence in the history of Dutch architecture. In 1914 he was hired by the famous architectural innovator HP BERLAGE as a designer. In 1915 he set himself up as an independent architect. Through his contact with Piet MONDRIAAN, Theo van DOESBURG and JJP Oud he was part of the group which founded the De Stijl movement. This group of young artists worked in abstract style but sought equilibrium.

When Amsterdam hosted the Olympics in 1928 the Dutch Olympic Committee arranged the build-

ing of a stadium on what was - at that time - the outskirts of the city. The committee commissioned Jan WILS to design it.

The structure WILS created was not only elegant but very much in the functional style of the time.

A stadium to hold 40,000 was planned with seating for 16,000. The infield was a football field and surrounded by an athletics and cycle track. The main stand had a steel roof. The stadium's smooth lines and brick construction meant it blended in perfectly with the surrounding residential area, Berlage's Plan Zuid.

In 1937 the capacity of the stadium was increased to 64,000 by the addition of a second concrete tier, also designed by WILS, but this obliterated much of the original design of the stadium.

WILS' other important works include apartment houses in The Hague (1918-1919) and the Cinema City in Amsterdam (1935-1936).

He served on the jury for architecture at the art competitions in 1924, 1928, 1936 and 1948.

In 1998/1999 the stadium was restored under the direction of Andre van STIGT and will be used as an athletic arena once more. The concrete tier added in 1937 has now been removed and the fine brick facade has been restored to public view. (WZ)



The Stadium 1999