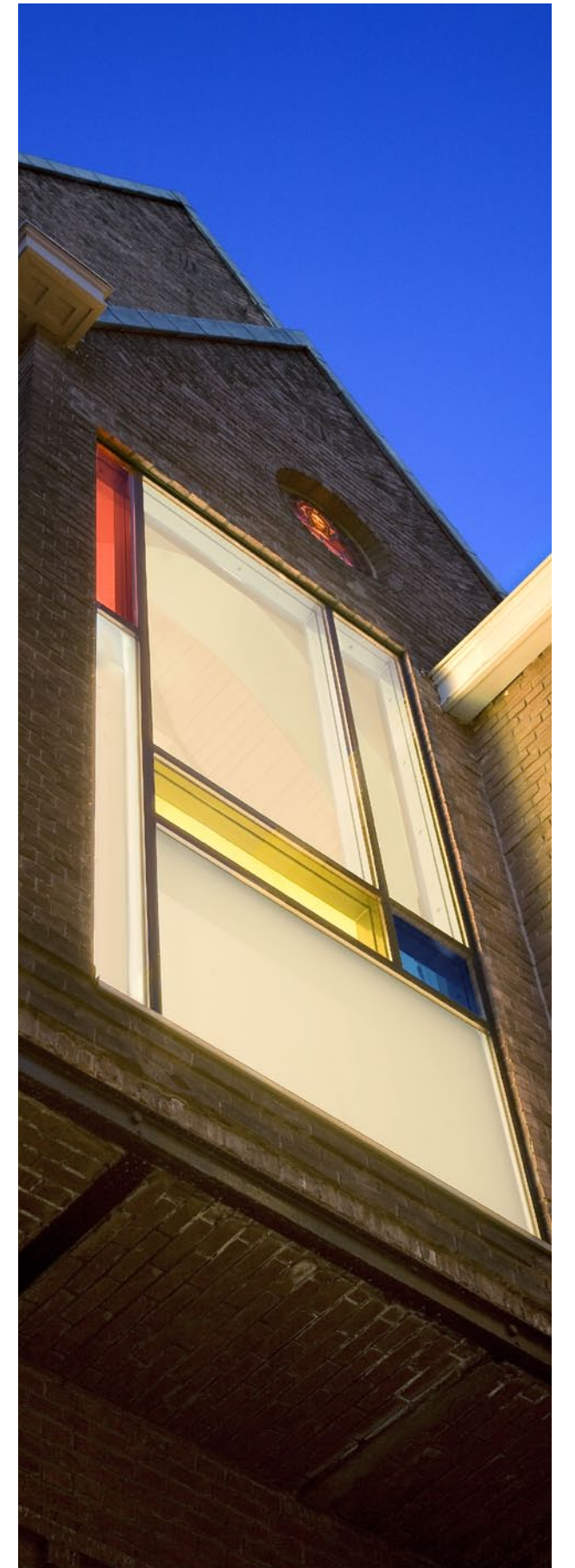


CHURCH OF LIVING



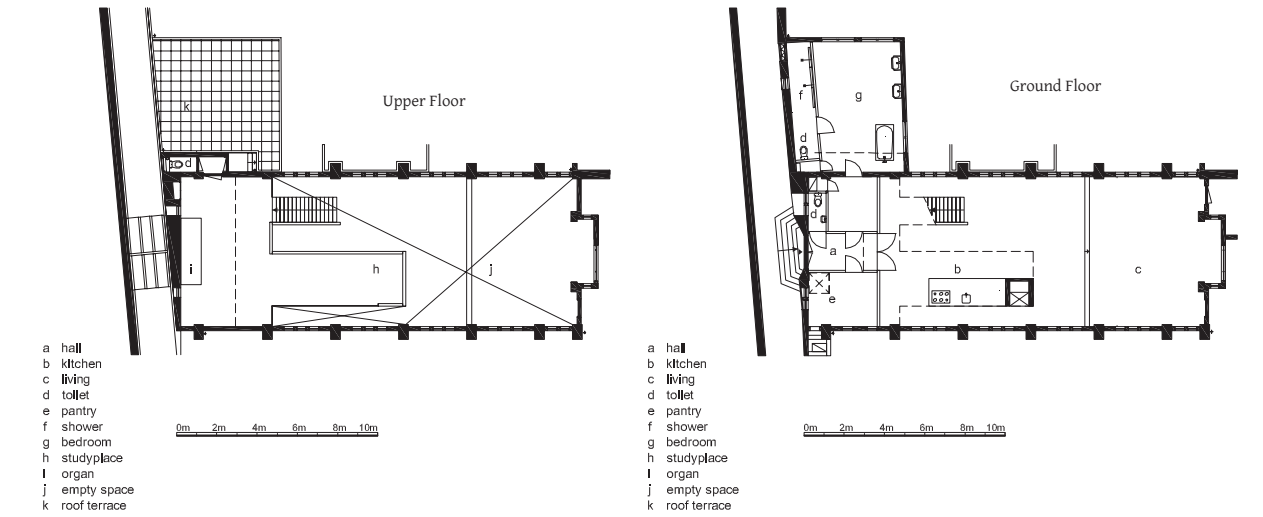


MARNIX VAN DER MEER, Architect
 After completing his Masters in Architecture at the Amsterdam Academy of Architecture, Marnix van der Meer worked as a project manager for Meyer & Van Schooten Architects. In 2003 he and fellow architect Rolf Bruggink started Zecc Architects at Utrecht.

Marnix believes that architecture is about creating an experience through a play of mass and space. He is always looking for that one architectural image that can tell an intriguing a story.

Photography by Cornbread

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Maintaining the building's intrinsic qualities were at the forefront of the design process, hence the conversion took place entirely within the original walls.

The entire home has been masterfully conceived for modern living, with open plan public areas occupying the expansive space that is the church body. An extension of the organ balcony provides and organizing element to this main area, creating a new spatial hierarchy of 'rooms' – kitchen, living, dining and study. The study is housed on this mezzanine level, below which the kitchen is tucked out of immediate sight but openly accessible.

Minimal with clean modern lines, the mezzanine's crisp shape creates a defined contrast with the soft forms of the chapel. White pervades the interior surfaces, reflecting the available light and softening the austerity of the original building.

Specific, characterizing elements that are maintained create a nice field of tension between old and new, though the contrast is still subtle, with the assuring feeling that the original aesthetic intent of the building was kept true. A more defined contrast is create between public and private spaces, where bright white gives way to dark, luxurious charcoal. This deep colour palette applied to the master bedroom and en suite creates the feeling of intimacy needed in these areas.

The clients' admiration of the stained glass windows meant that they were kept in sight from most points in the home. Despite the fact that these windows limit the amount of light that can be let into the residence, glimpses of them punctuating the white interiors, and the soft colourful light displays they cast across the walls and floor add interest to the monochromatic design. To combat the intrinsic lack of natural illumination, skylights were inserted into the roof to enlivening the space.

A lack of eye level windows gave the church a closed feeling, so new contact with the church's city home was achieved with the additional of a bold, somewhat abstract modern leaded glass front window.

Giving new life to the original fabric of the building, Zecc satisfied not only the homeowners and design critics but also the local community to whom the church had once belonged.