








19. Map Centre O 2-3

FORMER EMPAIN TOWNHOUSE AND BANK – FORMER DE KNUYT DE VOSMAER TOWNHOUSE

*Rue du Congrès/Congresstraat 33
Brussels*

-  *Sat only from 10h00 to 18h00
(last admission at 17h15)*
-  *Please note that access is only
permitted on guided tours
(15 people per group)*
-  *2-6 (Madou)*
-  *92-93 (Congrès/Congres)*
-  *29-65-66 (Madou)*

The remarkable Hôtel de Knuyt de Vosmaer building stands facing place de la Liberté/Vrijheidsplein, magnificently occupying the corner of rue du Congrès/Congresstraat and rue de la Presse/Drukpersstraat. Built in a mainly Renaissance Eclectic style between 1878 and 1879, based on plans drawn up by architect Joseph Naert, the building presents three façades richly decorated with blue stone and connected to each other by attached corner turrets. An imposing dormer window emblazoned with the coat of arms of the de Knuyt de Vosmaer family and topped

with an openwork *aedicula* marks the central axis of the main façade. The building rises above a powerful bossed lower level. The interior retains its especially rich decor, designed for Hector de Knuyt, son of a grand country squire, but in particular for Édouard Empain, who had already acquired the building in 1881. The carriage entrance adorned with pedestal-mounted marble busts leads to a grand marble and onyx staircase lit by Historicist style stained glass windows. As was common at the time, the styles are juxtaposed and while the grand salon features Rococo Revival style wainscoting, the living room is decorated with wood panelling sculpted with Neo-Renaissance motifs. Other elements belong to the Neo-Gothic style, such as another wooden staircase. The building has recently been carefully restored and converted for use as offices. (Listed 29/09/2005)

**Guided tours available all day
(last group at 17h15). In cooperation
with Pro Velo and Korei.**

**Commentary and walking tours
around the neighbourhood, Satur-
day at 14h00 and 16h00 (French/
Dutch). In cooperation with the
Comité de Quartier Notre-Dame
aux Neiges.**