

City Centre Campus

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City Centre Campus vital to the UvA's image



Oudemanhuispoort,
the historic heart of
the UvA

The decision has been made: the City Centre Campus is coming. The Faculty of Humanities (FGw) and the University Library (UB) will be located there, possibly alongside the executive staff. In this item, Maria Heijne (UvA/AUAS Library), Gerard Nijsten (Director of Operational Management at FGw) and Cees van der Wolf (Director of UvA Real Estate Development) explain what is going on.

The main occupants of the campus will be Humanities and the University Library. Furthermore, a number of other functions may well be added to the campus's programme, such as an area for the Board, a conference room, more space for events and an Aula for the conferral of doctorates. 'The vibe of the City Centre Campus will be much more UvA than just FGw or UB', says Gerard. And according to Maria, this will ensure that the campus adds value to the UvA as a whole. In addition to the expansion of the

'The City Centre Campus adds value to the entire UvA.'

Maria Heijne

programme, two scenarios have been elaborated into a preliminary design. One scenario is the current situation, in which the University Library is located on the Binnengasthuis premises, while in the other, the UB is situated in the Oudemanhuispoort premises.

Potential

The development of a second scenario is due in part to the events of 2015 (occupation of the Maagdenhuis, ed.). Maria and Gerard describe the addition of extra functions within both scenarios as 'evolving insight'. 'All developments in 2015 have resulted in a broader perspective', says Maria. After all, the City Centre Campus is the most vital campus with regard to the UvA's image. Gerard: 'Universities are often visually represented by a number of historic buildings linked to the university's history. For the UvA, that means the Oudemanhuispoort, amongst other buildings. Up to now, the City Centre Campus may well have been viewed as the location for FGw and the UB, but it has greater potential: it represents the UvA as a whole.' Cees: 'We are examining how we can optimally use the City Centre Campus location. And the rethink means we now have the opportunity to incorporate the lessons learned from other campuses.'

Heart of the UvA

Cees sees the City Centre Campus as the crowning glory of all the campuses. 'This campus can become the central location for UvA-wide events, as the Oudemanhuispoort is traditionally viewed as the heart of the UvA. It's a real gem. The UvA is already in discussion with parties who wish to establish themselves in or around this 'University District'. He explains that in recent years, the UvA has worked towards the realisation of four open city campuses. The City Centre Campus is the fourth and last of these. 'This assumes financial, intrinsic and moral solidarity between all faculties, as was the case with the other campuses that have already been built: the Amsterdam Science Park and Roeterseiland complex.'

Energy neutral

'What is the goal? In a number of years, the City Centre Campus will be the place to be for students', says Cees. 'It covers an area that is greater than those around the Oudemanhuispoort and Binnengasthuis premises. We are also striving to achieve energy neutrality, for example, by using geothermal heating, which will significantly reduce accommodation costs. The Municipality of Amsterdam

also wishes to contribute to this. It is a rustic recreational area, in contrast to the busy Rokin and Red Light District. I'd like to see plenty of courtyards.' The university will be prominently represented in the area by all of the students and employees, and of course, the residents will also be part of the local ambience. It will not be an area with a lot of tourists. Gerard describes it as 'a haven where you can catch your breath after the hectic pace of Dam Square and the Red Light District.' According to Cees, the decisions regarding the detailed make-up of the campus should be based on the vision of the City Centre Campus as a showpiece for the UvA.

Decisions at the area level

If it was up to the three directors, the choice facing the academic community would be between two detailed scenarios including extra UvA-wide functions, including solid financial underpinning. 'In our opinion, it's a decision that should be made at the area level', says Maria. Key issues regarding the decision include (amongst others): Are we prepared to make investments in quality? ▶

Further information

The University of Amsterdam is building its City Centre Campus in and around the Binnengasthuis premises, one of the UvA's four open city campuses. By clustering related academic disciplines, the UvA hopes to strengthen ties within the university and encourage collaboration both within the institution and beyond with companies, authorities and civil society organisations. The City Centre Campus will be the home base of the Faculty of Humanities and the University Library.
www.campus.uva.nl

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The Faculty of Humanities: The main occupant of the City Centre Campus (photo: conservation and restoration)

Are the accommodation costs in proportion to the effective facilitation of education, research and valorisation?

In short, the main question is ‘what would be the most effective and future-proof campus design?’

Delay

The scenarios must be formulated into a preliminary design to enable the academic community to make the right choice. Therefore, the start of construction – which was previously scheduled for 2016 – will be delayed. However, according to Cees, the UvA can still achieve the original prognosis (completion of the entire City Centre Campus by 2023/25, ed.) ‘We are currently investing extra time in solid preparation together with the academic community, local residents and the municipality. Proper preparation includes matters such as setting up a programme of requirements and applying for permits, in order to enable construction to begin in 2018. We are striving to ensure efficient execution for all parties concerned throughout the entire area, taking care of everything in one go.’

Vacant buildings

The region needn't fear a huge number of vacant buildings. Gerard: ‘We are doing everything we can to prevent this. We owe this not only to the residents, but also to the employees that are already there, such as Art History, Cultural Studies, Special Collections and the Allard Pierson Museum. And this is not to mention the employees that will be moving to the Bushuis and the Oost-Indisch Huis in the next few months. For example, on the ground floor of the former Service and Information Centre, ‘Vox-pop’ will soon be set up, featuring ‘pop-up’ initiatives such as exhibitions and lectures organised by students, employees and local residents. ■



Henk Danner, lecturer of professional practice, Theatre Studies

Laboratory for Theatre Studies

‘The American Professor Benjamin Hunningher believed that students of Theatre Studies should develop ‘dramatic imagination’. For this reason, upon his appointment to the UvA in the 1960s, he demanded a theatre to enable students to experience the theatre process in practice. And he got his way’, says Henk Danner, lecturer of professional practice in Theatre Studies and stage manager of the University Theatre.

Theatre Studies at the UvA is the only full-time programme in the Netherlands with its own theatre. The theatre on the Nieuwe Doelenstraat is the students’ theatrical home. ‘Here, we study the theory and practice of theatre performance.’

Laboratory

The theatre is primarily intended as a lecture room and laboratory for Theatre Studies. ‘If it is not being used by our

‘Our doors are open to all.’

Henk Danner

students, then it is used for other purposes such as conferences and lectures provided by the Faculty of Humanities (FGw) or other sections of the UvA. At the moment, the Amsterdam-based theatre group De Toneelmakerij are rehearsing here for a youth-theatre production that will later be performed at the Bellevue Theatre on the Leidseplein. Our students are attending the rehearsals to learn from them.’

Cross pollination

‘Although it is primarily a classroom, our doors are open to all. Our students’ productions always play to a packed house of family and friends. It’s not about the final product, it’s all about

learning the theatrical process. For this reason, we do not advertise the performances.’ Once the FGw is located on the City Centre Campus, Henk believes that more cross-pollination will take place. ‘We will collaborate and exchange much more because everyone will be close by. We already have a close connection with Special Collections since they acquired the collection of the TIN (Netherlands Theatre Institute). Our students make intensive use of this collection.’

Freek de Jonge

Theatre is connected with society. For this reason, Henk is extremely happy with the idea of an open city campus, which intermingles the university with the city. ‘For example, cabaret performer Freek de Jonge has been appointed an Honorary Fellow of our faculty. He gives classes and lectures and we discuss his work. Many of the issues he writes about directly relate to themes within Humanities.’ ■

‘It’s especially nice to see colleagues more often as it facilitates collaboration’



Alice Taatgen (right) and her colleague Sanne Frequin in the attic at BG2

‘It’s pleasant, fresh and clean here and the facilities are excellent. However, no longer having our own library is a great shame.’

We spoke to Alice Taatgen, a PhD student in Art History and one of the first people to move into the revamped building on the Turfdragsterpad in August.

Together with her colleague Sanne Frequin, a lecturer and fellow PhD student in Art History, they ‘reside’ in the attic, which is the showpiece of the new home of Art History and Cultural Studies. ‘All of the PhDs are together in one big room. At first, we were worried that this would cause friction, but that hasn’t been the case.’

Inspiring

‘Of course, the old building on the Herengracht was our home. It was a wonderful old building

but it hadn’t been renovated for 30 years. I’m very positive about our new start here. It’s especially nice to see our colleagues from Cultural Studies more often’, says Alice. According to Sanne, this also greatly facilitates collaboration. ‘And it’s inspiring to know what everyone else is doing.’

Learning environment

‘I’ve got no time for people complaining’, says Alice. ‘The only problems have been minor side issues. The computers were already working by the time we moved here in August. Sanne: ‘Any problems were dealt with straight away – presumably a lot has been learned from previous relocations.’

Library

However, they do miss having their own library. ‘At the premises on the Singel, our books are now divided between four dusty locations that are far away from

each other’, says Alice, who now orders books and has them delivered to Special Collections. ‘I pick them up from there, as it’s much closer than the Singel.’ And what else do they miss? ‘The porter at the Herengracht. He always knew exactly who was in the building and who wasn’t. It was a real personal touch. Now everything is done with machines and entry passes.’ ■

Complaints

Since the BG2 premises were opened, a number of complaints have been made due to technical malfunctions. Thankfully, most of the problems were dealt with quickly. For more complex problems, temporary or permanent solutions were sought in consultation with the users.

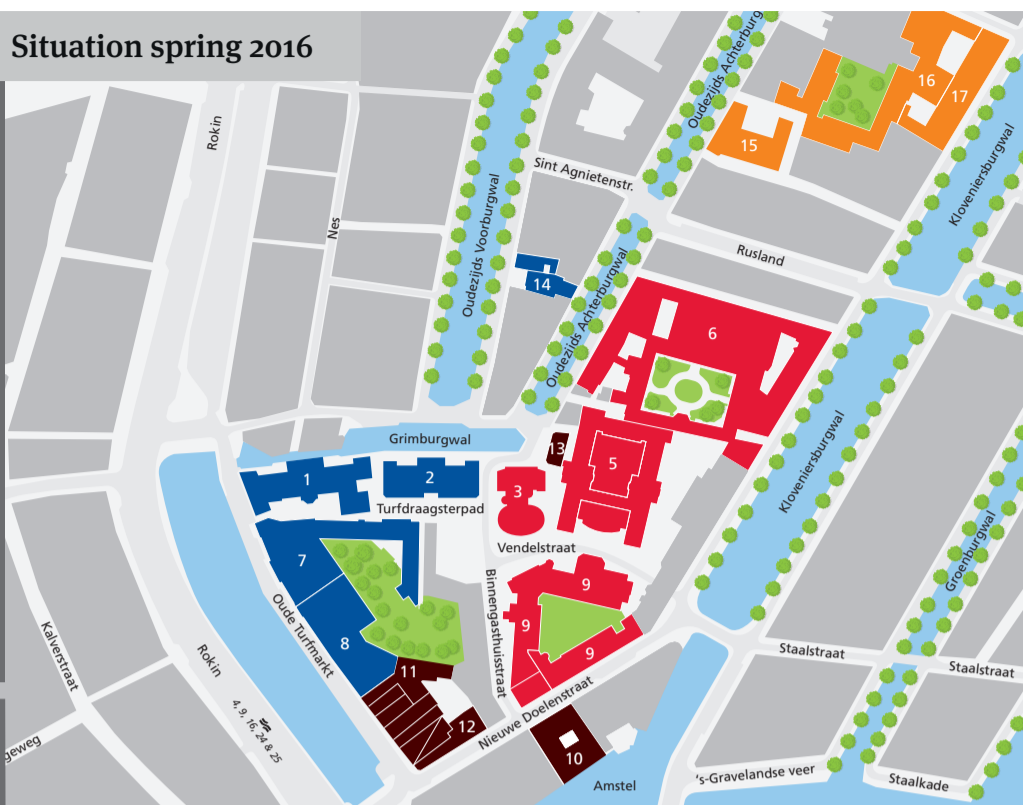
City Centre Campus map

Situation spring 2016

Home base for the Faculty of Humanities (FGw) and the University Library (UB)

- 1 Media and Culture Studies (FGw)
- 2 Art History and Cultural Studies (Faculty of Humanities)
- 3 Temporary location of VOX POP and UvA Real Estate Development/AUAS Development Office: future location of FGw
- 5 Future location of FGw
- 6 Oudemanshuispoort: Future location of UB/FGw
- 7 Allard Pierson Museum
- 8 Special Collections Library
- 9 Future location of UB/FGw
- 10 University Theatre
- 11/12 Temporary location of FGw/future purpose to be determined later
- 13 Amsterdam Academic Club
- 14 Agnietenkapel
- 15 Spinhuis: Future location of an external academic institution
- 16 Oost-Indisch Huis: Temporary location of FGw
- 17 Bushuis: Temporary location of FGw

- Ready
- Future renovation/construction project
- No construction activities
- Renovation/construction project



Further information

Do you have any questions or remarks about the development of the City Centre Campus?

If so, contact area manager Thomas Vernooij via e-mail (omgevingsmanager-binnenstad@uva.nl) or by phone (020 - 525 2443).

Students and listed buildings are important to the city



Aart Oxenaar (right) and Paul Rosenberg

‘The UvA and its students bring life and balance to the city’, explains Aart Oxenaar, Director of Listed Buildings and Archaeology (MenA) for the Municipality of Amsterdam. We spoke to him and MenA’s listed-building adviser Paul Rosenberg about the UvA’s heritage conservation.

Amsterdam is home to no fewer than 9,000 listed buildings. The UvA is one of the primary owners of listed buildings in the city, with historic premises in the Binnengasthuis, Roeterseiland complex and Amstel Campus areas. ‘The importance of listed buildings is immense’, says Aart. ‘Buildings make the city’s history visible. Listed buildings contribute to the allure of the city and historic city centres are more successful economically. People live, study and work there with great pleasure, and the tourists love them!’

Give and take

Paul explains that students are important to the balance of a city. ‘They bring neighbourhoods to life. Look at the impulse that Science Park gave to the Indische Buurt neighbourhood. Students also create new cultural heritage. Examples of this are the Wibautstraat, which is now a trendy area with the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, the Volkskrant building and Club Trouw. We therefore would like to preserve the educational function of listed buildings. However, this isn’t easy. A lot of give and take is needed in order to comply with all of the requirements set by the municipality, the UvA and the fire service. The UvA has to constantly check that restrictions stemming from listed-building status are not excessively hindering employees and students. In many parts of the Roeterseiland Campus, we were able to find a solution. For example, we converted the old chemistry lab on the Nieuwe Prinsengracht into a site for behavioural sciences research.’

Long-term vision

‘One of our most important tasks is to process 1,000 construction applications each year’, says Aart. ‘No listed building is sacred. After all, buildings must always undergo work to maintain the quality. We advise and guide people during this process. In developing the vision of the city campuses, the UvA has established a long-term strategy. This greatly facilitates consultation regarding heritage conservation over the next 50 years. In our opinion, the renovation and restoration of the former CREA building on the Binnengasthuis premises is a prime example of this. If this kind of quality is applied to the rest of the City Centre Campus, then we’ll be very happy. Humanities is also very fitting for this historic part of the city, as there used to be a monastery and a hospital here.’

New UB

For the last five years, the Listed Buildings and Archaeology department has been intensely involved in the planning of the new University Library. Paul: ‘The existing buildings will be given a new purpose. The roof built over the courtyard garden has made it a really ground-breaking design. It’s a great result that very many people are happy with.’ What do they think of the alternative plan to house the UB in Oudemanshuispoort? Aart: ‘That may look easy, but you’d have to start all over again, hold new talks and develop new plans. That’d be a huge waste of time and effort.’ ■

Vacant property management

Via VOX POP, which will be located in the round building on the Binnengasthuis premises (BG3) as of January, the UvA offers students, employees, local residents and other parties an opportunity to make use of empty rooms for debates, exhibitions, lectures, film evenings and other such activities.

The projects are temporary, and centre around the humanities.

For more information, visit www.voxpop-bg.humanities.uva.nl.

The UvA Real Estate Development Department also moved into the round building on the Binnengasthuis premises (BG3) in January. Furthermore, via Ad Hoc (a vacant-property management agency, ed.), small creative businesses have set up shop in empty buildings on the City Centre Campus. Together with the local area, the UvA is looking for other ways to make use of temporarily vacant property.

KNAW

The renovation of both the Oost-Indisch Huis and the Spinhuis premises is nearly complete. These buildings will be used by the Faculty of Humanities. Furthermore, the UvA is currently in talks with the KNAW (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences), which would also like to establish itself here.

Physical environment permit for UB

The physical environment permit for the construction of the new UB on the Binnengasthuis premises – including the zoning-plan change – has been granted. Work on the technical specifications of the designs is currently in progress. In mid-February, another notice of appeal must be submitted to the Council of State.

PUBLICATION DETAILS

The City Centre Campus newspaper is published by the UvA. The newspaper is distributed among local residents, businesses, students and employees at the City Centre Campus. UvA Real Estate Development: 020 525 2443 – huisvestingsontwikkeling@uva.nl. Editorial staff: UvA Real Estate Development Department. Text: Frederieke Genevace. Photography: Dirk Gillissen, Peter Strelitski. Design: Designyard. www.campus.uva.nl

Study association Off-Screen back on the Binnengasthuis premises



Milan Peters (left) and Job Wessels in their office

‘We organise activities outside the confines of the lecture halls.’ This year, Job Wessels and Milan Peters, students of Media and Culture, became board members of the study association Off-Screen. We spoke to them in their office on Turfdragsterpad 9, beside the renovated Art History and Cultural Studies building.

Chairman Job describes his association as a group of highly professional and highly creative people. ‘Our goal is to make students feel welcome. For this reason, we want to make everything as accessible as possible. We also believe that students should connect with society, and these activities help them get to know the city. In this way, our study association builds bridges between the university and the city.’

De Wereld Draait Door

As well as discounts on books and theatre performances in the city, the association also organises countless other activities

such as drinks receptions, trips and festivals. For example, Milan is responsible for the Media and Teaching Activities Committee. ‘We organise visits to TV programmes such as De Wereld Draait Door, Pauw, and Jinek, as well as to newspaper offices.’ They create all of the promotional material for the events, including professional aftermovies.

Future

Once the entire FGW is located on the campus, they also wish to collaborate with other study associations and organise interdisciplinary activities. Milan and Job think that the City Centre

‘Our study association builds bridges between the university and the city.’

Job Wessels

Campus will be ‘an amazing site for Media and Culture’ in the heart of Amsterdam, where it’s all happening. They are certain that the location will attract new students. ‘The future is promising’, says Job. ‘Just look at the Cultural Studies building: a beautiful and historic exterior with a hypermodern interior.’

Family

‘Off-Screen is a family’, says Job. ‘So to bring us together, we hold a drinks reception in the Atrium Café every Monday. We had to temporarily leave the Binnengasthuis premises as it was causing disruption for local residents. However, in close consultation with the neighbours, the UvA and the owners of the Atrium Café, we made new agreements. From now on, two or three board members are responsible for keeping the peace. They walk around and have a quiet word with people if necessary. Our initial experiences have been positive.’ ■

Off-Screen is the study association for Media & Culture and Media & Information. With 1,150 members, it is the largest study association in the Faculty of Humanities. For more information and aftermovies, visit www.offscreen.nl

INTRODUCING...

Ms Van der Hilst

Ms Van der Hilst (86) lives on the Binnengasthuisstraat and her home is opposite the renovated Art History and Cultural Studies building. ‘I miss the builders, but the building looks great. Old buildings are much more charming than modern buildings like mine.’

‘During the holidays, it’s quiet and boring. I’m happy that the students are back. The more life in the area, the better. I suppose it’s because I used to live on the Zwaneneburgwal, on the waterfront. It was always busy there. I enjoyed watching the boats sail by and seeing all the people on the streets, even at night.’

When the weather’s nice, I like to sit on my balcony and poke my nose into everyone’s business! If a student only locks up his back wheel, I shout at him ‘lock up the front one too or someone will come

along and take it!’ And if I see someone drop litter in the street, I’ll certainly say something. Though in a friendly way, like ‘oops, looks like you lost something there.’ That way, the reaction is always pleasant. Personally, I don’t think much of the boules terrain in front of the door. Dogs seem to make more use of it than humans. I’d prefer to see this courtyard made into a public garden with benches – that’d be nice for both students and residents. And it’d attract a nice mix of people.’

The renovation work didn’t inconvenience me at all. On the contrary, I miss the builders. I often chatted to them, and they would give me a hand with things sometimes. For example, they fitted a really useful shelf to my mobility scooter. However, I’m glad that the hoardings and the bicycle-parking facilities are gone. It was starting to look like a bike shed around here.’ ■



Ms Van der Hilst on her balcony