

New University Library in the University Quarter

The UvA is creating a fourth campus, the University Quarter. This quarter will be the home base for the Faculty of Humanities, the Executive Board and a number of university-wide facilities such as the University Library, auditorium and reception rooms. Work on the new University Library is now well under way. Following asbestos removal and the laying of pipes and cables, the contractor is expecting to set to work on putting in the new foundations and a cellar area prior to the summer of 2019.

Why is the UvA building a new library?

The UvA will be clustering education and research functions on four campuses to encourage people to meet up and collaborate and also with a view to using buildings and financial resources more efficiently. The role of libraries worldwide has changed from a book repository to a place of learning and meeting. The new University Library dovetails with the changed demand in terms of education and information and is in close proximity to the most important user of the collection, the Faculty of Humanities. An underground bicycle parking facility is being built under the new University Library. The Faculty of Humanities' entire open collection will eventually be accessible at a single site.

Why was the Binnengasthuis site chosen?

The UvA is building the new University Library in the former Tweede Chirurgische Kliniek and former Zusterhuis on Vendelstraat. This site was selected after staff and students were given an opportunity to voice their opinions on two alternative sites (Oudemanshuispoort or former Binnengasthuis buildings).

Who is designing the new University Library?

The new library is housed in a former hospital. The building consists of three components: the former Tweede Chirurgische Kliniek, the former Zusterhuis and a new-build section. The design preserves the existing historic building's character with the addition of a new-build wing and a glass roof. The winning design was produced by MVSA Architects and Architectenbureau J. van Stigt.

How sustainable is the new University Library?

By giving existing buildings a new function, making the most of geothermal and solar energy and installing insulation, the new University Library will be a (nearly) energy neutral building, one that will not be connected up to the gas network anymore. Furthermore, attention is being given to ensuring a pleasant indoor climate – heated in the winter by geothermal energy and cooled in the summer with cold air from underground. A bicycle parking facility is being created under the building to make accessibility by bike even easier.

What will the construction work cost and how long will it take?

The UvA is investing 66 million euros in the construction of the new University Library. The costs of construction have been budgeted for in the UvA's Accommodations Plan. Preparatory work for the construction commenced in 2018, with asbestos being removed and pipes and cables being laid.

A start will be made on constructing new foundations and an underground bicycle parking facility mid-2019. These will be followed by the atrium roof, the new-build section on Nieuwe Doelenstraat and the superstructure. If all goes according to plan, the renovation of the buildings' interiors and exteriors will kick off in 2021. The schedule leads us to assume that the new University Library will be opening mid-2022.

How will local residents be taken into consideration?

All building projects entail a degree of nuisance. Municipal regulations set limits for such nuisance. The requirements set in terms of accessibility, quality of life, safety and communication (known as BLVC requirements), which constitute an intrinsic part of the permit issued for the construction of the University Library, include agreements and measures that set limits in terms of the degree of nuisance that can be caused. What is more, to ensure compliance the UvA has appointed its own site manager. Furthermore, the contractor has appointed a project area manager and set up a weekly consultation hour for local residents. Local residents are frequently given updates on the progress of the construction work and the work schedule by means of leaflets delivered door-to-door and through the University Quarter app. There is also a direct line for them to call if they have any questions, suggestions or complaints that they would like to put to the contractor and the area manager.

In order to manage construction traffic and other traffic during construction of the University Library, traffic controllers are being used to ensure the safety of residents, visitors and commuters.

How will the UvA be involving and informing local residents and local businesses during the construction work?

In addition to leaflets delivered door-to-door and the campus website, the UvA has developed a special construction app through which local residents and local businesses can follow the construction work, ask questions and make suggestions. Area managers from the UvA and the contractor can be approached in relation to agreements made on such things as construction times and the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other road users. An emergency hotline has also been set up.

What will happen to the former University Library on the Singel?

At present, we are investigating the extent to which the building will be able to serve as an alternative teaching site whilst the Oudemanhuispoort is being renovated. What will happen to the building on the Singel after that is not yet known.

Keep abreast of the construction of the UvA's new University Library:

- Download the University Quarter app from the App Store or Google Play Store
- See uva.nl/universiteitskwartier