

Newsletter

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Renovation Binnenhof

The interview **Empathising**

According to project leader Marc Unger, playing a key role in this monumental renovation project is the opportunity of a lifetime. 'One of my core tasks is to empathise with others,' he explains. 'It's important to understand what local residents, business owners, Binnenhof users, politicians, and other parties really want. This means listening to and identifying with their needs, wishes, and interests. At the same time, it's important to focus on the task at hand: the need for renovation and the previously made agreements.'

Unger faces a monumental task. A task which it seems everyone formed an opinion on before the project even began. What keeps him motivated? 'Making the heart of our country's democracy ready for the next generation with a team of experts is an honourable job. You really start to love the buildings. Stepping inside is like walking through our parliamentary history. The project is huge, diverse, and complex, which truly fascinates me. The historic complex, parts of which date back to the thirteenth century, presents plenty of construction challenges. Some of the buildings call for a specific approach because of their intended users: the Dutch Senate and House of Representatives, the Council of State, and the Ministry of General Affairs. In terms of management, it's also important to make sure the temporary accommodation for politicians and government officials is done on time,' Unger explains.

How will the renovation impact the local community? 'A renovation is always inconvenient to some extent, there's really no way around it. However, we are trying to minimise this inconvenience as much as possible by making agreements with the builders. We've been in close contact with the municipality of The Hague and with local residents, business owners, and organisations. What they are most concerned about is building and noise pollution, construction traffic, and the accessibility and attractiveness of the area during the construction phase. Good collaboration with local parties is crucial,' says Unger. 'They know the area like no other.'



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New project leader

In November 2019, Marc Unger took on the role of project leader for the renovation of the Binnenhof complex on behalf of the Central Government Real Estate Agency. Marc has extensive experience as project manager and line manager for complex megaprojects in the construction and infrastructure sectors. Unger succeeded Pieter Dijkmeester who, after five years in this position, decided to pursue a new challenge at the municipality of Rotterdam

Postponement

The start of the Binnenhof renovation and the relocation of Binnenhof users was postponed by one year, until the summer of 2021. Minister Raymond Knops informed the House of Representatives of this postponement in a letter to Parliament on 16 October 2019. The consequences of this delay are as yet unknown. In any case, Prinsjesdag (the day of the King's speech to the States General) will still be held in the Ridderzaal. More information will follow as soon as it becomes available.

The project is certainly not at a standstill; in fact, the Central Government Real Estate Agency is moving full steam ahead with the preparations. The renovation is still desperately needed and the plans are being fleshed out in more detail. Preparations for the temporary relocation of the Dutch Senate, the House of Representatives, the prime minister and his staff, and the Council of State are also in full swing.

The Binnenhof according to....

Renée Jongejan

Business leader of the Mauritshuis and member of the Core Binnenhof Team

Protecting the museum collection

Vermeer's masterpiece *Girl with a Pearl Earring* is a favourite among museum visitors, as is this year's Rembrandt exhibition. The Mauritshuis, a direct neighbour of the Binnenhof, attracts some 440,000 visitors each year – a figure it plans to maintain, despite the renovation work.

'Cranes, construction materials, builders, and maybe even pontoons in the Hofvijver pond... the impact of the renovation is huge,' says Renée Jongejan. 'Pretty soon we'll have a construction pit next door. But they promised that the Mauritshuis would stay accessible and that our entrance area would stay clean and clear. We really need the income generated from our admission fees to cover our costs.'

Another underlying assumption is that the museum collection will in no way be affected by any vibrations caused by the renovation work. To ensure this, the museum decided to carry out a risk analysis with the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands. 'We're also conducting a baseline measurement to determine the current state of our building. We hope to avoid any damage by taking the necessary preventative measures, which we'll discuss with the Central Government Real Estate Agency,' says Jongejan. She believes it's important for the city to remain attractive to residents and visitors throughout the renovation process. She will discuss the best way to do this in a core team of representatives from the Central Government Real Estate Agency, the municipality of The Hague, cultural institutions, and other parties.



"We really need the income generated from our admission fees"

"The Hague Highlights, a light show projected onto the walls of the Ridderzaal and the Mauritshuis from 28 November to 21 December, is a popular attraction. In 2022, the Mauritshuis itself will be in the spotlight with a special programme to mark its 200th anniversary."



"With the expert architects, I'm confident it will all work out"

Mini and Frank

Mauritshuis visitors

Restoring the original ornaments

Mini and Frank, a married couple from Amsterdam, visit the Mauritshuis two to three times a month. Mini is no stranger to The Hague. In the 1970s and 1980s, she lived in Scheveningen and worked near the Laan van Meerdervoort.

'Yes, I'm familiar with the Binnenhof renovation; all they talk about in the papers is how expensive it's going to be, that there's a new architect, and that it's been postponed by a year. I don't mind the renovation at all, as long as they keep the original ornaments,' says Mini. Her husband Frank, a retired artist, nods in agreement. 'With those expert architects, I'm confident it will all work out.' Mini is worried the renovation will cost far more than budgeted. 'That's often the case with large projects. We'll definitely stop by during the renovation; we have friends in The Hague and love spending the day strolling through the city and the museums.'



A workday in the life of...

Onno Turk

Pressing issues addressed

Everyone agrees that this renovation was long overdue, but how will the one-year delay affect the business security, the safety, and the comfort of the people who work and use the Binnenhof complex?

As object manager, Onno Turk is responsible for maintenance and management. 'Conservation plans for maintenance and management have been drawn up for the entire Binnenhof,' he says reassuringly. 'These plans describe what is needed to keep the Binnenhof safe, healthy, and reliable for users before renovation work begins. These plans will run until the end of 2020. The necessary steps have been taken and preventative checks have been carried out on the façades and other areas. More intensive maintenance may be necessary next year, for example on the technical installations. In order to determine this, the Central Government Real Estate Agency will revise the current plans with the building users and implement them until the actual relocation date.'

Painting

The Binnenhof is painted every seven or so years and will also be painted this year, where necessary. 'It may seem strange, given the upcoming renovation, but it will help prevent the building from suffering further damage. Painting the window frames and doors now will protect them and help them withstand the renovation,' explains Turk.



"The most pressing issues have been addressed and preventative checks have been carried out"



Binnenhof news

Temporary relocation of House of Representatives

Work is currently underway behind the colourful construction hoarding that surround the building on Bezuidenhoutseweg, which once housed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Here, contractor Strukton WorkspHERE is building temporary housing for the House of Representatives.

The renovation means a relocation for the current Binnenhof users. The House of Representatives will move to Bezuidenhoutseweg 67 in a temporary building that will house the same facilities as the old one, including the plenary room with blue chairs, a visitors' entrance, and the Statenpassage with escalators.

The construction hoarding that surround the building are adorned with colourful historical figureheads from Dutch politics, including Willem Drees, Suze Groeneweg, and Aletta Jacobs. The theme: a century of suffrage. The work is by graffiti artist Micha de Bie (The Hague Street Art). For more information, visit: www.ikviernijstem.nl.

Binnenhof renovation

The Binnenhof in The Hague consists of several buildings, the oldest of which dates back 800 years. This is where the Dutch Senate and House of Representatives, the Ministry of General Affairs, and part of the Council of State convene. After many years of intensive and continuous use, a large-scale renovation is necessary to increase the safety and the working conditions for visitors and employees and to preserve the cultural heritage in the long term.

During the renovation, the House of Representatives will temporarily relocate to Bezuidenhoutseweg 67 and the Senate and Council of State to Lange Voorhout 34-36. The Ministry of General Affairs will move to the Catshuisterrein.



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Promenade à La Haye et aux environs.



Did you know...

The history of the *Staatsloterij* (state lottery) started in 1726 when the States General of the Republic of the Seven Provinces set up a central lottery known as the *Generaliteitsloterij*. The drawings were held in the Ridderzaal until 1848. Local orphans would draw the tickets and announce the winning numbers aloud.

The Hague HighLights 2019

The Hague Highlights is back following a successful first year. From Thursday 28 November to Saturday 21 December, the facades of the historic Mauritshuis and the iconic Ridderzaal will be illuminated as part of two spectacular light shows held on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM.

For more information, visit <https://denhaag.com/nl/event/95082/the-hague-highlights>

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This information is for residents, business owners and other involved parties in the direct vicinity of the Binnenhof. No rights may be derived from this publication.

For more information, visit www.rijksvastgoedbedrijf.nl/binnenhof. This site also has a digital version of this newsletter.

If you have questions or comments, please contact Informatie Rijksoverheid by phone on 1400 (weekdays from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM) or via www.rijksoverheid.nl/contact.

You can also contact area manager Marieke van den Bosch by e-mail at postbus.RVB.renovatie.binnenhof@rijksoverheid.nl For more information about contacting the municipality, visit www.denhaag.nl/contact and click on 'Contact'.

This is a publication by the Central Government Real Estate Agency, in collaboration with the municipality of The Hague.

This newsletter is produced to inform residents, businesses and shop owners in the vicinity of the Binnenhof regarding planned renovation works. You will find the English version of this newsletter at <https://english.rijksvastgoedbedrijf.nl/real-estate/renovation-binnenhof>.

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