

September 15, 2015

Renewed Museum Our Lord in the Attic reopens to public on 23 September

History as inspiration for the present day and the future

Our Lord in the Attic [Museum Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder] has been fully restored and expanded and reopens to the public on 23 September. From this date visitors will enter the museum via the new entrance building at Oudezijds Voorburgwal 38, which is connected to the historic house on the other side of a narrow lane by an underground passage. The restoration and expansion provides optimum access to the museum and ensures that this unique heritage is preserved for future generations. Throughout the six years of restoration work the museum remained open to the public. In addition to its historical focus, the renewed museum covers themes such as religious freedom and tolerance and their relevance today. The official opening will take place on Tuesday 22 September, in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Máxima.



Left: The monument and the new entrance building

Right: The church in the attic

Photos: Arjan Bronkhorst

The renovation of the museum – one of the oldest in Amsterdam – started in 2009. The historic house on Oudezijds Voorburgwal has been restored to its original essence: a 17th-century house where people lived, worked and practised their faith. The restoration process was supervised by specialist architect Frederik Franken and included the hidden church, the living quarters, two kitchens and several closet beds. The exhibition rooms have also been renewed. In its new layout, the museum focuses on the stories of the various people who lived in the house.

Designed by architect Felix Claus, the new building is situated on the other side of Heintje Hoekssteeg and the two buildings are joined by an underground passage. The new entrance building has been constructed using the original bricks from the 19th-century building that stood here previously and its completion has expanded the museum to twice its original size. Throughout the renewal period the museum remained open to the public. Director Judikje Kiers: 'We didn't have to turn away a single visitor. In fact, many visitors found it enjoyable and interesting to be able to look over the shoulders of the restorers. During the restoration our visitors even gave us a rating of 8.8 out of 10.'

New aspects

The renewed museum offers space to a host of new presentations and facilities, such as the Prologue Room in the underground passage. This light and spacious room contains an introduction programme on Amsterdam during the Golden Age and on the origins of Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder. In the historic house, the Mom Room (mom is a type of beer) has been reconstructed and now houses an exhibition of hundreds of items dating back to 1700-1775 that were discovered during the excavation of a centuries-old cesspit. The Epilogue Room, located in the basement, contains several special objects from the museum's rich collection, including a silver sanctuary lamp from the hidden church De Lelie dating back to 1761. A free audio tour guides visitors through the various rooms. The new entrance building contains all the necessary public facilities, such as toilets, cloakroom, café and museum shop, as well as an educational room.



Left: The underground passage

Right: The church in the attic

Photos: Arjan Bronkhorst

Reflection and inspiration

The second floor contains the presentation *Voices of Tolerance*. It is designed by Patrick Roubroeks (Xsaga) and offers a place of reflection where visitors can contemplate and be inspired by religious freedom and tolerance and their relevance today. With *Voices of Tolerance* the museum wants to build a bridge between the past and the present.

The relevance of freedom and tolerance today is also reflected in the educational room. From the school year 2016-2017 this room will be used for educational programmes on themes such as religious diversity and tolerance. The museum is working with teachers and pupils to develop a new teaching method upon which this programme will be based.

Unique in the world: Co-Visit tour

Another new feature is the Co-Visit tour, a virtual tour for people whose physical disability prevents them from visiting the historical house with its many steep staircases. This tour enables them to take a virtual tour of the old building from the convenience of the new entrance building. The "virtual visitors" use a special mobile device to maintain a sort of Skype contact with their partners as they walk through the house. The tour was commissioned by the Museum Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder and produced by The Creative Cooperative in collaboration with the Amsterdam healthcare institution Amsta. The Co-Visit tour is unique in the world and various museums have already shown interest in this method.

Queen Máxima

The renovated museum will be officially opened on 22 September 2015, in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Máxima. The programme includes a lecture by the American writer/historian Russell Shorto and a performance by Amsterdam rapper Akwasi, who wrote a new song for this occasion, inspired by pupils from three Amsterdam schools.

About Museum Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder

Museum Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder, founded in 1888, is one of the oldest museums in Amsterdam. Concealed behind the façade of the typical 17th-century canal house are a beautifully restored residence and a complete church. This hidden attic church came into being in the period following the Reformation, when Roman Catholics were forbidden from holding public church services.

The mission of the museum is to nurture the cultural and religious heritage of Roman Catholic Amsterdam. It is a place where the history of religious diversity and tolerance is told as inspiration for the present day and the future.

Note to editors (not for publication):

· Press preview 16 September 2015

The press preview will take place on Wednesday 16 September. Time: 09.00 – 11.00. Please register **no later than 13.00 on Tuesday 15 September** via pr@opsolder.nl

· Opening 22 September 2015

The official opening in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Máxima will take place on Tuesday 22 September. Accreditation **no later than 17.00 on Thursday 17 September** by email pr@opsolder.nl, stating name, medium, position, and date and place of birth.

For more information, please contact: Museum Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder, email pr@opsolder.nl,

Loes Wijnstekers, +31 (0)20 523 17 11 / +31 (0)6 229 277 29
Patricia Bosboom, +31 (0)6 147 407 30