

# The Rubens house – New visitor centre

Hopland, Antwerpen (BE)

**Complete stability mission**

Owner  
Ville d'Anvers

Architect  
Robbrecht & Daem

Cost of the works  
€ 9,16 M excl. vat of which  
€ 2,23 M for the structure

Studies  
2020 - 2021

Execution  
2022 - 2024

ST



Pierre Paul Rubens, the world-famous painter, is still omnipresent. A multi-talented artist, he himself designed his own house.

In 2027, the year of the Antwerp maestro's 450th birthday, the Rubens House will be completely renovated. Following the decision of the City of Antwerp and thanks to the investment of Toerisme Vlaanderen, a masterplan for this wonderful site is being developed. It enhances the infrastructure and returns the site to the coherence of a 17th century living and working place «with as much imagination as the maestro, so that the site is firmly anchored in the 21st century and ready for the future».

As part of this master plan, a new visitor centre is being built as a discreet extension to the historic site. The museum garden becomes the link between the historic building and the new construction; it is completely refitted with respect to the past and the Rubens' history.

In addition to the visitor function, the new building includes a multimedia centre, a cafeteria, a reading room and the Rubenianum library collection.

The integration of the large programme on a limited site, adjacent to neighbouring buildings, creates several technical challenges. The building has two basement levels, partially below the water table. To create the retaining structures, which have both a waterproofing function and the ability to take up horizontal and vertical loads, the techniques of jet grouting and CSM (cutter soil mix), provided with anchoring rods, are used.

On the upper floors, the exposed concrete floors have spans of 11 metres. The thin floors are seen through the glass facade and incorporate a concrete core activation system. All these constraints led to the choice of a lightened slab on architectonic pre-slabs, with post-tensioning on the most heavily loaded areas.