



PRESS RELEASE

Maritime Campus Antwerp (MCA) start of works

Antwerp 05.05.2020 - For the first time in years there is activity on the former BP site situated in the south of the city of Antwerp along the river Scheldt. The demolition and soil clean-up of the old industrial site is the first step towards the new and ambitious Maritime Campus Antwerp (MCA).

MCA will bring together maritime and port-based players from start-ups to corporations. This do-campus will be the centre for innovation extending to the broad maritime and port industry. Here companies, public partners, researchers and start-ups will form a community. The ambition is to strengthen the European and global maritime industry and make it sustainable.

The demolition and soil clean-up works are expected to be completed by the end of this year. The ambition is to start the construction works for the first building phase of about 30.000m² early next year. The ambition is to open in 2023.

Alexander Saverys, CEO of shipping company CMB and initiator of MCA, puts it like this:

“For the moment we have world class ports like the Port of Antwerp and a world class maritime industry in our country. The world is changing fast and competition is also increasing. To maintain our position we need to look and think ahead. I strongly believe in cooperation and innovation as key for these challenges. Joining forces with partners creates scale and by combining know-how and competences will result in R&D and innovative ideas that will help us to respond to new evolutions in the industry. The new campus will help us to maintain our current position and even strengthen and expand it.”

Reslea, the real estate branch of CMB, last year acquired the former BP-site located at the Benzineweg next to the nature reserve ‘Hobokense polder’. The vision of MCA is being translated into an ambitious first building project and masterplan for the entire site. This campus will grow into a do-campus with room for the core businesses of larger maritime corporations, collaboration and collective creation, labs, workshops, a vast range of R&D-facilities, classes and education and supporting services. MCA aims to connect as many qualitative players from the broad maritime industry as possible in one community looking for answers to the maritime challenges of tomorrow; private, education and research, public partners can all take part.

“The idea of co-creation for MCA is also applied to the way we are developing the campus and why we chose an innovative building team formula. We looked for partners who share our vision on MCA and our vision of collective creation. The building team partners are compatible and stable companies that bring the right people to the table. Because the team



will work together for many years to come, the competences, means and mentality were extensively screened. It is exciting to make a change and to see how this will develop into an inspiring campus concept. Also the MCA community will be based on this rather atypical approach.”, concludes Bart Huybrechts, Managing Director of Reslea and MCA.

Since last year a building team has been working on the design of the first building and the vision for the development of the site. The building team for MCA is a first because of the very early involvement and the far-reaching collaboration with the architects KCAP and Atelier Romain, contractor Willemen Construct, engineering company Tractebel and smart building specialist Spacewell. The demolition and soil clean-up will be executed by Deme Environmental Contractors (DEC) and Aertssen.

About MCA

MCA is a “do” campus and community, linking business, technology and knowledge, to strengthen and develop the maritime industry. MCA Campus houses companies ranging from larger corporates to small start-ups, educational and research institutions to work and innovate together. For this different facilities will be available ranging from offices, co-working and co-creation facilities and also R&D halls, labs and workshops. MCA Community has a broad perspective and focuses on the match making between the different players in the broad, maritime industry on a European level. Next to that MCA will also be a new public hotspot in Antwerp.

MCA is an initiative of the CMB group and is managed by the real estate company Reslea NV. Compagnie Maritime Belge (CMB) was founded in 1895 and is a diversified shipping group based in Antwerp, Belgium. CMB owns and operates more than 90 sea-going ships and is also involved in Innovation and Development (CMB.TECH) and real estate (Reslea, Maritime Campus Antwerp). CMB has offices in Tokyo, Singapore, Hong Kong, Hamburg and Brentwood.

www.cmb.be

Contacts:

Alexander Saverys
alexander.saverys@cmb.be
+32 3 247 59 01

Bart Huybrechts
bart.huybrechts@reslea.be
+32 486 888 555



Quote building team partner KCAP

The international design studio is involved in MCA as a masterplanner, architect and landscape architect. By working closely together with the client, the designers and the experts in the building team, a more integrated approach can be applied for MCA.

“The project for the Maritime Campus Antwerp is challenging because of the number of ambitions that come together.” says Jeroen Dirckx, partner at KCAP. “To start with: the campus has an exceptional program and concept with an international allure, fitting with Antwerp as a global city. To translate this program into a design we use our experience in the design of know-how and working environments. The synergy between the different activities and the interaction between the different users is key. The campus gathers different players and talent from the maritime industry. The cooperation enabled by this place combines different strengths and results into innovation. On top of that this will be a very attractive place to work and to visit because of the recreation, food and exposition facilities. It will become a new destination within Antwerp. The remarkable location along the ‘Schelde’ and the nature reserve ‘Hobokense Polder’ also offers extraordinary qualities. These qualities will not only be used but they will also be reinforced. We will do so by giving some of the space back to nature and by integrating ecology into the building concept. This location and program require a distinct architecture. The design creates a beacon marking the most southern entrance to the city along the ‘Schelde’. In an innovative and sustainable way it gives an identity to the location and to the international ambitions of the program. It will be a campus Antwerp can be proud of!”

Quote building team partner Atelier Romain

“Do not dither in the past, don’t dream of the future but focus your mind on the now. Where know-how, appetite, ambition, love and hope come together, that’s where the future is created. It is a privilege to be collaborating on a project in which you feel that it can make a real difference. A project that gives a real dimension to the term sustainability!” says Boris Huyghebaert, Partner at Atelier Romain.

Quote building team partner Willemen Construct

Willemen Construct based in Mechelen is part of the Willemen Groep. CEO Tom Willemen is excited about the project:

“We are happy and proud to be co-creating this project. The project fits perfectly with the core values of our family-owned company. There is a clear vision and an entrepreneurial family that started the project. The various partners are working together based on mutual trust. We strongly believe in this kind of long term cooperation. The project engages in innovation. In a rapidly changing world innovation is crucial to playing a significant role in every industry”.

To involve the building partners this early in the process is rather unusual.

“We love working in a building team because we can work openly with the other partners. Usually by the time that we get involved a blueprint of design has already been worked out. We can optimise this but the big picture is already fixed. This is not the case in this project. The vision is there but the rest is still to be worked on. What kind of buildings, volumes, the location, ..., all these things still need to be developed by the team. That is how we like to work: together with our partners by using our know-how and experience to achieve the best project.”



Quote building team partner Tractebel

Engineering company Tractebel was assigned to co-ordinate this ambitious project. Next to the programme and project management its team will be involved in the masterplanning, infrastructure design and technical studies of the buildings.

“In these water-linked projects we can integrate our expertise in energy, water, infrastructure, construction and mobility in full.”, emphasises Bram Vandenboom, Head of Tractebel Urban. “As engineers and consultants we can have the most added value in a project if we are involved from the very beginning. We like to think in an integrated way together with the other stakeholders to come to a well-elaborated and balanced project. Also the driving force of sustainability behind the whole project is very important for us. Our experts will work out solutions like e.g. carbon neutral energy and mobility and help to integrate this project into the environment including the nature reserve ‘Hobokense polder’.”

Quote building team partner Spacewell

“We are very excited to be co-operating in this maritime project”, says Eric Van Bael, CEO of Spacewell. “Innovation is in our DNA, and although we operate globally, Antwerp is still our home town. Spacewell – for some better known as MCS – since last year is part of the Nemetschek Group, the only group of companies in the world covering the full life cycle of building and infrastructure projects. Within the group with more than 5 million customers, Spacewell focuses on the user phase of buildings with software and technology but also with a profound know-how in the fields of e.g. FM service strategy, workplace concepts and benchmarking performance. Our software and smartbuilding technology enables the service provision to be more dynamic and the users and the facility teams to be fully supported. We are glad to be involved in this pioneering project already at this early stage, a good example for other projects as well.”