

BRUSK

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An ambitious
museum project



museabrugge.be/brusk

AN AMBITIOUS MUSEUM PROJECT: BRUSK

In heart of the historic city centre of Bruges, Musea Brugge is building the future. With the new BRUSK exhibition hall, the BRON research centre, the renovation of the Groeninge Museum and the creation of a new, green art site in the middle of the Bruges Museum Quarter, we are investing in an innovative, contemporary arts policy that will resonate far beyond the borders of our country. An ambitious museum project that conjures up images of sensational exhibitions, a dynamic place to meet, and a green museum park.

Musea Brugge, a unique player in the international museum world

Musea Brugge is a refreshingly different and contemporary group of 13 museums, all situated in the third largest city in Flanders. In non-corona times, we welcome almost 1 million visitors each year, 80% of which come from abroad. It is our ambition to further develop our Bruges museums, so that they become essential and dynamic locations within the city, where everyone feels welcome. Places where people can meet each other, where top-class exhibitions can stimulate a wide-ranging public, and where we can come together for dialogue and reflection. Musea Brugge occupies a special position in the (inter)national museum world: we are home to art and heritage collections and exhibitions of undisputed world class at iconic and visually stunning sites in the UNESCO World Heritage City of Bruges.

Museum Quarter

- Arentshuis
- Belfort
- Brugse Vrije
- Groeningemuseum
- Gruuthusemuseum
- O.L.V. - kerk Museum
- Sint-Janshospitaal en Apotheek
- Stadhuis

BRUSK (2025)

Quiet Quarter

- Gezellehuis
- O.L.V. ter Potterie
- Sint-Janshuismolen
- Volkskundemuseum

13 locaties, all connected with each other

In the city's **Museum Quarter**, five of our locations are situated within a stone's throw of each other: the St. John's Hospital Museum, the Church of Our Lady, the Arents House, the Gruuthuse Museum and the Groeninge Museum.

Three more iconic monuments are clustered around the Market Square, forming a unity in terms of their collections and the experience they provide: the Belfry, the Town Hall and the Palace of the Liberty of Bruges. In the **Quiet Quarter**, the Folklore Museum serves as a focal point for a further cluster, consisting of the St. John's Hospice Mill, the Gezelle Museum and the Our Lady of the Pottery complex. BRUSK will be the catalyst and the core hub for the collective operations of all these sites.

In 2022, the Flemish Government designated Bruges as a new **cultural heritage institution**. This title is awarded to organisations that combine the management of collections with cultural and heritage activities at an international level. The international designation committee praised in particular the outstanding quality of our collection, our international reputation and the efficacy of our public and collection policies.

BRUSK organises and hosts an innovative, high-quality exhibition programme of (inter)national and multi-disciplinary art from the 14th century to the present day.

With this designation, the position of Musea Brugge as a flagship of the cultural heritage sector in Flanders has been confirmed and we – together with the two other cultural heritage institutions in Flanders: the Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp (M HKA) and the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp (KMSKA) – will continue to play an exemplary and trendsetting role in the field of Flemish cultural heritage.

Major plans for the future

In the coming years the City of Bruges, Musea Brugge and Flanders will invest in an **impressive museum master plan in Bruges city centre**, with BRUSK as the showpiece at its beating heart. The subsidies granted by the Flemish Government, amounting to 27.2 million euros, represent a powerful lever that will help to make possible the further realisation of this museum project, which has a total cost of 47.5 million euros.

With BRUSK, a solution will be provided to the long-standing problem of the need for a suitable **exhibition space** for all types of art: old, modern and contemporary. At the same time, we will also be creating space and facilities that will allow us to **store, preserve** and **research** our rich art collections in the best possible conditions.

BRUSK, an impressive exhibition hall

BRUSK will be a new and dynamic cultural location for exhibitions with an international resonance. A state-of-the-art museum building that includes integrated sustainability, architectural innovation and harmony with its surroundings among its key priorities.

BRUSK is entered freely through a brightly-lit passageway. The **ground floor** houses the reception area, the museum shop, the workshops, an auditorium and a restaurant. This is an open, transparent and easily accessible place, in which we wish to provide space for the city, its residents and its visitors.

This museum project will make it possible for us to achieve four major ambitions, all of which are consistent with fundamental museal functions that are recognised worldwide: display, collection and preservation, sharing with the widest possible public, and research.

This rehabilitated site with an area of some two hectares will form the final piece of the puzzle in the Bruges Museum Quarter and will give a boost to the city – and, by extension, to Flanders – as a cultural region.

In this way, BRUSK not only has museal ambitions, but also educational and social ambitions. BRUSK will be a meeting place for like-minded people and those with differing opinions, where collaborations can grow, participation is stimulated, and culture in the broadest sense of the word can be experienced. The exhibition hall, together with the entire museum site, forms a place where people will want to come: to relax, to enjoy and to learn. An inspirational cultural hub in the beating heart of Bruges.



- A state-of-the-art exhibition hall for temporary exhibitions of the highest quality.
- A dynamic museum park, integrated with a stretch of the River Reie.
- A state-of-the-art exhibition hall for temporary exhibitions of the highest quality.
- The renovated Groeninge Museum and chapel.
- The BRON research centre, with the museum library and a consultation space.
- Designed by Robbrecht and Daem Architects and Olivier Salens Architects, in collaboration with CIT Red as property developer.
- Planned opening: 2025

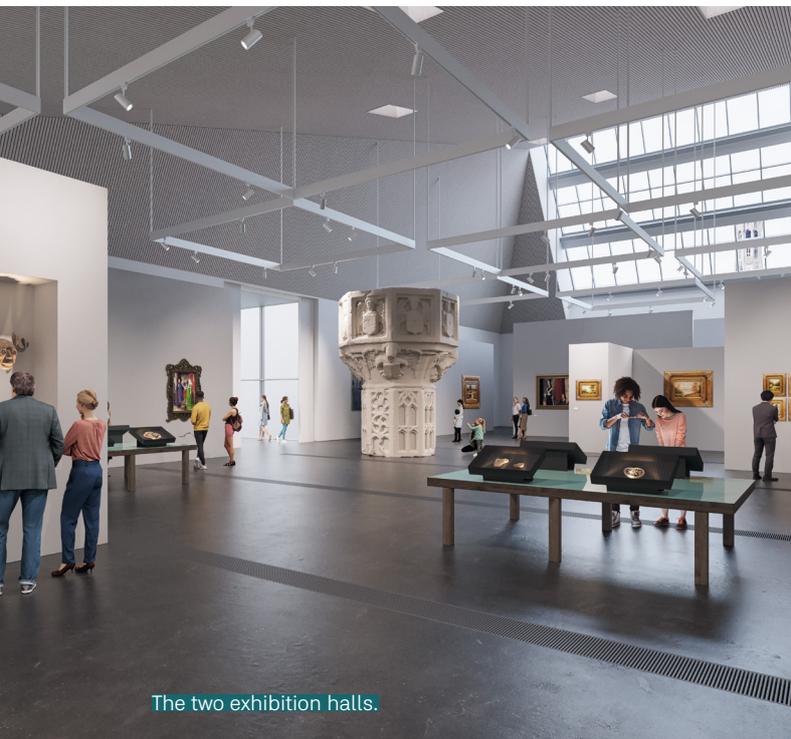


On the **first floor** there are two spacious halls, which have everything necessary to host large international exhibitions. These halls (40 x 40 m and 20 x 40 m) distinguish themselves from other halls in the museum landscape by their natural fall of light from the north, which is exactly the same as the fall of light in a classical artist's studio.

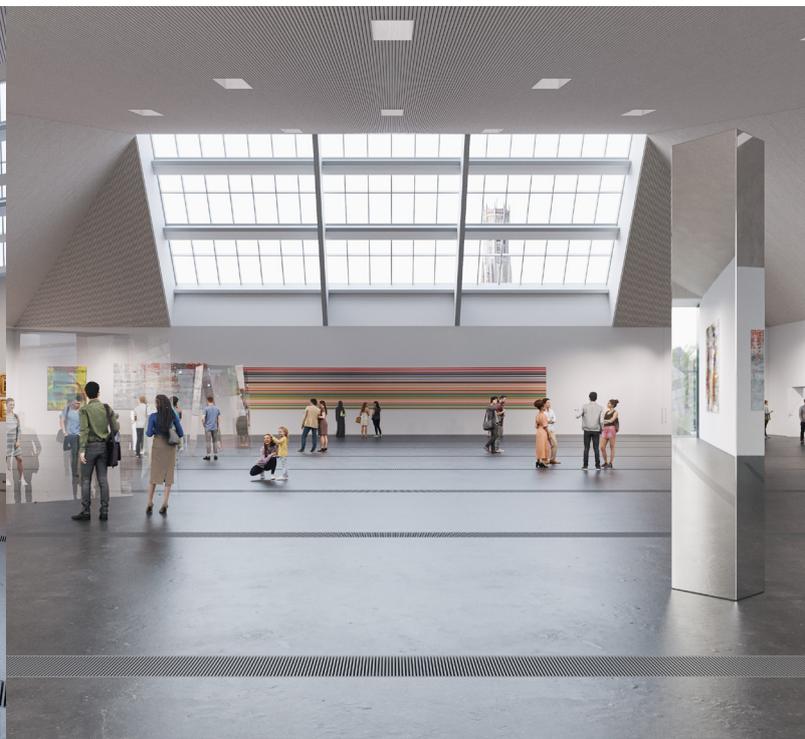
This light flows in copiously through two large, north-facing windows (19 x 15 m and 9.5 x 15 m), one in each of the halls. In addition, the height of the halls (13.75 m) calls to mind the historical spaciousness of medieval churches and cathedrals. Moreover, the exhibition halls can also be organised flexibly into separate areas.

This makes it possible not only to display outstanding works of art and host quality exhibitions, but also to bring dance, theatre and music into the museum.

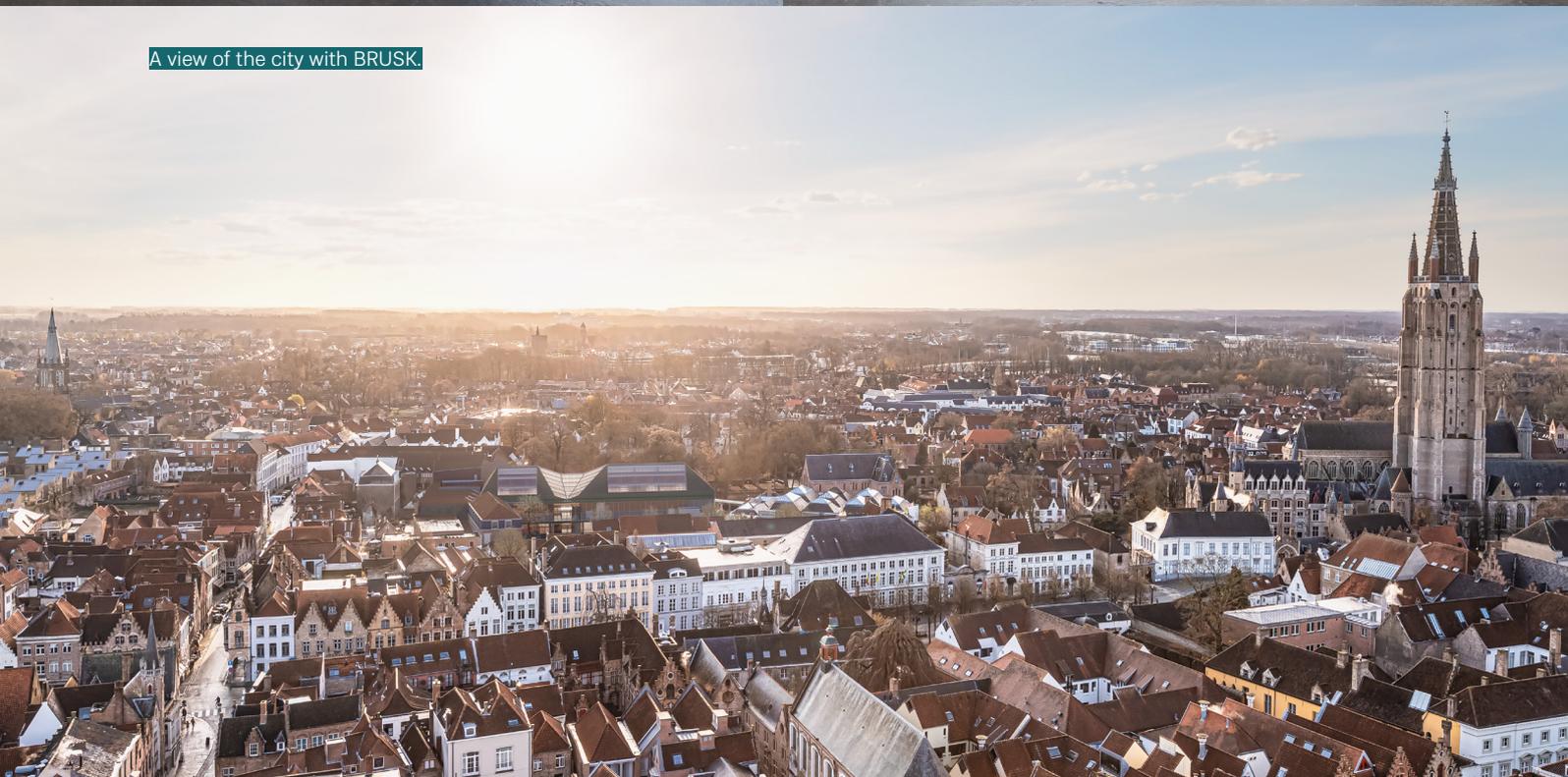
Each year in BRUSK it is intended to organise a minimum of five top-class, innovative and topical **exhibitions**, which will include old, modern and contemporary art. These exhibitions will connect the magnificent and centuries-old collections of Musea Brugge with new and surprising stories. Because they will combine art and heritage from different periods and continents with the present-day world in which we live, these BRUSK exhibitions will be thought-provoking, **socially relevant** and will stimulate visitors not only to expand their knowledge, but also to better appreciate and better connect with the things they see.



The two exhibition halls.



A view of the city with BRUSK.



THERE'S A NEW KID IN TOWN

A versatile and multi-functional museum site

The newly constructed BRUSK is part of a total approach that will lead to the creation of a dynamic art site, an inspirational research hub and an attractive meeting place. Alongside BRUSK, a new research centre for Musea Brugge will also be built. This is **BRON**, which can be regarded as the brain of Musea Brugge: the place where research into our collections is conducted; where international scientists, academics, guides, students and museum personnel can all meet; where there is space to brainstorm about projects; and where you can even come just to read a book or flick through a specialist magazine. Central elements in the BRON concept include the museum library and the consultation area for prints and drawings.

The **Groeninge Museum** and chapel – which currently forms the museum's entrance – will also be included within the master plan for the new site and will undergo thorough renovation.

All these museum buildings – BRUSK, BRON and the Groeninge Museum – will be surrounded by a new **museum park**. This will serve as a green meeting place, an oasis in the middle of the city, complete with trees, plants and a section of the River Reie, which will be integrated into the park as a real eye-catcher.

The new museum site will not be a place for a 'quick visit', but will be a new, creative and artistic hub in the heart of the city. A pleasant meeting place for local residents and visitors alike; a place where art in all its different forms can find expression and flourish.

BRUSK will also provide many opportunities for **companies**. The exhibition hall is an original and inspiring venue for company outings, but also for conferences and educational sessions. Thanks to the large foyer, the auditorium, the workshops and the catering facilities, BRUSK is the ideal event location.

BRUSK will become the place for the display of our magnificent collections in a progressive manner that links them with a contemporary cultural experience.



The ground floor of BRUSK.

THE BEATING HEART OF THE BRUGES MUSEUM QUARTER

Sufficient space for a top collection

Via a logistical footbridge, the two museum halls of BRUSK and the Groeninge Museum will all be connected with a **logistical wing**, a design concept that offers huge logistical benefits.

This building has been deliberately constructed on the street side of the complex, so that the entire museum site can be kept vehicle- and logistics free. The presence of this non-public, logistical space represents an important addition to the facilities available to the Musea Brugge collections. As well as the restoration workshops and a polyvalent area for photography and natural scientific research, a new depot will also be created for the most vulnerable of our collections: the paintings collection (almost 2,000 in number) and the works on paper collection (more than 20,000 prints and drawings). In total, this will make available an additional 1,100 m² of space for the care of our collections.

Sustainability as a priority

Right from the very beginning, BRUSK has made strongly integrated **ecological sustainability** one of its main priorities. The launch, decoration, furnishing and fitting out of BRUSK and its permanent displays will take due account of the concrete measures specified in the sustainability plan drawn up by Musea Brugge. Attention will be devoted to modular scenography, the recycling or reuse of materials, ecologically sustainable transport, the replacement of paper by digital alternatives, and the use of local and vegetarian catering for openings and receptions. BRUSK intends to play a leading role in discussions about ecology, art and culture, in part through greater participation and co-creation activities, not only with actors in its specific field, but also with the wider public.

The design of the buildings has also taken account of the most recent norms relating to sustainability. The roofs of the two exhibition halls and the west facade of the largest hall will be fully covered in dark green, electricity-generating glass 'scales',

which will provide the building with a sustainable power source. As a result, the building will be twice as energy efficient as the current requirements of the NZE norm. The building also complies as far as possible with the norms of circular construction. The renovation of the Groeninge Museum and the chapel represents a major step in the right direction for the further development of well-insulated and energy-efficient buildings in Bruges. All the buildings on the museum site will be connected to a BEO (borehole energy storage) field, which provides heating in the winter and cooling in the summer. It is planned that other buildings in the Museum Quarter, such as the Coach House and the Arents House, will also be connected to the heat grid in the future.

International ambitions

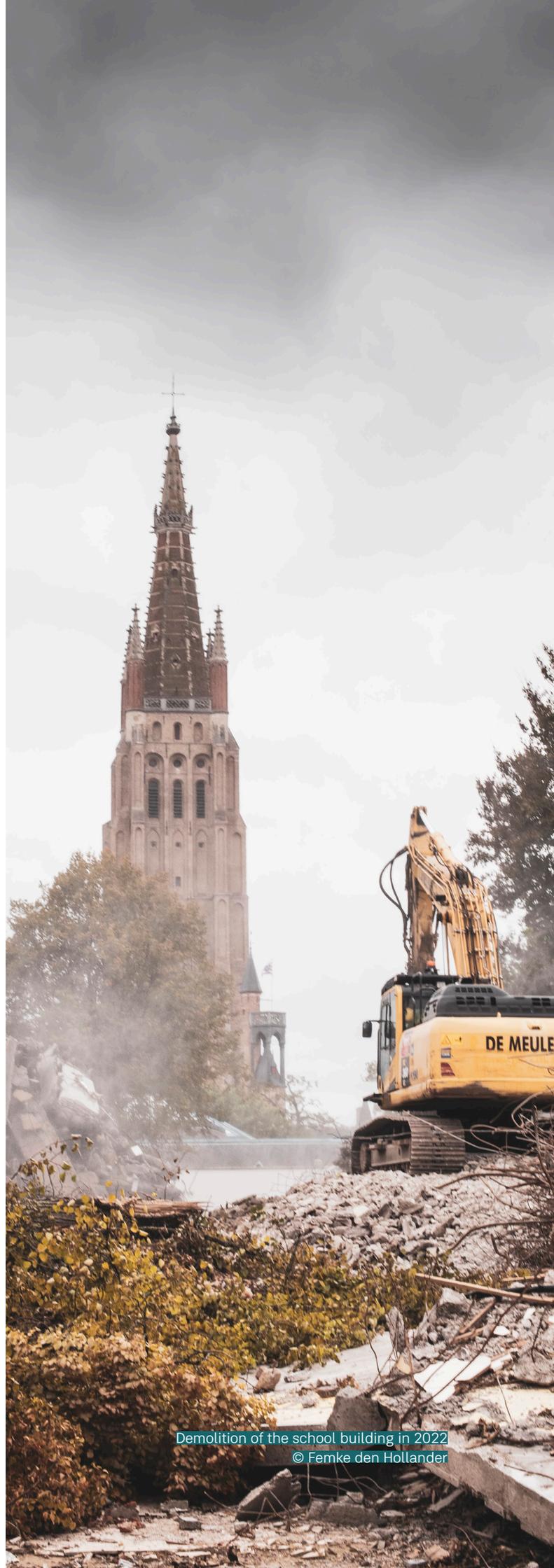
A green area in the heart of the city, bursting with creativity; a new public space where people can meet and exchange knowledge; an imposing location for the discovery, experience and discussion of art in all its many forms in a way that the world has never seen before. The ambitions of BRUSK set the bar very high.

With this museum project, we wish to place ourselves **firmly** and **innovatively** on the cultural and artistic map in a manner that befits a contemporary cultural policy. Together with the City of Bruges and the Flemish Government, we will pursue this core ambition as the best means to give our heritage and our past a safer and more promising future. BRUSK will become an international marker in the museum world, but one that speaks with the language of Bruges. That is the ultimate ambition of BRUSK and the new museum site in the heart of the Bruges Museum Quarter.

Timeline for the works*

- August – October 2022: Demolition of the school building
- October – December 2022: Archaeological investigation
- 2023 – mid-2025: Construction of BRUSK and renovation of BRON
- Autumn 2025 – spring 2026: Operational commissioning of BRUSK for collection management
- Mid-2025: Opening BRON
- Voorjaar 2026: Opening exhibition in BRUSK
- 2027 – 2028: Renovation of the Groeninge Museum
- 2028 – 2029: Creation of the museum park
- Voorjaar 2029: Opening of the renovated Groeninge Museum

*The timeline may be subject to change



Demolition of the school building in 2022
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