



ICONIC LANDMARK

SMU's lease for Vanguard Building, at the junction of Stamford Road and Armenian Street, starts in Q4 this year. PHOTO: ARTHUR LEE

SMU signs lease for former MPH Building

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SINGAPORE Management University has signed a lease for the former MPH Building, at the junction of Stamford Road and Armenian Street. SMU is leasing the building as an interim solution to cater to its expanding programmes until the new School of Law building is ready in 2017.

The lease for the ex-MPH Building, inked recently, will begin in the fourth quarter of this year and the university is expected to start occupying the premises at the end of this year, an SMU spokeswoman told BT.

The four-storey conserved landmark building – now known as Vanguard Building and owned by Vanguard Interiors – has a net lettable area of about 26,000 square feet.

SMU's spokeswoman said: "The leased space will house some of our offices, teaching, learning and research facilities to cater to our expanding programmes."

She declined to elaborate on the lease terms, but BT understands the lease duration is at least three years, to help tide over the current space crunch on the campus.

Earlier this year, the university broke ground for its new School of Law building, which will come up opposite the former MPH Building, in the open space between Armenian Street and Canning Rise.

It is planned that the new

building will have a floor area of 22,000 square metres and it has been designed to meet the Building and Construction Authority's Green Mark Platinum standards, with sustainable features to maximise energy savings. Key features of the new development will include the Kwa Geok Choo Law Library, the David Marshall Moot Court, the SMU Pro Bono Centre and other research centres.

Currently, the School of Law is housed together with the School of Accountancy in the same building; in addition, some law faculty members operate out of the Lee Kong Chian School of Business. Some space in these two buildings will be freed up when the School of Law moves into its dedicated building on Armenian Street in about three years.

The former MPH Building was accorded conservation status by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) on Dec 1, 2003. It was built in 1908 in an Edwardian style with a red-brick facade alternating with bays of decorative semicircular pediments.

Vanguard Building has been housing Vanguard Interiors' offices and showroom since October 2006. Prior to that, Vanguard had leased out the conserved property to a private school, AIT Uni-Campus, and before that, to MPH as part of a sale-and-lease-back arrangement when MPH sold the landmark freehold property to Vanguard for \$25 million in 2001.

Vanguard Interiors also has a warehouse in Kallang.