

LE CORBUSIER

The Maison La Roche



CONCEPTION GRAPHIQUE: BEATRICE DEBAS SUR UNE IDÉE DE COLLECTIF LA TOURNAI. RÉDACTION: FONDATION LE CORBUSIER. © FLC/ADAGP



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FONDATION
LE CORBUSIER

LE CORBUSIER

Le Corbusier (1887-1965), real name Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, left his native town of La Chaux-de-Fonds (Switzerland) in 1917, to settle permanently in Paris. He adopted the pseudonym Le Corbusier in 1920. In 1923, when the architect received the commission for Maisons La Roche and Jeanneret, he was 36 years old and had already designed buildings in La Chaux-de-Fonds and in Paris (Atelier Ozenfant). Architect, urban planner, painter, theoretician, he was deeply committed to research into housing for the working man but paradoxically it was his work for the enlightened middle class that was to establish his reputation as an avant-garde architect. In 1923, he published *Towards an Architecture*, still considered today one of the most important theoretical writings in the history of modern architecture.



**CHARLES-ÉDOUARD
JEANNERET
KNOWN AS LE CORBUSIER**

"La Roche, someone who has a fine collection like yours needs to build a house worthy of it."

RAOUL LA ROCHE STANDING IN FRONT OF MAISON LA ROCHE 1926





PORTRAIT OF RAOUL LA ROCHE

RAOUL LA ROCHE COLLECTOR

Born in 1889, Raoul La Roche grew up in Basel in a middle-class family receptive to culture and art. He settled in Paris in 1912, working at the Crédit Commercial de France until his retirement in 1954. Raoul La Roche met his compatriot Charles-Édouard Jeanneret in 1918.

La Roche, a devotee of modern art, was immediately won over by the Purist aesthetic brought into play in Le Corbusier's paintings and those of his friend Amédée Ozenfant. With their help, he brought together an outstanding collection of modern art including works by Picasso, Braque, Léger, Gris and Lipchitz. This was how he came to commission a house from Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret. It was to serve both as his home and as a setting for his collection.

Raoul La Roche died in 1965, having donated his house to the Le Corbusier Foundation.

RAOUL LA ROCHE STANDING IN FRONT OF MAISON LA ROCHE 1926



MAISONS LA ROCHE AND JEANNERET

The La Roche and Jeanneret houses, built by Le Corbusier and his cousin and associate Pierre Jeanneret between 1923 and 1925, belong to the series of 'purist' villas built in Paris and its surroundings during the decade from 1920 to 1930. Although semi-detached, the houses correspond to two quite distinct programmes:

“One of the houses accomodates a family with children and thus comprises a number of rooms and all the amenities required by a family, whereas the second is designed for a bachelor who owns a collection of paintings.”

The first of the two was designed for Le Corbusier's brother, Albert Jeanneret, and his wife Lotti Rääf, the second for Raoul La Roche. Today, Maison Jeanneret contains the offices of the Fondation Le Corbusier.

MAISONS LA ROCHE AND JEANNERET
1926



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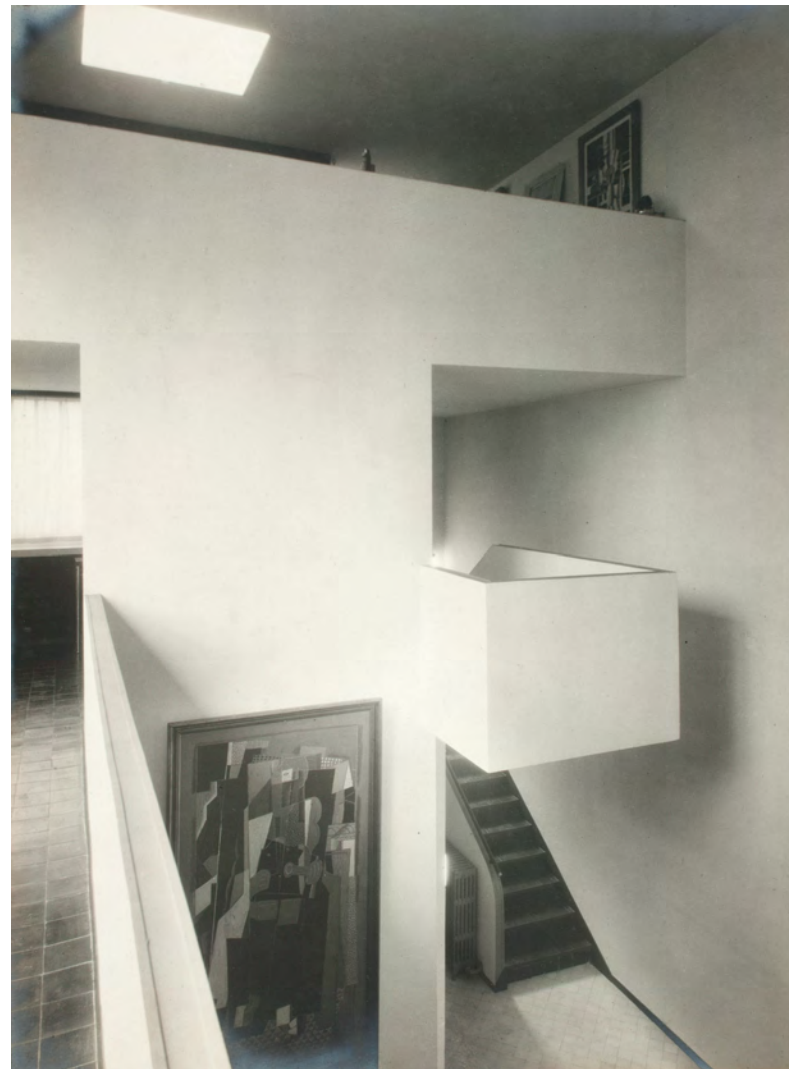
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FIVE POINTS OF A NEW ARCHITECTURE

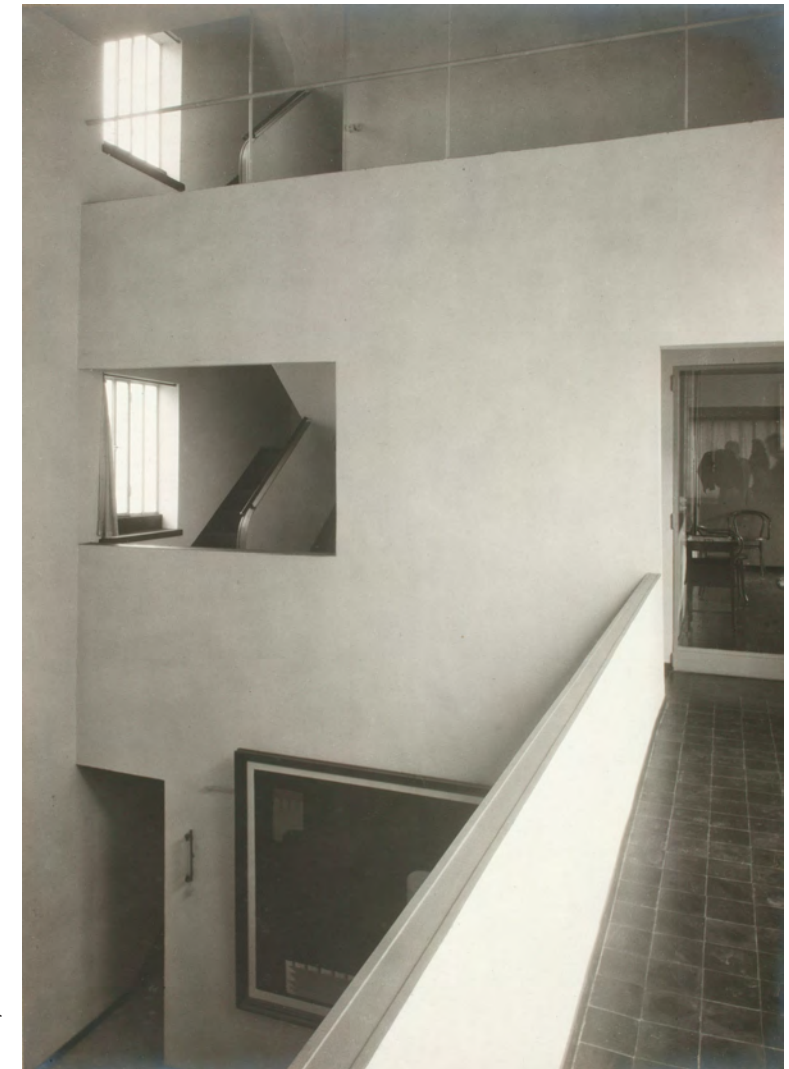
In 1927, the use of new building materials, such as reinforced concrete, allowed Le Corbusier to implement what he was to call the “five points of a new architecture”. These are: piles, roof garden, free plan, ribbon window and free facade, here used together for the first time.

THE HALL

The interior of Maison La Roche is arranged around two spaces, one “public” and the other private, each served by a staircase on either side of the entrance hall. The view of the different areas of the house and the little balcony, projecting as though suspended above a void, is an invitation to “the architectural promenade”, a concept dear to the architect. Although it has no direct opening onto the exterior, the hall is nevertheless bathed in light thanks to the ribbon window bordering the walkway.



THE HALL AND THE LITTLE BALCONY 1926



THE HALL AND THE WALKWAY 1926

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THE PAINTING GALLERY

A major space in *Maison La Roche*, the gallery does not offer direct views on to the exterior. The use of the interior ramp is an invitation to continue the “architectural promenade”. This architectural feature offers the visitor new perspectives. “Imperceptibly we climb a ramp, a totally different sensation from climbing a staircase made of steps. A staircase separates one floor from another; a ramp connects.” The gallery is the only space to have undergone transformations during Le Corbusier’s lifetime.

In 1923, the ramp was full-width throughout its length, there was a parquet floor and lighting came from bulbs hanging on wires. In 1928, as a result of damage due to central heating, work undertaken with Charlotte Perriand and Alfred Roth accentuated its modernist character. The space beneath the ramp was emptied to make room for a glass and metal shelf, a marble table was fitted in the centre of the room, a sheet metal sun-shield lamp was used to light the picture rail and the ceiling and the floor was covered with pink rubber and black tiles. Finally, in 1936, in order to improve the thermal and sound insulation, the walls and the ceiling were covered with hardboard panels.



THE RAMP 1926

THE LIBRARY

The library is on the topmost floor of the house. Coming after the mezzanine, it is a secluded space, overlooking the depths of the entrance hall. A double exposure (zenith and lateral) provides natural light conducive to reading. A concrete bookshelf for art books acts as a guardrail.



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THE LIBRARY 1926

THE DINING ROOM

Situated on the 1st floor in the private part of the house, the dining room offers a wide-angle view on to the exterior.

The bare bulbs hanging in the centre of the room are a reminder of Le Corbusier's desire to do away with all decoration. The walls and ceiling of the dining room are painted in light burnt Sienna. The furniture in this room was returned to its original state in the 2009 restoration.



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THE DINING ROOM WITH BRAQUE'S PAINTINGS 1926

THE PURIST BEDROOM

The bedroom occupies the topmost floor of the private part of the house. It is also called the “purist room” because it was there that Raoul La Roche hung his favourite purist paintings by Le Corbusier and Ozenfant. This room, small in proportion to the house as a whole, was simply furnished with a double bed, a metal table, a low wardrobe and a carpet. It benefits from natural light due to double exposure and there is an adjoining bathroom and a walk-in wardrobe.



© FLC/ADAGP - Charles Gérard

THE LA ROCHE BEDROOM, KNOWN AS THE “PURIST BEDROOM”
with Carafe, Bottle and Guitar in a Cellar and Still Life by Ozenfant and, at the head of the bed, Still Life with White Jug on Blue Background by Le Corbusier 1926

THE ROOF GARDEN

Replacing the traditional attic, the roof-garden offers a hanging garden at the top of the house: “the part on the roof is the furthest away from the noise of the street and enjoys bright daylight and the purest air.”

THE ROOF GARDEN 1926



© FLC/ADAGP - Charles Gérard

THE FURNITURE

The furniture, all chosen or designed by Le Corbusier, has particular importance here. As well as furniture forming an integral part of the building's structure (concrete shelves, built-in storage units), his choices reveal a fondness for trips abroad (Berber carpets) and industrially produced "objets type", which he made his own – Thonet chairs, Chalié wall-lamps, garden furniture. The many original designs include juxtaposable La Roche tables with wooden table tops and nickel-plated legs, metal tables, wooden storage units, etc. To these prototypes were added in 1930 the Grand Confort armchair and the armchair with reclining backrest, resulting from his collaboration with Pierre Jeanneret and Charlotte Perriand.

RESTORATIONS

Restoration work began with the Maison La Roche interiors in 2008, and was completed in spring 2015, with the renovation of the La Roche and Jeanneret facades and gardens. It has helped to bring conservation practice on Le Corbusier's works up to date and to systematize different approaches. These include historical and technical studies, research in archives, sampling and other material analyses and the setting up of scientific committees.

Project management was entrusted by the Foundation to Pierre-Antoine Gatier. The restoration of Maison La Roche has highlighted the role of architectural polychromy and emphasized the importance of colour in the design and perception of spaces.

"If the house were entirely white, it would be a jar of cream."

The rediscovery of the interior polychromies and the restoration of the "stony hued" facades (Le Corbusier's expression) was a surprise to both specialists and neophytes influenced by the dominant discourse on the celebrated "white villas" of the Modern Movement.

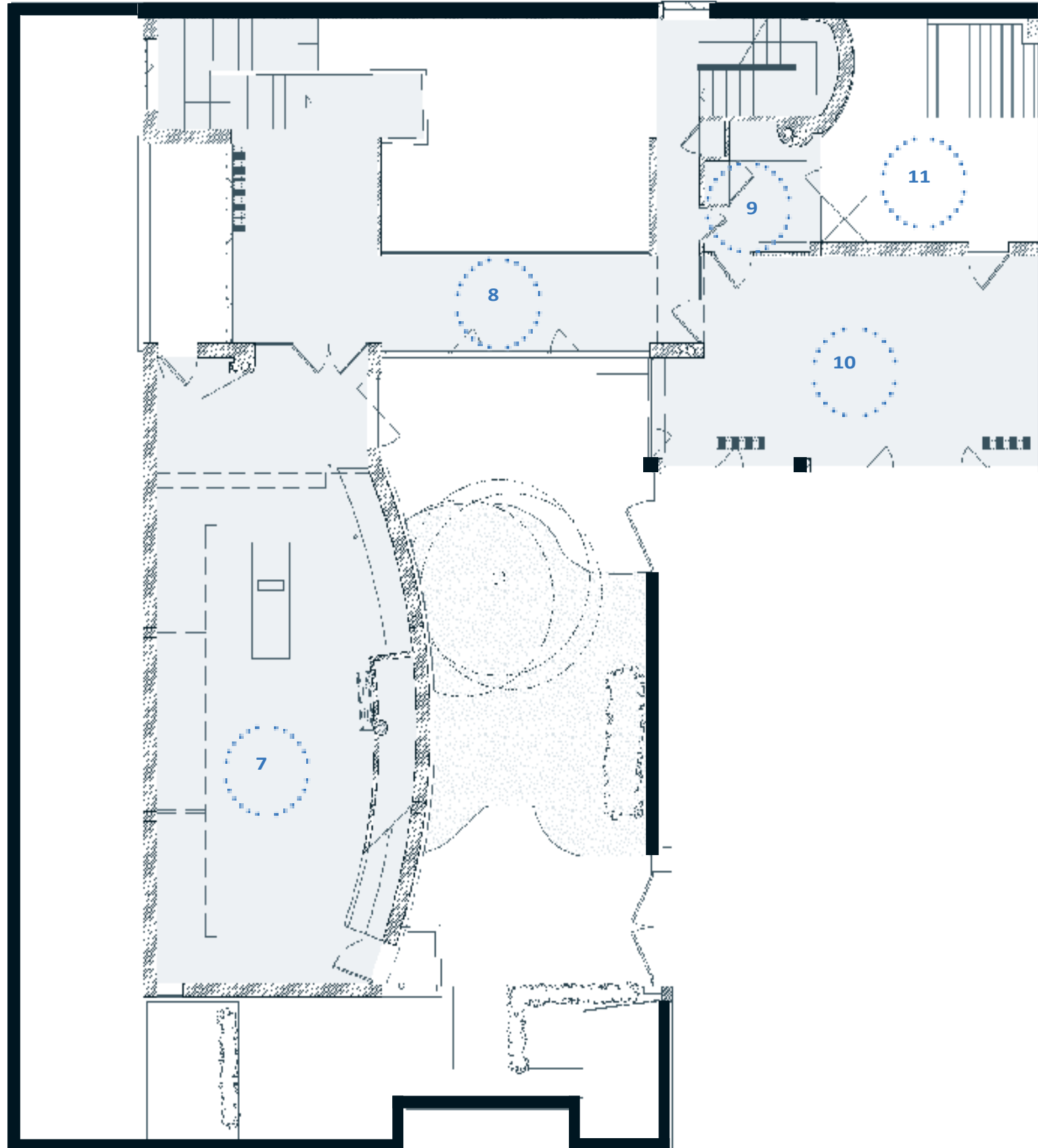
PLANS AND CROSS-SECTION OF MAISON LA ROCHE



GROUND FLOOR

- 1. HALL
- 2. CARETAKER'S LODGE
- 3. KITCHEN
- 4. BEDROOM
- 5. TOILETS
- 6. GARAGE

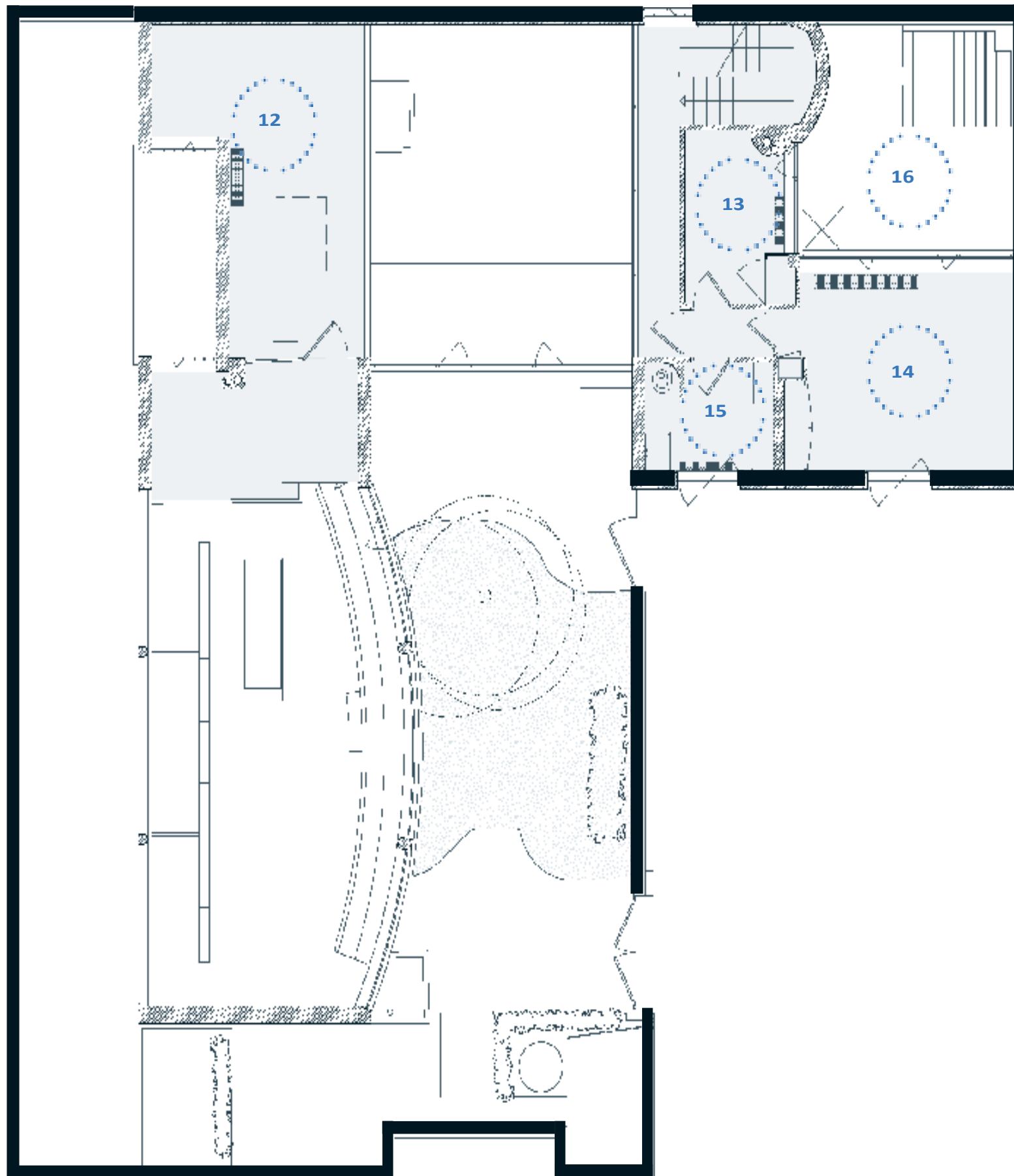
PLANS AND CROSS-SECTION OF MAISON LA ROCHE



1st FLOOR

- 7. GALLERY
- 8. WALKWAY
- 9. PANTRY
- 10. DINING ROOM
- 11. TERRACE

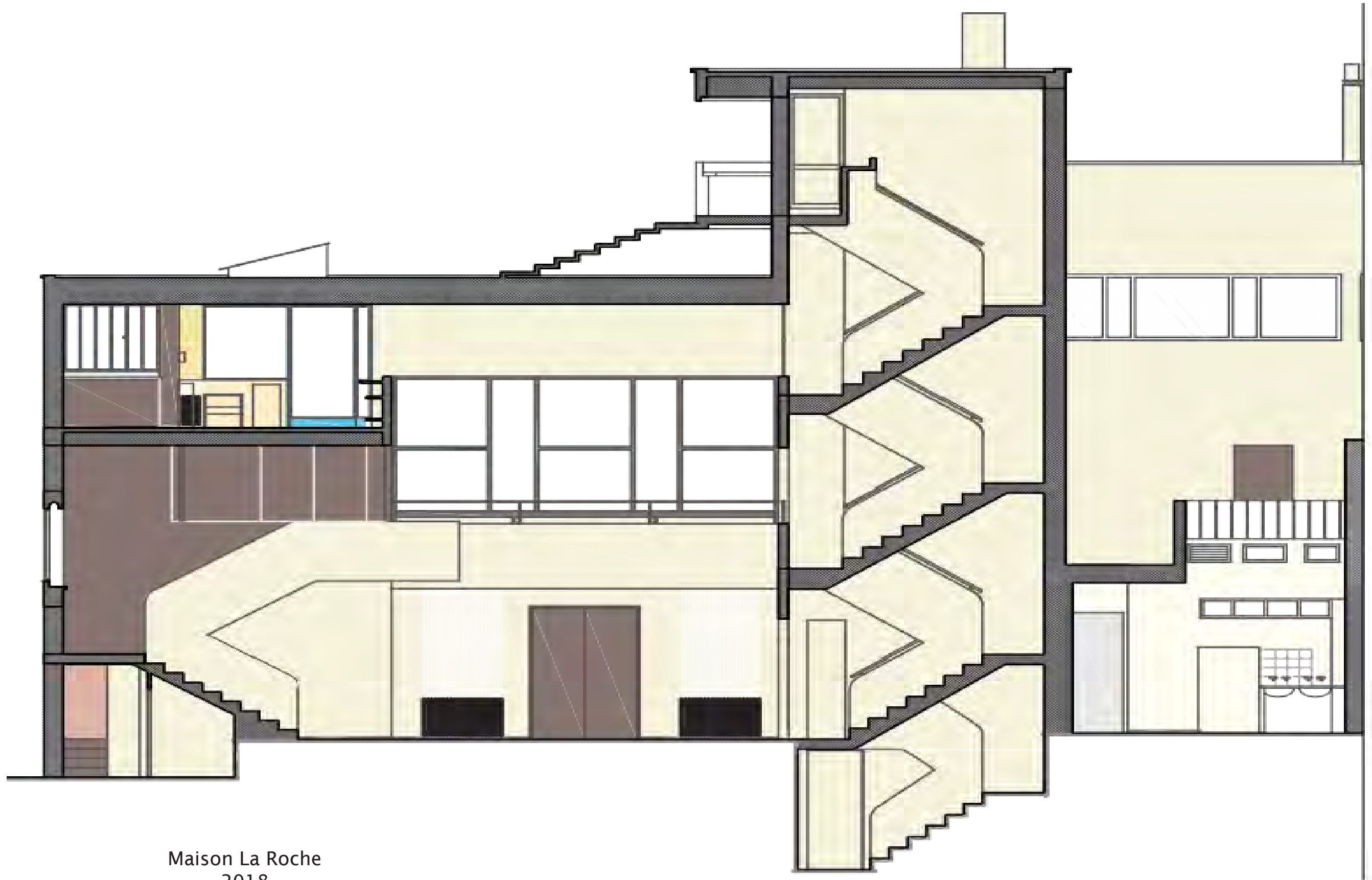
PLANS AND CROSS-SECTION OF MAISON LA ROCHE



2nd FLOOR

- 12. LIBRARY
- 13. DRESSING ROOM
- 14. PURIST BEDROOM
- 15. BATHROOM / WC
- 16. YARD

CROSS-SECTION PLAN



Maison La Roche
2018

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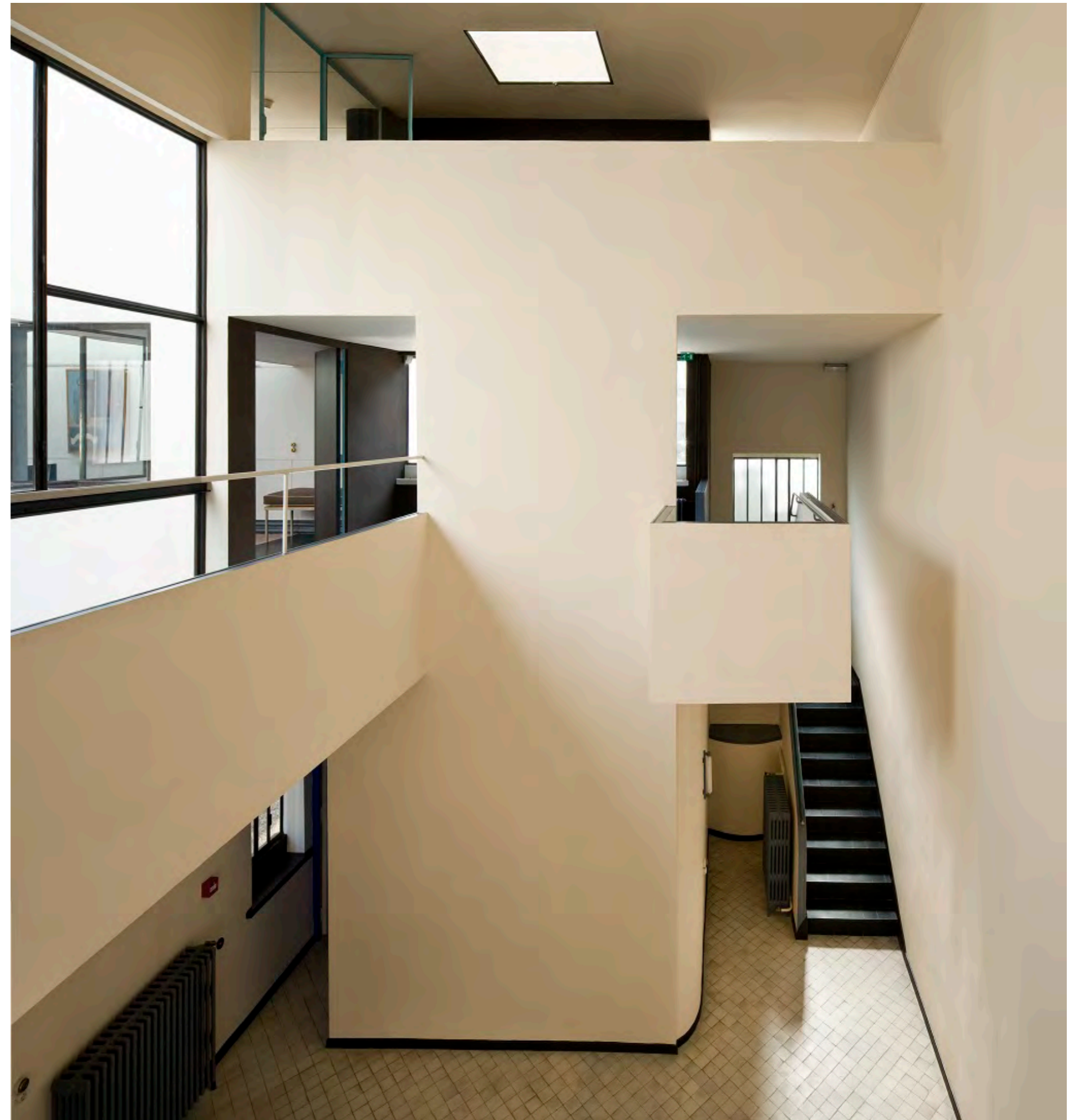
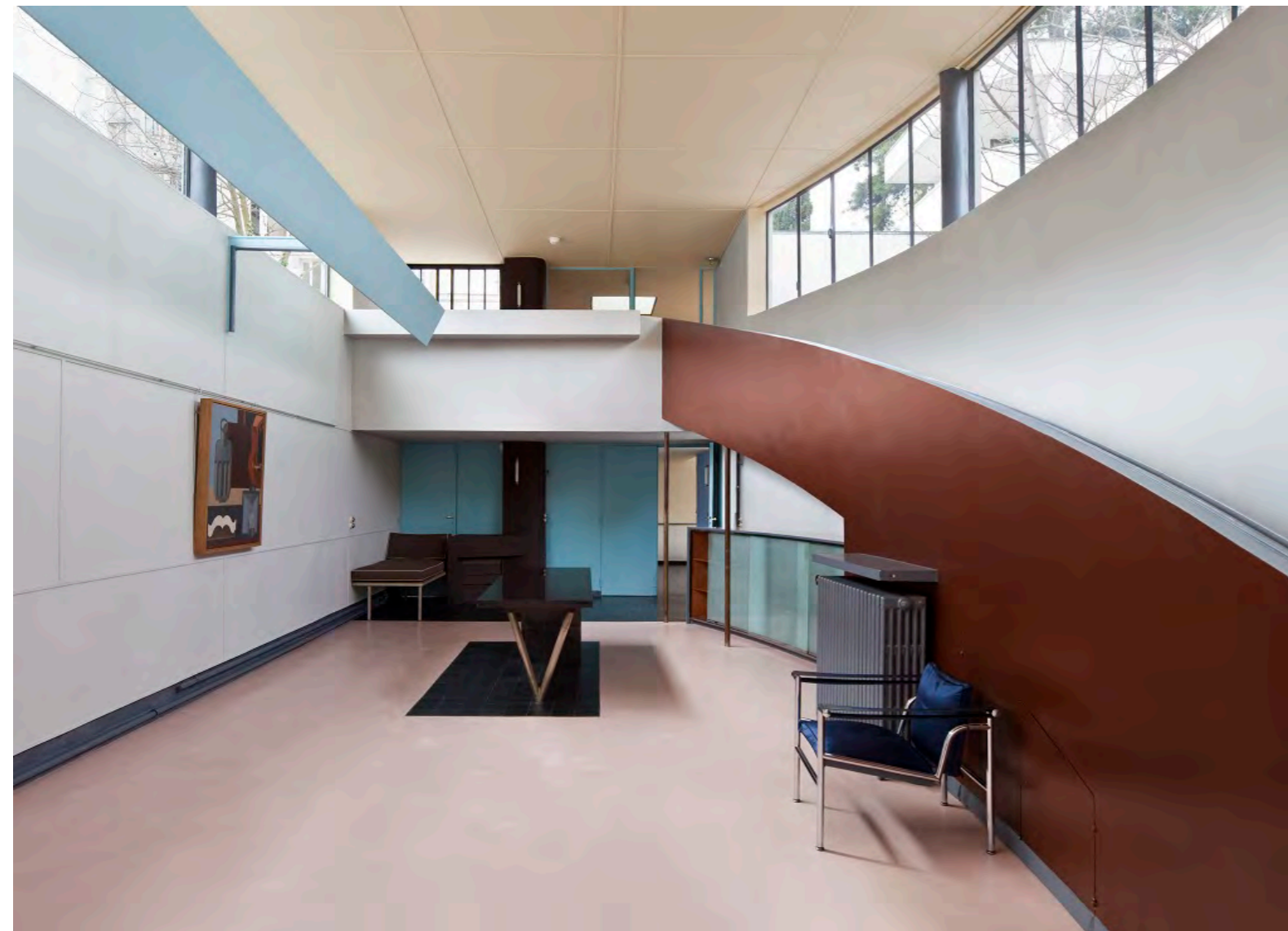
MAISON LA ROCHE COLOUR CHART

	DARK GREY
	LIGHT GREY
	PALE GREY
	OIL GREY WHITE
	DARK ULTRAMARINE BLUE
	CHARRON BLUE
	BLUE CERULEAN MEDIUM 2
	BLACK GREEN
	PARIS GREEN
	LIGHT SIENNA EARTH
	NATURAL SIENNA MEDIUM
	LIGHT NATURAL SIENNA
	PALE NATURAL SIENNA
	RED BROWN
	LIGHT BURNT SIENNA
	BURNT UMBER
	IVORY

THE QUESTION OF COLOUR

The restoration of the Maison La Roche achieved in 2009, in addition to maintenance and conservation, work focused on faithfully restoring the original colour scheme of the interiors. The polychromy here was of an experimental nature, conceived as a link between Le Corbusier's twin worlds, painting and architecture. In this form, it was a new departure in his work and one that was to be confirmed in the following years, being applied not only to interior space but also to façades.

The treatment of interiors in the house follows a twofold scheme: monochrome for the entrance hall and the dining room, polychrome for the gallery, library, purist bedroom and additional ground-floor rooms. The pale raw sienna, long believed to be white, was thus revealed as a kind of matrix from which the polychromy could express its full potential. The other colours are identical to the palette of Le Corbusier's easel painting where, as well as different values of grey and blue, we find green, burnt umber, light red ochre, yellow ochre, pink, ivory and black.



© FLC/ADAGP - Olivier Martin Gambier

**THE DINING ROOM
THE PAINTING GALLERY**

THE HALL

Maisons La Roche et Jeanneret
partie de



Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture



• **L'Œuvre architecturale de Le Corbusier,**
• **une contribution exceptionnelle**
• **au Mouvement Moderne**
• inscrite sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en 2016

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