

# **LE CORBUSIER**

## ***The Studio-Apartment***



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THE LIVING ROOM FOLLOWING RESTORATION  
2018



## LE CORBUSIER

Recognized worldwide as a major figure in 20th century architecture, Le Corbusier (real name Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, 1887-1965) also pursued an artistic career in which painting played a central role. While he and his cousin and partner Pierre Jeanneret worked on their architectural projects in the agency set up in rue de Sèvres in 1924, it was in his private studio that Le Corbusier painted, drew and wrote. The architect was 44 years old when he received the commission for the Nungesser- et-Coli building. As a leader in the Modern Movement's battle against conventional architecture, the early 1930s were for him a time of great productivity since he had already received numerous commissions and was engaged in a number of urban planning projects.



STUDIO  
1965

“Every day of my life has in part been devoted to drawing. I have never stopped drawing and painting, seeking, where I could find them, the secrets of form.”



CHARLES-ÉDOUARD AND YVONNE  
WITH THEIR DOG PINCEAU

<  
DINING ROOM  
c. 1965



## THE 24 NC BUILDING

Renewing the Haussmann typology, the apartment block was built for a private developer between 1931 and 1934.

For Le Corbusier this was the beginning of a demonstration that his Radiant City project could provide the city dweller with air, light and greenery. It was ideally located on the boundary between Paris and Boulogne, near the Bois and the many sports facilities. With an open outlook, it benefited from fully glazed facades, constituting a radical novelty and contrasting with the surrounding buildings. Similarly, its reinforced concrete frame structure allowed the “free plan” to be implemented. As a result, the apartments, numbering two or three per floor, were delivered with just the sanitary facilities, each occupier being free to partition his apartment as he pleased. Modern comfort included both personal and service lifts, central heating, a laundry and drying room, cellars and garages in the basement and servants’ rooms on the ground floor.



E CORBUSIER'S STUDY c.1960

1. Letter from Charles-Édouard and Yvonne to Mme Jeanneret 28 May 1934.

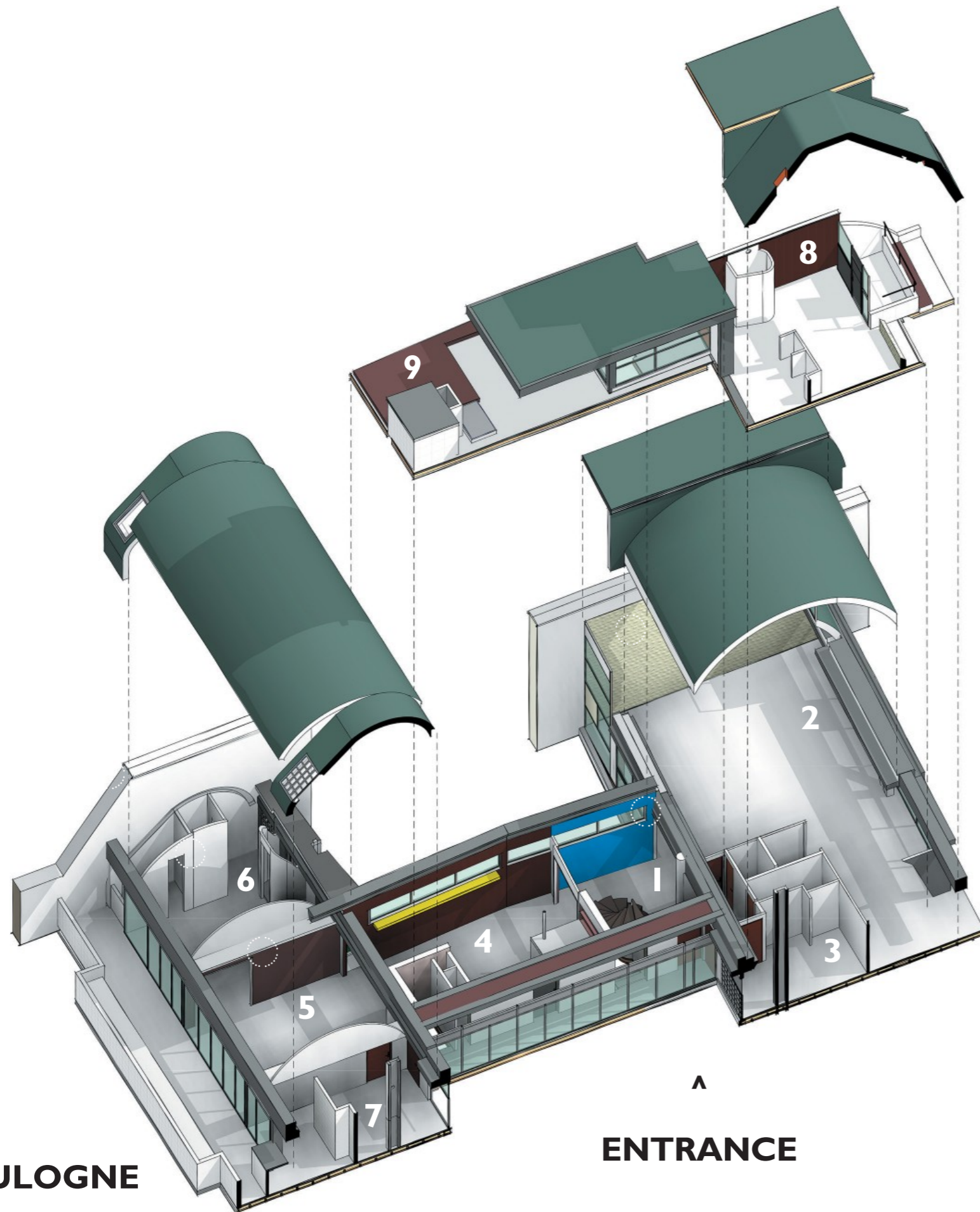
## THE STUDIO-APARTMENT

In order to build his own apartment, Le Corbusier negotiated possession of the 7th and 8th floors, undertaking to build the roof of the property at his own expense. He had just married Yvonne Gallis, whom he met in 1922, and was living with her in an old, cluttered apartment in Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Le Corbusier wanted a family living environment for Yvonne and himself, the housekeeper and the dog Pinceau, as well as space for his painting and writing activities. He used the entire width of the building plot, an area of 240 m<sup>2</sup> on two levels, to lay out the four main spaces making up the studio, the apartment, the guest room and the roof garden. All are exceptionally bright thanks to the glazed façades, the windows overlooking the courtyard and the skylights, for which the architect used the full range of Saint-Gobain products, including the famous Nevada glass bricks.

***“The sky is radiant and for a fortnight we have been living in miraculous new conditions: a home that is heavenly, because everything is sky and light, space and simplicity.”***

The volumes of the studio-apartment were structured by the polychromy of the walls, while spatial continuity was emphasized by the grid-pattern tiles covering the floor. The couple lived here from 1934 – Yvonne until her death in 1957, Charles-Édouard until 1965.

## THE ROOMS IN VISITING ORDER



1. ENTRANCE
2. STUDIO
3. SERVANT'S ROOM
4. LIVING ROOM
5. DINING ROOM
6. BEDROOM
7. KITCHEN
8. GUEST ROOM
9. ROOF GARDEN

**BOULOGNE**

**ENTRANCE**

**MODEL *Studio-Apartment* © A-BIME 2018**



## 7th floor

### ENTRANCE

Access to the apartment is via a passageway reached by a spiral staircase and equipped with a service lift.

The main entrance is at the epicentre of the apartment's four areas. The handrail-free helical staircase leads up through a glass cube to the guest room and roof garden.

### THE STUDIO

Marked by a striking contrast between traditional architecture and modern technology, this "atelier of patient research" extends under a curving arch 12 metres long. The party wall of rubble and visible bricks inspired Le Corbusier with these words:

***"Stone can speak to us; it speaks to us by means of the wall. Close to us, in contact with our hands, it is a skin, rugged and yet well-defined. This wall is my daily friend."***

Since urban regulations prevented him from lighting his studio from above, light was introduced through the glass facades – light indeed so dazzling that the architect spent much of his time inventing new devices to reduce it, witness the wood panels fixed to the facade on the Paris side of the building. The master's private space, a haven of creative disorder, was completed by a study in which he wrote his articles, books and private correspondence.

### SERVANT'S ROOM

Situated at the end of the corridor leading to the studio, the servant's room is endowed with real comfort for the time: a picture window looking onto the courtyard, electric lighting, a cupboard and even a water tap.



## LE SALON

The living room was arranged around the casing enclosing the lift machinery and the space taken up by the service lift and the chimney. The walls were faced with panels of oak-veneered plywood and the room furnished with the sofa and Grand Confort armchair, co-designed by Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret and Charlotte Perriand, as well as a specially designed coffee table. As in the rest of the apartment, works of art (by Le Corbusier himself, but also paintings by Fernand Léger or Alberto Magnelli, sculptures by Henri Laurens and Jacques Lipchitz) and “poetic reaction” objects (shells, bones, pebbles ...) were displayed in the niches and on the picture rails. Their arrangement was frequently varied.



## THE DINING ROOM

The dining room has a sweeping view of Boulogne from a large picture window, which was remodelled several times, and from a balcony-loggia. The geometrical stained-glass window was made in Reims by the artist Brigitte Simon and added in 1949. A red woollen rug, woven in Tlemcen, Algeria, sets off the marble table designed by Le Corbusier and surrounded by four Thonet armchairs..



## THE BEDROOM

Le Corbusier was fascinated by ocean liners and used their cabins as inspiration for the layout of his marital bedroom. He invented a raised bed resting on two feet and with a headrest fitted to the wall, its height allowing the couple to admire a view of Boulogne over the “dizziness-free” balcony balustrade. Madame had a vanity and her own bathroom with a hip bath; Monsieur had his shower and wash-hand basin – toilet and bidet were shared. A full-length mirror was concealed behind a yellow door. Clothes were stored in ingeniously designed furniture, part of a particularly elaborate piece of domestic economy.





## THE KITCHEN

The kitchen communicates with the dining room. It is equipped with built-in furniture, a total innovation for the time. Two storage units structure the space and support worktops overlaid with pewter. In the area for preparing meals, the double sink receives light from a small courtyard. The walls are faced with white earthenware tiles. Stove and refrigerator are housed in their own niches. The service door opens on to a passageway leading to the servant's room. This is located on the far side of the apartment, thus preserving the couple's intimacy.

### 8th floor

## THE GUEST ROOM

The guest room was intended mainly for stays made in Paris by Le Corbusier's mother. It is equipped with a shower and wash-hand basin and divided up by a storage cabinet at mid-height grandly surmounted by a central heating device. The balcony on the Paris side of the building is sheltered by an aluminum awning.

## THE ROOF GARDEN

In his projects Le Corbusier conceived a green space on the rooftops of Paris, blending into the surrounding urban environment. Between the two rounded vaults at the top of the building, he laid out a roof garden offering a breathtaking view of Boulogne and Paris. To begin with, it was planted with carefully selected varieties, but later it developed more randomly, Le Corbusier allowing Nature to recover her rights in this new open-air space.

*“The garden a poem.*

*Grass, lilac, roses and others – and what a horizon!”<sup>2</sup>*




© FLCADAP - Alvin Sultan


2. Letter from Le Corbusier to his mother, 29 April 1934.

The property of the Le Corbusier Foundation, the apartment-studio, awarded the Maison des Illustres seal of approval, was listed as a historic monument in 1972, and the entire building in 2017. Since 2016, as the world's first apartment building with entirely glazed façades, it has been part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site comprising a series of 17 works by Le Corbusier.

Immeuble Locatif à la Porte Molitor  
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



The restorations recently undertaken by the Le Corbusier Foundation, with François Chatillon, Chief Architect for Historical Monuments, have restored this iconic site to its final state in Le Corbusier's lifetime.

With the support of :  
**Cassina**

1 MOLITOR BUILDING, 2018  
2 LE CORBUSIER WITH TOTEM  
ON THE ROOF TERRACE 1950





**FONDATION  
LE CORBUSIER**

## **ACCESS**

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## **VISITOR INFORMATION**

Visits for groups only, by reservation, until December 2020.

Private visits and organization of small events on request.

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**LE CORBUSIER IN HIS PAINTING STUDIO**

1960