

THE URBAN MANSION IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY PARIS:
TRADITION, INVENTION AND SPECTACLE

By

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To my family, friends and colleagues, with gratitude

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACHM	Architecte-en-chef des monuments historiques
ADVO	Archives départementale du Val'd'Oise
AN	Archives nationales
AN-CP	Le service des Cartes et Plans aux Archives nationales
AP	Archives de Paris
BAVP	Bibliothèque administrative de la Ville de Paris
BHVP	Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris
BF	Bibliothèque Forney
BN	Bibliothèque nationale de France
ENSBA	École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts

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By

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The countervailing forces of tradition and invention strove for dominance in late nineteenth-century Paris. This dissertation argues that the urban mansion, *l'hôtel particulier*, is a tangible document of the merger of these two forces in the influential society of financiers and entrepreneurs, the *haute bourgeoisie*. While the architectural vocabulary and forms were indebted to a rich cultural tradition, these urban mansions of the upper classes reflected changing social and cultural values, as well as technological advances in construction materials.

The Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild is singularly appropriate as a case study to evaluate the thesis that the Parisian urban mansion of the Second Empire is significant as an expression of both tradition and invention, alongside the culture's fascination with spectacle. The geographically prominent location of the site, the leading role in the contemporary society of the Rothschild family, and the visual features of the property suggest significant physical evidence of the era.

The relative paucity of written documentation and the relative obscurity of the building's architect, Léon Ohnet (1813-1874) and the principal decorator, Léopold de Moulignon, test the thesis that physical and archival evidence, documentation and analysis may be integrated to expand this body of knowledge. This research suggests that while Ohnet practiced generally

within the mainstream of the Second Empire cultural aesthetic, he skillfully balanced the use of historically derived architecture with an inventive spirit. The spatial organization and effects, enabled by the use of modern materials and scenographic design techniques, reflected the contemporary cultural values of spectacle and display. In Paris, these attributes, along with elegance, were what counted most.

This study verifies the role of physical documentation and analysis to supplement understanding of the social and architectural history of an era. By building a case for the amalgamation of historical architectural models coupled with an inventive approach to architectural design; the study substantiates the *hôtel particulier* as a visual manifestation of the life of the *haute bourgeoisie* between 1850 and 1890 in Paris; and establishes the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild as a significant expression of this society.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

“The nineteenth century was both incredibly inventive and indebted to a rich cultural tradition.” (François Loyer)¹

An Inventive Spirit

Invention and tradition are the dual characterizations of nineteenth-century design described by French historian François Loyer, Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur and recipient of the Grand Prix du Patrimoine in 1999.² This dissertation argues that the urban mansion, *l’hôtel particulier*, is a tangible document of the merger of these forces in the influential society of the *haute bourgeoisie*, the wealthy class of financiers and entrepreneurs. While the architectural vocabulary and forms were indebted to a rich cultural tradition, these residences reflected changing social and cultural values, as well as technological advances in construction materials between 1850 and the late 1880s.

A series of political and social upheavals marked the period as the government of France transformed from the Second Empire to the Third Republic. This culture gave rise to a new powerful class, the *haute bourgeoisie*. This class of financiers and entrepreneurs was characterized by their abilities to create the capital that powered the development of new industries and technologies. The group began to achieve social ascendancy during the first half of the nineteenth century, gradually displacing the aristocracy of the *ancien régime* in wealth and power. By the time of the Second Empire, the *haute bourgeoisie* wielded great influence within the political, social and cultural spheres.

The societal polemics extended into the artistic and architectural fields, where the traditions of l’Académie des Beaux-Arts were being challenged by younger architects seeking an appropriate design language to express the new vision of society in each cycle of political change. Within the conventions of residential architecture for the moneyed classes, the basic

form of the *hôtel particulier* was fully established during the *ancien régime* and had reached a mature expression by the end of the eighteenth century.

Changes wrought by the new social values of the nineteenth century, technological advances in building systems, new architectural materials and the power shift from the aristocracy to the *haute bourgeoisie* reflected in the urban mansions built for the *nouveau riche*, or new moneyed class. As this new class competed for dominance, the cultural phenomenon of the visual spectacle, vigorously celebrated within the realm of public architecture, moved into the private world of the Second Empire *hôtel particulier*.

Previous works dedicated to the study of the nineteenth-century *hôtel particulier* have emphasized the cultural tradition that influenced the architecture. The urban mansion is presented as an expression of the client's social standing, designed to reflect "a taste refined yet unobtrusive,"³ and was not seen as a place for innovative design ideas. This dissertation seeks to challenge that viewpoint, through an analysis of the dialectic present in the use of historical architectural models coupled with a newly inventive spirit in their design. The role of new technologies and the expression of the culture's fascination with spectacle are the hallmark features of the *hôtel particulier* of the last half of the nineteenth century.

Case Study: The Urban Mansion of the Baronne Salomon de Rothschild

In order to evaluate the thesis that the Parisian urban mansion of the late Second Empire and early Third Republic was significant as an expression of both the forces of tradition and invention in design, alongside the physical expression of the culture's fascination with spectacle, the urban mansion of the Baronne (Baroness) Salomon de Rothschild, herein after called the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild, was selected for this case study. To supplement the written documentation, often incomplete or inadequate, the physical evidence will be examined as a document of social history. The property is located within the post-1860 limits of the city of

Paris, in the 8th *arrondissement* (district), with the entrance to the residence located at numbers 9-11, rue Berryer.

Following an accepted practice of the nineteenth-century generations of the Rothschild family, the third son of James de Rothschild, Salomon de Rothschild (1835-1864), married his second cousin, Adèle, whose grandfather, Karl-Mayer Rothschild, was the founder of the Naples branch of the dynasty.⁴ The Baronne Adèle-Hannah-Charlotte de Rothschild (1843-1922) was only twenty-one years old at the time of her husband's death. She remained for another decade in the neighborhood near the church of La Madeleine,⁵ in the *hôtel particulier* at 25, rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré,⁶ which she had shared with her husband and their only child, Hélène, who was born in 1863. She chose not to execute the architectural plans for a new *hôtel particulier* on avenue Messine, designed by the architects Émile Petit and H. Croiseau.⁷ Instead, in 1872, she commissioned Léon Ohnet (1813-1874), architect of the Rothschild expansion of the Hôtel de Talleyrand, to design a *hôtel particulier* for her newly acquired property in the neighborhood of Faubourg du Roule. Adèle de Rothschild resided there with Hélène, until the latter's marriage in 1887⁸ and then lived alone in the mansion until her death in 1922, surrounded by the extensive art collection, the product of her own family inheritance and the prodigious acquisitions of her husband during his brief life. The building is now known as the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild.

The site selected by the Baronne de Rothschild for her new residence had a rich history and included several significant late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century buildings and site features. The property is bounded by the modern day avenue de Friedland, rue de Balzac, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré and the rue Berryer, and was part of a larger 12-hectare property assembled by Nicolas Beaujon (1718-1786), a financier and private banker to the nobility,

including Louis XV and Madame Du Barry. The evolution of the property through the ownership of the family of the acclaimed writer, Honoré de Balzac, extending into the 1880s, will be examined in the evaluation of the site. The architectural expression of this case study building reflects the influence of previous structures that were still extant on the property and the adjacent parcels at the time of the project's design and construction, a period spanning from 1872 to 1878. Additional property acquisitions and site alterations occurred throughout the 1880s.

The current configuration of the property is a result of five separate acquisitions, totaling 7,531 square meters, which were made by the Baronne de Rothschild, between 1873 and 1882.⁹ The first parcel, acquired on the 28th of November, 1873, was the site of the Chartreuse Beaujon, and was a parcel of about 5700 square meters, with two addresses, the principal entrance at 20, rue Balzac and another at 65, rue des Écuries-d'Artois, (the modern day rue Berryer). It was here on this elevated terrain that the new *hôtel particulier* was constructed.

In 1874, Adèle de Rothschild acquired the adjacent property containing 853 square meters, at 63, rue des Écuries-d'Artois, from the artist Pierre-François-Eugène Giraud (1806-1881). The next year, she purchased the house and garden at 67, rue des Écuries-d'Artois. The sales document describes the property as containing 252 square meters, bounded in the front by the rue des Écuries-d'Artois, at the rear by Madame de Balzac's property, on the right by the Chapelle Saint Nicolas and on the left by the property of "Madame la baronne."¹⁰

In 1882, Adèle de Rothschild acquired Balzac's property, at 22 rue Balzac, adjacent to her residence. The demolition of the writer's house, the Hôtel de Balzac, in 1890, allowed for the expansion of her garden to the northwest.

The main building with the lower courtyard to the east, as shown on this plan, is the grand *hôtel particulier*, conceived by the architect Léon Ohnet, which erased the building designed by Girardin. Soon after, the old chapel was razed and the

property was finally acquired by the baroness Rothschild, as was the old house of Balzac which was removed to provide more space for the garden.¹¹

In homage to the great writer, a domed pavilion known as the *rotonde de Balzac* was constructed in this garden space, at the angle of the intersection of rue Balzac and rue Berryer in 1891.¹² The interior features some of the wall panels and a pair of decorative door panels salvaged from Balzac's residence, an example of the late nineteenth-century practice of repurposing salvaged architectural fragments in a new setting to create an ambience.

The Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild is singularly appropriate as a case study to evaluate the thesis that the Parisian urban mansion of the late Second Empire and early Third Republic is significant as an expression of both tradition and invention, alongside the culture's fascination with spectacle. The geographically prominent location of the site, the leading role in the contemporary society of the Rothschild family and the visual features of the property suggest significant physical evidence of the era. The paucity of available written documentation from the period and the relative obscurity of the architects and designers test the thesis that physical documentation and analysis may supplement understanding of the social and architectural history of an era.

Research Focus

Project Development

The subject of this research project grew out of participation in an earlier project for a commemorative publication on the restoration of the Hôtel de Talleyrand,¹³ an eighteenth-century *hôtel particulier* that is regarded as one of the earliest master works of the nascent style of French neoclassicism. While the principal façades of the *hôtel* were designed by the renowned architect Ange-Jacques Gabriel (1698-1782), as part of his master composition for the Place Louis XV (the Place de la Concorde), the *portail* (entrance gateway), the interior façades

overlooking the *cour d'honneur* (Court of Honor), and the overall decorative program for the *hôtel* were the work of the young architect, Jean-François-Thérèse Chalgrin (1739-1811).¹⁴ Educated at the Académie des Beaux-Arts, and winner of the Grand Prix de Rome in 1758, Chalgrin conceived and implemented a harmonious and unified decorative scheme throughout the mansion, all the while keeping to “Gabriel’s preordained formula while revealing his own greater modernity.”¹⁵

An intriguing element of this building was the nineteenth-century addition on the east end, along the rue Mondavi, dating from about one hundred years after the building’s original construction in 1767.¹⁶ While harmoniously integrating the four-story mass of the addition onto the original building, architect Léon Ohnet (1813-1874) incorporated signature features of nineteenth-century design, including the clipped corner of the upper floor plans and the iron and glass bay window on the *grand étage* (principal floor elevated above street level). Other interventions within the interior were reflective of a marked change in the use and meaning of these spaces. Ohnet is not a well known architect of the period, and thus this little known body of work became a departure point for further research. His design for the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild fully expresses the social aspirations of the wealthy elite of the period, as they were translated into architectural forms and spatial experiences that contain both references to the grand classical tradition of French architecture and to the innovative possibilities of changing cultural values and advances in building materials.

Research Questions

The research topic thus evolved from an interest in the synergistic result of these two tendencies as expressed in later nineteenth-century residential architectural design, and seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Through the case study of the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild, how does the urban residential architecture of Paris, from the period of the Second Empire through the first two decades of the Third Republic (1852 to 1890), express tradition, invention and spectacle as characteristics of social and cultural aspirations, including evoking traditional architectural features, inventive use of new technology, display of valuable collections and the obsession with social advancement, with “seeing and being seen”?
 - a. How does the expression of cultural tradition (historicism, eclecticism) and inventive design (“modernity“) co-exist in the architecture and décor of these buildings? How do emerging building technologies, with the use of new materials, enable the creation of new types of spaces and the reinterpretation of traditional spatial forms?
 - b. How does the interest in scenographic design and the cultural obsession with spectacle, influence the spatial organization and character of the upper class residential architecture, and the experience of the spectator?
 - c. How did the desire to collect, preserve and display valuable art objects, furnishings, and artifacts influence the conception of interior space, décor and circulation, and reflect the aspirations and values of the collectors?
2. How does the interplay of different classifications of evidence, such as the remaining physical evidence and other sources of documentary, contextual and inferential evidence, contribute to the understanding of a work of architecture?
 - a. How does the work reflect the “period eye” of nineteenth-century architectural design? The “period eye” is defined as the generally accepted rules, which may be

conscious or unconscious, which govern the perception and interpretations of objects within a given culture.¹⁷

- b. What was the original design intent and how did the designers respond to the needs and desires of the client?

Organization of the Document

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the overall themes of the dissertation. The criteria for the selection of the case study building are listed along with a brief description of the subject property. The inspiration for the research project is explained. The focus of the research investigation is described in the research questions.

Chapter 2 outlines the political and social framework to set the context for the period of study and identifies some of the principal clients who commissioned examples of grand residential architecture. Among the most influential of the *haute bourgeoisie* were members of the Rothschild family of bankers and entrepreneurs, and their spectacular rise in the nineteenth century is directly tied to societal changes in the decades from the 1820s through the 1870s.¹⁸ How the architectural expression of these residences was used as a means to project this group's image of their position as the new upper class, rivaling the former aristocracy, is also examined.

Chapter 3 sets the cultural stage and explains the prevailing design aesthetics of the period of study from the 1850s through the 1880s. The major theme of nineteenth-century architecture is the counterpoint of technological advancement in building materials, and the spectacular urban expansion with its extensive opportunities for new building programs, set against the rich cultural tradition that was utilizing an ever greater diversity of historical models from which to draw inspiration for architectural expression. In the nineteenth century, French society was a significant trendsetter for the industrializing world and had developed into a highly visual culture, as evidenced in developments in the arts, sciences and literature. This emphasis on the

visual, on “seeing and being seen”, culminated in a highly developed “scenographic” approach to architectural design, and the resultant impact on the expression of residential architecture during the Second Empire is examined here.

A second related theme is the study of how the residential architecture served as a showcase for the significant collections of the art, furnishings, and objects, and how this aspect influenced both spatial design and experience. The clients lived amidst, rather than apart from their collections. Design prototypes for the case study building, including the Château de Ferrières as a significant influence on the aesthetic preferences for the *hôtels particuliers* of the *haute bourgeoisie*, are discussed.

Chapter 4 analyzes the case study building, the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild, to illustrate the importance of the accepted practice of architectural analysis of the built object, as a data-gathering tool used to fill in the gaps of the archival record. The preparation of an architectural analysis for an extant structure requires an examination of the changes to a building over time, and the act of observing several cultural viewpoints in succession. This analysis, used in conjunction with other forms of evidence, allows the work to be understood as a specific product of its age and illuminates the broader context within which it was created. This information-gathering strategy formed a fundamental part of this research process. The building’s history, as developed from published and archival data, including narrative sources, graphics and historic photographs, is compared with the extant object, with the aim of understanding the “period eye” of the post-Second Empire design aesthetic. By shearing away the layers of change to the building, the physical state of the architectural object is used to fill in gaps in the archival record. The role of spectacle and the experience of the spectator are explained as significant drivers of design. The impact of technological advances in building

materials, coupled with changes in social mores and behavior, pushed the creation of new types of spaces and celebrated the cultural values of the period.

Chapter 5 develops the research conclusions. The elements of the spatial organization and effects, enabled by the use of modern materials and scenographic design techniques, reflected the contemporary cultural values of the *haute bourgeoisie*. The legacy of these works for residential design continued into the early twentieth century and became an international approach to design.

Appendix A contains an in-depth explanation of the research methodology and a literature review. Additional information on the designers of the case study building can be found in Appendix B, which focuses on the life and career of Léon Ohnet, and in Appendix C, which includes notes on additional works by Justin Ponsard and Léopold de Moulignon.



Figure 1-1. Portrait of Adèle de Rothschild. [A. Cary, “Mme. Salomon de Rothschild.” No date (before 1891) Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris (BHVP) Cote: PM XXX, 5.] Note: Subsequent source citations from this collection will be listed as [A. Cary, image name, plate #]. This collection of images was photographed by the author with permission of BHVP.



Figure 1-2. Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild view from the garden. [Author's photo]

Notes

¹ François Loyer, *Paris: Nineteenth Century Architecture and Urbanism*, trans. Charles Lynn Clark (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988), 161.

² “Remise de la Légion d’honneur à François Loyer”, 11 juin 2001, Ministère de la Culture, accessed September 1, 2011, <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/actualites/conferen/duffour-2001/loyer.htm>.

³ François Loyer, *Architecture of the Industrial Age*, trans. R.F.M. Dexter (Geneva: Skira, 1983), 102.

⁴ Rothschild Family Tree 2000. Print copy obtained from Rothschild Archives, London, UK, October 4, 2010.

⁵ Fredric Bedoire, *The Jewish Contribution to Modern Architecture 1830-1930*, trans. Robert Tanner (Jersey City: KTAV Publishing, 2004), 182.

⁶ Alexandre Gady, “Folie Beaujon et chapelle Saint-Nicolas,” in *Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré*, eds. Beatrice de Andia et Dominique Fernandes (Paris: Délégation à l’action artistique de la ville de Paris, 1994), 361. Gady refers to an important earlier history of the site by R. Dupuis, “La chartreuse et le quartier Beaujon,” *Bulletin de la société de l’histoire de Paris et de l’Île de France*, 1935, 97-133.

⁷ Pauline Prévost-Marcilhacy, *Les Rothschilds: Bâtisseurs et Mécènes* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), 103.

⁸ Anka Muhlstein, *The Rise of the French Rothschilds* (Paris: Vendôme, 1982), 8-9. Diagram of the family tree.

⁹ Handwritten notes in folder labeled “Baronne Salomon de Rothschild (Adèle) Succession”. Rothschild Archives, London, UK. File number 000/1037/127/ 0/5.

¹⁰ Michel Borjon, *Hôtel Salomon de Rothschild. Étude historique et archéologique*. (Paris: GRAHAL Groupe de Recherche Art Histoire, Architecture et Littérature, Décembre 2000), 40-41. This document cites notes from the Archives Nationale, Minutier Centrale CXVIII, 1142.

¹¹ Gady, 361. “*Le bâtiment principal avec sa basse-cour à l’est, que montre ce plan, est déjà le grand hôtel particulier, conçu par l’architecte Léon Ohnet et qui à effacé le bâtiment de Girardin. Peu après, l’ancienne chapelle était rasée et son terrain était finalement acquis par la baronne de Rothschild, tout comme l’ancienne maison de Balzac, supprimée pour faire place à un jardin.*” Unless noted otherwise, or indicated as a translation in the List of References, translations of French text into English are my own.

¹² Borjan, *Hôtel Salomon de Rothschild*, 43.

¹³ The generally accepted modern name for the building is the Hôtel de Talleyrand. Among some French art historians, there is a preference to refer to the building by the name of the original owner, the comte de Saint-Florentin. Thus, in some French publications, the work is referred to as the Hôtel de Saint-Florentin.

¹⁴ Robert Carlhian and Fabrice Ouziel, *Analyse historique & technique pour l’Hôtel de Saint-Florentin dît Hôtel de Talleyrand Pièces Historiques: Étude Préalable à la Restauration* (Paris: United States Department of State Foreign Buildings Operation, Février 2000), 17-18.

¹⁵ Susan Douglas Tate, *Concorde: Hôtel de Talleyrand* (Gainesville, FL: Storter Childs, 2007), 29. This quote references a quote from Wend Von Kalnein, *Architecture in France in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972, 1995), 206.

¹⁶ Carlhian and Ouziel, *Étude Préalable*, 17.

¹⁷ Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Use of Images as Historical Evidence* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2001), 180.

¹⁸ See literature review in Appendix A pertaining to works by Prévost-Marcilhacy, Loyer and Bedoire.

CHAPTER 2
“IN PARIS ONLY ELEGANCE COUNTS.” ROTHSCHILD MANSIONS: VANGUARD OF
THE RISING *HAUTE BOURGEOISIE*

Rise of the *Haute Bourgeoisie*

The radical societal changes in nineteenth-century France sprang from the incessant ruptures in the political and economic life of the nation. Three-quarters of the way into the century, by the founding of the Third Republic, originally declared in 1870, France had gone through three revolutions, two republics, two empires and three monarchies, and had emerged as one of the world’s preeminent industrial powers. One product of the French Revolution was the rupture of the established political and social orders of the pre-1789 revolutionary system, the *ancien régime*. After the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in 1815, a significant shift in the power base of French society took root, and culminated in another revolution in 1830 when the political and economic force of the new moneyed class of financiers and entrepreneurs backed a new “citizens” government.

A study of French business history creates a picture of the diversity of the entrepreneurs of the early to mid-nineteenth century. The study, *Les Entrepreneurs du Second Empire*, documented the provenance of prominent business families in France, and was published in a number of volumes organized by geographic region. From the volume dedicated to Paris, “among the ninety-three leading bankers and financiers in Paris, 54 percent had origins east of the Meuse and 38 percent came from outside France.”¹ In addition to the Jewish families, there was an influx of Protestant entrepreneurs from Switzerland and Germany.² French Catholics were also represented in this group, as were French Huguenots, who fled to Switzerland, then later returned to France.³

The battle for supremacy was won by this new *bourgeoisie*, who held their assets in stocks and bonds, in contrast to the former aristocratic families of the *ancien régime*, whose wealth was

derived mostly from their land holdings, buildings, furnishings, antiques and art collections. In her biography of James Mayer de Rothschild, Anka Muhlstein describes this transfer of wealth to a new class during the period of the Restoration and the July Monarchy.

Relative shrinkage of titled wealth between 1820 and 1847 can be explained by the reluctance of the nobles to invest in industry and commerce and by their withdrawal from public life after 1830.⁴

The resultant cultural climate can be glimpsed through the experiences of two generations of one of the most influential and entrepreneurial families of the century, the Rothschilds. In the rise of the *haute bourgeoisie*, the Rothschild family represents the most elite of this socially ascendant group. For this reason, a case study of a Rothschild property is analyzed in this dissertation to evaluate physical evidence as a supplement to written history in understanding a specific site, client, architect and the society of a period.

In Paris, Only Elegance Counts” 1811-1830

As part of the prominent banking family’s business strategy, the five Rothschild brothers, sons of the successful Jewish financier Mayer-Amschel Rothschild (1743-1812), were deployed across the capitols of Europe. The eldest brother, Amschel, remained in Frankfurt at the family seat of the Rothschild bank. Nathan married into another wealthy and well established Jewish banking family in London. Salomon settled in Vienna in 1820 and Carl Mayer set up the Naples branch of the family bank in 1821. The youngest brother, James-Mayer, arrived in Paris from Frankfurt in 1811 to represent the interests of the family bank. In a letter of that year to one of his brothers, the young James laments his lack of social presence and the pressure of the imperative to present a dashing figure, because “in Paris, only elegance counts.”⁵

James aggressively pursued a campaign of upward mobility, in both the financial and social worlds. By 1818, with the first of several property acquisitions, the purchase of the *hôtel particulier* built for duc d’Otrante, at 19, rue Laffitte, James was achieving his dreams of social

ascension.⁶ As a young man struggling to fit in to a complex social system, James realized the importance of appearance in conveying the appropriate message to his adopted countrymen, who regarded his social naiveté with some indulgence.⁷

The rapid increase of his fortune eclipsed that of most other members of the *haute bourgeoisie* of the period and was a key driver in his quest for the family, with their Germanic heritage and Jewish identity, to be accepted and integrated into French society. How much was his fortune worth? As Mulstein points out in her analysis, the French franc retained a constant value from 1815 through 1868, the year of James' death. Her analysis estimated his worth as

approximately 120,000 francs in 1815, at 20 million in the years before 1830, at 40 million under Louis-Philippe (1830-48) and at 150 million in 1868.⁸

By comparison, the estates of other financiers were significantly smaller. In 1829, the fortune of banker Jacques Laffitte was estimated between 25 and 30 million francs, which was subsequently lost in the revolution of 1830. Upon his death in 1847, Delessert's fortune was valued at 11 million francs, Jean-Charles Davillier's estate was valued at 6 million in 1846 and Jean-Conrad Hottinguer left 4 million to his heirs in 1841.⁹ Thus, there was a hierarchy among this new group of the "industrial and mercantile bourgeoisie," based on levels of wealth.¹⁰

This wealth allowed James access to major political figures throughout his life. Early on in his new life in France, his financial support aided Louis XVIII in the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in 1815.¹¹ The five Rothschild brothers had, by this time, acquired large amounts of capital and were negotiating terms on supplying an advance payment to the Austrian government for France's war indemnity to Austria. In 1817, the Rothschild family was ennobled by the Austrian Emperor, and the five sons of Mayer-Amschel were granted the title of "Baron." In France, James added a "*de*" to his surname and continued his social rise.

During this period, James de Rothschild, established a financial relationship with Louis-Philippe, the Duc d'Orléans, who was a cousin of the Restoration monarch, King Louis XVIII (1755-1824). By shifting his allegiance to the Orléans branch of the Bourbon dynasty, he secured the favor of the future King Louis-Philippe (1773-1850). At this point, his dealings were oriented towards the old aristocracy who held most of the ministerial positions and power in the government. But storm clouds were brewing, and the rising entrepreneurial classes were growing tired of their exclusion from political power. After the revolution of 1830, James enjoyed a friendly relationship with the new monarch, "penetrating deep into French political life,"¹² Having pursued wealth and access to power for eighteen years, it was apparent that the "July Monarchy would grant him an abundance of both."¹³

Urban Mansions for the New *Haute Bourgeoisie*: 1830-1851

The desire to acquire objects symbolic of one's "arrival" extended to property as well. James de Rothschild, not unaware of the cachet of owning one of the jewels of the nascent neoclassical movement from the previous century, purchased the Hôtel de Talleyrand at auction for over one million francs in 1838, from the estate of the famous statesman, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord.¹⁴ Soon thereafter, he commissioned restoration work on the *hôtel*, hiring the painter Louis Francois Bertrand to restore the original ceiling painting created by the renowned neoclassical artist Jean-Simon Berthélemy (1743-1811) in the grand stair. Baron James and his wife, Betty (1805-1886), never lived at the *hôtel*, preferring their grander mansion on rue Lafitte, and instead he rented the property to various tenants. Around 1841, the famous circular stables of Cellurier, which were located to the north of the Hôtel Talleyrand, at 4, rue Saint-Florentin, were demolished and Baron James constructed a new building, to be known as the Hôtel de l'Infantado, in its place.¹⁵

The basic form of the *hôtel particulier*, had reached its mature architectural type during the *ancien régime* of the eighteenth century. As seen in the example of the Hôtel de Talleyrand, the floor plan reflected the strict social hierarchy, with the formal reception rooms arranged *en enfilade*, that is, one space leading directly into the other, with aligned doorways. Spaces were experienced as discrete volumes in a sequence. Access to these spaces was strictly controlled by rigid social hierarchies and rituals. Social position determined the level of access into the formal reception rooms. A lower level official might gain access to the antechambers and more socially elevated guests could penetrate into the state apartments, from large receptions in the Grand Salon, to formal meetings in the Grand Cabinet (State Office), and more intimate meetings in the Salon Ovale (Oval Salon) and the Chambre (State Bedchamber used for official business.)

In the two decades after the 1830 Revolution, the rise of the new *haute bourgeoisie* class, with their great wealth based not on land and provenance, but on capital and trade, reflected a different set of values in the design of their residences. Changes wrought by the new social mores of the nineteenth century, including the incorporation of new building technologies in structural, lighting and plumbing systems, and circulation patterns based on less formal rules of social interaction, caused the component elements of the *hôtel particulier* to be designed with different considerations. Salons, dining rooms and reception rooms were now used in a different manner, with the emphasis on open circulation of family and guests to showcase the opulent interior decorative features, reflecting the new emphasis on bourgeois family life.

New types of spaces, such as the top-lit gallery-hall, were enhanced by technological advances in materials, notably iron and glass. Inspired by the covered commercial arcades, such as the Passage Brady (1828), these two-story spaces began appearing in the organization of the floor plans by midcentury. These gallery-halls were designed to accommodate the broadening

interest in collecting, as the acquisition of antiques, art, sculpture and exotic plants was no longer the exclusive privilege of the nobility.

There remained a sense of separation between the long established financiers of old French origins and the “newcomers” to this elite group during the reign of Louis-Philippe. Where the differences in aesthetic tastes for design and décor are best observed is within the sphere of domestic architecture. In Fredric Bedoire’s work, *The Jewish Contribution to Modern Architecture 1830-1930*, he cites as an example, James de Rothschild’s renovations to his mansion on rue Laffitte, completed in 1836.

A weakness for gilt and overloaded decoration was above all manifest among the successful bankers, with James de Rothschild’s residence on rue Laffitte as the prime example. Contemporaries regarded the bankers’ desire to outdo the most luxurious interiors of the *ancien régime* as a way of demonstrating their credibility to their customers and as a token of their economic sovereignty.¹⁶

In contrast to this observation, the aesthetic sensibilities of other members of the financial elite were described as more restrained, as the members of this group

associated unchecked luxury with the ostentation of a decadent aristocracy, and through innate prudence, refused to increase the opulence in their lives. This reserve can be explained by the fact that the rich *bourgeois* of the period – Delesserts, Périers, Davilliers, Mallets, Hottinguers - were rising steadily in a society from which they had never been excluded.¹⁷

Through the 1830s and 1840s, the seeds of the future urban form of Paris were germinating. Fashionable new neighborhoods for the upper middle classes were developed, around the Étoile, and along the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré. Major urban interventions were planned, such as the reconstruction of the neighborhood around Les Halles, although many of these projects would only be executed after 1852, during the Second Empire. The full extension of the rue de Rivoli to the east, first envisioned by Napoléon I, was finally achieved between 1853 and 1857 by Napoléon III.¹⁸

Coupled with this new urban vision was the need for new means of transportation, and the importance of developing the potential of the railroads was envisioned by James de Rothschild early on. The Rothschild Bank provided a major portion of the finances for the successful Paris to Saint-Germain rail line, completed in 1837 by another important entrepreneurial family, the Péreire brothers. In a prescient letter, Emile Péreire notes that this participation by the Rothschilds “is not only of great importance for this particular venture, it will also necessarily have a determining influence on the later realization of all the great industrial undertakings.”¹⁹ In 1845, the Rothschilds became the major shareholders in the contract for the financing and construction of the Chemin de Fer du Nord, the northern rail line between Paris and the Belgian border. The profound influence of this ‘great industrial undertaking’ was aesthetic as well as financial; by 1860 this rail line was one of the principal routes in France. James was president of the company (Comité de Direction) and was closely involved with the major architectural and engineering works associated with the railroads. During the rebuilding of a new terminus station in Paris, the Gard du Nord, the Comité would oversee such details as the selection of the artists who would be creating the 23 statues on the principal façade, which cities these statues would symbolize, and the cost of the work.²⁰

While the July revolution of 1830 was primarily motivated by the desire for political power among the new entrepreneurial class, the 1848 revolution was a product of the economic factors that spawned social unrest. The *haute bourgeoisie* were in a position to take advantage of their new power base in 1830 and to “grow quietly richer, steeped in self-satisfaction” while they “thought less about social issues than how to turn public affairs to their own profit.”²¹ It is during this period that class segregation increases, as many industries and workshops left the urban center and moved to cheaper land to the east and north of the city limits, followed by the

working classes. A series of riots by the urban poor, in 1830, 1832, 1834, and 1838, were harshly suppressed. In 1846, a financial crisis was followed by bad harvests, and an economic depression in 1847. In February 1848, after days of rioting in the city, King Louis-Philippe, who had lost support of his political base as well as the Republicans, abdicated and fled to England. In the wake of the destruction of his brother Salomon's (1744-1855) château at Suresnes by an angry mob, James de Rothschild prepared his staff for possible looting and damage to his own home and offices. He told them "I wouldn't miss my château, but I would miss Paris if I had to leave it."²² This sentiment reinforces the level of successful social ascendancy achieved for the family through his efforts of the three preceding decades.

A provisional government, made up of Republicans and Orléanists, enacted universal suffrage for males and, in April of 1848, held the first parliamentary election since 1792. Attempts to address the high unemployment failed and the hungry populace, increasingly disenfranchised, continued their protests for the right to work. Fierce street battles between the army and the workers in June ended in a brutal repression. The first presidential election in France was held on December 10, 1848, with Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte winning as a "republican" candidate promoting progressive economic policies. A successful coup d'état in December 1851 ended with the dissolution of the National Assembly and constitutional modifications to the role of the president. In 1852, another referendum approved the formation of the Second Empire with president Bonaparte named as Napoléon III, Emperor of the French.

Tradition and Invention in the Urban Mansion: 1852-1870

The Rothschilds' relationship with the new Emperor was business-like, guardedly providing loans and financing projects. It was the Péreire brothers, former business associates of James de Rothschild, who were more closely tied to the new regime. The Péreires were the force behind urban projects such as the Grand Hôtel du Louvre, built for the 1855 Exposition

Universelle, le Grand Hôtel designed by architect Alfred Armand in 1862 and the development of the upper class Plaine Monceau residential neighborhood, located to the north of the Place de l'Étoile.

A period of social calm and prosperity returned in the 1850s, as James was enjoying the profits of his labors, including the success of his railroad ventures. This was the decade in which he undertook the major reconstruction of his *château* in Ferrières-en-Brie. Bedoire notes the irony that the taste for “overloaded decoration,” displayed in the Rothschild mansion of the 1830s, was later adopted by Napoléon III and his inner circle. This trend is seen in the interiors of the apartment of the State Ministry within the Louvre palace in the 1850s. But by then, James de Rothschild had moved on to his masterpiece at Ferrières, where, along with his principal designers, the renowned British landscape designer Joseph Paxton (1803-1865) and the *ornementiste* (principal decorator and painter) Eugène-Louis Lami (1800-1890), he had “devised new means of expression, using genuine materials and modern conveniences.”²³

By selecting an English landscape designer instead of a leading French architect to execute the project, James succeeded in achieving several goals. Paxton was already known to James for over a decade, having designed a grand English country home at Mentmore for his nephew, Mayer, son of Nathan de Rothschild, during the early 1850s.²⁴ Fresh from his critical success and fame as the designer of the Crystal Palace in 1851, Paxton was invited by Napoléon III to provide advice on the plans for the 1855 Exposition Universelle (World Exposition) in Paris²⁵, which was to be a statement of French industrial innovation and strength. This new spirit of international exchange, in commerce and in culture, was already deeply imbued in the family's psychology, and James made his choice of an architect based on his forward-looking vision.²⁶

The new *château* was vast in scale, a quadrilateral plan of sixty-five meters on each side, with two principal floors raised above a basement level of service spaces. Ferrières was innovative in the inclusion of the latest technologies in building systems, including central heating and running hot and cold water to bedroom suites.²⁷ Each of the four building façades has a different character, knit together by the massing of the corner towers at each of the four corners of the quadrangle, and the repetition of similar window openings as the recurring themes. The interior is composed of suites of rooms, each with its own theme of décor, inspired by a rich variety of historical references to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French interiors and Venetian precedents.²⁸ This approach can be seen as a collection of architectural themes presented in a manner similar to the eclectic collection of *objets d'arts* that was displayed within. Napoléon III made an inaugural visit to Ferrières in 1862. The spectacular success of the visit served as a reminder to the Emperor of James' power and independence from the *régime*.²⁹

By the end of the Second Empire, the assimilation of the Jewish financiers into French upper society was fully achieved. The grand residential districts around Parc Monceau and along the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré were home to the new wealthy classes, regardless of culture or faith.

Unlike several other continental cities, Paris did not have a monumental street especially constructed for the eminent Jewish entrepreneurs. After its transformation by Haussmann, Paris was to a very great extent uniform and anonymous, also in the sense of the assimilated wealthy Jew living in the midst of the non-Jewish populace.³⁰

A Tradition Continues: 1870-1890

After the death of James de Rothschild in 1868, his eldest son Mayer-Alphonse (1827-1905), referred to as Alphonse, took over the operations of the Rothschild Frères bank. The bank was to play a major role after the 1870- 1871 Franco Prussian war, by providing capital for the payment of five billion francs in war reparations to the newly united German Empire.

The impact of the events of 1871 on the urban fabric of the capital city was profound, with significant damage and destruction to important edifices, and the disruption of major projects begun by Napoléon III and implemented by Haussmann. After the victorious Prussians withdrew from Paris in 1871, a civil war broke out between the partisans of the Paris Commune, a loose coalition that briefly ruled Paris from March until the end of May 1871, and the forces under control of the National Assembly. A small group of Commune loyalists set fire to the Tuileries Palace, destroying the interiors and leaving a shell that was torn down in 1882. In a similar fashion, the Hôtel de Ville was burned by Commune loyalists as anti-Commune forces surrounded the building. The massive reconstruction project for the building lasted from 1873 to 1892. Construction eventually resumed on the new Opéra, which opened to great acclaim in 1875.

The uprising and quick suppression of the Commune, from January to May of 1871 caused a deeper social shock, but order was restored through the establishment of a provisional government under Marie-Joseph-Louis-Adolphe Thiers (1797-1877), who was the first leader of the Third Republic. The changes in government did not seem to cause a rupture in the stylistic and aesthetic preferences of the Second Empire, however, and the prevailing architectural trends continued well into the early twentieth century.

By then, Alphonse de Rothschild and his siblings were deeply integrated into the economic and cultural life of Paris. In addition to his position as head of the Paris branch of the family bank, he was named a regent of the Banque de France in 1855, and he was honored with the Grand Croix de la Légion d'honneur.³¹ He was renowned as the greatest collector of art and objects, in a family of great collectors. "He outshone all his contemporaries as connoisseur, patron and sensitive art lover."³² Alphonse was named to the Académie des Beaux-Arts in 1885.

The love of collecting extended to Bordeaux vineyards. Alphonse and his brother Gustave inherited the vineyards of Château Lafitte-Rothschild and were in friendly rivalry with their cousin Nathaniel's Château Brane Mouton, (renamed Château Mouton-Rothschild) in Pauillac. Horse-racing, "the sport of kings," was another of the Rothschild brothers' passions and their Haras de Meautry breeding farm successfully produced champions for over a century.

As a leader in the cultural sphere, Alphonse often attended the opera and theatre. With his wife Leonora, a cousin from the English branch of the family, the couple was described by one English noblewoman as "the most lavish entertainers of their day."³³ The young couple was offered the Hôtel de Talleyrand as a residence upon their marriage in 1857, but the precise date of their relocation to the property is unknown, as the city directories only listed this address as of 1865.³⁴

While James de Rothschild had commissioned the architect, Léon Ohnet (1813-1874), with whom he had previously collaborated on other projects, to design an addition for the building, the work was likely implemented after James' death in 1868. The addition was certainly completed by 1871, as evidenced in a photograph taken in that year by the photographer Desvarreaux. This image depicts the barricades at the entrance to the rue de Rivoli, erected during the Commune.³⁵ In the calm after the political storm, Alphonse again retained Ohnet's services, along with the architect Émile Petit, for a second campaign of remodeling of the interior to accommodate their later nineteenth-century lifestyle.³⁶ Ohnet and Petit also appear to have collaborated on a project for Charlotte de Rothschild (1825-1899), Alphonse's older sister, married to his English cousin Nathaniel, for their *hôtel particulier* in the fashionable neighborhood along the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré.³⁷

Alphonse's younger brother Salomon-James de Rothschild (1835-1864) married his Neapolitan cousin Adèle de Rothschild (1843-1922), but died at the age of twenty nine. It was Adèle who later commissioned Ohnet to design and construct a new *hôtel particulier*, with its neoclassically inspired façades, on the grounds of the eighteenth century folie Beaujon, bordering the avenue de Friedland, on rue Berryer. Despite Ohnet's death in 1874, the work was constructed in accordance with his design drawings, according to contemporaneous sources.³⁸ Within the design of this *hôtel particulier* Ohnet succeeded in capturing the dual aspects of the period, a skilled interpretation of traditional architectural models balanced with an innovative spatial design enabled by the use of new materials. This last, and most mature example of Ohnet's body of work will be the subject of the case study in Chapter 4.

The second and third generations of the Rothschild family commissioned a remarkable portfolio of grand residences that carried the eclectic style favored by the Second Empire aesthetic into the early twentieth century. Whether these residences were renovated eighteenth-century palaces or newly constructed nineteenth-century *hôtels particuliers*, the architectural expression emphasized the values in vogue in the 1860s and 1870s; those of adherence to a grand tradition of French academic architecture combined with inventive approaches to the use of new materials and of a more dramatic spatial experience. The resulting mansions were spatially fluid visions of opulent spectacle, with the display of extensive collections of artwork and objects, bathed in light. As for the architectural preferences of other members of the *haute bourgeoisie*, their "self expression continued into the new century to be sought in historical allusions and period architecture."³⁹ By the end of the nineteenth century, the financial and entrepreneurial classes preferred the veneer of tradition and it would be left to the artistic circles to adopt the avant-garde in architectural design.

Building the Client's Self-image

The broad history of French classicism during the *ancien régime* was the design reference for these urban mansions, and the interior space typology of the public rooms drew on the models established by the 17th century *hôtel particulier* - the foyer, grand stair and reception *salons*. However, the societal changes of the nineteenth century altered the purpose of these spaces, their sequence in the plan and the approach to their decor. Attributed to the “triumph of a mercantile society,”⁴⁰ these changes included the primacy of family life at home, the desire for comfort and modern conveniences and the passion for the acquisition and display of valuable objects, art and artifacts. Translated, this meant that their public life, “defined by a routine of leisure activity and the demands of sociability. . . are all highly ritualized occasions for looking at others and for being looked at.”⁴¹

While the antecedents for the entry sequence of the Second Empire *hôtel particulier* were firmly rooted in the grand historical tradition of French residential architecture, there are two key differences. One is in the greater sense of volumetric openness, from the vestibule and entrance stair to the central hall and circulation galleries, as seen in the design for the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild. The quality of openness is due to the technological advances in materials, particularly in the use of glass in iron frames. This innovation in building materials allowed for larger expanses of glazed walls and roofs, further enhancing the perception of, and sense of connection to the adjacent spaces and the activities within. In an increasingly scenographic approach to design, adopted from the public buildings of the period, notably the new Opéra, designed by Charles Garnier (1826-1898), alternating light and dark spaces heighten the drama in the experience of the patrons progressing through the spatial sequence.

The second difference from the earlier mansions and palaces is in the manner in which the collections are presented as integral parts of the fabric of the house. The Rothschilds, as did their

contemporaries, lived with their collections in a comfortable way, as everyday objects within the spaces; not as though they were inhabiting a museum, but rather living “in a princely treasure trove.”⁴²

A New Century

The influence of the *style Rothschild* has carried through time and space, across sovereign boundaries and through the remaining decades of the nineteenth century into the early twentieth century. The supremacy of nineteenth-century French culture and aesthetics was unchallenged as these models were imported to other European countries, as seen in the residential commissions by members of the extended Rothschild family. Ferdinand de Rothschild (1839-1898) chose the renowned French architect, Gabriel-Hippolyte Destailleur (1822-1893), the architect of the restoration of the *château* of Vaux-le-Vicomte, to design his magnificent country estate at Waddesdon, England, begun in 1874 and completed in 1883, with an additional wing added in 1889. Destailleur drew his inspiration from several sixteenth and seventeenth-century French Renaissance châteaux, including those at Chambord and Maintenon. As Bruno Pons noted, “the Rothschilds of Baron Ferdinand’s generation played an important role in the annals of reuse of decorative panels.”⁴³ The paneling of the Tower Room at Waddesdon was acquired for Ferdinand by 1894. Originally designed in 1773 by Étienne-Louis Boullée (1728-1799) for the main salon of the private country estate in Issy, owned by the financier Nicolas Beaujon,⁴⁴ the panels were stripped of the original white paint down to the oak, and received a waxed finish and gilded accents on the raised sections of the panel moldings, in keeping with late nineteenth-century tastes.

Nathaniel von Rothschild (1836-1905) from the Viennese branch of the family, commissioned the French architect Jean Girette, a former student of Charles Garnier, to create a neo-Baroque mansion in the Belvedere section of Vienna, in the 1870s.⁴⁵ The Beaux-Arts trained

ornamental sculptor Antoine Ziegler (1829-1885), decorator of the Imperial Apartments designed by Viollet-Le-Duc at Pierrefonds for Napoléon III, was commissioned to design the décor of the mansion.⁴⁶

In the early twentieth century, this building tradition continued in the works of architects such as René Sergent (1865-1927), whose practice can be seen as truly international. Sergent's body of work includes numerous residential commissions, including a villa for the designer Jean Worth in Paris, a house for the Gould family in New York, a mansion for Pierpont Morgan in London and several grand mansions in Buenos Aires. He was renowned for restoration of eighteenth-century palaces as well as for new designs based on a more rigorous application of historical architectural detailing. In the design for the Louis XVI-style Hôtel Moïse de Camondo, dating from 1911-1914, Sergent's approach to design was, on the one hand, more academic, returning to a purer interpretation of historically inspired architectural details. His skill in scenographic design animated the interior, and created a more fluid conception of space, awash with light from the main stair hall and the spiral stair that leads to the family quarters on the upper floor. Sergent was later retained by the Rothschilds to renovate and modernize the Hôtel Adolphe de Rothschild on rue Monceau. He designed with

an in-depth knowledge of the techniques and secrets of renowned designers such as Mansart, Delafosse, Blondel, Gabriel, Brogniart, Ledoux or Chalgrin, which allowed him to play the "high game of classicism" as few of his contemporaries could.⁴⁷

Thus, the foremost Parisian residences of the early twentieth century contained the elements emphasized in the preceding fifty years; eclectic historical references, spatial fluidity emphasizing a scenographic experience, and the housing of significant collections of traditional art and objects, while integrating the most modern comforts and conveniences of the period.

These characteristic elements will be analyzed in depth in the case study building, the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild, in Chapter 4 of this document.



A



B

Figure 2-1. Château de Ferrières. A) Façade view from lake. B) Entrance façade. [Author's photos]



Figure 2-2. Portrait of Alphonse de Rothschild, no date. [Wikimedia Commons, p.d.]

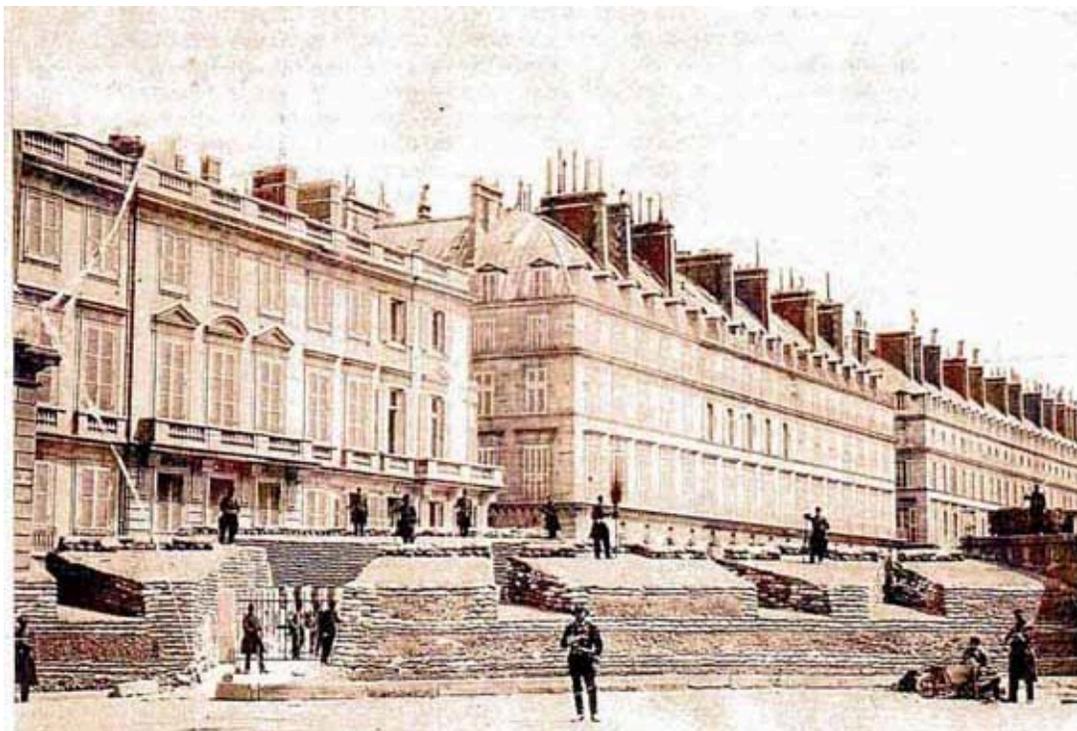


Figure 2-3. Hôtel de Talleyrand, photograph of barricades, 1871. [Scanned and reprinted with permission from author, *Concorde*, 60]



Figure 2-4. Adèle de Rothschild as a young woman. [A. Cary, *Portrait de Mme. Salomon de Rothschild*, plate 3]

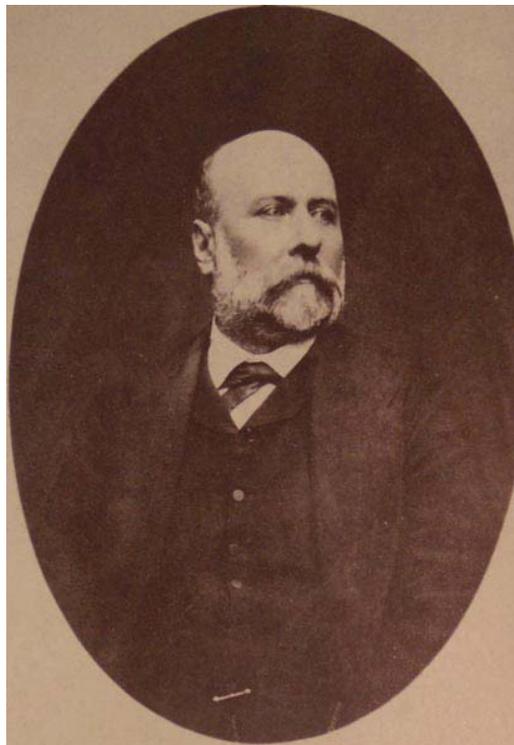


Figure 2-5. Portrait of Léon Ohnet. [A. Cary, *Léon Ohnet*, plate 6]



Figure 2-6. Waddesdon entrance façade. [Author's photo]



Figure 2-7. Tower Room at Waddesdon. [Author's photo]

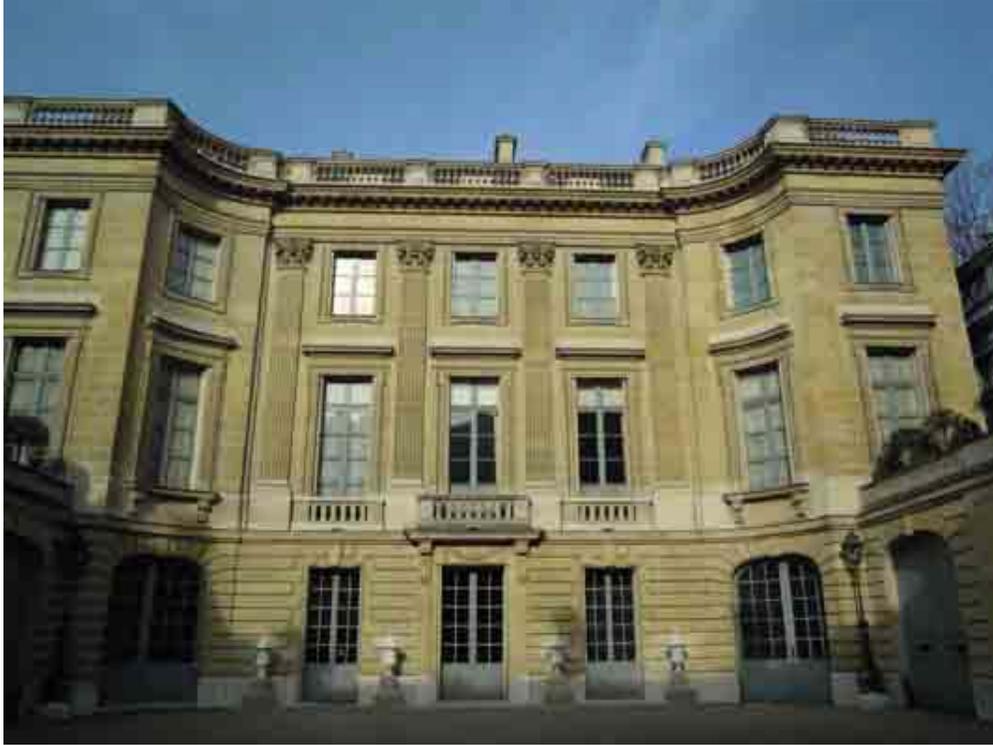


Figure 2-8. Hôtel Camondo court façade. [Author's photo]



A



B

Figure 2-9. Hôtel Camondo interiors. A) Stair hall. B) Upper hall. [Author's photos]

Notes

¹ Michael S. Smith, review of *Les Entrepreneurs du Second Empire*, by Dominique Barjot, et al., *Business History Review* (Winter 2007): 2, accessed February 14, 2010, <http://www.hbs.edu/bhr/archives/bookreviews/79/msmith.pdf>.

² Michael S. Smith, *The Emergence of Modern Business Enterprise in France, 1800-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 34.

³ Fritz Redlich, "Jacques Laffitte and the Beginnings of Investment Banking in France," *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society* 22, No. 4/6 (Dec. 1948): 137-161.

⁴ Anka Muhlstein, *The Rise of the French Rothschilds* (Paris: Vendome, 1982), 164.

⁵ Muhlstein, *French Rothschilds*, 130, figure 4.

⁶ Pauline Prévost-Marcilhacy, *Bâtisseurs et Mécènes*, (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), 306.

⁷ Muhlstein, *French Rothschilds*, 60. "The Faubourg Saint-Germain looked upon James with a certain benevolent humor."

⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 164-5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹¹ Muhlstein, *French Rothschilds*, 51. Virginia Cowles, *The Rothschilds: A Family of Fortune* (New York: Knopf, 1973), 72.

¹² Muhlstein, *French Rothschilds*, 97.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁵ Robert Carlhian and Fabrice Ouziel. *Analyse historique & technique pour l'Hôtel de Saint-Florentin (dît Hôtel de Talleyrand) Pièces Historiques: Étude Préalable à la Restauration*. (Paris: United States Department of State Foreign Buildings Operation, Février 2000), 32.

¹⁶ Fredric Bedoire, *The Jewish Contribution to Modern Architecture 1830-1930*, trans. Robert Tanner (Jersey City: KTAV Publishing, 2004), 175.

¹⁷ Muhlstein, *French Rothschilds*, 78-9.

¹⁸ Robert L. Herbert, *Impressionism: art, leisure and Parisian society* (New Haven: Yale University, 1988), 3.

¹⁹ Richard Schofield, *Along Rothschild Lines. The Story of Rothschild and Railways across the World*. Revised edition. (London: The Rothschild Archives, 2010), 8.

²⁰ Karen Bowie, *Les Grandes Gares Parisiennes au XIX Siècle* (Paris: La Délégation à l'Action Artistique de la Ville de Paris, 1987), 110-1. The total cost for the 23 statues was a sum of 82,000 francs. The company would pay half the cost upon completion of the mock-up and the other half after the execution of the work in place.

²¹ Muhlstein, *French Rothschilds*, 170.

²² Muhlstein, *French Rothschilds*, 177.

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- ²³ Bedoire, *The Jewish Contribution*, 175.
- ²⁴ Bernard Marrey and Jean-Pierre Monnet, *La grande histoire des serres & des jardins d'hiver: France 1780-1900* (Paris: Graphite, 1984), 59.
- ²⁵ Prévost-Marcilhacy, *Les Rothschilds: Bâtisseurs et Mécènes*, 93.
- ²⁶ This point is made by Loyer, Prévost-Marcilhacy and Bedoire.
- ²⁷ Information sheet from the historic site, Château de Ferrières, obtained during a site visit on December 3, 2010.
- ²⁸ Lami toured Venice in 1860. In a letter he stated that he had brought back "several new and picturesque ideas." Quote from a display panel at the château de Ferrières, December 2010.
- ²⁹ Muhlstein, p. 139. This gesture of *rapprochement* was seen as an acknowledgment of Napoléon III of the independence and power of the Rothschilds.
- ³⁰ Bedoire, *The Jewish Contribution*, 181.
- ³¹ Already a Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur, Alphonse de Rothschild received the award of Grand Croix in 1896.
- ³² Derek Wilson, *Rothschild: The Wealth and Power of a Dynasty* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1988), 246.
- ³³ Cowles, *The Rothschilds*, 146.
- ³⁴ Archives de Paris, *Bottin de Paris 1865* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1865) cote AP 2mi 3 series microfilms, 2mi3/50.
- ³⁵ Carlhian and Ouziel, *Étude Préalable à la Restauration*, p. 33. Photograph by Desvarreux, from a private collection.
- ³⁶ Carlhian and Ouziel, *Étude Préalable à la Restauration*, 32.
- ³⁷ Anonymous, "Travaux particuliers," *Le Constructeur. Organe des industries du bâtiment. Travaux publics et magasins généraux* (03/01/1865-1865/03/14), 6. This article lists Ohnet as the architect for the residence of M. de Rothschild on rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, on the party wall with Pereire (hence the residence of Charlotte and Nathaniel) but other sources attribute work to Petit and Robillard. Extant drawings by Robillard were included in Prévost-Marcilhacy, *Bâtisseurs et Mécènes*, 108.
- ³⁸ See Chapter 4 for discussion of how the successor architect, Justin Ponsard, who took over the project after Ohnet's death, carefully followed Ohnet's design intent and drawings.
- ³⁹ Bedoire, *The Jewish Contribution*, 201.
- ⁴⁰ Bertrand Lemoine, *Architecture in France 1800-1900*, trans. Alexandra Bonfante-Warren (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993), 154.
- ⁴¹ Susan Harrow, *Zola: La Curée* (University of Glasgow: French and German Publications, 1998), 17.
- ⁴² Quote from a presentation given by Dr. Ulrich Leben, entitled "A High Victorian Legacy at Waddesdon Manor: the Smoking Room, Baron Ferdinand's Treasure Room and its Contents since the Creation of Waddesdon," from the symposium entitled *American Gothic*, February 27, 2010 at the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida.
- ⁴³ Bruno Pons. *Waddesdon Manor Architecture and Paneling*. Published for the Waddesdon Trust by Wilson Publishers, 1996, 15.

⁴⁴ Selma Schwarz, *The Waddesdon Companion Guide*, (Waddesdon Manor: The National Trust, 2003), 53.

⁴⁵ Andreas Nierhaus, "France as an example: The Rothschild Palaces in Vienna." *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst- und Denkmal Pflege* 2008 Heft. Bundesdenkmalamt. <http://www.bda.at/text/136/1091/113115/#nierhaus>.

⁴⁶ Antoine Zoegger, drawing entitled *Projet de décor de la bibliothèque du Palais Nathaniel de Rothschild*, (c. 1875), from the exposition, "Le décorateur et l'amateur d'art. Décors intérieurs," Paris, France, 2008, Musée d'Orsay website, accessed March 4, 2011, http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/index-of-works/notice.html?no_cache=1&nnumid=66647&cHash=adf97fae9f.

⁴⁷ Fabio Gremientieri, *The Bosch Palace. Reappraisal, Restoration and Renovation Project*, trans. Kathleen Dolan (Buenos Aires: Pablo Corral, 2001), 37.

CHAPTER 3
CURIO SHOPS AND VIRGIN FORESTS: TRADITION, INVENTION AND SPECTACLE IN
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY HÔTEL PARTICULIER

Ohnet and the Dualism of Tradition and Invention

Léon Ohnet was one of a small group of select architects commissioned by the Rothschilds for the design of their residences. Even with this prestigious clientele, the name of Ohnet has been largely unrecognized by history. This may be due to Ohnet's modest nature, unlike his contemporaries he was not a prolific writer on architectural theory, nor did he design major public commissions.¹ Through analysis of his work, he can be understood as an architect whose design aesthetic expressed the dual nature of the mainstream of French mid-nineteenth century architecture, an approach that was simultaneously "inventive and indebted to a rich cultural tradition."²

Ohnet's architectural education followed the traditional path of classical training in the context of an era when alternatives to academic neoclassicism were developing in the broadening terrain of influences on French architectural design theory. Accepted into the École des Beaux Arts in January 1832, Ohnet pursued his architectural studies for at least four years and won a medal for his drawings on iron construction in 1836.³

Radical new ideas were in the air at the École during this period and while neoclassicism was the sanctioned architectural language, there was an increasingly expanded range of historical models considered as appropriate for reference. This tendency, coupled with the inventive use and expressive possibilities afforded by new materials, was radically altering the approach to design. The developments in architectural theory of the 1830s and 1840s deeply influenced Ohnet's generation. In order to better see with the "period eye" of the second half of the nineteenth century, this architectural journey must be understood, as it progressed from the use of strictly prescribed "antique" historical models in the neoclassicism of the Restoration period

(1816-1830), to the free combinations of a more diverse set of historical references in the movement of Second Empire eclecticism (1851-1870).

École des Beaux Arts and the Supremacy of French Classicism

Invention came late to the designs executed for the Grand Prix de Rome in the nineteenth century École des Beaux Arts. It was only in 1865, one of the years in which Ohnet served as a juror for the Prix de Rome competition in architecture and some thirty years after his student days there, that the prize winning project for a “Large Hôtel for Travelers” celebrated the exposure of the large scale iron structural frame, rather than concealing the structure within the accepted material of monumentality: masonry.⁴ The successful student, Louis Noguet (1835-1883), may have taken his inspiration from the iron and glass roof designed in 1863, by Jacques-Félix Duban (1797-1870), which covered the courtyard of the Grande Salle des Antiquités at the École des Beaux-Arts.⁵

Along with Pierre-François-Henri Labrouste (1801-1875), Joseph-Louis Duc (1802-1879) and Léon Vaudoyer (1803-1872), Duban was one of the group which Loyer calls the “four Prix de Rome musketeers of the *avant-garde*”⁶ who studied together at the Villa Medici in Rome during a period from 1825 to 1832. By the early 1830s, during the years of Ohnet’s formative education at the École, these four young architects were designing with a new understanding of historical precedents, a wider range of architectural references and a nascent conception of Rationalist theory, and were developing the movement known as Romanticism in architecture. Thirty years later, these four architects had all produced major public buildings, had been published widely and by the end of the 1860s had all been elected to the Académie des Beaux-Arts, proclaiming them part of the architectural establishment.

Duban and his colleagues had gained a formal education that was steeped in the neoclassicism favored by the architecture section of the French Institute, the Académie des

Beaux-Arts, and by extension, the architectural curriculum of the *École des Beaux-Arts*.

Although part of a separate institution, the *Académie*, had the right to nominate the professors of the school and to control the programs for, and the judging of the *Grand Prix de Rome* competitions thus exerting a profound influence on the design philosophy championed by the faculty. As part of their training, students were also affiliated with the *ateliers*, studios established by some of the architect members of the *Académie*.

The generation of architects who gained control of the *Académie*, after the reorganization by the French Institute⁷ following the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy, included A.-C. Quatremère de Quincy (1755-1849), A. Vaudoyer (1756-1846), the father of Léon Vaudoyer, and the architects Charles Percier (1764-1838), Pierre Fontaine (1762-1853), Jean-Baptiste Rondelet (1743-1729) and François Debret (1777-1850), who were characterized as “old men when elected, and this only reinforced their tendency toward conservatism.”⁸ Quatremère de Quincy held the post of permanent director of the *Académie* until 1839. This conservatism looked to the pre-Revolutionary rules of design promulgated by the royal academies of the *ancien régime*; symmetry, axuality and proportion as the basis for eternal and universal principles of beauty derived from nature and from the study of the known models of ancient Greek and Roman architecture, with a heavy reliance on the classical texts of antiquity.

This vision of the architectural ideal was increasingly challenged by the findings of archeologists throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when newly discovered physical evidence greatly expanded the understanding of the architecture and décor of past cultures and periods. Through these discoveries, the past became more tangible and less idealized. As Loyer notes, “undiscriminating enthusiasm was superseded by critical analysis.”⁹

The young “Romantics” at the Villa Medici in Rome rebelled against the limitations placed on their choices for study. In a series of letters to his conservative architect father, the younger Vaudoyer voiced his opinion of the status quo, made up of “*éteignoirs*,” a term referring to candle snuffers, used metaphorically for those who refused the young architects the freedom to study antique architectural monuments beyond the approved models.¹⁰ Vaudoyer, along with his contemporaries, championed the idea of “continual progress” in the historical evolution of architectural design in response to the social and cultural forces of a particular time and place. Labrouste, the *Grand Prix* winner of 1827, was the principal instigator of the new vision of classicism at the Academy in Rome, with his controversial project that reordered the construction sequence of the temple complex at Paestum. His mature works made use of the broader range of historical models in highly innovative ways, as seen in the Bibliothèque Saint-Geneviève of 1845.

By the early 1840s, an expanded inventory of French and Italian historical architectural forms, along with references from other cultures and eras, was available to architects. Elements of the Romanesque, Gothic and early Renaissance were incorporated into major buildings of the Louis-Philippe period, as seen in Duban’s project for the new Musée des Études at the École des Beaux-Arts. Constructed between 1832 and 1840, the project was conceived as a “historically eclectic museum of French Gothic and Renaissance fragments.”¹¹ Duban continued his work on the École des Beaux-Arts complex for four decades,¹² and his designs epitomized the duality of the nineteenth century tradition, from which he drew on a wide range of historical forms and details, and invention, in the integration of the modern materials of an iron and glass roof and cast iron support columns which enclosed the open courtyard of the Grande Salle des Antiquités.

One of Ohnet's more famous contemporaries was Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-Le-Duc (1814-1879). While they were colleagues, both working as diocesan architects during the 1850s and 1860s, and while there was evidence of mutual respect from the records of the proceedings that document their service together on the Commission des Arts et Edifices Religieux,¹³ these two architects had radically different approaches to design, reflecting the great diversity of architectural expression in the middle and later years of the century. Whereas Ohnet was steeped in the traditional path of French academic training, Viollet-le-Duc refused to attend the École des Beaux-Arts.¹⁴ Appointed as an *auditeur-suppléant* in 1838, to the Commission des Monuments Historiques¹⁵, Viollet-Le-Duc undertook several important restoration projects for the nascent movement of preserving France's great historic monuments. Early on, he was captivated by the Gothic style, popularized by Victor Hugo in his 1831 Romantic novel, *Notre Dame de Paris* (*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*). In 1844, along with his colleague Jean-Baptiste Lassus, Viollet-Le-Duc won the architectural competition for the restoration of the cathedral of Notre Dame.¹⁶ He began writing essays for the newly founded journal, *Annals archéologiques*, and formulating his Rationalist theory, which transcended the narrow confines of style to form a theory of design based on responding to modern needs and building with modern materials. The approach is one of synthesis, not "revivalism," a process described in John Summerson's essay on Viollet-Le-Duc.

The architect's education must therefore, proceed in two stages. First he must learn how to analyze the masterpieces of the past, then he must learn to make his own synthesis, serving the conditions and using the materials dictated by his age.¹⁷

In contrast to Viollet-Le-Duc's tendencies to openly express modern materials within his later architectural works, Ohnet adopted the mainstream position of using the wide range of available historical models for the exterior composition, and in concealing the structure with traditional materials. While no theoretical writings by Ohnet have been found to date, by

studying his body of work and life history, certain conclusions may be suggested. The expanded range of historical precedents established through the work of the Romantics during Ohnet's student days was exploited in his works from the late 1840s through the 1860s.¹⁸ Coupled with his experiences in designing industrial buildings, factories and train stations, the dual forces of tradition and invention exerted a powerful influence on his later works. Later in his career, he seemed to gravitate to the late eighteenth-century neoclassicism as his preferred source of inspiration for architectural design. This choice of architectural expression was juxtaposed with his innovative plan organizations, which created dramatic spatial experiences through the manipulation of light and dark spaces to create "pivot points" in the principal organizing axes along the circulation paths. This technique of enlivening the experience of progressing through the spaces culminated in the design of the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild.

Eclectic Behavior

In the seventeenth century, Louis XIV had created the Académie royale d'architecture to promote his ambitions for an architecture that expressed a national character. This notion of a national character held great appeal for Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, (later Napoléon III). As part of a campaign to legitimize his own rule, through associating his Second Empire with the glory of the first empire of his uncle, Napoléon III resurrected the project to complete the Louvre. Duban began the project in 1848 and work on the complex was continued in the 1850s by the architects Visconti and Lefuel. The work was

executed in an eclectic style: Italian and French Renaissance elements, but predominately borrowings from the Louis styles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in keeping with the character of a national monument built mainly in those centuries.¹⁹

Lefuel's interior design for the suite of apartments for Napoléon III's state minister, Achille Fould, adopted the heavy gilded treatment of the ornament and paneling popularized

several decades earlier by the Rothschilds and other wealthy entrepreneurs. Bedoire describes these interiors as “one of the most opulent in nineteenth century Europe,” which served as inspiration for the interior palettes of the new Garnier Opéra.²⁰

In *Architecture of the Industrial Age*, Loyer characterizes eclecticism as a behavior rather than a theory, where the past, “in the reading given it, is placed totally at the service of the modern vision of form.”²¹ The elegant *hôtels particuliers* constructed in the newly developed residential districts around the Parc Monceau, along the Champs-Élysées and in the Quartier du Roule, took their architectural cues from the notion of a national character inspired by the architecture from the reigns of the Bourbon dynasty, the Louis styles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The exterior design would reflect a fairly homogeneous composition with details of the selected period, and the interiors would contain a collection of spaces, each with their coherent composition of architectural features from these major periods of design. The interior furnishings could be drawn from many periods, creating the eclectic mix later described sometimes disparagingly, as *tous les Louis*. But the key development in residential architecture would be the changing social values surrounding public and private life and the culture’s fascination with visual spectacle.

Daly and the Eclectic “Clothing” of the *Hôtel Particulier*

In the case of private architecture, the needs of the domestic life were to become the driving force in the organization of the plan, while encasing these more modern conceptions of space in the “clothing” of a rich variety of historical references. This metaphor was used by the influential architectural critic and architect, César Daly, to describe the role of the modern residence of the 1860s as

clothing for the family, destined to serve as envelope, to provide shelter and to lend itself to all their activities, protect them from the elements, harmonize with the

simplicity (rusticity) or the refinement of their habits, to bend to their taste and even a bit to their whims.²²

One notable private commission, designed by Labrouste, was a *hôtel particulier* which was widely publicized by the architectural press of the Second Empire. Daly published drawings of Labrouste's design for a French Renaissance-inspired *hôtel* created for the banker Louis Fould, the brother of Napoléon's minister Achille Fould, in the *Revue de l'architecture et des travaux publics*.²³ In an interview for the article, Labrouste's client noted his love for the architecture of the *style Louis XIII*, but wanted "no pastiche" and directed his architect to incorporate façade sculptures from other periods,²⁴ thereby dictating an eclectic aesthetic. The selection of construction materials, including the gray slate mansard roof and walls composed of red brick and light colored stone trim, was inspired by buildings from the reign of Henry IV in the early seventeenth century, such as those found around the Place des Vosges. A famous denizen of the Place des Vosges, Victor Hugo, described this type of architecture as a "*style tricolore*."²⁵

Daly returns again to the example of Labrouste's Hôtel Fould in his discussion of the ideal characteristics of the modern urban mansion in his highly significant work entitled *L'Architecture privée au dix-neuvième siècle sous Napoléon III*. The book was presented as a primer on the design of urban mansions, apartment buildings and suburban villas, using examples of each building type that were constructed between the declaration of the Second Empire in 1852, and the 1864 publication date, a date which preceded by just a few years, Ohnet's work for the Rothschild residences.

Daly begins his discussion with a comparison between the forces that drive the design considerations of the modern *hôtel privé* (*hôtel particulier*) and those that created the *hôtel particulier* of the *ancien régime*, noting that while there are some analogies between the general plan layout, the grand, noble and formal *distribution* and function of spaces of the past do not

lend themselves readily to the demands and needs of the new style of modern living.²⁶ The term *distribution* had evolved, by the mid-eighteenth century, to describe not only the arrangement of the spaces in the floor plan, but also the entire decorative program that contributes to the desired visual effect. By the mid-nineteenth century, the meaning of the term, *distribution*, was essentially unchanged; however, the radically different social and cultural mores dictated a different arrangement of spaces and functions in the *hôtels particuliers* built during this period.

While the new urban mansion does not exclude the desire for highly refined and artistic decorative schemes, the primary design concerns must address the needs of modern hygiene and health, comfort in daily life, and accommodate both the intimate needs of family life as well as the “charms of social relations.” To illustrate this point, Daly describes the modern role of the *salon*, and notes that it is not enough that the space possesses an ornate décor and is richly furnished; the space must also be both warm and well-ventilated. In his commentary he provides some insight into the sociological and cultural aspects of the period, while the *vestibule* may be monumentally scaled, it must not create conditions that “cause a chill in the elegant and delicate woman who must walk across this space, or who wishes to stop a moment upon leaving the warm and scented atmosphere of a party.”²⁷

Rules for the layout of the floor plan of the modern *hôtel* and its *distribution*, are precisely described in the text.

Thus in summary, what we call the *hôtel*, is subdivided in three clearly defined sections: reception rooms, the family apartments and domestic services, with the varied requirements for each space to function properly.

Also, today, the plan layout (distribution) generally adopted for private residences should have the following layout;

At the level of the cellar, One part is transformed most often into a partial basement, where the kitchen is located with all its dependencies, (when there is not cellar level, the kitchen is placed on a part of the ground floor).

At the ground floor (the level of the street floor, or the *rez-de-chaussée*) but elevated or raised, are the reception rooms, the dining rooms, ceremonial rooms and galleries, salons, game rooms, etc.

At the first floor (floor above the ground floor) are suites of rooms for family members.

At the second floor, bedrooms for friends and guests or some of the family.

The service spaces and dependencies such as stables, coach houses, tack rooms, cow sheds and servants' lodgings are placed in separate structures, and separated as much as possible around the entrance court that isolates the mansion from the street, and the garden which often extends from the rear of the mansion.²⁸

Some variations to this organizational plan may be necessary, particularly on tight urban sites. Daly notes that in this case, the *rez-de-chaussée* may be given over to the service space requirements and that the principal reception spaces may need to be elevated to the first level above, the *grand étage*. Although Daly does not specifically say so, this arrangement is common to the *hôtels particuliers* of the *ancien régime*, built in the dense urban areas of pre-Second Empire Paris, as seen in the discussion in the previous chapter regarding the Hôtel de Talleyrand.

The societal position of the client also plays a role in the architectural expression of the edifice. This notion had its antecedents in the eighteenth-century movement known as “*architecture parlante*,” defined as “speaking architecture” or “narrative architecture,”²⁹ a theoretical concept where the architecture would incorporate a symbol for the function of the building and the identity of the owner. One such example is the House for the supervisors of the water source of the river Loué, by Claude Ledoux (1736-1806), which features the river running through the center of the structure. By the later nineteenth century this notion of symbolism of form was translated to symbolism of architectural style. Daly extends this concept through his recommendations for a nineteenth century *hôtel* wherein a more sober type of architecture might be chosen for a magistrate than for a *hôtel* with a *caractère special* (unique character), where the

client may be an artist (architect, painter or sculptor). A client who is a collector will have other needs in addition to accommodating the needs of family life only.

When the client loves the arts, if he owns statues, paintings, the architect should create special features in the gallery space, so that these works are shown in conditions that are especially favorable to display and to lighting.³⁰

In the catalogue of examples that follow the text, Daly created a taxonomy of characteristics for the new urban mansions, designating them as first, second or third class. Daly provides an extensive discussion of one notable example; the *style Louis XIV* inspired *hôtel privé première classe*, (first class), by the architect Edouard-Emmanuel Convent (b. 1825), and the architect and decorative painter François-Joseph Nolau (1804–1886).³¹ Eleven plates are dedicated to this elegant building constructed at 8, rue de Valois du Roule,³² which was renamed rue Monceau after 1868.³³ The large L-shaped urban site organizes the traditional components of the *hôtel* with the entrance *portail* and the *bâtiments des gardiens* (guardian's pavilions flanking the entrance gates) opening into the *cour d'honneur*. The main residence is set well back onto the site, between the adjacent structures, with a large garden in the rear. The dependencies, stables, carriage houses and servants' apartments, are set out of sight of the main house and are accessed through the main gate and through a side passage built against the adjacent property line.³⁴

The plan distribution closely follows Daly's recommendations for spatial organization, with the *sous-sol* (below-grade level) housing the kitchens and service spaces for the *maitre d'hôtel*, food storage, pastry areas and waiting room for other domestic staff. The *rez-de-chaussée* contains the oval-shaped vestibule and the principal public spaces, the salons and dining rooms are elevated by a half flight of stairs. Service functions, including service stairs as well as the *grand escalier*, are grouped on either side of the principal block. Circulation between the principal spaces is direct, without reliance on halls or galleries between them. Convent's design focuses on the character of the rooms, not on the experience of moving from one space to

another. In contrast, Ohnet's design for the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild, emphasized dramatic circulation spaces as an innovative feature of the *distribution*. Refer to chapter 5 for this discussion.

In the Convent plan, the first floor above the main level contains the apartments of both the client and his wife, her sitting room, his study, the baths and dressing areas, a family dining room, a smoking room, and bedrooms for their guests. The central hall is labeled as a *jardin d'hiver*, a winter garden space, with small fountains at either end of the wide hall. This space is top-lit by three glazed lights that carry borrowed light down from the attic floor level.

The fascination with domestic architecture for the new "aristocracy" of the *haute bourgeoisie* was even reflected in the design program for the 1866 Prix de Rome competition, the last year in which Ohnet served as a juror on the selection panel.³⁵ The project title was a *Hôtel à Paris pour riche banquier* (Town house in Paris for a Rich Banker), Jean-Louis Pascal (1837-1920) won the Grand Prix with a design inspired by the architecture of the Louis XIV period.³⁶ Pascal later succeeded Labrousse as the architect for the Bibliothèque Nationale.³⁷ Pascal's design contains the principal architectural ideas found in the reigning Second Empire style of the period; an overall symmetry and axuality to the plan composition, façade references drawn from French Classicism, in this case the French Renaissance, the glazed dome over the central court that washes the light over a monumental stair as a celebration of the spectacle of movement through the space, lush plantings in the public spaces and a winter garden.

Eclecticism and Symbolism in the Interior Décor

Tasteful Elegance

Just as Daly's work focused on the exterior architecture and the plan distribution of the Second Empire, numerous publications from the period discussed the features of a proper decorative program for the principal spaces. One example is the *Dictionnaire du tapissier*,

critique et historique de l'ameublement, by J. Deville, published around 1878.³⁸ In this work, Daville described the aspects of contemporary design that achieved the tasteful elegance sought after by the architects and clients of the *hôtel particulier*. Architects and *ornementistes* could employ the available range of architectural styles to convey and reinforce the clients' image through the culturally accepted symbolism that was imbued in each style, but as Daville admonished in his text, the designer was to maintain a consistency of décor within each discrete space, rather than resort to a mixing of motifs within a space.

Salons, Grands et Petits

There was a protocol for selecting the architectural character for each of the spaces forming a common language understood within the culture. For example, the reception spaces of the Second Empire *hôtel particulier* were comprised of several types of *salons*. The *grand salon* was an elaborately decorated space that should reflect the standing of the client and above all, a serious level of good taste and stability. The *style Louis XIV* conveyed the correct character, with the emphasis on the monumental scale, balanced proportions of height to length and width and regular placement of wall openings and sections of carved paneling in regular modules, which formed the important frame for the decorative scheme. The ceilings were generally coffered, the walls were paneled with robustly carved and gilded moldings, and mirrors were placed opposite the richly colored marble chimney piece.

Smaller reception rooms, the *petits salons*, flanked the *grand salon*. Daville noted that it was not unusual to select a *style Louis XV* or *Louis XVI* for the architectural features of the *petit salon* adjacent to a *grand salon* in a *style Louis XIV*, but to create a sense of visual continuity between the spaces by using the same fabrics in the draperies and in the upholstery. The reputation of the designer would be determined by the ability to create an ensemble of visual effects that was harmoniously related.³⁹ The *petit salon de reception* was used as a formal

entertaining area. A style Louis XVI *petit salon* would be decorated with painted wood panels in a pale color, with gilded moldings and delicately scaled neoclassical furnishings. The wealthiest patrons would use eighteenth-century furniture rather than reproductions. Here, Daville directed the architect to retain control over the selection of the chimney piece, as their role was to preside over the entire decorative program, and some clients lacked the knowledge, or taste level to select an appropriate piece.⁴⁰ The second type of *petit salon* was a *salon de famille*, meant for more intimate gatherings, where

the grand parents would have card games, the ladies would work on their embroidery and the children would read newspapers or illustrated books, it is here that by necessity, intimacy can be created; make this room a fanciful place.⁴¹

Thus, while basing the design on a defined style, the introduction of eclectic elements to create a less rigid character within this type of space was permissible.

Salle à Manger

Just as with the several types of *salons*, the dining spaces were divided by role and sized accordingly. For large dinners and gatherings, there would be a *grand salle à manger* with a large table. This space would be located near the *grand salon*, and have the service access spaces, the *offices* and staging areas adjacent. Several architectural themes were considered appropriate, such as an Italian Renaissance inspired hall, others would present a somber *style Louis XIII* or *style Louis XIV*. In many cases, stained wood paneling in mid-range tones with a waxed finish would cover the wainscot or the full height of the space. The ceilings were decorated with large paintings in molded frames, or with beamed ceilings *à la française*. For the family, a small dining area, a *petit Salle à manger*, often decorated in a style Louis XVI, would be located near the *petit salon de famille*.

Private Spaces and Exotic Tastes

Turning to other cultures and periods for inspiration, a fascination with the Orient became a recurring theme in all of the arts beginning in the eighteenth century and continuing through the nineteenth century. The Near East and the Holy Lands were increasingly popular tourist destinations during the mid-nineteenth century.

Interest in things oriental, greater in Paris than in other European cities, was accompanied by a profounder knowledge of color in architecture.⁴²

Moorish elements were especially popular for certain specialized interior spaces, often seen in *fumeurs* or smoking rooms. These spaces were seen as a sort of *petit salon* for men and could be designed in an imaginative style; hence the popularity of Moorish or Turkish styled interiors. These spaces were best suited to wall treatments with wood paneling, dressed leather wall coverings, or patterned glazed tiles and were not lavishly draped with fabric, to avoid retaining the smell of smoke. Stained and colored glass in the window openings was often employed in lieu of fabric draperies. Exotically themed interiors were employed in garden pavilions, such as the interior of the Kiosque in the garden of the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild.

Some decorative motifs, including the Star of David and inscribed text written with Hebrew letters, were associated with Jewish culture and could be found on funerary monuments and in synagogue design.⁴³ In a residential setting, private areas for worship were often incorporated into the design, such as the *oratoire* in the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild, where the niche for the Torah Ark was defined by a horseshoe shaped arch and embellished with plaster decoration of geometric patterning.⁴⁴

Thus, the eclecticism of the architecture for Second Empire period *hôtels particuliers* can also be seen as an inventive response to the new social order that arose after the revolution of

1848. While drawing on the rich historical sources in order to create architecture for a new age, a new freedom in the composition of architectural elements triumphed over a strict imitative use of historical models.

Invention: Industrial Architecture and New Technologies

Covered *Passages*

The other significant component in understanding the “period eye” of the later nineteenth century was the technological revolution in building materials and structures. Seen first in industrial architecture such as in factories and in civil infrastructure, bridges and canals, the new materials migrated into use in public, commercial and eventually into residential building types.

All in all, historicism in the nineteenth century is inseparable from the myriad of issues surrounding the creation of modern democratic nations suited to the new economic realities of the industrial world. Within this arena of competing social and economic forces, traditional architectural values and technology clash in a way that they never did before.⁴⁵

The search for techniques to bring more light into interior spaces began in earnest in the eighteenth century, and by the early nineteenth century, cast iron supports and iron and glass roof structures were appearing in the new commercial spaces of the city. The covered arcades or *passages* of the 1820s “sought to respond to the demand for luxury of the aristocratic clientele of a great capital.”⁴⁶ The *passages* combined both spatial experimentation and visual spectacle in the richly decorative interior themes, with the iron and glass roofs illuminating the glittering display of goods for sale in the boutiques that lined the passage, “making the passage more akin to the palace than to the boutique.”⁴⁷ As seen in the Galerie Vivienne of 1823, a series of light iron trusses carry the iron-framed glass roofs, with operable sections, over a Restoration period interior décor. The daylight washed over the storefronts and the display of goods onto the arcade floors, and created a rich, visual environment of glimmering, gilded architectural ornament, which married commerce and social interaction in new ways, ultimately leading to the grand

glass-roofed department stores of the later nineteenth century. Within the context of residential architecture, the display of art, objects, furnishings and décor was enhanced by the introduction of large amounts of daylight into specially designed “gallery” spaces became a necessary feature of the elegant Second Empire *hôtel particulier*.

Railroad Stations

Technological advances in materials made larger expanses of glazing possible and even more spectacular spaces were developed in two public building types; train stations and greenhouses or *serres*. It is in the train stations that the duality of the nineteenth century, tradition and invention, is most evident. By the late 1850s and the early 1860s, development of the railroad industry had accelerated, with the wealthiest entrepreneurs of the day taking the lead, as seen in the previous chapter’s discussion of the Rothschild and Péreire families. These expanded rail lines demanded new architectural infrastructure, and the largest project of this period was the new terminus station for the Gare du Nord. The large glass roofs of the train sheds were supported by cast iron columns, in the new station of the early 1860s.

This example is significant for this study, as the Compagnie de Chemin du Fer du Nord initially consulted with Léon Ohnet to work with the railroad’s architect, Lejeune, to produce preliminary designs, or *avant-projets* between 1857-60.⁴⁸ It is probable that these early lessons in iron and glass construction and the luminous qualities of the resultant spaces influenced Ohnet’s later design approach to his residential commissions, as seen in the spatial character of the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild to be discussed in Chapter 4.⁴⁹

Structural Frame

By the second half of the nineteenth century, iron was used increasingly as part of the structural framing system in the grand residences, but was always concealed within the “acceptable” external material of stone.⁵⁰ Even in the retrofit of an eighteenth-century *hôtel*

particulier for a nineteenth century life, the strength of iron was exploited to advantage, but the material always remained concealed from view.

The pitched street battles of the Commune in 1871 which resulted in major destruction to a number of the city's major buildings, including the Hôtel de Ville, proved the wisdom of the structural framing fortifications made by Alphonse de Rothschild to the Hôtel de Talleyrand, essentially turning the building into a "strongbox."⁵¹ The iron floor framing reinforcement was uncovered during the rehabilitation project of 2009 when the building was retrofitted to receive air conditioning, but is once again concealed under the restored wood parquet flooring.

Development of Iron and Glass *Serres*

The evolution of the *serre* (greenhouse) and the *jardin d'hiver* (winter garden), both for public and private projects, pushed the technical boundaries of iron and glass construction. Cross-pollination between French and English models accelerated these developments. Greenhouses in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century were usually constructed from wood and glass, or a combination of iron columns and wall framing with wood framing rafters supporting a glass and iron roof structure. One of the earliest glass structures framed completely from iron was designed by Charles Rohault de Fleury (1801-1875) for the Paris Museum of Natural History. The greater strength inherent in curved roof forms allowed for the advantage of longer spans between supports and the larger panes of glass were made possible by improvements in French glass-making.⁵² The architect was able to increase the size of the glass surface to 30 cm x 30 cm panes, in contrast to the English glass sections of 20 cm x 10 cm, thus allowing for more light to penetrate the interior. Rohault de Fleury's great contribution was his understanding that "what horticulturalists wanted was a glass cage, and that architecture should appear only as geometric tracery."⁵³

Other notable French examples included the huge iron and glass structure housing vast public gardens in the 1846 Jardin d'hiver (winter garden) on the Champs Élysées. The most spectacular of the iron and glass structures at midcentury was the Crystal Palace designed by Joseph Paxton, at the London Great Exhibition of 1851. A monumentally scaled iron and glass structure was also proposed for this Exhibition by the French architect Hector Horeau (1801-1872), in 1849, predating Paxton's construction.⁵⁴ Horeau's notable works include the Jardin d'Hiver in Lyon of 1846-7.⁵⁵

Jardins d'hivers and the Taming of Nature

The *jardin d'hiver* (a type of *serre* or greenhouse structure used to extend living areas or provide a year-round garden space protected from the elements), had attained great popularity as status symbols within the domestic architecture of the *haute bourgeoisie* in the mid-nineteenth century.

In addition to satisfying the passion for beautiful and rare plants among the class of famous entrepreneurs and financiers, the greenhouses also figure as one of the building types that created innovations in architecture from the standpoint of construction materials and techniques, much as did the train stations or the covered markets. They were also seen as a sign of modernity. Following the trend among the Rothschilds, . . . , the less known bourgeoisie threw themselves into the culture of rare plants, and these *coelogine massengeana*, (a type of orchid) became an exterior sign of wealth.⁵⁶

In the urban context, small *serres* were attached to apartment buildings, beginning in the early 1860s and achieving a pinnacle of popularity by 1890. An early example of an iron and glass bay was constructed at 32, rue Malesherbes and illustrated in César Daly's 1864 publication, *L'Architecture Privée au dix-neuvième siècle. Nouvelles maisons de Paris et des environs*. In describing the corner treatment for an apartment building at the intersection of the boulevard Malesherbes and the rue des Mathurins, comprised of four stories of stacked circular bay window gardens, Daly writes that it is the "stacked winter garden spaces, open to the *salons*

that create the effect of a crystal tower.”⁵⁷ This example predates the popular use of these glass bays by at least 20 years.

A related architectural feature is the single bay window, used on the façades of *hôtels particuliers* to achieve more open views down a street and to add additional natural light to an interior space. One notable example is the corner bay window of iron and glass that was constructed in the late Second Empire addition for the Hôtel de Talleyrand, designed by Léon Ohnet prior to 1871. While skillfully blending the exterior expression of the form with the existing neoclassical façades, this window created a contemporary interpretation of space. With the emphasis on opening the corner of a room, the treatment of the placement of the wall opening is a decidedly radical break with the fenestration pattern seen in the rest of the eighteenth-century *hôtel particulier*.

The attached *jardin d’hiver*, or winter garden, was incorporated in the residential architecture of the wealthy classes as early as the eighteenth century for purposes of display of exotic plants rather than for their cultivation. It was during the reign of Louis-Philippe that the role of this space became one of reception, an extension of the *salon*, “wherein one could easily converse, read or play a game of whist...while admiring the plants.”⁵⁸ Cited by Marrey and Masset in their book, *La grande histoire des serres & des jardins d’hiver, France 1780-1900*, the evocative scene from Balzac’s 1831 work, *La peau de chagrin*, captures the essential character and meaning of these spaces. In the scene, a young married couple is having lunch in the *serre*,

a type of salon filled with flowers, on the same level as the garden. The soft and pale winter sun, whose rays strike across the rare shrubs, warmed the air. Their eyes were delighted by the strong contrasts among the varied foliage, by the colors of the sprigs of flowers and by the fantasies of light and shade. While all of Paris still warmed themselves before their sad foyers, the two young spouses laughed under a bower of camellias, lilacs and heather. Their happy faces were raised above the narcissus, the lilies-of-the-valley, and the Bengal roses. In this voluptuous and rich *serre*, their feet strolled through an African braid richly colored like a carpet.⁵⁹

While these types of *serres* were not common until the 1850s, the glazed spaces became an essential component of the mansions of the *haute bourgeoisie* during the Second Empire.

Detailed drawings for an attached *serre* were included in Daly's compendium of Second Empire *hôtels particuliers*. This example, located at 47, rue des Victoires, was designed by the architect M. Ruprich-Robert. The iron and glass structures with iron floral motifs are suspended on the interior court façades. One forms the court side wall of the *jardin d'hiver* space that is situated in the sequence of public rooms, nestled between a Salon and the Billiards Room. The second space forms a *galerie vitrée*, or glazed gallery, which runs along the demising wall of the property line and provides a circulation path around the perimeter of the hôtel court at the *premier étage*.⁶⁰

These interior garden spaces performed several important architectural and social functions. On a practical level, these spaces were viewed as a way of bringing nature into the residential architecture of the period, particularly in an urban setting. A charming account of the relationship of plants to architecture was written by W. Robinson, F.L.S. (1838-1935), a British correspondent from *The Times* for the Horticultural department of the Great Paris Exhibition of 1867. In *The Parks, Promenades & Gardens of Paris*, published in 1869, Robinson contrasted the Continental approach to the use of plants to those of Great Britain, and in two chapters, he highlighted the design character and spatial effects achieved with plants in the interior of the French residences. The following scene that he describes is reminiscent of the rendering of the interior of Pascal's winning design for a *hôtel particulier* for the 1866 Grand Prix de Rome.

The wide staircase ascending from the entrance hall had also a charming array of plants so placed that the visitors seemed to pass through a sort of floral grove – fine leaved plants arching over, but not rising very high and have a profusion of flowering things among and beneath them...the groups of tall plants were placed opposite this staircase, and reflected in the great mirror behind, the effect when descending the staircase was fascinating indeed. A still finer effect was produced in a room near the great dancing saloon, and through which the guests passed to the magnificent ball-room. Against each pillar in this saloon was placed a tall palm

with high and arching leaves like those of *Seaforthia elegans* and others with longer leaves and pendulous leaflets. These meeting, or almost meeting across, produced a very graceful and imposing effect, while round them were arranged other plants distinguished either by beauty of leaf or flower, and the groups at each pillar connected by single rows of dwarf plants, closely placed, however and well mossed in as in the case of the most important groups. The very close planting of the plants is a peculiar part of the arrangement, - you cannot notice any dividing marks or gaps, yet there is not awkward crowding. The fact is that with an abundance of plants distinguished by beauty of form, it is almost impossible to make a mistake in arranging them.⁶¹

Robinson continues his admiration in an ode to the French *jardin d'hiver*,

There are few things more worthy of the attention of the numbers interested in indoor gardening in this country than the superior mode of embellishing conservatories and winter gardens which is the rule in France and on the continent generally. Conservatories and similar structures. . . wherever they are erected they are gracefully verdant at all times, being filled with handsome exotic evergreens, planted and arranged so as to present the appearance of a mass of luxuriant vegetation, and not that of a glass shed filled with pots and prettiness with which we are all so familiar. . . . continental plan of divesting the interior of the conservatory of all formality” , the presentation of the conservatory as “...a somewhat permanent and architectural character”, noting that plants show better in a subdued light than in that of the glass shed.⁶²

The *jardin d'hiver* was also heavily imbued with cultural symbolism and was celebrated in the arts and literature of the period. Edouard Manet’s painting “In the Conservatory” is analyzed in detail by art historian Robert Herbert in his work *Impression: Art, Leisure & Parisian Society*.

In setting the stage for the social context of the painting, Herbert notes:

Natural growth became a social commodity, a garden poured into containers, and enframed in a cage of glass and iron, the same modern materials used for fair buildings and for department stores. Indoor gardens became *de rigueur* in Haussmanian Paris.⁶³

These spaces can also be seen as an extension of the passion for the collection of art, objects and artifacts, which was a defining attribute of the cultural elite of this period. The collecting of rare or exotic species of plants was a natural extension of this activity, inspired in part by the rise of an interest in exoticism and the Orient, as previously discussed in this Chapter.

In literature, the *jardin d'hiver* became a celebrated symbolic device to signify the opulence and decadence of the period. Susan Harrow describes one notable example in her commentary on Emile Zola's *La Curée*, originally published in 1872, and contemporaneous to the design of the hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild.

The rampant, palpitating plant life courses with primitive energy, in contrast with the rigidly structured, rarefied world of the Saccard's dinner-party which continues in the adjacent rooms. The metaphorical insistence on the conservatory's exotic atmosphere seems to call up the obscure desire which lurks in the tentacular depths of the flora and foliage. . . . Zola's evocative description transforms the banal winter garden into an archaic world of sensuality, cruelty and corruption.⁶⁴

The setting in the Saccard mansion was likely inspired by the *jardin d'hiver* at the *hôtel particulier* of the chocolate magnate, Émile Menier, (1826-1881). Designed by the architect Henri Parent (1819-1895) and built from 1869 to 1870, the residence featured a dramatic *jardin d'hiver*, as did many of the residences constructed around the Parc Monceau area from 1861 to 1880.

One of the most notable and published examples is the *jardin d'hiver* of the *hôtel particulier* at 24-28 rue des Courcelles, offered by Napoléon III to his cousin, Princess Mathilde de Bonaparte. The Princess occupied the former Palais Bragance from 1857 to 1871. Renowned for her intellectual and cultural interests, her weekly *salons* were some of the most influential during the period; on Wednesdays she would receive men of letters, on Fridays the focus would be on artists and on Sundays she would receive those prominent in the political sphere.⁶⁵ The Princess preferred the company of men and it was a rare woman who received an invitation to these gatherings. The dining room was lit from above by a large iron and glass skylight and was decorated with shrubs and climbing vines that grew up the Corinthian columns and opened into the *jardin d'hiver*.⁶⁶ The taste for eclecticism was on full display, as evidenced in this description penned by the Goncourt Brothers.

With her taste for bric-a-brac, the princess Mathilde has, in her winter garden which wraps around the residence, surrounded herself with furnishings from all countries, from all periods, in all colors and all forms: a mess (*capharnaïm*) which has the strange and amusing quality of a curio shop in a virgin forest.⁶⁷

Thus, the winter garden became another treasured object of the cultural elite of this period. As a means to satisfy the desire for a connection to “nature” in the increasingly urbanized and sprawling city, albeit a highly manicured nature, the *serre* was the perfect paradise for indulging this desire. And true to Zola’s characterization, the *jardin d’hiver* was a subliminal expression of unrestrained libertine pursuits, especially for upper-class women, in a society of “corseted” social mores.

Stage-set and Spectacle in the *Hôtel Particulier*

Industrial innovation in iron and glass technology, as applied to residential architecture, produced another feature that could be exploited for heightened dramatic effects. By the second half of the 19 century, circulation between the principal rooms occurred most often through spaces dedicated for that purpose: vestibules, halls, galleries and transitional spaces. Vestiges of the direct passage between the more public spaces, through aligned doorways, known as *en enfilade*, were retained in the plan distribution. The large areas of top glazing, in the form of laylights (glazed flat ceiling areas under skylights), created pools of light which punctuated the circulation paths through the interior space.

The sense of scenographic drama was heightened by the skillful manipulation of light, as both daylight and gas lighting were used to modulate the tonal character of rooms. By juxtaposing bright and dim spaces, the sense of movement was accentuated. Creating this sense of dynamism and delight in the visual experience of space through shifting centers of interest is a key characteristic of the Second Empire *hôtel particulier*.

Most significant was the celebration of a kind of spectacle that was different from the sense of display seen in the *ancien régime*, which was not one of reciprocity. There, the spectacle was intended to inspire awe and to remind the viewer of the power of the monarchy. “During the *ancien régime*, royal favor was the source of power and wealth and those who had access to it wanted to live in circumstances that recalled royal living style in decoration and furniture.”⁶⁸ For the aristocratic class, “most life was public life” and “the sequence of reception took precedence over comfort, and display was more important than intimacy.”⁶⁹

The art of set design for the theater was applied to the experience of architecture and had a significant influence on the evolution of the stair, beginning in the Baroque period. A notable example can be seen in Le Brun’s design for the Escalier des Ambassadeurs at the palace of Versailles.⁷⁰

Above all, these grand internal stairs- Staircases of Honor, as Guadet (n.d.) calls them – were designed to make the transition from the ground to the *piano nobile* and the upper floors as imperceptible a spatial barrier as possible. The stair and the stair halls were used to distract the stair user from the act of climbing and to integrate the vertically adjacent spaces.⁷¹

From the upper stair landing, the visitor would enter an antechamber or series of antechambers which lead to the principal reception rooms arranged *en enfilade*; that is one space leading directly into the other, with aligned doorways. Spaces were experienced as distinct volumes in a sequence. Access to these spaces was strictly controlled by rigid social hierarchies and rituals.

Principal among the cultural changes of the nineteenth century was the idea of a symbiotic relationship between architecture as a stage-set, and the role of the individual experiencing the architecture as that of both a participant and a spectator. This metaphor was refined by Charles Garnier to explain his design vision for the Paris Opéra, in his *Le Théâtre* published in 1871, wherein, “The Grand Escalier...becomes a vast spontaneous theater where the public performs to

itself.”⁷² Loyer defined this best in his analysis of Garnier’s techniques of spatial transition that coupled the Rationalist analysis of form and function with a consummate skill in creating fresh compositions of architectural details drawn from Italian and French sources.

The overall unity [referring to the dense collection of urban furnishings, statues, columns, candelabras], did not matter in this case because the composition, departing from a privileged viewpoint, instead proposed a continuous displacement, a spatial narrative pausing at a certain number of points; hence composition by “centers of interest, expressing successive stages in the narrative.”⁷³

Glass Roofs and Borrowed Lights

The finely developed narrative of space within the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild reinterprets the highly innovative architectural *parti* (design concept or organizational theme) of Ferrières, which preceded Ohnet’s work by some 15 years. The design for Ferrières centered on the two story interior space, the Hall with its large, continuous laylight, under an iron and glass skylight. The massive area of glazed ceiling panels provided a flood of diffused sunlight by day and was illuminated with thousands of gas lights at night, creating the perfect *mise-en-scène* (visual theme or stage-set) for parties and social gatherings designed to impress visitors. Paxton was responsible for the architectural concept and the innovative techniques of using the natural light for spatial drama, further developing the features he conceived for the 1852 design for Mayer de Rothschild’s residence of Mentmore. The top-lit rectangular gallery space, served as the central point from which the plan layout is organized.

Glass-roofed exhibit spaces became a staple feature in the mansions of the Second Empire. Another notable example was incorporated into the expansion of a *hôtel particulier*, at 45-49, rue Monceau, The original structure was designed in 1863 by the architect Willem Bouwens Van der Boijen (1834-1907) for Eugène Péreire. Acquired by Adolphe de Rothschild in 1868, two additions were constructed in 1870-1, by the architect Félix Langlais. To the west, the reception areas on the *rez-de-chaussée* were expanded with the addition of the top-lit Salle de Bal (used for

an exhibition space) and an L-shaped gallery with glazed ceilings. To the east along the rue Monceau, an attached *serre*, constructed from stone, iron and glass was inserted into the narrow space between the original mansion and the adjacent party wall.⁷⁴

Skylights first appeared in aristocratic residences in Paris around 1770-1790 and were used to illuminate staircases, drawing rooms, boudoirs and bedrooms.

During the nineteenth century, however, their use narrowed, and glazed roof openings came to be employed exclusively to light those areas where the numerous classifications of the bourgeois home originated, such as the main staircase – which directed internal traffic vertically and horizontally towards rooms with increasingly specific functions, such as the nursery, the billiard room, the smoking room, the small drawing room and the water closet, or the service staircase, used by the staff.⁷⁵

In Ferrières, the Hall is ringed by a corridor, with skylights punctuating the roof of the upper floor, and light wells penetrating through the ceiling of the elevated main floor. These “borrowed lights” became a common feature in the scenographic composition of the circulation spaces in the Second Empire *hôtel particulier*. Ohnet used glazed ceiling openings in the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild to light the internal space of the Gallery hallway as the spectator progressed to the Dining Room. Aligned under the skylight on the roof level above, and carrying through a void space in the upper level floor plan, the light is allowed to filter down through two levels.

Entertainment, Spectacle and Display in the *Hôtel Particulier*

Housing the two major pastimes of the wealthy, the spaces for entertaining and for presentation of the collections of art objects were interwoven in a new way, reflecting the cultural values of the period and the personal tastes of the client. The contrast in behavioral changes based in Second Empire values is most evident when the project involved the adaptation of an existing eighteenth-century residence, as seen in the alterations made to the Hôtel de Talleyrand. The treatment of the eighteenth-century principal public reception spaces along with

the addition of two nineteenth-century reception rooms on the east side of the building were driven by the desire to showcase these two activities, the role of spectacle and the desire for display.

A great collector of paintings, sculpture and furniture, Alphonse de Rothschild was especially interested in preserving and safeguarding French cultural heritage.⁷⁶ In contrast to the prevailing trend during the Second Empire of demolishing the eighteenth-century urban *hôtel* that had survived the Revolution, and rebuilding larger residences, Alphonse chose instead to live in, and to preserve, the more modestly scaled spaces of the eighteenth-century *hôtel*, and is thus more in tune with the previous generation of Rothschilds. As Bruno Pons described him, “of this generation he was the only one in the family to settle within old and historic walls.”⁷⁷

As previously noted, the addition to the *hôtel* was extant by 1871. Ohnet’s design for the addition to the building is a masterful example of compatible design within a historic context. On the rue de Rivoli façade, the two bay wide addition features a slight projection of the wall plane, aligned with the original central pavilion of Gabriel’s design, which demarcates the new construction. The new openings repeat the sizes and proportions of the eighteenth century windows at each level. The single new window of the *grand étage* on this façade is capped by a triangular pediment, echoing the two outer windows of the adjacent projecting bay of the building, but with a slightly different proportion. All of the principal horizontal linear elements of the façade are respected within the new construction. Yet this is not an exercise in copying the past; Ohnet handled the important element of the southeast corner with an angled wall on the two upper levels above the line of the balcony. The innovative feature of this design is the iron and glass bay window in the corner room which serves as a graceful acknowledgement of the period’s interest in the act of “seeing” into and out of a space. By placing an opening at the

corner, more light can enter the room, illuminating the activity within, and, conversely, allowing the inhabitants a wider view of the Tuileries gardens beyond.

In 1872, Ohnet was retained for a second campaign of alterations, to accommodate the Rothschild's nineteenth-century pattern of living.⁷⁸ In contrast to the formal sequence of eighteenth-century compartmentalized spaces, consisting of *antichambre* (antechamber), *salle d'audience* (reception room), *cabinet* (state office) and *chambre* (formal bedchamber), the typical sequence of public rooms in the later nineteenth century would have included a *vestibule*, a *salon*, a *petit salon* for more informal and small gatherings, and a separate *salle à manger*, (formal dining room). There was often a smaller dining room for use by the family.

The need to accommodate large groups freely circulating through the public rooms while admiring the objects within led to the insertion of additional openings between the eighteenth-century spaces. Perhaps the most flagrant reinterpretation of space resulted from the relocation of the fireplace in the *salle d'audience*. Instead of the eighteenth-century position, centered on the long axis of the room on an internal wall opposite the windows that overlook the rue Saint-Florentin, the fireplace was moved between two of the windows on the exterior wall. This relocation of a solid fireplace mass in turn accommodated a new arched opening into the Grand cabinet between the existing pair of doors, hence reducing this wall to an arcade and facilitating freer movement between these two rooms. Ruptures in the traditional pattern of the eighteenth-century spatial sequence included the insertion of a new pair of doors from the first *antichambre* into the *arrière cabinet*.⁷⁹

The décor of the *antichambres* was completely altered in the mid-nineteenth century. The eighteenth-century room was created with a relatively simple décor of painted but ungolded wood panels, and a checkerboard floor of dark stone and white marble. The Rothschild décor enriched

the appearance of the room with a mixture of marble wall panels and a painted *faux* marble finish applied onto wood panels. The two remaining *antichambres* had rich textiles added to the walls and copious amounts of gilded wood moldings to define the panels.

The second *antichambre* and the *arrière cabinet* contain an eighteenth century jewel from Alphonse's art collections, the Louveciennes panels. The placement of these panels illustrates another key feature of the period, the integration of the art and object collections within the interior architecture of the display spaces.

With the intent of recreating an eighteenth-century interior room décor, Baron Alphonse de Rothschild added several significant works of art to this space. By 1889, he had acquired the sculpted and gilded panels of the Salon Carré from the pavilion built for Madame DuBarry at Louveciennes, designed by the architect Claude Nicolas Ledoux (1736-1806). Created by the artists Jean-Baptiste Feuillet and Joseph Metivier around 1771, these panels are a fine example of the neoclassical style in interior design.⁸⁰

However, the treatment of these panels was decidedly the product of the nineteenth century aesthetic of reusing architectural pieces in unconventional ways.

Four of these panels are placed in this second antechamber; two panels flank the chimney, and two are placed around a window opening. This disposition reflects the taste of the nineteenth-century collector rather than a strict adherence to the aesthetics of the eighteenth century... the fortuitous discovery of archival photographs of the panels, depicting the panels after their removal from the pavilion. From these images, one can see that the original panels had been extended with a compatible design at the top to fill the available wall space.⁸¹

Striking for its inventive feeling, the Rothschild Dining Room (also called the Music Room because of the motif of musical instruments featured in the paneling) blends exceptional elements from Alphonse's prized collection of eighteenth-century French architectural artifacts within a room conceived with nineteenth-century sensibilities. One traditionally styled window is placed at the west end of the wall. The rectangular volume of the room is broken at the southeast corner by a section of wall placed at a 45-degree angle between the south and east facades, which

contains an iron framed window bay. This opening dissolves the effect of a defined corner in the room and provides an expanded view to the exterior and a flood of natural light into the space.

In the absence of precise documentary records, physical evidence can be used to analyze the development of a property. In this case, the space was the subject of two campaigns of decoration. During the restoration work of 2000-2007, an earlier decorative treatment of painted low relief plaster arabesques was found underneath the applied wood panels, dating from the time of original construction.⁸² In the post 1871 decorative phase, the room décor was converted to serve as a screen for the collection of exquisitely sculpted wood panels from the later eighteenth century,⁸³ including nine wall panels, four overdoor panels and two mirror surrounds. The eighteenth-century features are integrated into sections of nineteenth-century paneling, and combined with overdoor medallions, large mirrors and a Carrera marble chimneypiece to create a neo-Louis XVI character.⁸⁴ The decorative motifs include allegorical female figures, represented by nudes atop antique style altars, with symbols of the four seasons, theatre, masks and cascading musical instruments. The provenance of the eighteenth-century panels has not been definitively determined.⁸⁵

The repurposing and alteration of architectural components from an earlier period to suit new locations illustrates an attitude towards the art objects shared by most collectors of the period, including other Rothschild family members. Alphonse did not consider his house as a museum, but rather he lived his life surrounded by his collections. The art objects were integrated into the existing spaces, rather than the spaces conforming to the dictates of the artwork. When the décor called for the reuse of architectural components, there were fewer inhibitions about modifications to the artifacts in order to fit the architectural frame, and a less stringent definition of “authenticity” and integrity of the individual piece in the sensibility of the

later nineteenth century than would be found today. Thus, the objects could be freely altered and subordinated to the overall composition and effect of the spatial containers within which the nineteenth century social rituals are enacted.

The Nineteenth-Century *Hôtel Particulier* as a Document of Social History

The overarching themes of nineteenth-century architectural design can be seen in both public and private buildings of the period. The *hôtel particulier* was a modestly scaled structure set within the larger urban context, and references to the grand tradition of French classicism were most often used for the exterior expression. The innovative spirit freed by the broadening of available historical and cultural models, advances in building technology and a cultural passion for spectacle and rich visual display were exploited to obtain more open and innovative plan *distributions*. Dramatic, scenographically conceived circulation paths connected the richly embellished interiors in innovative ways, creating the dazzling visual character of the nineteenth-century *hôtel particulier*.

It is fully within this context of the new urban mansion of the Second Empire that Ohnet's master work, the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild can be understood. Ohnet drew his neoclassical inspiration from the period of Louis XVI, influenced to some degree by his prior experience in designing a successful addition to Gabriel's innovative composition for the Hôtel de Talleyrand from the previous century. Yet his work is very much a product of its time, with the use of modern materials to enhance the scenographic sense of spatial progression and emphasize the objects of display.

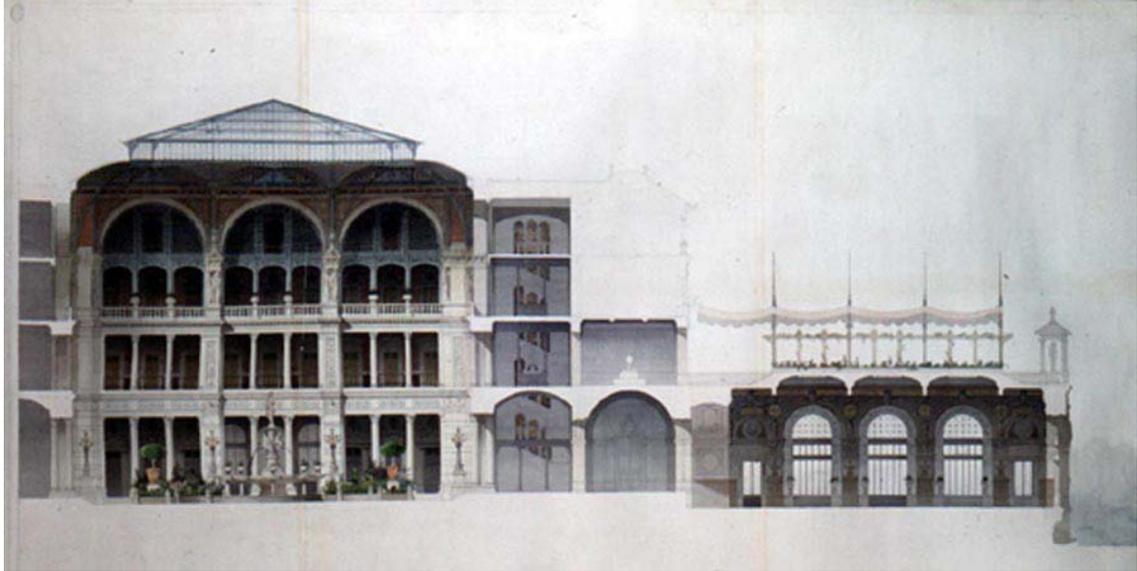


Figure 3-1. *Hôtellerie pour voyageurs, Détail de la coupe longitudinale*, Grand Prix de Rome project by Noguet, 1865. [Cat'zArts at ENSBA database, file PRA-235-6]



Figure 3-2. Palais des Études, École des Beaux-Arts, Duban, 1836-40, glass roof 1863. [Cat'zArts at ENSBA database, file PH14-10942]



Figure 3-3. Hôtel Beaujon: garden kiosk. [A. Cary, *Intérieur du kiosque dans le jardin*, plate 34]



Figure 3-4. Hôtel Fould, Street façade by Labrouste, 1858. [C. Daly, *Revue Générale de l'Architecture et des Travaux Publics*, Vol. XVI, 1858, Pl. 6]

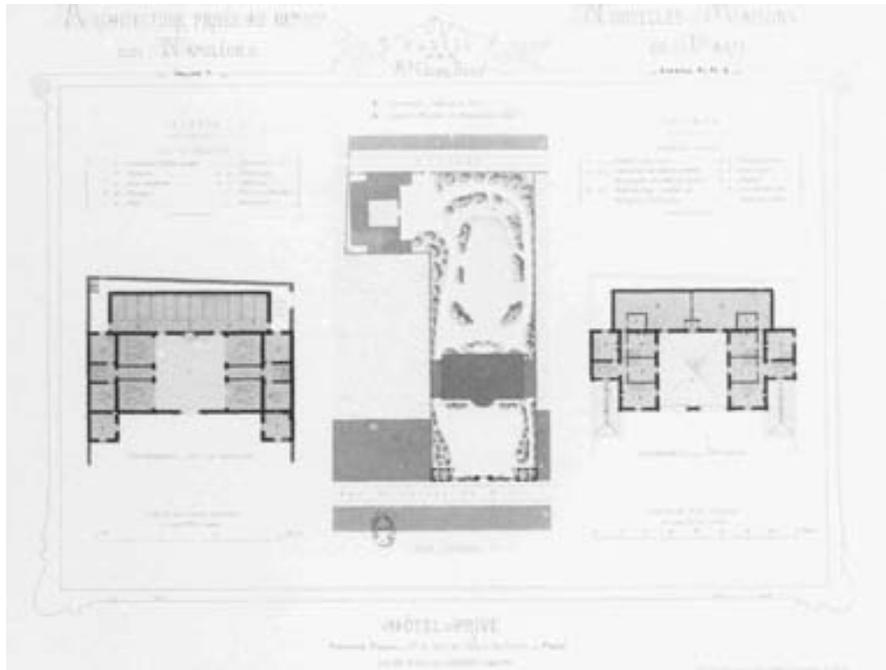


Figure 3-5. Hôtel privé, Site Plan, by Convents & Nolau, c. 1864. [C. Daly, *L'Architecture privée au dix-neuvième siècle sous Napoléon III. Nouvelles maisons de Paris et des environs*. Ex. A-1, pl. 2.] This series of figures is from the document reprinted from the Gallica database, Bibliothèque Nationale, in accordance with policy rules for non-commercial use.

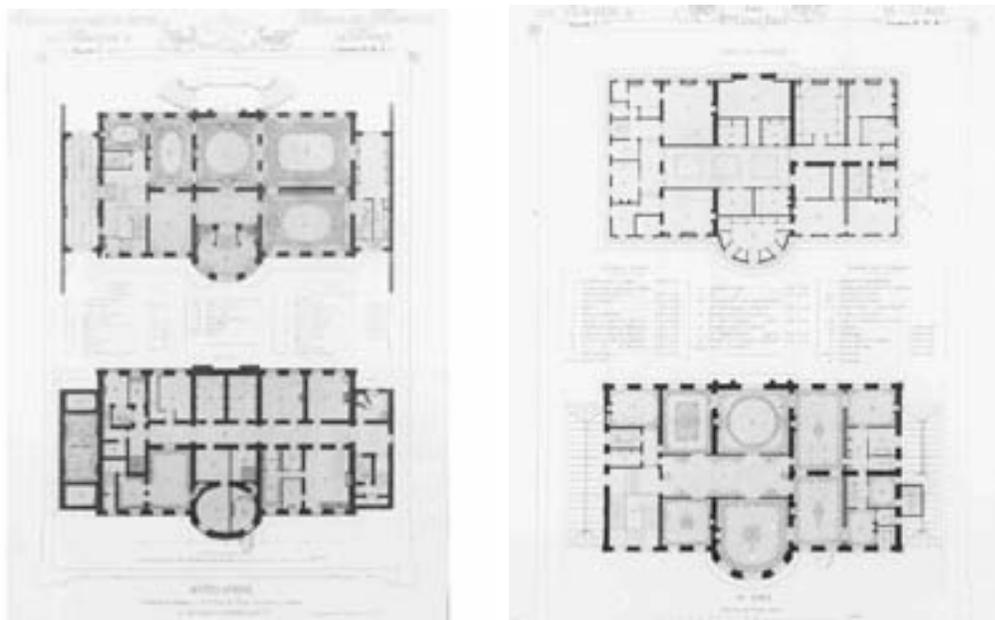


Figure 3-6. Hôtel privé, Plans Sous-sol et Rez-de-Chaussée, Premier Étage et Combles by Convents & Nolau, c. 1864. [C. Daly, *L'Architecture privée au dix-neuvième siècle sous Napoléon III. Nouvelles maisons de Paris et des environs*. Ex. A-1, pl. 3 & pl. 4]



Figure 3-7. Hôtel privé, Court façade details, by Convents & Nolau, c. 1864. [C. Daly, *L'Architecture privée au dix-neuvième siècle sous Napoléon III. Nouvelles maisons de Paris et des environs. Ex. A-1, 1864, pl. 1*]

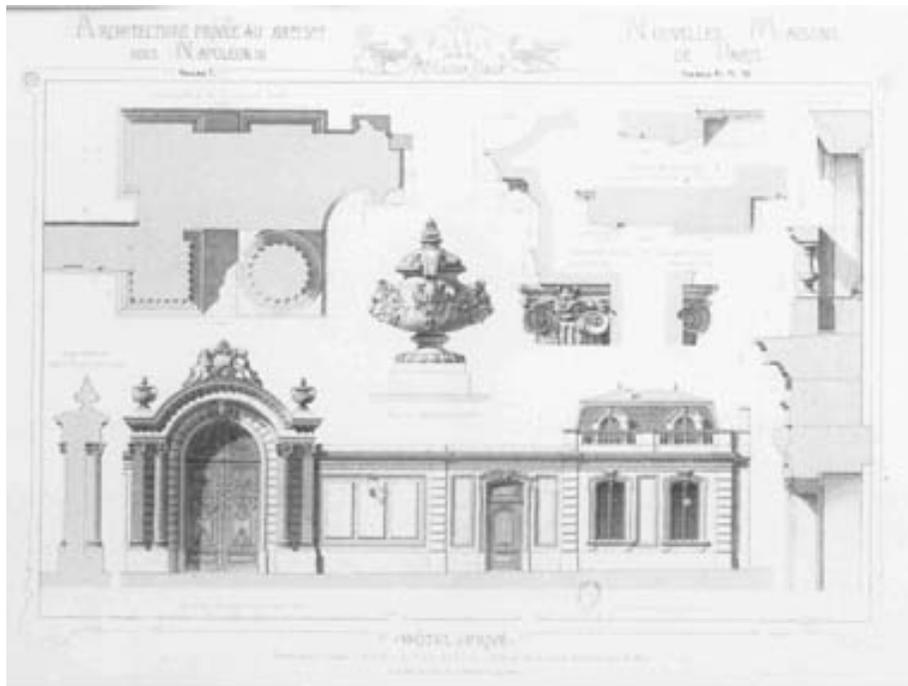


Figure 3-8. Hôtel privé, Street façade details by Convents & Nolau, c. 1864. [C. Daly, *L'Architecture privée au dix-neuvième siècle sous Napoléon III. Nouvelles maisons de Paris et des environs. Ex. A-1, pl. 10*]

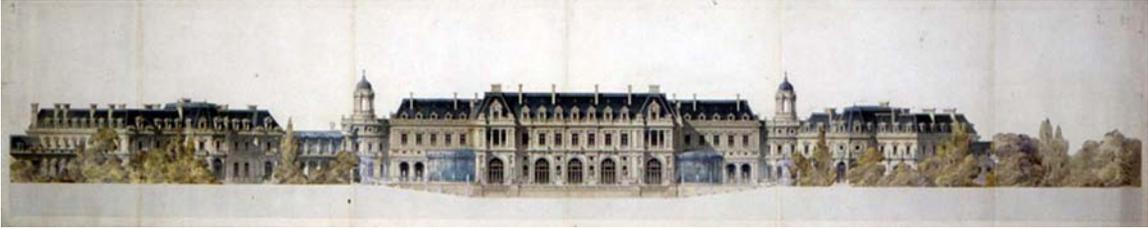


Figure 3-9. *Hôtel pour un riche banquier, Elevation*, Grand Prix de Rome project by Jean-Louis Pascal, 1866. [Cat'zArts at ENSBA database, file PRA-240-4]

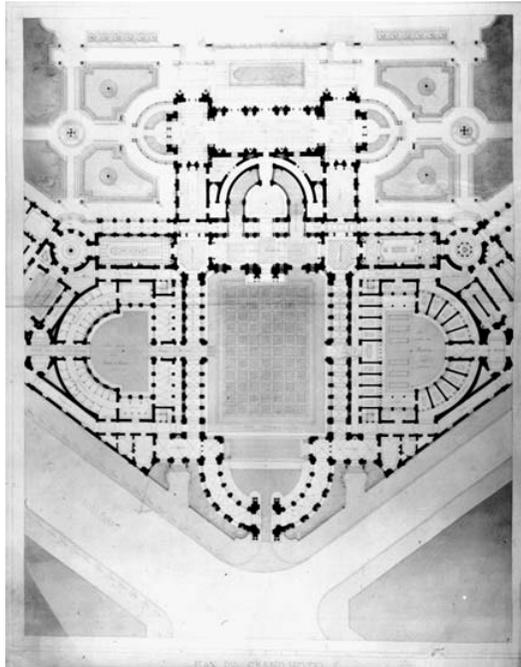


Figure 3-10. *Hôtel pour un riche banquier, Plan d'ensemble*, Grand Prix de Rome project by Jean-Louis Pascal, 1866. [Cat'zArts at ENSBA database, file PRA-240-1]

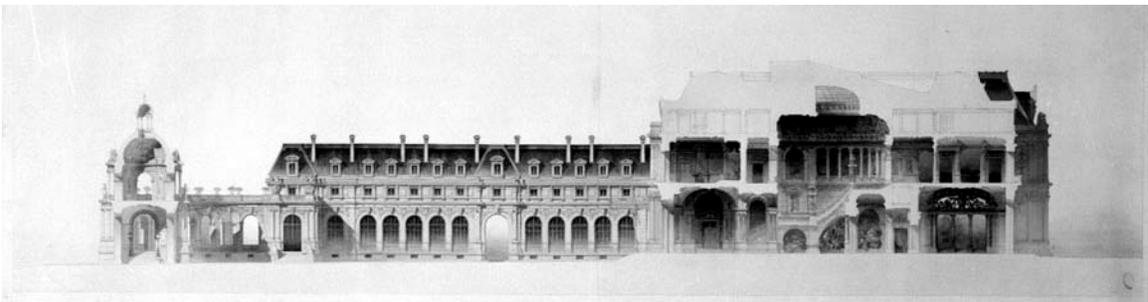


Figure 3-11. *Hôtel pour un riche banquier, Coupe longitudinale du cour*, Grand Prix de Rome project by Jean-Louis Pascal, 1866. [Cat'zArts at ENSBA database, file PRA-240-6]

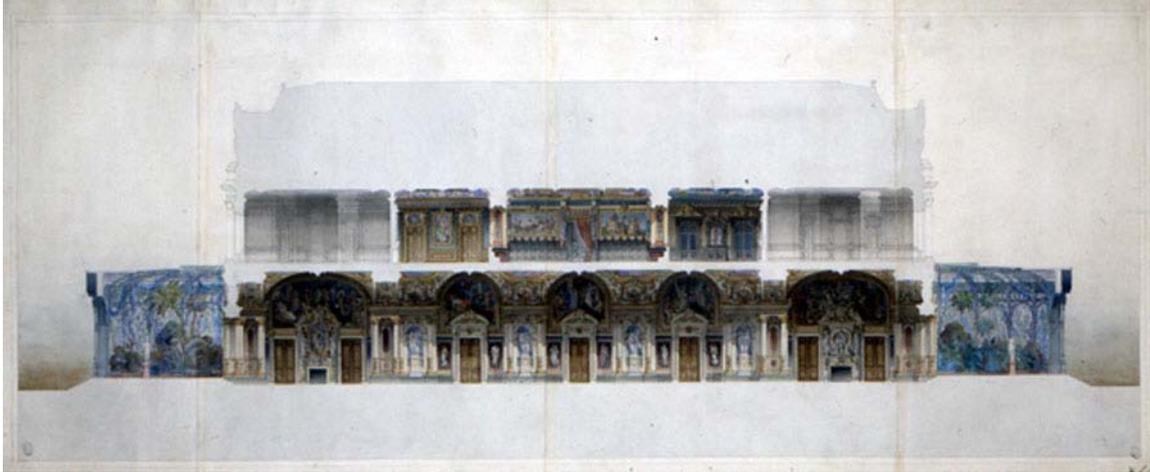


Figure 3-12. *Hôtel pour un riche banquier, Coupe longitudinale*, Grand Prix de Rome project by Jean-Louis Pascal, 1866. [Cat'zArts at ENSBA database, file PRA-240-5]

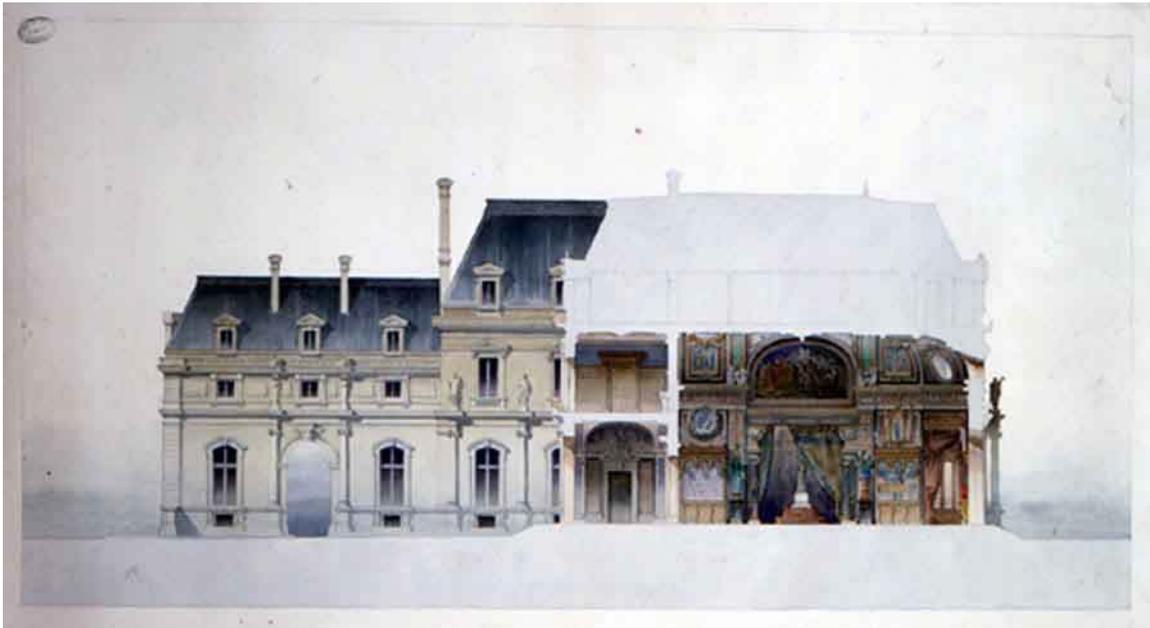


Figure 3-13. *Hôtel pour un riche banquier, Coupe transversale*, Grand Prix de Rome project by Jean-Louis Pascal, 1866. [Cat'zArts at ENSBA database, file PRA-240-7]



Figure 3-14. Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild garden façade. [Author's photo]



Figure 3-15. Hôtel de Talleyrand façade on the rue de Rivoli. [Author's photo]



Figure 3-16. Galerie Vivienne. [Author's photo]

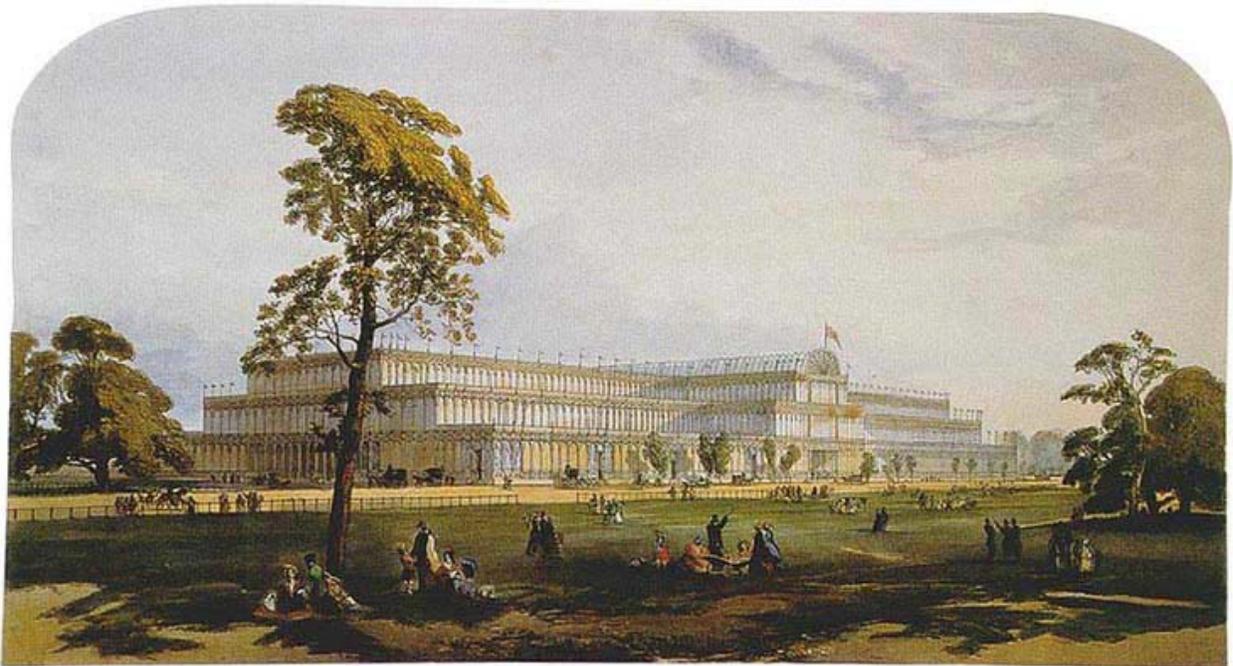


Figure 3-17. The Crystal Palace, by Joseph Paxton, Dickinson, *Comprehensive Pictures of the Great Exhibition of 1851*, 1854. [Wikimedia Commons, p.d.]



Fig. 4. — Tour en fer et verre, formant quatre étages de jardins d'hiver.
(Boulevard Malesherbes.)



Fig. 5. — Plan de la tour des jardins.

Figure 3-18. Bay window serres, Blvd. Malesherbes, c. 1864. [C. Daly, *L'Architecture privée au dix-neuvième siècle sous Napoléon III*, 14]



Figure 3-19. Bay window Hôtel de Talleyrand. A) Corner view B) Detail [Author's photos]

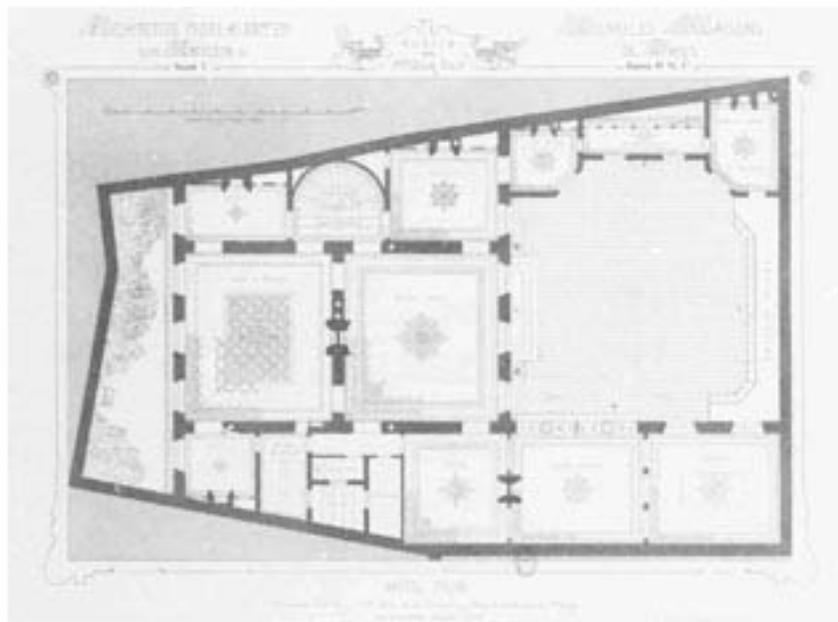


Figure 3-20. Hôtel Privé, Rue de la Victoire, Ruprich-Robert, c. 1864 Jardin d'hiver et Galerie Plan. [C. Daly, *L'Architecture privée au dix-neuvième siècle sous Napoléon III*, Ex. A-2, pl. 1] This series of figures is from the document reprinted from the Gallica database, Bibliothèque Nationale, in accordance with policy rules for non-commercial use.

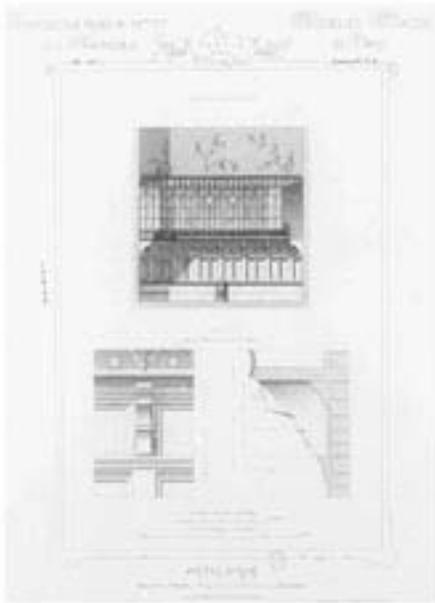


Figure 3-21. Hôtel Privé, Rue de la Victoire, Ruprich-Robert, c. 1864 Jardin d'hiver et Galerie Façades. [C. Daly, *L'Architecture privée au dix-neuvième siècle sous Napoléon III*, Ex. A-2, pl. 3 & pl. 4]

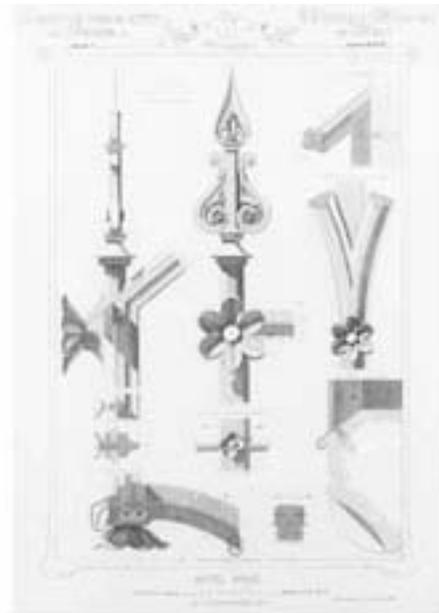


Figure 3-22. Hôtel Privé, Rue de la Victoire, Ruprich-Robert, c. 1864. [C. Daly, *Jardin d'hiver & Galerie, Section and Detail, L'Architecture privée au dix-neuvième siècle sous Napoléon III*, Ex. A-2, pl. 11 & pl 12]

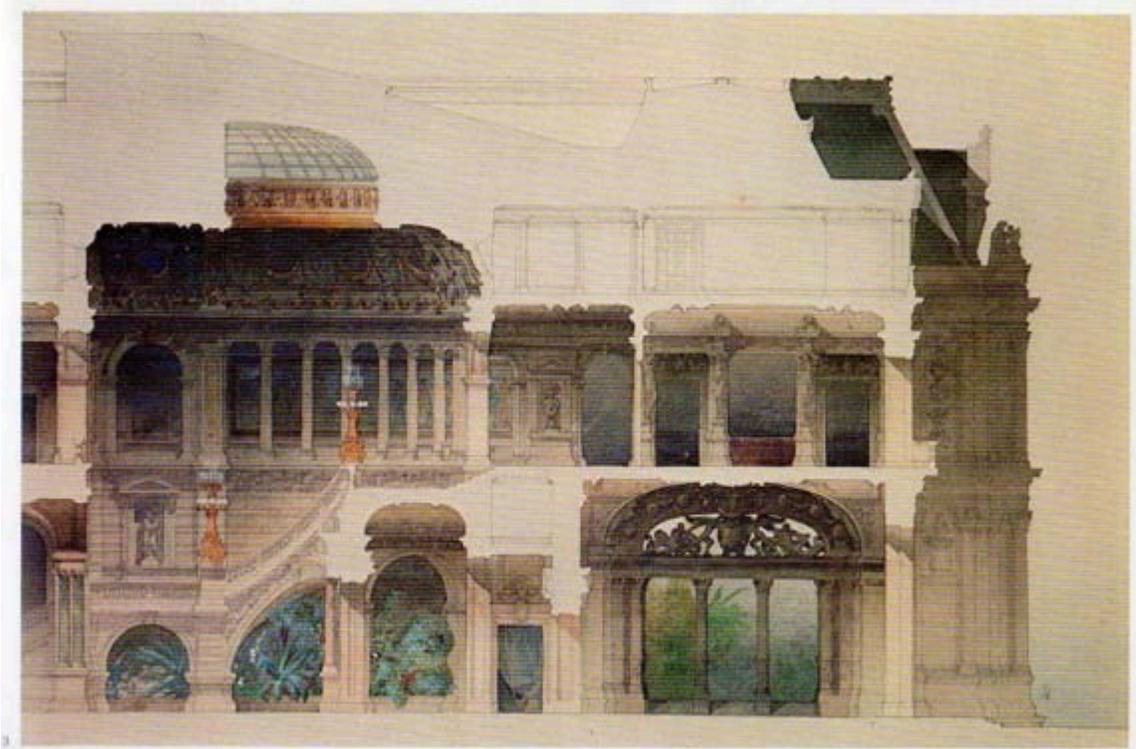


Figure 3-23. *Hôtel pour un riche banquier, Detail*, Grand Prix de Rome project by Pascal, 1866. [Cat'zArts at ENSBA database, file PRA-240-7]



Figure 3-24. *In the Conservatory*, Manet, 1879. [Wikimedia Commons, p.d.]



Figure 3-25. Dining Room of Princess Mathilde, Giraud, 1854. [Wikimedia Commons, p.d.]



Figure 3-26. *La Véranda de la Princesse Mathilde*, Sébastien-Charles Giraud, 1864. [Image courtesy of Musée des Arts Decoratifs photothèque.]



Figure 3-27. Opéra Grand Stair, engraving by Riquois and Sulpis, n.d. [Garnier, *Le Nouvel Opéra*, 1871], Gallica.



Figure 3-28. Château de Ferrières, Hall. [Author's photo]



Figure 3-29. Ferrières skylights and lightwell in corridors. [Author's photos]

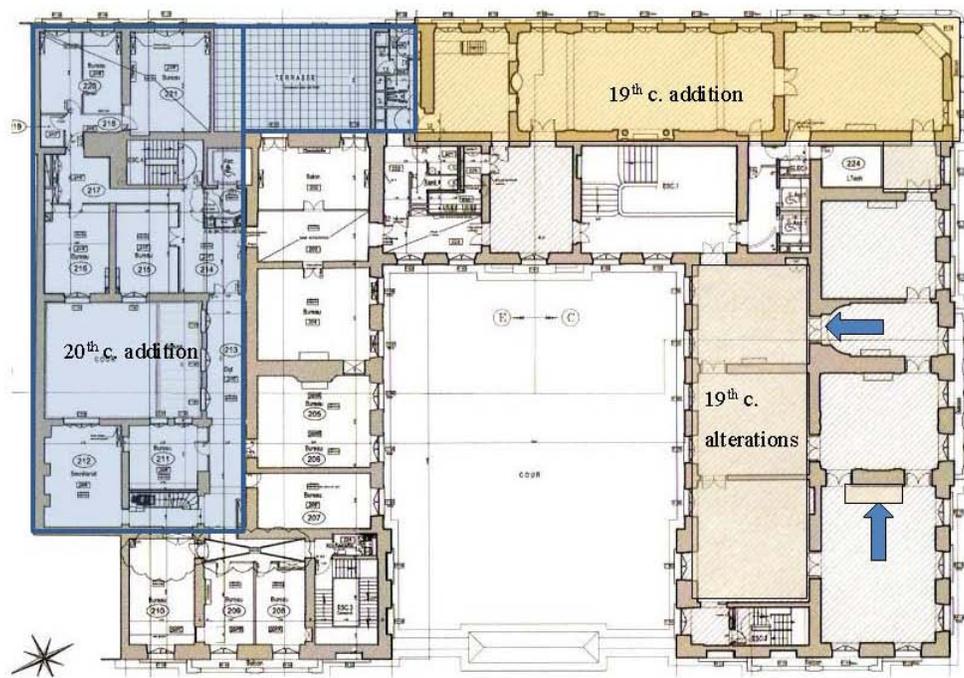


Figure 3-30. Hôtel de Talleyrand floor plan of *grand étage* with 19th century addition. [Author's diagram]



Figure 3-31. Hôtel de Talleyrand Louveciennes panels. [Author's photo]



Figure 3-32. Hôtel de Talleyrand Music Room with reflection of interior bay window in mirror over fireplace. [Photo courtesy of S. Tate and J. Hahn]

Notes

¹ See Appendix B for a detailed discussion of Ohnet's career and body of work.

² François Loyer, *Paris: Nineteenth Century Architecture and Urbanism*, trans. Charles Lynn Clark (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1988), 161.

³ AN, dossier AJ/52/377 OHNET, Léon. Ohnet's student folder from the École des Beaux-Arts, covers the period from 1829 to 1833. David de Penanrum, *Les architectes élèves de l'École des Beaux-Arts par David Penanrum, Roux et Delaire* (Paris: Imprimerie de Chaix, 1895), 217. Biographical summary of Ohnet's career at the École indicates that he won a medal in the first class of 1836. Also see Appendix B for additional information on the life and architectural career of Ohnet.

⁴ David de Penanrum, *Les architectes élèves*, 84. List of project topics and prize winners by year.

⁵ Donald Drew Egbert, *The Beaux-Arts Tradition in French Architecture. Illustrated by the Grand Prix de Rome*, ed. David Van Zanten (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 44, 61-62. Also see Ecole des Beaux-Arts website for Noguet's drawings of his successful 1865 Grand Prix project. <http://www.ensba.fr>

⁶ Loyer, *De la Revolution*, 69.

⁷ The Royal Academies were abolished in 1793 and the French Institute was created in 1795 to promote the sciences, social sciences and the arts.. The 1816 decree by Louis XVIII reinstated the term "Académie" to the divisions of the Institute. The study of architecture was assigned within the Académie des Beaux-Arts.

⁸ Egbert, *The Beaux-Arts Tradition*, 37.

⁹ François Loyer, *Architecture of the Industrial Age*, trans. R.F.M. Dexter (Genève: Skira, 1983), 6.

¹⁰ Barry Bergdoll, *Léon Vaudoyer, Historicism in the Age of Industry*. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994), 90.

¹¹ Christopher Curtis Mead, *Charles Garnier's Paris Opera: Architectural Empathy and the Renaissance of French Classicism*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1991, 12.

¹² De Penanrum, *Les architectes élèves*, 69.

¹³ Meeting Notes from the *Commission des Arts et Edifices Religieux*, 17 juin 1852, 164^{ème} séance. Viollet-le-Duc reviewed and recommended the approval of Ohnet's plans for an Episcopal palace in Ajaccio.

¹⁴ Sir John Summerson, "Viollet-le-Duc and the Rational Point of View" *Heavenly Mansions and Other Essays on Architecture*, London, Cresset Press, 1949, 7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁶ Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Lassus and Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-Leduc. *Projet de restauration de Notre Dame de Paris rapport adressé à M. le Ministre de la Justice et des Cultes*. Paris: Imprimerie de Mme. de LaCombe, 1843. Viollet-Le-Duc was responsible for numerous restoration projects throughout France.

¹⁷ Excerpt from essay by Sir John Summerson, "Viollet-le-Duc and the Rational Point of View", 8.

¹⁸ Ohnet used the Gothic Revival Style in the Episcopal Palace at Ajaccio, and an Italianate style in the Episcopal palace at Carcassonne. See Appendix B for works by Ohnet from this period.

¹⁹ Egbert, *The Beaux-Arts Tradition*, 60.

²⁰ Bedoire, *The Jewish Contribution*, 179.

²¹ Loyer, *Architecture of the Industrial Age*, 126.

²² César Daly, *L'Architecture privée au dix-neuvième siècle sous Napoleon III. Nouvelles maisons de Paris et des environs*. Paris:A. Morel, 1864, 10. Translation of text. "Ce ne serait pas exagéré que de définir la Maison: le vêtement de la famille. Elle est en effet destinée à lui servir d'enveloppe, à l'abriter et à se prêter à tous ses mouvements. Elle la garantit du froid et du chaud, s'harmonise avec la rusticité ou le raffinement de ses habitudes, se plie à son gout, meme un peu à ses fantaisies."

²³ Daly, *L'Architecture privée au dix-neuvième siècle sous Napoleon III*, 14. In this reference, Daly footnotes his previous article in the *Revue de l'architecture et travaux publics*, volume 16, 1858, in which he published the drawings of Labrousse's design.

²⁴ César Daly, editor, "Hôtel de M. L. Fould," *Revue de l'architecture et travaux public*, 16, no. 1 (1858): Col. 39 and plates 5,6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

²⁵ Francis R. Kowsky, "The William Dorsheimer House: A reflection of French Suburban Architecture in the Early work of H. H. Richardson" *The Art Bulletin*, College Art Association of America, March, 1980.

²⁶ Daly, *L'Architecture privée au dix-neuvième siècle sous Napoleon III*, Tome 1, 14

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁹ Egbert, *The Beaux-Arts Tradition*, 123.

³⁰ Daly, *L'Architecture privée au dix-neuvième siècle sous Napoleon III*, 14-16.

³¹ David de Penanrun, Roux, et Delaire. *Les architectes élèves de l'École des Beaux-Arts, 1793-1894*. Paris: Impr. De Chaix, 1895, 129.

³² Daly. *L'Architecture privée au dix-neuvième siècle sous Napoleon III*, Tables des planches du tome premier. 31. Example A1, planches 1 à 11. See Figure x for map of 1867.

³³ Aristide Michel Perrot, "Nouveau plan de Paris divisé en arrondissements, quartiers et paroisses." Paris: Goyer, 1867. Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, cote A790.

³⁴ See note 27 above. Daly, Example A1, planches 1-11.

³⁵ Ohnet's service as a juror for the Grand Prix de Rome competitions is documented at the Archives Nationales, AN Cote F/21/620, and in several period publications.

³⁶ Egbert, *The Beaux-Arts Tradition*, plates 16,17,18. Project renderings are available from the Ecole des Beaux Arts digital archives., *Hôtel pour un riche banquier*, Pascal, Jean-Louis. 1866, dessin scolaire d'architecture. PRA 240-1, PRAe 167, PRA 240-2, PRA 240-3, PRA 240 -4, PRA 240 -5, PRA 240-6, PRA 240-7.

³⁷ De Penanrum, David, *Les architectes élèves*, 84, Egbert, *The Beaux-Arts Tradition*, 147.

³⁸ J. Deville, *Dictionnaire du Tapissier Critique et Historique de l'Ameublement français* (Paris: C. Claesen, 1878-1880).

³⁹ Daville, 237. "c'est cet ensemble des nuances de la décoration qui fait le mérite ou la réputation de tel architecte."

⁴⁰ Daville, 239.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Bedoire, *The Jewish Contribution*, 157.

⁴³ Ibid., 160.

⁴⁴ Historic photographs from the collection housed in the *Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris*, A. Cary, photographe, “Hôtel Beaujon”, BHVP, plates 34 (Kiosque), Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, Photothèque, Cote P.M. XXX, 2-44.

⁴⁵ Harry Francis Mallgrave, editor. *Architectural Theory. Volume 1: An Anthology from Vitruvius to 1870*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006, 334.

⁴⁶ Loyer, *Architecture of the Industrial Age*, 36.

⁴⁷ Loyer, *Architecture of the Industrial Age*, 36.

⁴⁸ Karen Bowie, editor. *Les Grandes Gares Parisiennes au XIX Siècle* (Paris La Délégation à l’Action Artistique de la Ville de Paris, 1987), 104.

⁴⁹ See Appendix B for additional information on Ohnet’s work on the Gare du Nord.

⁵⁰ It was only late in the Second Empire that one of the earliest examples of an externally exposed iron structural frame where the wall material is expressed as an infill panel is seen. The Moulin de Noiseul, at the site of the Menier chocolate factory was a revolutionary structure, designed by Jules Saulnier and built between 1865 and 1872. The strong expression of the diagonal iron braces and the vertical columns provide a decorative structural cage.

⁵¹ Bedoire, *The Jewish Contribution*, 124.

⁵² Bernard Marrey and Jean-Pierre Monnet, *La grande histoire des serres & des jardins d’hiver, France 1780-1900* (Paris: Graphite, 1984), 38. “Ayant choisi le fer, il opta pour des combles arrondis, les fers courbés offrant une meilleure résistance à section égale que des fers droits.”

⁵³ Marrey and Monnet, *La grande histoire des serres*, 38.

⁵⁴ Loyer, *Architecture of the Industrial Age*, 74.

⁵⁵ Marrey and Monnet, *La grande histoire des serres*, 47-48.

⁵⁶ Marrey, and Monnet, *La grande histoire des serres*, 61. “Il n’est donc pas tout à fait incongru de noter que les serres, tout en satisfaisant la passion de quelques grands noms de la finance et du négoce, figurant parmi les types de bâtiment qui ont fait progresser l’architecture sur le plan constructif, tout comme les gares ou les halles et marches couverts. Elles portaient, de la même façon, le signe de la modernité. A la suite des Rothschild, Furtadoo-Heine, Perrier-Jouet... la bourgeoisie de moindre renom se lancer dans la culture des plantes rares, et telle coelogine massengeana sera promue au rang de signe extérieure de richesse.”

⁵⁷ Daly, César, *L’Architecture privée au dix-neuvième siècle sous Napoleon III*. Tome 1, 18. “...enfin ce sont des serres s’ouvrant sur les salons et qui s’étagent en “tours de cristal.”

⁵⁸ Bertrand Marrey and Jean-Pierre Monnet. Marrey, Bernard and Jean-Pierre Monnet. *La grande histoire des serres & des jardins d’hiver, France 1780-1900*. Paris: Graphite, 1984 Marrey, Bernard and Jean-Pierre Monnet. *La grande histoire des serres & des jardins d’hiver, France 1780-1900*. Paris: Graphite, 1984, 119.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Daly, *L’Architecture privée au dix-neuvième siècle sous Napoleon III*, Tome 1, Example A2, planches 1 – 5.

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- ⁶¹ W. Robinson, *The Parks, Promenades & Gardens of Paris* (London: John Murray, 1869), 269.
- ⁶² Robinson, *The Parks, Promenades & Gardens of Paris*, 280-281.
- ⁶³ Robert L. Herbert, *Impressionism: Art, leisure and Parisian society* (New Haven: Yale University, 1988), p. 181.
- ⁶⁴ Susan Harrow, *Zola: La Curée*. University of Glasgow: French and German publications, 1998, p. 81.
- ⁶⁵ Marry and Monnet, *La grande histoire des serres*, 128.
- ⁶⁶ Painting of *The Dining Room of the Princesse Mathilde* by Sébastien-Charles Girard, 1864.
- ⁶⁷ Marry and Monnet, *La grande histoire des serres*, 129, 191, citing a quote from the brothers Goncourt. Edmond et Jules de Goncourt. *Journal. Mémoires de la vie littéraire*. Tome 3. Paris. G. Charpentier et E. Fasquelee, 1887-1896.
- ⁶⁸ Michael Dennis, *Court and Garden: from the French hôtel to the city of modern architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), p. 115
- ⁶⁹ Dennis, *Court and Garden*, 69.
- ⁷⁰ John Templar, *The Staircase: History and Theories*. (Cambridge: The MIT Press,), 128
- ⁷¹ Templar, *The Staircase*, 128.
- ⁷² Christopher Curtis Mead. *Charles Garnier's Paris Office: Architectural Empathy and the Renaissance of French Classicism*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1991, 127. Mead's translation of Garnier's text.
- ⁷³ Loyer, *Architecture of the Industrial Age*, 138.
- ⁷⁴ Prévost-Marcilhacy. *Bâtisseurs et Mécènes*, 322-3. Unfortunately, the building was demolished during the 1970s.
- ⁷⁵ Dexigner, online portal for designers.. <http://www.dexigner.com/news/16252>
- ⁷⁶ Robert Carlhian and Fabrice Ouziel. *Analyse historique & technique pour l'Hôtel de Saint-Florentin (dît Hôtel de Talleyrand) Pièces Historiques: Étude Préalable à la Restauration* (Paris: United States Department of State Foreign Buildings Operation, Février 2000), 33, referencing Bruno Pons *Grand décors français*, .80-1. "...qui passait pour la plus Gallomane de la famille."
- ⁷⁷ Ibid."mais de sa génération il fut le seul de la famille à s'installer dans les murs anciens et historiques. "
- ⁷⁸ Prévost-Marcilhacy, *Bâtisseurs et Mécènes*, 371.
- ⁷⁹ These nineteenth century alterations were documented and analyzed extensively in the Carlhian and Ouziel studies previously referenced. These alterations have been reversed in the recent restoration of the State Apartments that was completed in 2007, with the aim of restoring the eighteenth century character to these significant spaces.
- ⁸⁰ Fabrice Ouziel & Associés, "Vestibule, grand escalier & antichambres du premier étage pour l'Hôtel de Saint-Florentin dit Hôtel de Talleyrand Pièces Historiques". (Paris: United States Department of State Overseas Buildings Operations, Février 2004.
- ⁸¹ Tate, *Concorde*, 105. This discovery was made by Fabrice Ouziel, consulting historical architect for the U.S. Department of State's restoration project of 1998-2007, while conducting historical research work.
- ⁸² Carlhian and Ouziel, *Étude Préalable à la Restauration*, 88.
- ⁸³ Tate, *Concorde*, 121.

⁸⁴ Carlhian and Ouziel, *Étude Préalable à la Restauration*, 86.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 87.

CHAPTER 4
THE HÔTEL BARONNE SALOMON DE ROTHSCHILD: DOCUMENTING TRADITION,
INVENTION AND SPECTACLE

Art and Memory

Bequeathing her mansion, its contents and gardens to the French government as a “house of art” was the great legacy of the Baronne Adèle-Hannah-Charlotte de Rothschild. Not wanting to leave a static monument in perpetuity, she specified in her will the desire to create a dynamic place for the arts to flourish. She did this in memory of her late husband, Salomon de Rothschild, the third son of James-Mayer de Rothschild, founder of the French branch of the family of bankers and financiers. Presenting the architecture, interior decor and art as a “living place” was very much a part of the Rothschilds’ *savoir-vivre*, of conducting family and social life comfortably within the sumptuous décor and amidst the works of art. Two years after her death in 1922, Carle Dreyfuss wrote

The Baronne Salomon de Rothschild did not want there to be yet another museum in Paris. The visitors who will penetrate into the vast rooms of the *rez-de-chaussée*, with the tall windows opening on the beautiful garden bordering the avenue de Friedland, will by no means have the impression of visiting a museum. Precious works of art, bequeathed to the State which furnish the display cases within the hôtel, form a magnificent ornament for this beautiful house, that is dedicated, through the will of an intelligent and generous woman, to artists and to friends of the Arts.¹

The Client’s Program

One of the challenges for this case study is the lack of documentation pertaining specifically to the development of the design *parti*² and other design-related issues for the residence, or any communications on design issues between the client and her architects. The available correspondence and records are limited to some of the financial arrangements only.³ Therefore, other sources of evidence were used for research. For documentary evidence, there is the extant physical evidence of the building, which could be compared with the documentary

photographs from the 1880s and 1890s, to understand the alterations that were made over time. A preface page to the photographic collection of 1891 explained the design intent for the structure. In addition, there were several contextual and inferential sources of information; and a few contemporaneous references to the building in the writings of others. The Baronne de Rothschild's interest in building this new *hôtel particulier* was attributed to her desire to create an homage to her late husband; to celebrate his passion for the arts, to display his extensive collections (in keeping with this Rothschild family tradition) and to "affirm his way of living", according to Victor Champier in an article describing the completed building in an 1891-2 edition of *Revue des Arts Decoratifs*.⁴ The collections contained fine furnishings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, metalwork, ceramics, historical arms, carved ivories, glassworks, and precious books.

It was to give all of these marvels a context which suited them, that Baronne Salomon wanted to build the mansion.⁵

In addition to displaying their extensive art collections, the Rothschild family typically used their residences to support their public life; for entertaining to reinforce their position among the foremost members of the cultural elite, and for receiving family members of the extended family in more intimate settings.⁶ In keeping with other family residences, the mansion contained the more private spaces on the upper level; including the suite of rooms for the Baronne's daughter Hélène and her governess, a family salon, and the Oratoire, a space for private religious observances.

One significant exception is the placement of the Baronne's private suite on the garden level, instead of on the more private *premier étage*. The Baronne never remarried and devoted herself to preserving the memory of her late husband. Later historians have differed in their interpretations of Adèle's life; Wilson described the Baronne's later life as that of a semi-recluse.

“She had many friends whom she entertained with charm and style but she refused to return their visits.”⁷ She did not frequent art galleries, but would invite promising artists and writers to her residence with their work and supported a number of them as their patroness.⁸

Publications of the time have not afforded an insight into the activities of entertaining or family life in the mansion.⁹ In this case, the extant building was studied, in conjunction with other sources of contextual and inferential evidence,¹⁰ to achieve an understanding of the resulting design, and to reconstruct the patterns of use and the spatial experience of living in the mansion.

Selecting an Architect

The Rothschilds favored certain architects for their projects, and the second generation (sons of James-Meyer) often used the same architects for their residences that they would commission for their commercial, social and religious projects. These architects included Léon Ohnet, Félix Langlais and Émile Lavezzari (1832-1887).

This absence of distinction between the social, private and religious realms, naturally led this generation of Rothschilds to entrust the construction of their dwellings to architects involved in their commercial projects, notably with the railroads. Léon Ohnet, architect for the Northern railway company, enlarged Alphonse’s urban mansion and built the townhouse for the Baronne Salomon, on rue Berryer.¹¹

The choice of Ohnet for the Baronne’s residence might seem an unusual one, given his early career experience as a diocesan architect¹², and the fact that he was moving towards the end of his architectural career and devoting more time to his roles in politics and public life.¹³ But considering Ohnet’s pre-existing relationship with Baron James de Rothschild, as an architect collaborating with Lejeune for the Chemin de Fer du Nord, where he drew the early plans for the new Gard du Nord, the link may be easily explained. He had previously worked on residential projects for both the Baronne’s father-in-law, James, and her brother-in-law, Alphonse, in

renovating the Hôtel de Talleyrand to suit a Second Empire lifestyle. Additionally, Ohnet shared the same *notaire* (type of lawyer in the French legal system specializing in matters of property and other legal documents) with the Rothschild family.¹⁴ It is also notable that, earlier in his career, his diocesan work included the design and renovation plans for several Episcopal palaces, including the work at Carcassone and Ajaccio.¹⁵ Thus, large-scale and sumptuous buildings with a residential program were already part of his early professional experience.

According to several accounts, despite Ohnet's untimely death in 1874, at the beginning of the construction phase, the completed edifice is remarkably faithful to his design intent. The front panel of the Baronne's collection of photographs that was donated to the Musée Carnavalet around 1891, affirms her intent to follow Ohnet's plans.¹⁶ The project was assumed by Ohnet's student, Justin Ponsard, "who went to work with fervor."¹⁷ Champier provides an assessment of Ponsard in his article on the building, dating from 1892.

As modest as he is full of talent, M. Ponsard knew, while taking inspiration from the ideas and customs of the owner, how to make a remarkable work having a distinctive and sober character in its elegance.¹⁸

Ponsard also designed the Baronne's stables at 1, avenue de Wagram, between 1879-1881, notable for the large iron and glass sky light over the central court space and smaller skylights in the stalls space.¹⁹

Designers and Artisans

During the four year design and construction phase, Ponsard worked in close collaboration with the artist-decorator, Henri-Antoine-Léopold de Moulignon, (1821-1897)²⁰ who was charged with creating the entire ornamental program for the interior, including the decorative painting, and selection of the fabrics. Moulignon understood well the Baronne's desire to present the art collection to best advantage. His skill in creating a harmonious interior experience is acknowledged in a contemporaneous review.

He was both the painter and the interior decorator for the *hôtel*. From this comes a general harmony between the furnishings and the choice of colors that is rarely found to such a degree.²¹

Moullignon also administered the interior architectural works, soliciting the bids from the artisans,²² and overseeing their work. Many of the contractors and artisans employed on the project had previously worked on other Rothschild commissions. These companies included; Pruchon Martel et Lâiné (masonry), Hussent (mirrors), Balastet (carpentry), Haussen (fabrics and upholstery), Dasson (bronze), Gagey, (finish carpentry and paneling), Feist (painting), and Lefebvre et V. Fontaine (sculpture).²³

Known for his academic paintings, Moullignon's works were exhibited at numerous official Salons, the formal exhibitions run by the Académie des Beaux-Arts, from 1847 to 1868. His subjects took on an increasingly exotic flavor, and themes of the near east, including generic character studies, were interwoven with his portraits and allegorical classical works.²⁴

Architectural Vocabulary

The architectural vocabulary chosen for the design of the *hôtel* has been described as “*pur style Louis XVI*” (pure Louis XVI style) by Champier, reflecting the late nineteenth-century understanding of a revival of French neoclassicism. Contemporary historians take a more nuanced view of the stylistic expression of the design. Rather than seeing the work as a direct historic interpretation of eighteenth-century neoclassicism, these historians view the style as one which borrows freely from the traditions of French classicism, from the renaissance to the *style Empire*, creating a style associated with the Second Empire and with the Rothschilds. In his Avant-Propos for the book, *Rothschilds: Bâtisseurs et Mécènes*, François Loyer describes Ohnet's work as

a *hôtel* with Louis XVI (flavor) style, which may not be the most perfect, but is the only summary of the traits of a “Rothschild style” architecture, (including the

astonishing Italianate Salon plunged in the cryptic light of the skylight at its zenith).²⁵

Ohnet has produced a work that interprets rather than copies a traditional theme and exhibits modernity in its unique central space that plays a pivotal role in the plan organization. The composition of the spatial sequence is a particularly inventive response to the constraints of the site and the client's program.

History of the Site

Folie Beaujon

In studying the physical history of previously developed properties, the preexisting architectural and landscape features can have profound implications for current conditions, as evidenced in this case study. Several architectural elements from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were salvaged and reused as part of Ohnet's vision for the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild and the adjacent gardens. The property that is today bounded by the avenue de Friedland, avenue de Beaujon, rue de Balzac, avenue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré and the rue Berryer was, in the eighteenth century, part of a large 12-hectare property assembled by Nicolas Beaujon (1718-1786). A financier, private banker to the nobility, including King Louis XVI and Madame Du Barry, Beaujon was a libertine and philanthropist, as well as one of the wealthiest men of his day.²⁶ He had owned a country estate near Issy,²⁷ which later became the *mairie* (city hall) of Issy-les-Moulineaux, southwest of Paris, but had sold it as his health declined and travel became difficult. Desirous of a pastoral estate not too far from his urban residence in the Hôtel d'Évreux (now the Élysée Palace), Beaujon assembled several parcels between the Champs Élysées and the rue du Faubourg du Roule and built a small palace and a group of service buildings around a court; a *pavillon des bains*, or bathing pavilion and a chapel intended for his mausoleum, called the chapelle Saint-Nicolas.²⁸ The buildings were surrounded by a *jardin à*

l'anglaise (English-style garden) with several greenhouses, and a windmill used to power the pumps that fed the water features of the garden, as well as supplying water for the bathing pavilion.²⁹ The property was named, with some irony, the Chartreuse de Beaujon, as the layout of the orchards and gardens recalled the pastoral character of a *chartreuse*, or a monastery of the Carthusian order.

The main pavilion of the residence was designed by the architect Nicolas-Claude Girardin (1749-1786), a student of, and collaborator with, the architect Étienne-Louis Boullée (1728-1799). Girardin's design was a unique example of the trend of the "rustic" theme of architecture made popular during the reign of Louis XVI, as seen in the picturesque architecture of Marie-Antoinette's *hameau* at Versailles. The central room was an octagonal salon, and was decorated with a ceiling painting by Louis-René Bouquet (1717-1814), artist and decorative painter of the royal Menus Plaisirs.³⁰ This painted feature was salvaged from the demolition of the pavilion and integrated into the ceiling design for the Grand Salon of the nineteenth-century *hôtel particulier*.

The chapelle Saint-Nicolas was constructed in 1783, in the northwest corner of the property, with the long axis of the rectangular plan placed perpendicular to the existing road. The chapel had a single entrance door that was flanked by two Doric columns, leading into a rectangular nave with flanking side aisles defined by five Doric columns on each side. The only light in the space came from the ceiling oculus. Opening from this space, the choir contained a circular arrangement of eight fluted Ionic columns supporting a coffered dome pierced by an oculus.³¹ The building survived for over 100 years and parts of the structure, five of the Ionic columns and the entablature, were preserved and reinterpreted in the late nineteenth century as a garden "ruin." The treatment of the architectural fragments in this manner, re-interpreted as a garden feature, reflect the prevailing attitude towards the integration and reuse of these features,

as elements to be freely used in the creation of a mood or “scene,” similar in flavor to design features found in an eighteenth-century *jardin à l’anglaise*.

The property then passed through several families. The gardens were converted to a sort of outdoor attraction called the “Montagnes françaises,” in 1817.³² After 1825, the property passed through several owners and was subdivided. This process resulted in the creation of new streets; one ran behind the houses fronting on the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré and was called the rue des Écuries-d’Artois. This street was renamed rue Berryer in 1877. A street was extended south from the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, and was named the rue du Moulin-de-la-Chartreuse for the windmill built in this area by Beaujon, then renamed rue Fortunée. This street name changed again in 1850, after the famed novelist, Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), acquired the parcels containing the *pavilion des bains*. In 1854, Haussman directed the expropriation of part of the land for a new avenue radiating out from the place d’Étoile, naming this new street the avenue Beaujon.³³ An 1857 plan shows the access to the property from the rue des Ecuries through a *portail* with an *allée* of trees leading to the pavillon de Beaujon.³⁴

Honoré de Balzac

Balzac, the novelist and playwright noted for his realistic depiction of society was, in 1846, searching for a new residence. He was drawn to the lot containing the old bathing pavilion of Beaujon’s estate, of about 500 square meters, because of its reasonable cost and its location in a neighborhood that was ascending in prestige and value.

Around 1846, shortly before his marriage with the countess Éveline de Hanska, he (Balzac) acquired one of the houses built on the site of the *montagnes françaises*: in the middle of overgrown gardens that conceal small pavilions, fragments of eighteenth-century architecture. This house, poorly built without a grand exterior appearance, has only a ground floor and an upper floor. It almost touches the old dwelling of Beaujon and is joined to the chapelle Saint-Nicolas, where later on, Madame de Balzac could go to hear the mass without leaving her residence.³⁵

But it was not love at first sight, between the writer and the site. Of his newly acquired property, Balzac wrote this description of his newly acquired property.

The house is as lovely inside as it is ugly on the outside. These eight French windows on the long side of the building are dreadful. As for the garden, it is like a prison yard.³⁶

The neighborhood character of the quartier Beaujon of this period is characterized by Hirsch in her essay on the Quartier du Roule in the work *Paris aux cents villages* as “working class and middle class, lovely houses from the Restoration period and their gardens border the tree-lined private avenues, closed by iron gates.”³⁷

Balzac renovated the pavilion into a residence, the bath space was resurfaced in blue marble and decorated with *bas-reliefs* with erotic themes, and the reception *salons* were decorated with sumptuous materials and furnishings.³⁸ After Balzac’s death in 1850, his widow resided in the house for over thirty years. Her son-in-law acquired two adjacent parcels including the site of the *chapelle*. In order to settle the debts of her daughter, she sold the house while retaining the rights of residence, to the Baronne de Rothschild in 1882. Shortly after this acquisition, the Baronne ordered the demolition of the residence and chapel and expanded the garden space onto the newly acquired property.

In homage to the great writer, a domed pavilion known as the *rotonde de Balzac* was constructed in this garden space, at the angle of the intersection of rue Balzac and rue Berryer in 1891.³⁹ The interior features some wall panels and a pair of decorative door panels salvaged from Balzac’s residence, another example of repurposing salvaged architectural fragments for a new setting to create an ambience.

Early Buildings, Site Features and Ruins

The discussion of these features is important to this study as some of these elements were incorporated into the new construction and used in a manner that mirrored the later nineteenth-

century attitude towards the alteration of art objects and artifacts. As seen in the previous chapter's example of the alterations to the Louveciennes panels, it was an accepted practice to alter the architectural fragments or objects to suit the space or the mood of the desired design effect, rather than a concern with a stricter definition of authenticity or conservation of the object, which our modern sensibilities would dictate today.

Reading the material evidence correctly requires an understanding of the layers of alterations and additions to a building, structure or site over time. Buildings change with the passage of time, reflecting the different needs, uses and aesthetic preferences of their occupants over the lifespan of the physical object. Even after a structure's service life is over, the existence of its "ruins" can provide valuable data for analysis and interpretation of the attitudes of the original creators and users. In this particular study, "ruins" from an earlier period, in the form of architectural fragments, have been incorporated into the new construction, and prove equally enlightening in the discernment of cultural and aesthetic values for the period under study.

Writing on the history of the site during the time of Beaujon and assessing the changes made to the property during the later nineteenth century, including the creation of the "ruins" from pieces of earlier structures on the site, another historian presents a different view:

Thus placed, these "ruins" have a late eighteenth-century quality that probably would not have been displeasing to monsieur Beaujon. It is likely that, on the other hand, he would consider with a skeptical eye, the Third Republic (style) stone heap that has the pretensions of a private townhouse for whose construction, his charming Louis XVI pavilion was shamelessly torn down.⁴⁰

The inspiration for Ohnet's selection of architectural style was likely due to several factors. In addition to the social and family association with styles of the *ancien régime*, Ohnet may have wished to pay homage to the eighteenth-century *pavillon* that was to be demolished to make room for his new construction. The second factor was that Ohnet had completed the work on the Hôtel de Talleyrand just prior to this commission, and had developed a sensitively designed

addition to Gabriel and Chalgrin's neoclassical masterpiece. Thus, his fluency in the particular stylistic vocabulary was well established in his recent work.

Architectural Features

Architectural *Parti*

Having a father-in-law such as James de Rothschild, for Adèle, meant spending time at the family seat of Ferrières, where Salomon was raised. This architectural *parti* conceived by Paxton and the decorative aesthetic established in the work of Lami would have been familiar to the young couple. The *distribution* of the plan is organized around a grand entrance axis leading into a two-story central Hall with its spectacular toplight, which is ringed by the peripheral gallery that provides access to the principal spaces. The public rooms were conceived each with its own character; the Hall with its eclectic Baroque and Venetian elements, the Salon des Tapisseries in a *style Louis XV*, the Salon Louis XVI as a more literal stylistic borrowing of neoclassical elements and the Grand Salle à Manger in a neo-Renaissance style.

Taking the architectural *parti* of Ferrières and applying it to an urban site required a careful manipulation of scale in order to maintain the sense of elegance and drama so clearly desired by the client. It is a testament to Ohnet's design skill that, at the time of construction, and despite the existence of the buildings to the west on the property not yet owned by the Baronne, that the *hôtel particulier* reads as a free-standing structure. Ohnet achieved this effect through manipulation of the building's massing by stepping down the scale of the side wing where it touched the property's western party wall.

Ohnet organized the site plan in the traditional *hôtel* sequence; with the property edge defined by a street wall, articulated with alternating sections of stacked quoins and solid panels, and capped with a stone balustrade. The *portail* on the north façade, consisting of a higher section of wall with entablature and cornice, frames a round arched opening. Within the opening,

a pair of paneled wooden doors piercing the solid wall leads to the *cour d'honneur*. This space was originally planted with poplars and hornbeam trees and surrounded by tall hedges.⁴¹ A central building block, the *corps de bâtiment* is set between the court and the rear garden.

The raised grade level of the garden terrace from the street entrance level is one of the significant site features, and demanded a different design response for each side of the *hôtel*. As seen from the *cour d'honneur*, the massing of the north façade of the *hôtel* contains a three-and-one-half-story central block, composed of a lower *rez-de chaussée*, an upper *rez-de chaussée* containing the reception rooms, an upper floor for the more private family spaces and a third floor with the servants' spaces in the attic area under the mansard eaves behind the roof balustrade. This balustrade helps shield the view of the attic level mansard roof that is set back from the exterior wall edge. On each side of the projecting three-story main block, an asymmetrical two-story pavilions is set back. Along the east property boundary, a two-story service wing is set perpendicular to the main building block and originally contained the kitchens and service spaces. The garden side of the building is one story shorter than the entrance court façade, so that the rooms of the upper *rez-de chaussée* open directly to the level of the garden. The façades are clad in dressed ashlar masonry, with projecting stone quoins at the corners of the projecting main pavilions.

Exterior Composition

The principal entrance court façade is composed of a three bay wide central *avant-corps* or projecting pavilion, placed on the centerline through the *portail*, and flanked by two symmetrical pavilions set back from the main frontispiece. Centered within the middle bay is a projecting block surmounted by a triangular pediment. The head heights of the two ground floor windows on either side of the entrance door opening are set lower than the windows of the main block, reflecting the lower level of the entrance floor. The pair of entrance doors were originally natural

oak with a waxed finish and were capped with a half round fixed glass transom with a decorative iron grill., A pair of Ionic columns adjacent to the pilasters support the archivolt over the entrance opening, recalling a triumphal arch.⁴² The arch keystone is ornamented by the decorative motives of a woman's head and acanthus leaves.

The entrance vestibule is elevated above the level of the *cour d'honneur* by several steps flanked by statues of winged figures with female heads. The entrance is illuminated at night by a pair of post mounted lights on free-standing pedestals to the sides of these statues.

The garden façade is the inverse of the court façade in massing. Here, the central three bay wide pavilion is recessed from the flanking pavilions. A porch colonnade is placed across the recessed center pavilion and is defined by paired Ionic columns at the upper *rez-de-chaussée* level (the *rez-du-jardin*, or garden level). The roof of the colonnade forms a balcony opening from the *salon* on the upper level. Similar to the court face, a central bay is projected from the wall plane and is capped by a triangular pediment. The decorative sculptures include a vase in the form of two swans surrounded by musical instruments. The entablature of the two flanking pavilions is supported on ornamental brackets and frieze bands containing decorative sculptures of branches of oak or laurel leaves and vases.

The small side wings are recessed well back from the forward pavilions and present as one story high under a roof balustrade with an attic space under the mansard roof. The eastern wing terminates in an iron and glass wall and roof, forming a small *jardin d'hiver*.

Interior Design and Décor

The interior reflects the architectural themes of the era that were discussed in the previous chapter, the program of spaces decorated with historically inspired architectural ornamentation and a heightened sense of dramatic spatial composition. The concept for the *distribution*,

inspired by an earlier Rothschild residence, follows in the spirit of Daly's guide to incorporating modern patterns of living, while reflecting the individual attributes and desires of the client.

Moullignon's interior program incorporated decorative motives with an Italian flavor, as seen in his decorative painted panels, often with gilded backgrounds, that were integrated throughout the mansion.⁴³ The recurring motifs, birds, flowers, laurel branches set against a blue sky background, reflect a pastoral theme, as though nature was brought into the interior, an important theme of the period, as discussed in the previous chapter.

The Vestibule as Theatre

In plan, the entrance vestibule is the first of two almost equally sized rectangular rooms dedicated to circulation and display. Contained within the one-and-one-half story volume, of approximately eight meters in height, is the first set of paired monumental stairs, the *escalier d'honneur*. The curving, flared steps, much like the *fer-en-cheval*, horseshoe-shaped stairs at Ferrières, sweep the visitors up on both sides of the vestibule. The walls are constructed from dressed stone, giving the décor of this space a restrained and monochromatic character. The ornamental vocabulary of the sculpted elements consists of Ionic pilasters supporting the coffered ceilings beams, and garlands of flower, which festoon the overdoor panels.

Bringing more daylight into the interior was a major design consideration in the architect's conception of the spatial experience.⁴⁴ The vestibule is lit from the sides by elongated windows, from the front by the round arched transom across the doorway, and from the borrowed light of the elevated top-lit Hall, which spills through the large opening onto the balcony and down the walls into the lower level of the vestibule. The floor is patterned with alternating red and grey marble squares, set into white marble frames, with deep red square insets at the frame corners.

This stair served two important design functions. One was to provide a practical means of accommodating the change in topography of the site, from the raised garden on the avenue de

Freidland, to the lower elevation of the rue Berryer. The second role was to inaugurate a dramatic spatial sequence.

This scenographic tradition that triumphed in 1862, with the inauguration of the Hall at Ferrières, lasted from the nineteenth into the twentieth centuries. By integrating all aspects of a (theatrical) production, the exterior architecture and the interior (*décor*) of the residences became entertainment.⁴⁵

This feature is expressive of the love of “stage-set” integral to the aesthetics of the designers who developed the *goût Rothschild* and, on a broader level, this scenographic technique was embedded in the design aesthetic of the Second Empire. Prévost-Marcilhacy describes these *hôtels* “as splendid, eclectic, decorative, polychromatic. . . in the line of the Garnier Opera.”⁴⁶

This sense of drama and display is continued throughout the public spaces of the *hôtel*. After proceeding through the formal entrance sequence of *portail, cour d'honneur, vestibule* and climbing the *escalier d'honneur*, the visitor crosses the balcony and passes under the large opening that leads to the Hall. The two niches flanking the opening contained large “magnificent exotic shrubs, whose green foliage forms with red color of the tapis and the white of the stone an agreeable harmony.”⁴⁷

Hall

Described as a ‘half-scaled’ version of the grand central Hall at Ferrières,⁴⁸ this top-lit space serves as the pivot point for the cross axes of the floor plan layout. Prévost-Marcilhacy noted that architect Ohnet’s major preoccupation seemed to be to obtain as much natural light as possible throughout the *hôtel* by using glass-covered spaces, in the Hall and in the winter garden that is connected to the dining room at the end of the gallery space.⁴⁹ The architect was also expressing his skill in manipulating varying levels of light and dark spaces to emphasize the drama and movement inherent in the circulation axes of the plan.

Rising to a height of eleven meters, the two-story Hall is ringed at the second level on three sides by a corbelled gallery with a central projecting balcony that serves as a “*tribune*” or oratory balcony. Adopting another motif from Ferrières, two corner balconies curve outward, reinforcing the theatrical aspect of the space. Functionally, this gallery also provides multiple viewpoints to celebrate the sense of “seeing and being seen.”⁵⁰

The ceiling is ornamented by a large coved cornice and the glass roof with wrought iron decorative motifs, abstracted floral “jewels” at the edges of each pane of glass and a patterned band of Greek key scrollwork at the outer edge of the flat section.⁵¹ The decorative painted panels set within the cornice are the work of Moulignon. The small inset paintings between the robust brackets of the supporting cornice features doves on laurel branches set on a gold background, to imitate a sort of Byzantine mosaic.⁵²

The space is furnished in a manner that encourages the visitor to flow around the round sofa set at the center of the space and to continue their journey on one of the two principal axes that meet at this juncture. Under this two-story space at the center of the building, the visitor has a choice, either to continue straight ahead through the Salon rouge and out to the garden terrace under the incised portico, or to turn onto the perpendicular axis of the Galerie, at the center of the *hôtel*. Opposite the Galerie is the opening into the Grand Escalier that leads to the upper level,

Salon Rouge

The Salon rouge (Red Salon) décor is inspired by the *style Louis XVI*, with the paneling painted in a pale grey. On either side of the entrance door, the paneling was originally covered with fabric above the wainscot. Floral motifs fill the painted medallions of the overdoor panels, and the medallions in the carved moldings of the ceiling at each end of the room.

In keeping with the spirit of integrating artifacts from the earlier structures on site, the ceiling painting is by the eighteenth-century artist Lagrenée.⁵³ The painting is set into a

rectangular frame with a decorative plaster border with half-oval ends. An inset painted border is set between the painting frame and the cornice. The room opens directly to the garden on the opposite long wall of the space, the fireplace is set on one end of the room and a pair of doors opens into the Grand Salon on the opposite side of the space.

Grand Salon

The Grand Salon décor recalls spaces in other Rothschild residences, notably the spirit of the Salon Louis XVI of Ferrières. Both spaces are dominated by a large allegorical painting in the ceiling with a painted border. The geometric ceiling border is bounded by the shallow entablature supported by the full height Corinthian columns and pilasters. The walls are covered with wood panels with inset paintings depicting floral garlands and medallions, whose character recalls the treatment of the walls within the Grand Salle à manger by Ohnet and Petit at the Hôtel de Talleyrand.

The reuse of architectural fragments continues with the integration of the ceiling painting salvaged from the octagonal salon of the Chartreuse de Beaujon, and signed by Louis-René Bocquet (1717-1814), the Inspector-General and chief designer of the Menus Plaisirs, the royal department in charge of creating special events for the court of the *ancien régime*.⁵⁴ Bocquet is known for the designs he created for Marie-Antoinettes's private theater at Versailles in 1778.⁵⁵

Display

The *hôtel* had a Cabinet des Curiosités, or a study for curios, a type of space found in many Rothschild residences, which housed the extensive collections of *objets d'art*. The room is also labeled on the 1892 plan, from the Champier article, as a *fumoir*, or smoking room, where the gentlemen would repair after dinner, to smoke and to discuss business. This room paneling was likely salvaged from another building and was set into a larger space with a hidden corridor around the back and sides of the internal walls. As depicted on the floor plan in the Champier

article of 1891-1892, the walls on the north side are splayed and contain medieval stained glass panels that “borrow” light from the windows on the exterior wall. These walls are covered with dark wood paneling and inset panels of Cordoba leather. The room was furnished with display cases containing objects from the collection of Salomon de Rothschild. This entire room assembly was to be preserved *in situ*, as part of the stipulations in the Baronne’s bequest.

Galerie

Leading between the Grand Salon and the Cabinet des Curiosités, the Galerie (passage with glass in ceiling or wall), acts as a corridor and liberates the principal rooms from an *en enfilade* circulation. This ornately decorated space terminates on the central axis of the Salle à Manger, or dining room. A laylight centered in the ceiling of the *galerie*, “borrows” light from the light shaft, a void space above, which is in turn covered with a skylight.

Salle à Manger

The room décor is noteworthy for the grey Auvergne walnut paneling and insets of eighteenth-century Goblins tapestries. The ceiling cornice is plaster painted in a faux wood finish to match the walls. The large decorative ceiling painting is surrounded by four medallions, one in each corner, featuring a floral design, with a gilded lattice frame over the picture, and set against a sky blue background.

In the Cary photograph, the room is furnished with a small table, unlike the grand dining rooms of other residences of the period.

The Serre

As discussed in Chapter 3, the glazed *serre* or *jardin d’hiver* served as a way of bringing nature into the dwelling and creating an expression of the exotic interests of the period.⁵⁶ A focal point of the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild is a small *serre* wedged between the adjacent property wall and the main block of the *hôtel*. The *serre* opens directly from the Dining Room

and terminates the principal east-west axis of the plan. Linked to the dining room by three arched openings, and enclosed at the end by the end wall of the property, the small space is capped with an iron and glass roof.⁵⁷ The south wall, composed of iron and glass panels and doors, opens directly onto the garden terrace. The floor is clad with clay tiles.

According to Champier's description, published in 1893 in the English publication, *The Decorator and Furnisher*, the décor of the Salle à Manger was intended to create an "illusion of verdure." Two of the three bays were separated from the serre by untinned mirrors, so one could see into the winter garden from the dining room. The party wall which terminated the line of sight from the Salle à Manger was covered with mirrors to reflect the sight of greenery and attempt to deepen the perception of space in the small *serre*.⁵⁸

Compared with other Rothschild residences, this example of a *serre* is quite modest in size, but its scale is harmonious with the overall size of this *hôtel particulier*.⁵⁹ The construction of this space utilizes materials found in the commercial and industrial architecture of the period. Ohnet had worked for the railroads and had prior experience with these materials.⁶⁰ But beyond this interest in modern materials of the age is Ohnet's desire for "openness translated in the plan as a better integration of the building within the garden. . . in that the hall extends laterally by a gallery leading to the dining room that opens into the winter garden."⁶¹

These *serres* or *jardin d'hivers*, by their transparency, embody the design counterpoints of visual connectivity and privacy. The placement of this space at the end of a major east-west axis of the architectural plan punctuates the aspect of a visual connection, yet at the same time provides a sense of visual and acoustic privacy from all spaces but the Dining Room.

Private Spaces

By locating the Baronne's own private apartments on the upper *rez-de-chaussée* at the garden level, in the west block of the building, Ohnet broke with the usual pattern of placing the

private spaces on the upper level grand floor. The historic photographs taken after completion of the project illustrate these spaces in detail. Unfortunately few traces of this décor remain, as the suite of rooms was modified during the 1920s to accommodate an apartment for the resident property manager, after the transfer of ownership to the government upon the death of the baronne.

Returning to the Hall, the top-lit Grand Escalier leads to the upper level, which contained a Salle des Billards (billiards room), the Oratoire and the Baronne's daughter's apartments. While no extant plan of Ohnet's design for the *premier étage* has been found, the actual layout of spaces was noted on the 1922 drawings which depicted the renovation plan for the building.

Notable for its exotic motifs, the Oratoire was located above the Baronne's bedroom and boudoir in the west block of the upper level. The details of the décor were conceived in the "Arab style, created for Jewish religious ceremonies."⁶² The décor of this space was removed to accommodate the Secretariat of the Bibliothèque Doucet.⁶³ Fortunately, the historic photographs, taken by A. Cary before 1891 documented the appearance and design features of the Oratoire.

The Salle des Billards is intact, and featured wood wall paneling, decorative ceiling moldings and an inset ceiling design. The balance of the upper level was extensively modified with the addition of partitions and dropped ceilings during the several campaigns of renovations in the twentieth century.

Architectural Interventions from the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries

The Baronne de Rothschild's will, which bequeathed the property, residence, artworks, furnishings, gardens and dependencies to the French government, creating the Fondation Salomon de Rothschild, contained three directives for the use of the property. These were; to hold expositions of the artwork at least twice a year, to provide a place for special events, concerts and charity sales events to benefit artists, and to provide artists with a venue to receive

their foreign colleagues for meetings and conferences, in order to strengthen the bonds between artists.⁶⁴

The site program, developed by the ministry of Public Instruction and the Beaux-Arts, preserved the salons on the *rez-de-chaussée* with the collections *in situ* as reception rooms, to receive artists and scholars, thereby fulfilling the directives of the bequest.⁶⁵ The upper floor and the attic were taken over by the Université de Paris for the art and archaeology library, known as the Doucet collection, which occupied these areas from 1925 to 1935.⁶⁶ The plans of the lower and upper ground floor level were left essentially intact. Some partitions were added on the *premier étage* to accommodate the needs of the library, and to provide an apartment for the site administrator. From 1925 until 1945, the Cabinet des Estampes of the Bibliothèque Nationale was also housed on the upper level.

The drawings for the renovation work were made by the government architect, Eugène Bois in 1922, and his drawings record the extant layout of the interior, including the *sousbassement* (raised basement plan), the *rez-de-chaussée haut* (upper ground floor plan), the (*premier étage*) (first floor plan) and the *deuxième étage* (second floor plan) under the eaves. Fortuitously, the original room names were noted in script on the plans while the intended room use designations were indicated in architectural block lettering. These documents provide a valuable record of the design architect's original design of the plan distribution for all of the floors of the residence.⁶⁷

Significant alterations were made to accommodate the occupation of the building by the Centre nationale d'art contemporain from 1967 to 1974. The installation of dropped ceilings and wall coverings obscured some of the original décor. In 1976, the Fondation Nationale des Arts Graphiques et Plastiques was created, and this institution occupied the property. The Centre

nationale de la Photographie occupied the building from 1993 until 2004, when the institution moved to the renovated Jeu de Paume museum at the Tuileries gardens.⁶⁸

The site was designated as a *monument classé* in 2005 for the totality of the site, including the buildings and dependencies, entrance court, gardens, property walls, the colonnade of chapelle Saint Nicolas, and the rotonde de Balzac.⁶⁹ As of 2010, a major rehabilitation has been completed for a private client. A massive hall has been constructed under the building to house a conference center, while the historic building received major restoration work.⁷⁰

Significance

The Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild exemplifies the aesthetic sensibilities of the period spanning the Second Empire and early decades of the Third Republic. The juxtaposition of the two prevailing design tendencies of the era, the eclectic selection of traditional forms and details of three centuries of French classical design, combined with an innovative plan organization and spatial sequence created a dramatic visual experience.

The role of spectacle as a design consideration was given form through the plan distribution and through the skillful use of natural light to evoke a theatrical sense as the spectator moved along the circulation paths of the interior. The public spaces opened onto the gardens and the illusion of greenery was furthered extended by the visual tricks employed in the design of the *jardin d'hiver*, which sought to bring nature indoors.

The iconography inherent in the selected architectural style, recalling the neoclassical *style Louis XVI*, reflected a sober and restrained decorative statement desired by the client. Exotic architectural themes were employed in the more private spaces, to create a more fanciful (or in the case of the Oratoire, perhaps more a spiritual) experience in these areas.

The building fits within a tradition of residences for the social group of Second Empire entrepreneurial families, but contains some unique features due to specific programmatic

requirements. These included the nature and duration of assembling the property from multiple parcel acquisitions, the physical characteristics of the site and the particular circumstances of the client, a female member of one of the most prominent families of the later nineteenth-century *haute bourgeoisie*.

The Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild is singularly appropriate as a case study to evaluate the thesis that the Parisian urban mansion of the Second Empire is significant as an expression of both tradition and invention, alongside the culture's fascination with spectacle. The geographically prominent location of the site, the leading role in the contemporary society of the Rothschild family, and the visual features of the property suggest significant physical evidence of the era.



Figure 4-1. Portrait of the Baronne de Rothschild. [A. Cary, *Portrait de Brnne. Salomon de Rothschild*, plate 4]

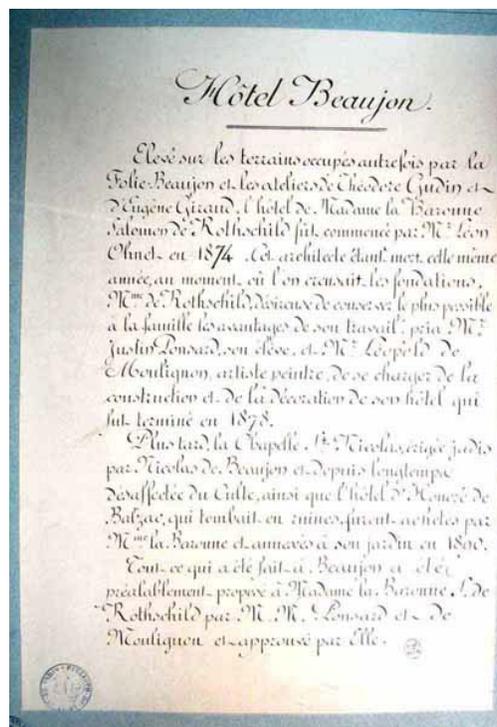


Figure 4-2. Preface to photographic collection. [A. Cary, *plate 2*]

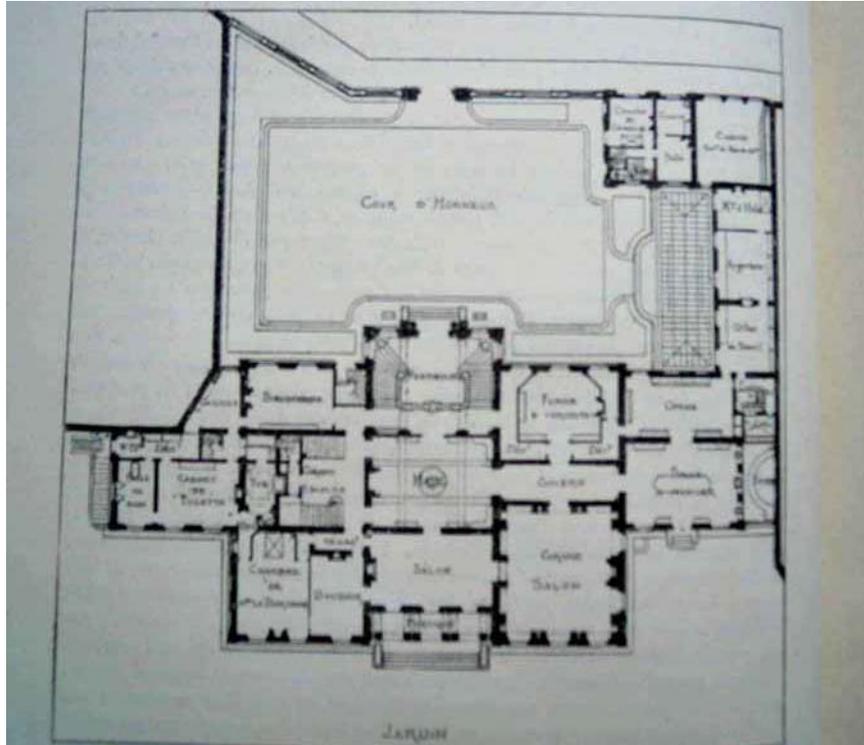


Figure 4-3. Plan du rez-de-chaussée, Revue des Arts Decoratifs, V.Champier, 1892. [Author's photo]

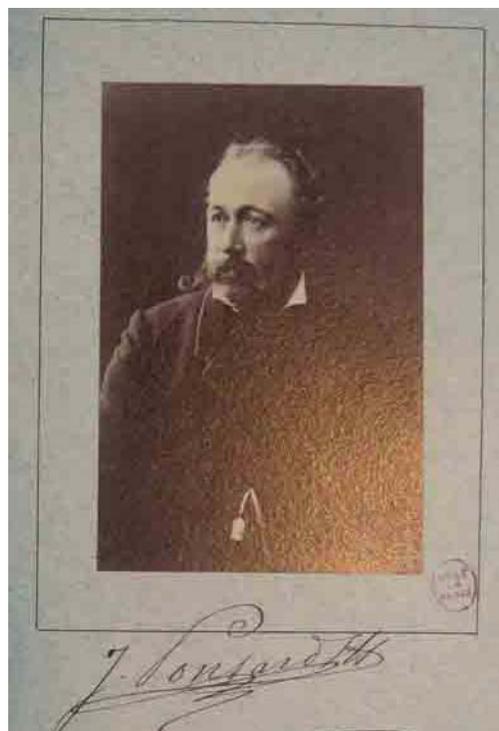


Figure 4-4. Portrait of J. Ponsard. [A. Cary, Portrait de J. Ponsard, plate 7]



Figure 4-5. Stables by Ponsard, main court. [A. Cary, *Écuries de Mme la Baronne Salomon de Rothschild*, plate 35]



Figure 4-6. Stables by Ponsard, stalls. [A. Cary, *Écuries de Mme la Baronne Salomon de Rothschild*, plate 36]



Figure 4-9. Court of Honor facade. [A. Cary, *Façade sur la cour d'honneur*, plate. 10]



Figure 4-10. Great Hall facing the gallery [A. Cary, *Le Hall. (côté de la galerie)*, pl. 25]

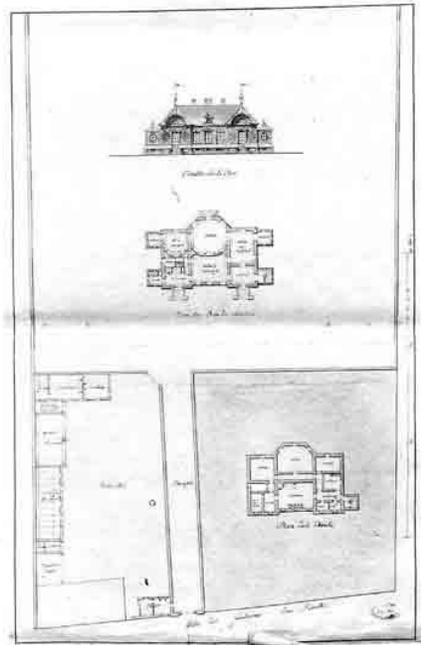


Figure 4-11. Folie Beaujon site plan and elevation, Girardin, 1781. [Archives Nationales, AN MCN LIII561, 16 juillet 1781] Author's photo.

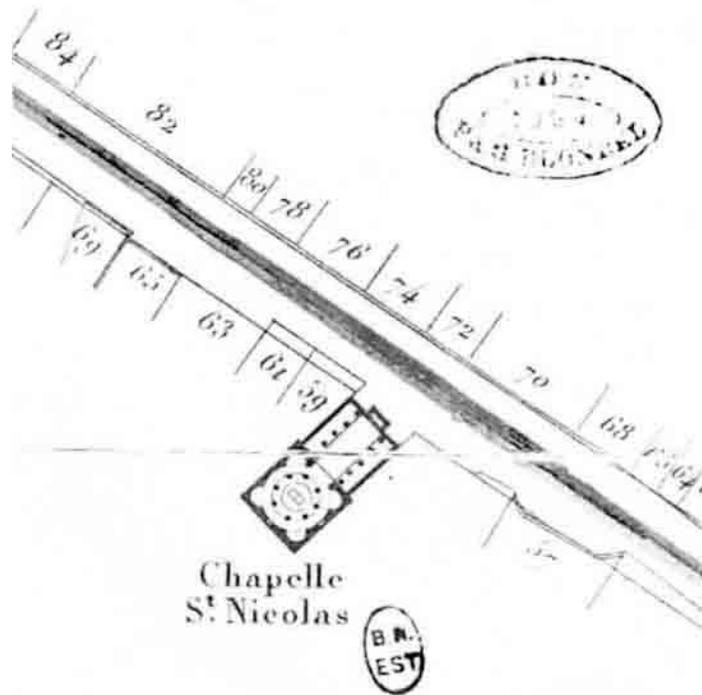


Figure 4-12. Chapelle Saint-Nicolas site plan, Jacoubet, 1836. [Dossiers des monuments historiques, copy of drawing at BN- Estampes]

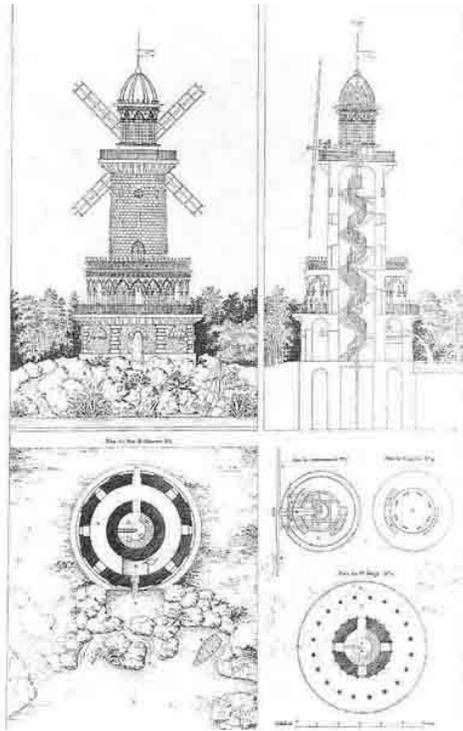


Figure 4-13. Windmill at Folie Beaujon [Krafft et Ransonnette, *Plans, coupes et elevations des plus belles maisons de Paris*, 1802, pl. 47]



Figure 4-14. Vue de la Folie Beaujon : les communs, le moulin-joli. 1807. Dessin à la mine de plomb et rehauts de craie sur papier brun ; 12,7 x 17,7 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ancienne coll. Destailleur. [Wikimedia commons, p.d.].



Figure 4-15. Pavilion folie Beaujon, Girardin, constructed 1787. View around 1830. [Wikimedia commons, p.d.]



Figure 4-16. Vue de la Chapelle Beaujon, historic engraving. [Copy from the Dossier de Classement - Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild, date 2005. Reference No. PA00088834, Ministère de la Culture, herein after referred to as Dossier de classement, M.H.]



Figure 4-17. La Chapelle Saint-Nicolas de Beaujon, L. Leymonnier, 1865. [Dossier de classement, M.H.]



Figure 4-18. Chapelle Saint-Nicolas in ruins. [A. Cary, *Chapelle St. Nicolas*, plate 43]



Figure 4-19. House of Balzac. [A. Cary, *Vue de l'hôtel de Honoré de Balzac et la coupole de la chapelle St. Nicolas*, plate 37]

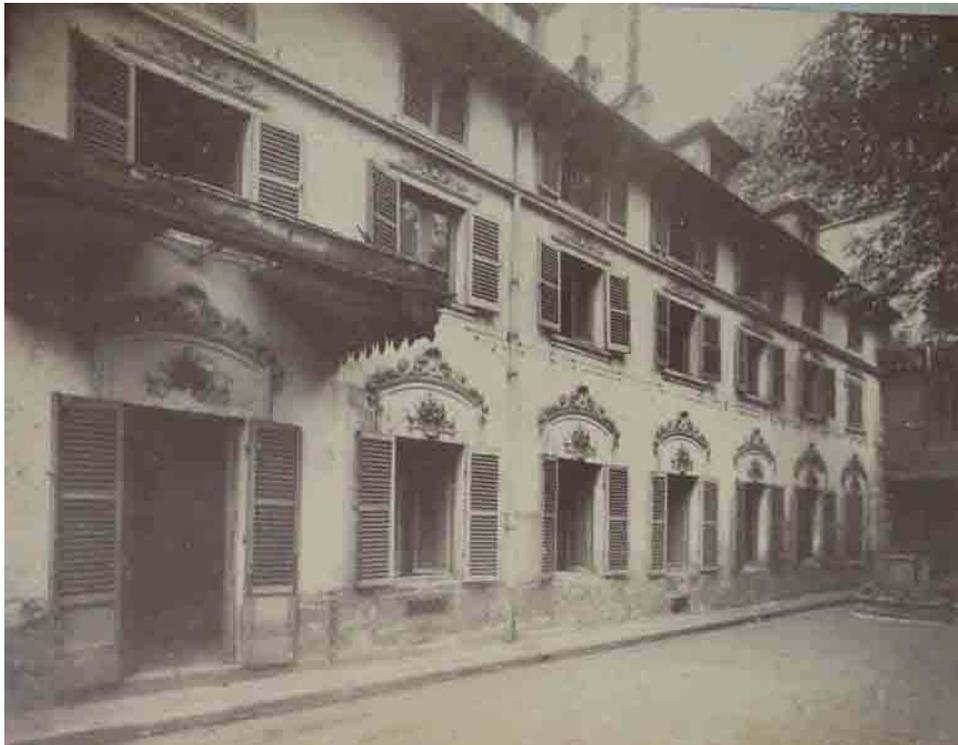


Figure 4-20. House of Balzac, garden façade. [A. Cary, *Hôtel de Honoré de Balzac*, plate 38]



Figure 4-21. House of Balzac, Salon. [A. Cary, Hôtel de Honoré de Balzac, salon, plate 40]



Figure 4-22. House of Balzac, Chambre. [A. Cary, Hôtel de Honoré de Balzac, plate 39]



Figure 4-23. Rotonde de Balzac. [A. Cary, *La rotonde dans le jardin*, plate 44]



Figure 4-24. Colonnade in garden. [A. Cary, *La colonnade de l'ancienne chapelle Saint-Nicolas dans le jardin de l'hôtel Rothschild*, plate 42]



Figure 4-25. Château de Ferrières, Hall. [Author's photo]



Figure 4-26. Château de Ferrières, Salon Louis XVI. [Author's photo]



Figure 4-27. Château de Ferrières, Salon de famille. [Author's photo]

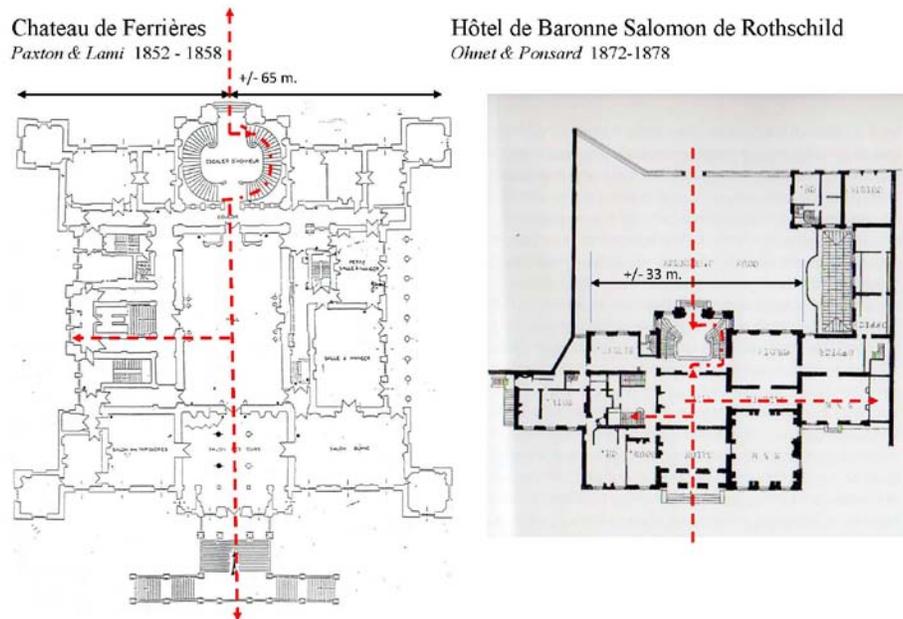


Figure 4-28. Comparative plans, Ferrières and hôtel Salomon de Rothschild. [Author's diagram]



Figure 4-29. Porte cochère. [A. Cary, *Porte cochère sur la rue Berryer*, plate 24]



Figure 4-30. Porte cochère, view from rue Berryer. [Author's photo]



Figure 4-31. Court façade in 1975. [Dossier de classement, M.H.]



Figure 4-32. Service wing. [Dossier de classement, M.H., 2004]



Figure 4-33. Court façade center pavilion. [Dossier de classement, M.H., 2004]



Figure 4-34. Court Façade detail. [Author's photo]



Figure 4-35. Garden facade. [A. Cary, *Façade sur le Jardin*, plate 27]



Figure 4-36. Garden façade from public garden. [Author's photo]



Figure 4-37. Garden façade balcony. [Author's photo]



Figure 4-38. Garden façade detail. [Author's photo]



Figure 4-39. Garden façade Dining Room wing. [Author's photo]



Figure 4-40. Detail of *serre* façade. [Author's photo]

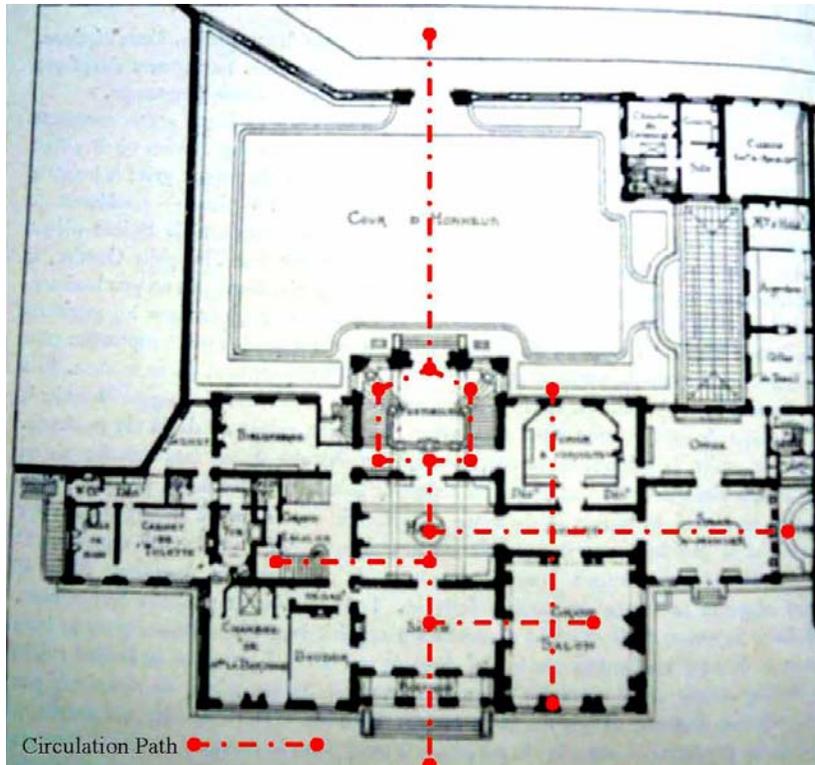


Figure 4-41. Plan with circulation axes. [Author's diagram]



Figure 4-42. Vestibule [A. Cary, Vestibule, plate 9]



Figure 4-43. Floral overdoor detail of carving. [Courtesy of S. Tate and J. Hahn]



Figure 4-44. Vestibule windows. [Author's photo]



Figure 4-45. Hall facing the fireplace. [A. Cary, Hall, (côté de la cheminée), plate 22]



Figure 4-46. Hall, ceiling detail. [Dossier de classement, M.H., 2004]



Figure 4-47. Glass ceiling detail. [Dossier de classement, M.H., 2004]



Figure 4-48. Hall ceiling painting and cornice detail [Dossier de classement, M.H., 2004]



Figure 4-49. Salon Rouge. [A. Cary, Salon rouge, plate 19]



Figure 4-50. Salon rouge ceiling painting. [Courtesy of S. Tate and J. Hahn]



Figure 4-51. Salon rouge ceiling detail. [Courtesy of S. Tate and J. Hahn]



Figure 4-52. Grand Salon, view of fireplace. [A. Cary, Grand Salon, plate 20]



Figure 4-53. Grand Salon. [A. Cary, Grand Salon, plate 21]



Figure 4-54. Grand Salon, view to Red Salon. [Dossier de classement, M.H.]



Figure 4-55. Grand Salon ceiling detail. [Courtesy of S. Tate and J. Hahn]

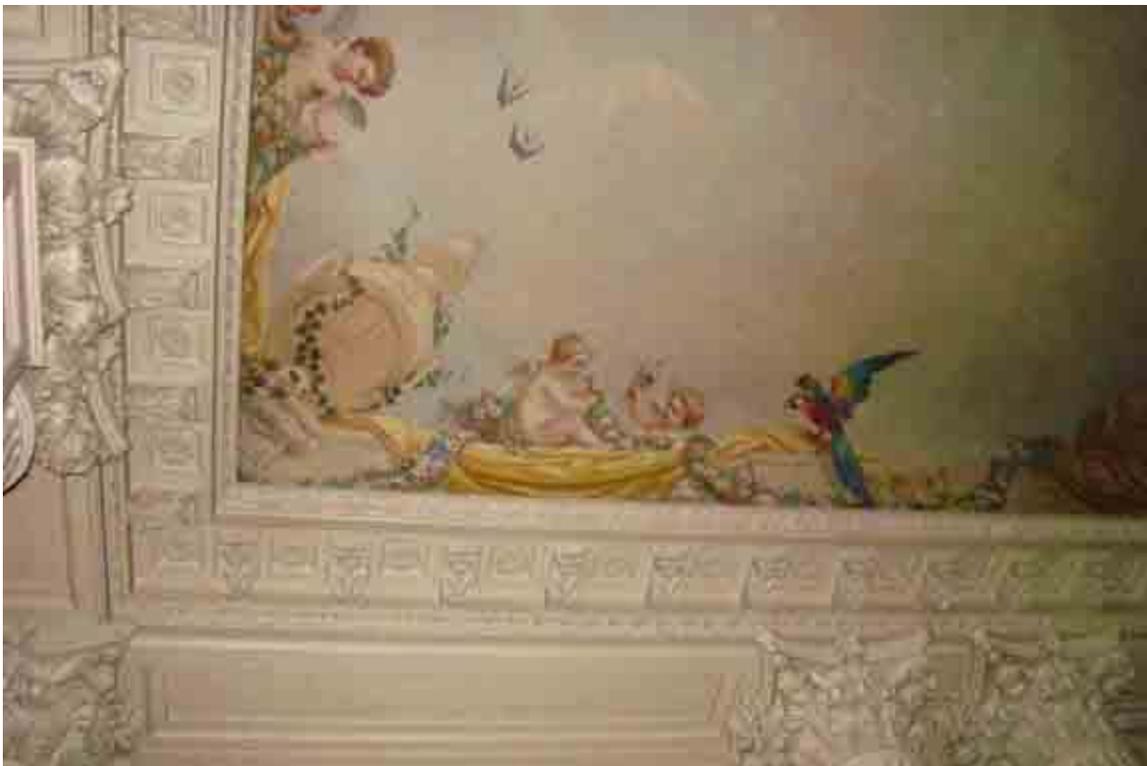


Figure 4-56. Grand Salon ceiling painting detail. [Courtesy of S. Tate and J. Hahn]



Figure 4-57. Study of Curios. [A. Cary, Salle des curiosités, côté de la large vitrine, plate 11]



Figure 4-58. Study of Curios, view of fireplace. [A. Cary, Salle des curiosités, côté de la cheminée, plate 12]



Figure 4-59. Galerie with toplight. [A. Cary, Galerie, plate 8]



Figure 4-60. Dining Room. [A. Cary, Salle à manger (côté de la Galerie), plate 33]



Figure 4-61. Dining Room and *serre*. [A. Cary, *Salle à manger (côté de la Serre)*. plate 23]



Figure 4-62. *Salle à manger* door trumeau. [Author's photo]



Figure 4-63. Salle à manger ceiling medallion. [Author's photo]



Figure 4-64. Château de Ferrières Dining Room. [Author's photo]



Figure 4-65. Butler's Pantry [A. Cary, Office d'Honneur, plate 32]



Figure 4-66. Serre, detail of plate 23.



Figure 4-67. Serre doors. [Courtesy of S. Tate and J. Hahn]

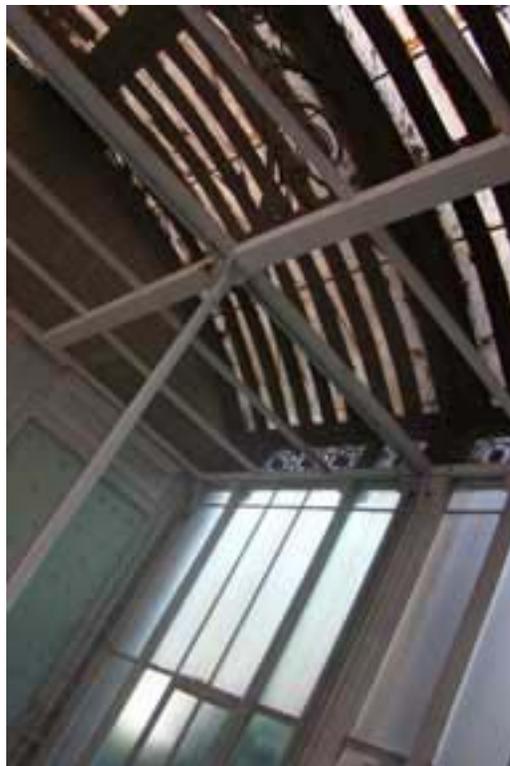


Figure 4-68. Serre, ceiling. [Courtesy of S. Tate and J. Hahn]



Figure 4-69. Baronne's Boudoir. [A. Cary, Boudoir, côté de la chambre à coucher, plate 16]



Figure 4-70. Baronne's Bedroom. [A. Cary, Chambre à coucher, plate 14]



Figure 4-71. Baronne's Dressing Room. [A. Cary, *Cabinet de toilette*, plate 15]

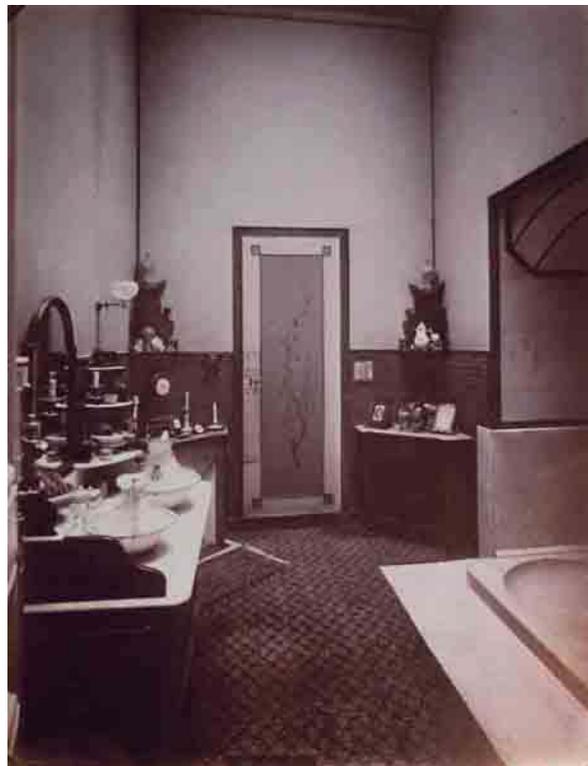


Figure 4-72. Baronne's Bath. [A. Cary, *Le tub*, plate 13]



Figure 4-73. Library. [A. Cary, *Bibliothèque*, plate 31]



Figure 4-74. Grand Stair Hall. [A. Cary, *Grand Escalier*, plate 30]



Figure 4-75. Billiards Room [A. Cary, Salle de billards, 1^{er} étage, plate 26]

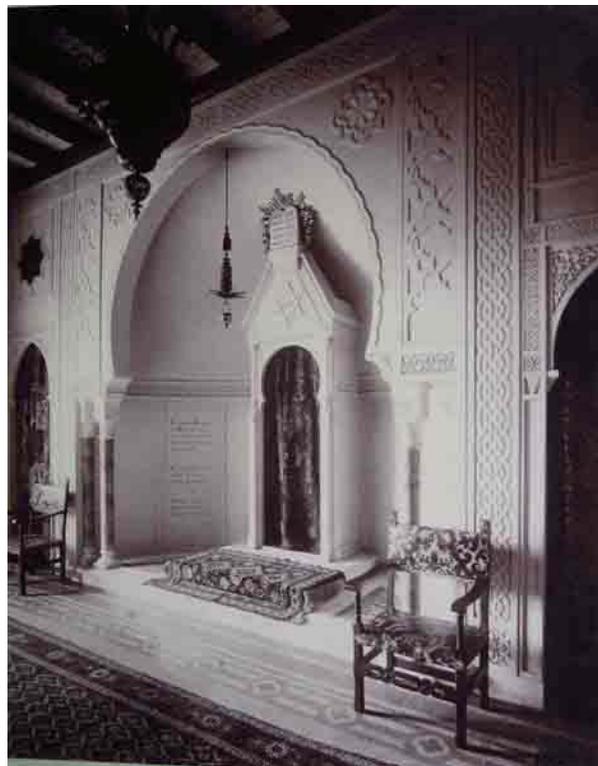


Figure 4-76. Oratoire. [A. Cary, Oratoire, 1^{er} étage, plate 29]



Figure 4-77. Nursery, no date. [Rothschild Archives, dossier 11 rue Berryer #009]

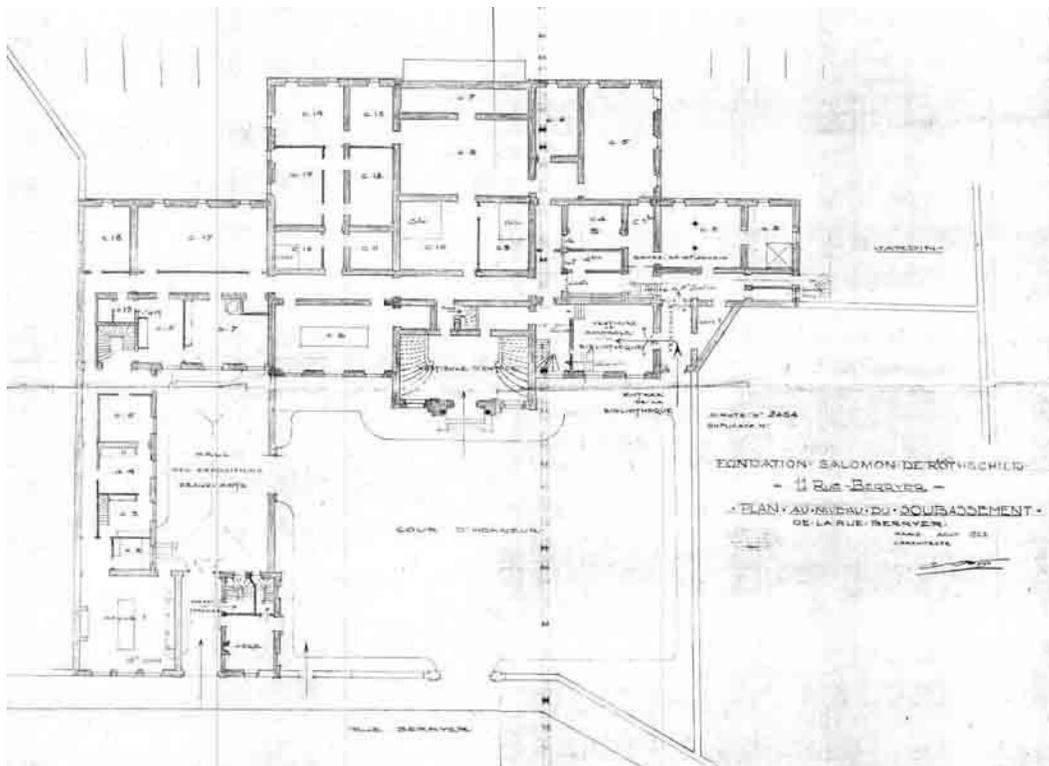


Figure 4-78. Plan du sous-bassement, Bois, 1922. [Archives Nationale, author's photo]

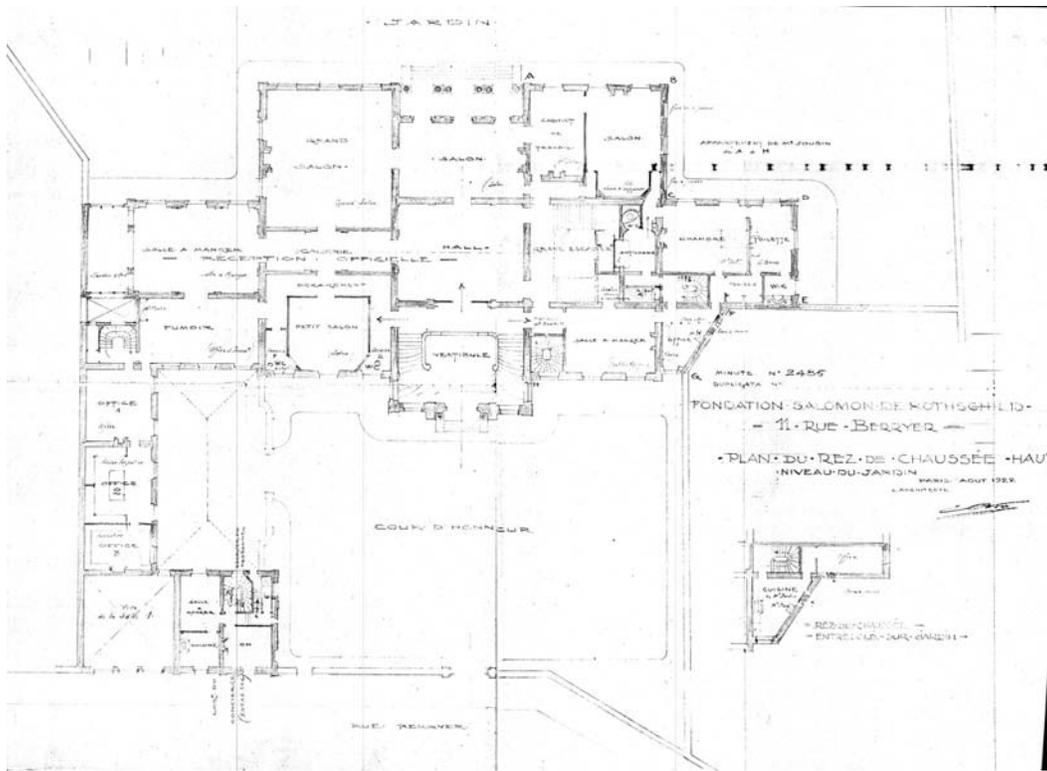


Figure 4-79. Plan du rez-de-chaussée, Bois, 1922. [Archives Nationale, author's photo]

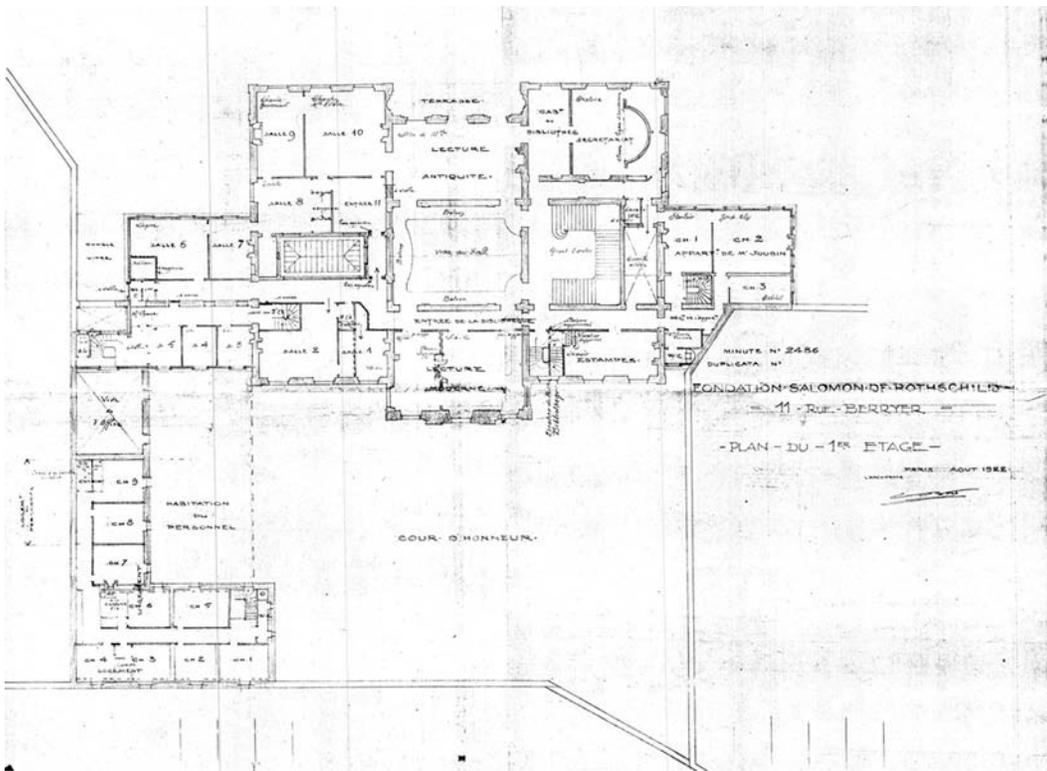


Figure 4-80. Plan du premier étage, Bois, 1922. [Archives Nationale, author's photo]

Notes

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- ¹ André Joubin & Carle Dreyfus, “La foundation Salomon de Rothschild. I. La bibliothèque d’art et d’archéologie. II. Les oeuvres d’art conservées dans l’hôtel,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* n. 752 (Décembre 1924): 325. “*La baronne Salomon de Rothschild n’a pas voulu qu’il y eût à Paris un musée de plus. Les visiteurs qui pénétreront dans les vastes salons du rez-de-chaussée, dont les hautes fenêtres s’ouvrent sur le beau jardin bordant l’avenue de Friedland, n’auront nullement l’impression de visiter un musée. Les objets d’art précieux, légués à l’État, qui garnissent les vitrines de l’hôtel, forment une magnifique parure à cette belle demeure, consacrée par la volonté d’une femme intelligente et généreuse aux artistes et aux amis de l’Art.*”
- ² *Parti* is an architectural term for the organizing themes of a design concept, including the structural organization.
- ³ Rothschild Archives. File number 000/1037/73/66, “Construction de l’hôtel de la rue des Écuries d’Artois.” Notes accompanying payment and note to Mme. Ohnet regarding payment.
- ⁴ Victor Champier, “L’habitation moderne. L’hôtel Salomon de Rothschild. L’ancienne folie de Beaujon et la maison de Balzac,” *Revue des Arts décoratifs* 1 (1891-2): 70.
- ⁵ Champier, 72. “*C’est pour donner à toutes ces merveilles le cadre qui leur convenait, que la baronne Salomon voulut se faire bâtir un hôtel.*”
- ⁶ Anka Muhlstein, *The Rise of the French Rothschilds* (Paris: Vendôme, 1982), 207.
- ⁷ Derek Wilson, *Rothschild. The Wealth and Power of a Dynasty* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1988), 187.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁹ Discussion with historian Pauline Prévost-Marcilhacy at the building during a site visit, October 21, 2009.
- ¹⁰ Appendix A Research Methodology, and figure A-1.
- ¹¹ Prévost-Marcilhacy, *Les Rothschilds: Bâtisseurs et Mécènes*. 152. “*Cette absence de distinction entre les domaines social, privé et religieux conduit naturellement les Rothschild de cette génération à confier l’édification de leurs demeures à des architectes liés à leurs affaires, et notamment aux chemins de fer. Léon Ohnet, architecte de la Compagnie du Nord, double l’hôtel d’Alphonse puis édifié l’hôtel de la baronne Salomon, rue Berryer.*”
- ¹² See Appendix B for more information of this aspect of Ohnet’s career and examples of work executed within this role as diocesan architect.
- ¹³ Pauline Prévost-Marcilhacy, “Hôtel Salomon de Rothschild”, *Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré*, edited by Beatrice De Andia et Dominique Fernandes (Paris: Délégation à l’action artistique de la ville de Paris, 1994), 367. This observation regarding the choice of architect was discussed by Mme. Prévost-Marcilhacy.
- ¹⁴ Prévost-Marcilhacy, “Hôtel Salomon de Rothschild”, *Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré*, 370.
- ¹⁵ Drawings for Palais Episcopal Carcassonne in the *Archives Nationale*. (sous-séries CP/F/19*/1876) and the Palais Episcopal Ajaccio (sous-séries CP/F/19*/1863) Ajaccio.
- ¹⁶ A. Cary, photographe, “Hôtel Beaujon”. Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, Photothèque, P.M. XXX 2 – 44, plate 2. Brief introduction to the photographs.
- ¹⁷ Champier. 72. “*...qui se mit à l’oeuvre avec ardeur.*”
- ¹⁸ Champier. 72. “*Aussi modeste que rempli de talent, M. Ponsard sut, tout en s’inspirant des idées et des convenances de la propriétaire, faire une oeuvre remarquable ayant un grand caractère de distinction et de sobriété dans l’élégance.*”

¹⁹ Prévost-Marcilhacy, "Hôtel Salomon de Rothschild", *Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré*, 368. Photographs of the stables are in the collection of photographs given by the baronne Salomon de Rothschild to Bibliothèque Carnavalet in 1892, as noted in Champier's article. See also Photographs under file number P.M. XXX, 35 and P.M. XXX,36, Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris.

²⁰ See Appendix C for additional information on the life and career of Moulignon.

²¹ Champier, 72. "*Il fut à la fois le peintre et le tapissier de l'hôtel. De là une harmonie générale dans l'arrangement des meubles et le choix des couleurs qui est rarement obtenue à un égal degré.*"

²² Letters from files of Rothschild Archives.

²³ Borjon, 14, referencing Prévost-Marcilhacy, "Hôtel Salomon de Rothschild", *Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré*, 367.

²⁴ See Appendix C for additional examples of interior decorative commissions and for an example of academic paintings by Moulignon.

²⁵ Francois Loyer, " Avant Propos," in *Les Rothschilds: Bâtisseurs et Mécènes*, by Pauline Prévost-Marcilhacy, "*un hôtel goût Louis XVI qui n'est peut-être pas le plus parfait, mais qui est à lui seul le résumé de tous les traits de l'architecture Rothschild (y compris l'étonnant salon à l'italienne plongé dans la lumière cryptique d'une verrière zénithale).*"

²⁶ Thierry Claeys, "Nicolas Beaujon". *Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré*, eds. Beatrice De Andia et Dominique Fernandes, (Paris: Délégation à l'action artistique de la ville de Paris, 1994), 363.

²⁷ The Issy residence was the provenance for the Beaujon panels that are now installed in the Tower Room of Waddesdon Manor. See Chapter 3, note 42.

²⁸ Alexandre Gady, "Folie Beaujon et chapelle Saint-Nicolas," *Rue du faubourg Saint-Honoré*, eds. Beatrice De Andia and Dominique Fernandes (Paris: Délégation à l'action artistique de la ville de Paris, 1994), 354-355.

²⁹ Pierre Wittmer, "Les jardins." *Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré*, eds. Beatrice de Andia et Dominique Fernandes (Paris: Délégation à l'action artistique de la ville de Paris, 1994), 47.

³⁰ Bocquet on the website of Ministère de la Culture.

http://www.culture.fr/recherche/advanced/?search=Menus%20Plaisirs%20du%20roi&sel_date_mode=libre&sel_search_mode=tous_les_termes&sel_filter_exact=off&sel_filter_ortho=on&sel_filter_syn=on&filter_image=1&advanced_search=1

³¹ Gady, "Folie Beaujon," 356.

³² *Ibid.*, 359.

³³ *Ibid.*, 360.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Champier, 68. "*Vers 1846, peu de temps avant son mariage avec la comtesse Éveline de Hanska, il fit l'acquisition d'une des maisons construites sur l'emplacement des montagnes françaises; au milieu de jardins un peu en broussailles où se perdaient des pavillons, fragments d'architecture du XVIII^e siècle. Cette maison, assez mal bâtie, sans grande apparence extérieure, n'avait qu'un rez-de-chaussée et un étage. Elle touchait presque à l'ancienne demeure de Beaujon et faisait corps avec la chapelle Saint-Nicolas, où, plus tard, Madame de Balzac pouvait aller entendre la messe sans sortir de son habitation.*"

³⁶ Anne Panchout, "Maison de Balzac", *Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré*, eds. Beatrice De Andia, et Dominique Fernandes (Paris: Délégation à l'action artistique de la ville de Paris, 1994), 365. "*La maison est aussi jolie au*

dedans qu'elle est laide au dehors. Ces huit croisées de face dans un bâtiment long c'est affreux. Quant au jardinet, c'est comme un préau de prison."

³⁷ Marie-Christine Hirsch, "Les Champs-Élysées Nord jusqu'en 1870: le faubourg du Roule", *Paris aux cent villages*, no. 53 (septembre 1980), 23. "*La physionomie du quartier Beaujon est populaire et bourgeoise, de belles maisons Restauration et leurs jardins bordaient les allées fermées par des grilles... »*

³⁸ Champier. 68. Description of the house interiors as described by Théophile Gautier in "*la nouvelle demeure qu'habitait Balzac, rue Fortunée, dans le quartier Beaujon, moins peuplé alors qu'il ne l'est aujourd'hui*".

³⁹ Michel Borjan, directeur. "*Hôtel Salomon de Rothschild. Etude historique et archéologique. Rapport.* (Paris : GRAHAL, Groupe de recherche Art Histoire, Architecture et Littérature, Décembre 2000), 43. See photograph of this space in Chapter 4.

⁴⁰ Gady. 361. "*Ainsi disposées, ces "ruines" ont un air de fabrique fin XVIII qui n'aurait peut-être pas déplu à monsieur Beaujon. Gageons, en revanche, qu'il considérerait d'un oeil sceptique le tas de pierres III République qui a des prétentions d'hôtel particulier et pour la construction duquel on a rasé sans vergogne son charmant pavillon Louis XVI.*"

⁴¹ Champier.

⁴² Prévost-Marcilhacy, *Les Rothschilds: Bâtisseurs et Mécènes*, 319.

⁴³ Prévost-Marcilhacy, "Hôtel Salomon de Rothschild", *Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré*, 367.

⁴⁴ Prévost-Marcilhacy, *Les Rothschilds: Bâtisseurs et Mécènes*, 222.

⁴⁵ Prévost-Marcilhacy, *Les Rothschilds: Bâtisseurs et Mécènes*, 14. "*Cette tradition scénographique qui voit son triomphe en 1862 avec l'inauguration du Hall de Ferrières se prolongera au long des XIXe et XXe siècles. Intègrent toutes les formes de la mise en scène, l'architecture extérieure et intérieure les demeures devient spectacle. »*

⁴⁶ Ibid., "*ils se révèlent fastueux, éclectique, décorative, polychrome, s'inscrivant ainsi dans la ligne de l'Opéra Garnier.*"

⁴⁷ Victor Champier. "The Hôtel of Madame Solomon de Rothschild, Paris. Furniture and Furnishings. " *The Decorator and Furnisher*, 1892, 205-207.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Borjan, 16. "*Deux petits avancées circulaires et un balcon en face de la cheminée transformaient cette galerie en tribune de théâtre.*"

⁵¹ Borjan, 16. "*Le plafond, orné d'une large corniche en voussure, est percé d'une verrière ornée des motifs en fer forge.*" Images from the dossier Monuments Historiques compiled for designation as a *monument classé* in 2005.

⁵² "Rapport Justicatif." DRAC, Île de France, avril 2004, Description, 3. Dossiers des Monuments Historiques.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Gady, 355.

⁵⁵ "Folie Beaujon" http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folie_Beaujon.

⁵⁶ Emile Zola sets the pivotal seduction scene between two of the principal characters in *La Curée* in the conservatory of the family's *Hôtel particulier*. The conservatory space is both seen by others (as when Renée spies Maxime with his lover; and a private retreat, where Maxime seduces Renée and sets the tragic plot in motion.

⁵⁷ Borjan, 16. "...cette salle communiquait avec la serre, sorte de jardin d'hiver, grâce à trois baies cintrées garnies de glaces sans tain de toute hauteur."

⁵⁸ Victor Champier. "The Hôtel of Madame Solomon de Rothschild, Paris. Furniture and Furnishings. " *The Decorator and Furnisher*, 1892, 205-206.

⁵⁹ Prévost-Marcilhacy, *Les Rothschilds: Bâtisseurs et Mecenes*, 253 – 255, discusses a few examples of more monumental *serres* at Halton, Gruneberg and Waddesdon.

⁶⁰ See Appendix B for further information on Ohnet's work with the railroads.

⁶¹ Prévost-Marcilhacy, *Les Rothschilds: Bâtisseurs et Mecenes*, 222. "Ce désir d'ouverture se traduit également dans le plan par une meilleure intégration de l'édifice dans le jardin: ... tandis que le hall se prolonge latéralement par une galerie, puis une salle à manger qui ouvre sur une serre."

⁶² "Style arabe, conçu pour les ceremonies du culte juif".

⁶³ Borjon., 17. Oratoire noted on the plans of E. Bois, 1922. A.N. Cote F/21/6032 Hôtel Rothschild. Photographs under file number P.M. XXX, 29. Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris.

⁶⁴ Translation by author of extract from the will of the Baronne de Rothschild, prepared by Maître Burthe, notaire dated 11 March 1922. Rothschild Archives, file reference 000/1037/73/6A.

⁶⁵ André Joubin & Carle Dreyfus, "La foundation Salomon de Rothschild. I. La bibliothèque d'art et d'archéologie. II. Les oeuvres d'art conservées dans l'hôtel," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* n. 752, (Décembre 1924), 317-318.

⁶⁶ Gérard Alaux, "A rebours: La restauration de l'hôtel Salomon de Rothschild," *Patrimoine et cadre de vie. Les cahiers de la ligue urbaine de rurale*. 167 (2e trimestre 2005): 38-9.

⁶⁷ AN Cote F/21/6032, records of work after government acquisition of the property and full size architectural plans by E. Bois, 1922.

⁶⁸ *Rapport justificatif*, by Valérie Gaudard, CRMH, DRAC Ile-de-France, april 2004. From the file "Dossier pour le classement de l'hôtel Salomon de Rothschild. 9 et 11 rue Berryer, 12 avenue de Friedland, 193 rue du fbg. Saint-Honoré." Cote 75108-027 Monuments Historiques.

⁶⁹ "Dossier pour le classement de l'hôtel Salomon de Rothschild. 9 et 11 rue Berryer, 12 avenue de Friedland, 193 rue du fbg. Saint-Honoré. " Cote 75108-027 Monuments Historiques. Ministère de la Culture. In 1984, the hôtel was inscribed on the supplemental inventory of historic monuments '*Inscrits sur l'Inventaire supplémentaire des Monuments historiques*' The protected areas included the façades and roofs, the entrance vestibule and stair, the grand stair, salle des Curiosités, rooms with décor, and the columns from the chapelle Saint-Nicolas. The term, "rooms with décor", was sufficiently vague to cause interpretive disputes in how the spaces should be treated and was a subject of concern to the cultural bureaus charged with protecting the integrity of the building. This situation was addressed twenty years later when the site achieved the status of a *monument classé* by an *arrêté* dated 4 March, 2005, for the totality of the site, buildings and dependencies, entrance court, gardens, property walls, the colonnade of chapelle Saint-Nicolas, and the rotonde de Balzac.

⁷⁰ Site visit on October 21, 2009 with Didier Repellin, ACMH and historian Pauline Prévost-Marcilhacy. Completion of the work for the company GL events. <http://www.hôtelsalomonderothschild.com/?langue=en>.

CHAPTER 6 LEGACY

Interpreting architectural forms and details and derived from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century examples of French classical design, with an innovative plan organization and spatial sequence, architect Léon Ohnet's design for the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild exemplifies the cultural and aesthetic sensibilities of the Second Empire period. The inventive quality of the design was further enhanced by the use of modern materials, the iron and glass framing, which allowed Ohnet, to achieve the dramatic scenographic effects in his architectural composition, with the emphasis on the visual connectivity of the spaces seen through the contrast of shadow and pools of light along the spatial progression.

As noted in the Introduction, Ohnet is not a well-known figure. This may be attributed to several reasons. By nature he was modest, his career focused on religious architecture with no high profile public edifices, his residential works consisted primarily of renovations to existing structures, with the notable exception of the case study building, and his early death, at age 61, cut short his career. The analysis of his body of work points to the conclusions that Ohnet can be evaluated as an architect who practiced generally within the mainstream of the Second Empire cultural aesthetic, balancing skillfully the socially desirable references to architecture of the past with an inventive spirit. Ohnet, as a result of his training at the *École des Beaux-Arts*, was well-versed in the techniques of the hierarchical ordering of programmatic forms and volumes, and in the axial composition of the sequential organization of spaces, abstracted from any specific architectural style. His mature architectural works emphasized shifting axes of circulation sequences, more porous circulation between discrete spaces, the use of varied levels of illumination to dramatize spatial sequence, and emphasis on the visual connection through spaces, all the while clothing the composition in a rigorous but not "archaeological" application

of the features of a selected architectural style. The ability to bring more light into spaces through the use of iron and glass, which borrowed from the traditions of retail and public architecture (arcades, and other public spaces), and the emphasis on top-lighting, increased the expressive range of spatial design and the dramatic sequencing of spaces.

The second generation of the French branch of the Rothschild family had “arrived” within the cultural hierarchy, and the family members were, in fact, at the top of the social ladder, by the time of the second decade of the Second Empire. Hence, their residences were an expression of this social position. With four centuries of French classical architecture upon which to draw, the design elements associated with the Bourbon dynasty proved to be particularly appealing to this social group’s self-image.

But this tendency should not be understood as an exercise in the strict copy of the original model as two additional design trends were at work. The expansion in the accepted range of historically referenced architectural styles, especially during the period of the 1830s and 1840s, afforded a new sense of freedom in the composition of façade elements with which to “clothe”¹ new architectural solutions to the design program of the urban mansion, the Second Empire *hôtel particulier*. The design program now included a new perspective on the family in residence. Within the influential writings of César Daly’s work of the late 1850s and early 1860s, the emphasis on modernity and comfort, and the nurturing of familial bonds within the larger social context of the family led to a reinterpretation of the role of various spaces and the resultant plan distribution, as well as the invention of new types of spaces.

The importance of visual experience was deeply embedded in the Second Empire psyche, and the role of spectacle became more reciprocal. Rather than emphasizing passive observation and inspiring awe in the viewer, the cultural milieu emphasized the simultaneity of viewer and

viewed. This cultural characteristic is well illustrated by the public spaces of the period; the great train stations, the public winter gardens, the shops and the ultimate expression of Second Empire culture, the Garnier Opéra. These spaces in turn influenced residential design.

The aesthetic adopted by the *haute bourgeoisie* was deeply influenced by the passion for collecting valuable objects and this group desired to live amidst the objects and the art collections housed in the urban mansions as part of the *décor* and their daily experience. The *vestibules, galeries, salons, fumoirs, escaliers d'honneurs* and *jardins d'hivers* were open and luminous, filled with *objets d'arts* that were an integral part of the *décor*. It was an accepted practice to relocate and alter to fit earlier works of art and architectural features within the later nineteenth-century spatial containment, as a way of displaying and experiencing the objects of value.

One of the great legacies of the Rothschild family, and others of this social group, was their sense of “*noblesse oblige*,” the obligation to honorable and generous behavior associated with high rank. As members of the new elite who had replaced the nobility at the top of the social hierarchy, their generous philanthropy supported educational, social and cultural causes, including major donations of artworks to governmental and to cultural institutions. The strong interest in collecting contributed to the preservation of cultural structures, objects and artworks into the twentieth century. The physical and documentary record attests to the architectural intentions of these clients.

The personal writings and records of Ohnet have not been discovered to date, beyond his architectural reports on various buildings and the few examples of drawings conserved at the Archives Nationales. By studying the available forms of evidence, his design intent may be understood. Determinative evidence, in the form of the physical record of the Hôtel Baronne

Salomon de Rothschild, and the available documentary evidence of his drawings and records of the clients, have been assessed with the contextual evidence from the period of study, and the inferential evidence provided by a study of other family urban mansions of the period, as well as the architect's body of work. This research confirms the value of physical analysis to supplement documentary evidence to offer a broader understanding of a context.

Did Ohnet understand the needs of his client, the Baronne Salomon de Rothschild? One can answer a resounding "yes" to this question that was raised in the Introduction. The client's appreciation for the elegance of the architectural solution, the selection of stylistic references, the dramatic illumination of the principal spaces, along with the close integration of the building to the adjacent gardens was celebrated in Victor Champier's article of 1892. The Preface to the collection of photographs of the mansion, donated to the Musée Carnavalet in the same period, attests to her satisfaction with Ohnet's master work.

This research work has identified the need for a comprehensive study of the life and career of architect Léon Ohnet. During the course of this research project, the discovery of some lesser known works by this architect makes such a study an important future contribution to the body of knowledge for understanding the interplay of ideas within nineteenth-century French architecture, as well as bringing to light the importance of his work within the mainstream of architectural practice during the last half of the nineteenth century.

In the *hôtel particulier* of late nineteenth-century Paris, the spatial organization and effects, enabled by the use of modern materials and scenographic design techniques, reflected the contemporary cultural values of the *haute bourgeoisie*. These characteristics became the hallmark of this highly influential period of French architecture, and produced an international

legacy that has survived into the modern world. In Paris, these attributes, along with elegance, were what counted most.

Notes

¹ Recalling Daly's use of the term in his works cited in Chapter 4, note 23.

APPENDIX A RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Process and Methodology

Using a variety of evidence types and sources is essential to creating a full picture of the research subject. Groat and Wang's organizational model for various types of evidence, "determinative, contextual, inferential and recollective" sources, was used as a starting point.¹ Missing from this model's process diagram was a representation of the iterative nature of research, as the interrelationships of data analysis, evaluation, synthesis and narrative production were graphically shown as operating along a linear process. The research process is most effective when these tasks operate in continuous loops applied to the tasks of data gathering, data organization, evaluation, interpretation and narrative production and products. See Figure A-1 - *Process diagram for interpretive historic research*, for a graphic representation of the interrelationship of all research activities, illustrating the iterative nature of this research process. This continuous process of refinement for source definition, investigation and evaluation, acknowledges the holistic nature of this type of research project; drawing on data and evidence from many disciplines to inform the understanding of specific research subject within a much broader context.

Determinative evidence places the object in time and provides direct information about the physical characteristics of the object and its setting. Categories of this type of data include material (physical) evidence and documentary evidence. Material evidence includes the onsite assessment of the three dimensional physical conditions of the building, object or setting and the composition and condition of the building materials. Forensic architectural research, performed by the French architects in charge of the restoration work for the referenced buildings, involves the peeling back of layers of decoration and covering materials to reveal the evolution of a space

or structure over time. Documentary forms of evidence can include textual sources, written narratives, graphic images, drawings, sketches, photographs, official property records that pertain directly to the object of study. One type of determinative evidence serves to inform the other, as documentary records tell only part of the story. The absence or suppression of some information may have resulted from the culture's social values regarding "suitability" of the information, or from the destruction of source materials. Observing and analyzing the physical characteristics of the extant building can fill the gaps in the documentary records. Synthesizing these findings can allow for inferences to be drawn which can then be further refined by consideration of contextual information.

Contextual evidence is used to develop an understanding of the broader environment in which the particular subject is situated, including the major artistic and cultural movements that may influence the design of an architectural work and may involve comparisons with other works from the same period. Other useful sources include the products of contemporaneous trends in the visual and performing arts, literature, music, urban design, architecture, fashion, industrial design and production of objects, newspapers, political and religious documents.

Inferential evidence allows for deducing linkages of ideas in the absence of documentary evidence; through proximity of dates, or connectivity of ideas, persons or trends when no explicit evidence of a connection has been found. Recollective evidence, the records of an interview regarding the object of study, or a memoir, can reinforce the preceding evidence types; confirming dates (determinative), establishing the spirit of the times (contextual) and informing connections (inferential).²

Sources for research data that were examined for this study include a literature review to better understand the architectural and cultural contexts of the period from the Second Republic

to the Third Republic. From this broader review, a number of key archival sources were identified and consulted for a deeper understanding of the research subject. Identification of, and investigation within the collections of archives, libraries, museums and other institutional sources of information, provided a wealth of published and original unpublished materials. These institutions included the Archives Nationales de France (AN), Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BN), Musée Carnavalet (MC), Archives de Paris (AP), Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris (BHVP), Bibliothèque Administratif de la Ville de Paris (BAVP), Bibliothèque Forney (BF), Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine (MAP), Archives départementales du Val d'Oise (ADVO) and the Rothschild Archives in London (RA). The types of research materials included letters, official documents, drawings and photographs. Field investigations of architectural works, both as subject and as contextual evidence, yielded important data to complement and substantiate the archival evidence.

In assessing and evaluating the credibility of evidence, the model defined by Gallagher in *A Guide to Historical Method*, proved useful. The data, obtained from sources other than direct observation and investigation of the architectural subject, was analyzed using external and internal synthesis of information and its presentation. External synthesis involves the organization of facts by date, topic and place, and assessment of the authenticity and provenance of data. Internal synthesis involves assessing the reliability of observation, intention, motive of the author, and internal consistency or contradictions of facts.³

In developing interpretations of the data, the challenge of understanding the meaning of the architectural objects within the culture goes beyond the analysis of written and narrative sources. In Peter Burke's book, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*, he discusses recent trends in developing a "cultural history of images" that is concerned with reconstructing

the rules of conventions, conscious or unconscious, governing the perception and interpretations of images within a given culture. The essential point is to reconstruct what the British art historian Michael Baxandall calls ‘the period eye’.⁴ “Architecture” can be substituted for “images”, and thus a principal task of this research is to reconstruct “the period eye” of Second Empire culture as applied to residential design. Foremost among these cultural factors is the importance of opulent and glittering visual display; of objects and persons, contained in a rich architectural framework, and present at many scales, from the corner of a room to a cityscape. The research project includes a review of the trends in the contemporaneous visual arts, music and literature, and the study of other cultural artifacts, including fashion, furnishings and objects, to flesh out the understanding of the culture within which the architectural expression, as applied to residential buildings for the wealthy, was conceived and experienced.

Literature Review

The literature search of background sources included works discussing the history of the entire nineteenth century, to situate the major social and political events along a timeline, and to understand the effects of these societal changes on the composition and attitudes of the shifting social class structure. See figure A-2 - *Nineteenth century timeline*. The major artistic movements are graphed along a timeline with the social and political upheavals. This overview of the arts, literature and music further deepened the understanding of the effects of aesthetics and culture on the architectural design and decorative arts of the study period. In Robert L. Herbert’s book, *Impressionism: Art, Leisure and Parisian Society*, the rise of the Impressionists art movement is connected to the developments of suburban leisure and the rise of the new *bourgeoisie*.⁵ For an understanding of the social mores of the new social class of the *haute bourgeoisie* during the Second Empire, the novels of Émile Zola provided a rich contextual background. With the use of highly detailed descriptions of the external, observable world, Zola

created an intimate view of the precise details of manners, dress, settings and interior décor, for the backdrop against which he placed his characters. His 1872 work, *La Curée*, describes the architecture, spatial sequences and décor of the Saccard family's Second Empire *hôtel particulier* and provides a credible window into how these spaces were used by the family and experienced by visitors.

Works by three contemporary cultural and architectural historians were selected for a more detailed review. The principal themes of nineteenth century French architecture are holistically discussed in several writings and texts by the historian François Loyer. The quote at the beginning of this introduction is taken from Loyer's detailed overview of the urban architecture and design in his book *Paris: Nineteenth Century Architecture and Urbanism*. In *Histoire de l'architecture française de la Revolution à nos jours*, Loyer notes that by the nineteenth century, trends in architectural design could no longer be seen as simply an academic debate between the traditionalists and innovators within the French classical tradition, the dominant style for French architecture since the Renaissance. The label of modernity has been applied to trends in architecture since the eighteenth century, van Kalnein used the word to describe the neoclassicism of the architect Chalgrin, seen as being at the forefront of the new trends in design of the 1760s and 1770s, his work was called 'modern' in style.⁶ By the nineteenth century, this recurring theme of modernity, (*modernité*) became firmly grounded in the revolution of industry and new materials. The rhetoric of the "messianic utopia", used in the revolution of 1848, conjoined the social revolution with the industrial revolution, and Loyer identifies a direct echo in architectural trends, infused, in his words, with a founding modernity, at its base, a "*modernité fondatrice*."⁷ Loyer provides a detailed analysis of the evolution of glass enclosed spaces, from the commercial passages inserted into the early nineteenth century cityscape to the development

of the glazed *jardins d'hiver* (winter garden) or *serre* (greenhouse), which served to integrate the world of exotic “nature” into the grand residences of the Second Empire.⁸

Loyer makes the point that while Classicism continued as a dominant architectural expression throughout the nineteenth century, a fundamental change occurred in its meaning and expression. The effects of the archaeological discoveries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries overturned the definition of the “canonic system” of the orders, thus, “*tout est permis*” (all is permitted.)⁹ Classicism was no longer seen as a system, but instead becomes a “catalog” of ornament. The art of “mixed citations”, combinations of the contrasting vocabularies of different periods and cultures, is the basis of this eclecticism.¹⁰ Duban’s renovation work to the décor of the Galerie d’Apollon, Salon Carrée and Salle des Sept-Cheminées at the Louvre for Louis Napoléon, completed by 1851, is cited as a significant example in the development of a “neo-baroque” approach towards an integrated decorative program of architecture, sculpture and painting. The ‘confrontation’ of the nineteenth century work with the seventeenth century décor of LeBrun “opened the door to this astonishing decorative inventiveness.”¹¹

The Château de Ferrières, built by James de Rothschild (1792-1868), is described as “the marriage of the finesse of French taste” with the “historic culture of monumentalism”, and this fusion influenced the design aesthetic of the ensuing decades.¹² The notion of architecture and décor conceived as a “stage-set” characterizes the interiors of private residences as well as those of the public architecture of the Second Empire.¹³ In the preface of Pauline Prévost-Marcilhacy’s book: *Les Rothschilds: Bâtisseurs et Mécènes*, Loyer suggests that what James de Rothschild sought from his architect, Joseph Paxton (1803-1865), in the design of Ferrières was “*modernité*” (modern, forward-thinking design), with transparency of façade and translucency of roof. The

interiors, with suites of rooms in the flavor of the interior design from the reign of Louis XIV, consecrated this grandeur and solemnity far from the normal scale of private residences.¹⁴

Two works by Pauline Prévost-Marcilhacy, the book, *Les Rothschilds: Bâtitseurs et Mécènes* and the dissertation entitled *Architecture et décoration des maisons construites par la famille Rothschild en Europe*, illuminate the role of the immensely wealthy and influential Rothschild family as major patrons and producers of nineteenth-century architecture, especially in their vast array of residential projects. The sheer volume of studied works, over fifty structures on five continents, and covering a period of over one century, required an expansive and meticulously executed research methodology, which resulted in the use of a taxonomic model for the presentation of the research. Two principal goals of her dissertation research are clearly identified. One was to create a general synthesis of the works, where none had existed previously. Another goal was to develop a detailed study of the family iconography, in order to confirm the existence of, and to clearly define, a “*style Rothschild*” in the architectural works and a “*goût Rothschild*,” characterized by the eclectic mix of styles, for the decor.¹⁵

Prévost–Marcilhacy emphasizes the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to selecting the research sources, including the integration of published works covering the social history, religious history, economic history, the psychology of the relationships between the Rothschild family members as patrons and their chosen designers, the family as a socio-cultural group and art and architectural historical analyses.¹⁶

Noteworthy in this work is the compilation and the synthesis of numerous documents from private archives. Since the extended family generally operated as a cohesive multi-generational social unit, the study of their correspondence served to illuminate the aesthetic sensibilities, shared ideals and rivalries among the individual family members. A variety of documents, titles,

legal records of sales, plans and drawings, urban plans of the streets with notations on the dates and types of improvements made to the properties, also existed in public archives scattered in five countries, but prior to this study, these documents had never been examined together to establish the broad overview of the architectural works.¹⁷ Another significant source for information was found in the *Minutier central des notaires* (central repository for the legal documents of the *notaires* or specialized attorneys), which contained detailed inventories of family acquisitions, including art and artifacts. The inventories, typically made after a family member's death, provide a window into the aesthetic choices, the collections of antiques and artifacts and often shed some light on the personality of the deceased.¹⁸

The approach of creating a “catalog” of the buildings within the document provided a systematic framework for presenting the information in a precise and consistent format, including the geographic setting and historical context, sources used, selection of architects and available drawings, descriptions and drawings of interior décor, outbuildings and ancillary structures and related gardens and landscape designs. In essence, the work creates a monograph for each of the buildings, organized by country, by family members and in chronological order.¹⁹

Prévost-Marcilhacy concludes that a “*goût Rothschild*” exists within a specific set of works found in France, and originally was created by the artist and decorator Eugène Lami (1800-1890).²⁰ In her view, these works epitomized the nineteenth-century proclivity for eclecticism.²¹

In *The Jewish Contribution to Modern Architecture 1830-1930*, Fredric Bedoire's central premise is that without the “presence of Jewishness in European and American architecture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ...the Western world would have looked completely different.”²² While his book covers a broad array of building types, from residential to

commercial and monumental architecture, he notes that the “family and the home have always occupied the focal point of Jewish attention, and it is no coincidence that Jewish influence also concentrated on the private home, its layout and furnishings.”²³ Hence the book offers an in-depth discussion of the many examples of residential design throughout 130 years of social and stylistic developments. Bedoire suggests that the Jewish entrepreneurial class, “readily viewed their houses as literary messages rather than pictures,” thus:

One has to read James de Rothschild’s Ferrières and interpret the symbolic language, just seeing and experiencing the place is not enough. It is like the Torah and the Talmud, text and interpretation. This is part of the reason why Jews were attracted to Modernism: the images reduced to signs.²⁴

Bedoire formulates an argument that the legal emancipation of the Jews in the nineteenth century made possible their ascension among the capitalist societies, as representatives of a cultural elite, but one with a distinct and separate sense of values, as outsiders from the societies in which they lived. He cites the work of writer, philosopher and Baudelaire scholar, Walter Benjamin (1892-1940). In Benjamin’s 1938 work, *Das Paris des Second Empire bei Baudelaire* (The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire) he calls Paris, “the capital of the nineteenth century.” Bedoire contends that, “Benjamin portrayed, without actually saying it, a drama in which a prominent role is played by the Jews.”²⁵ Benjamin’s Marxist leanings were reflected in his manner of using social history to explain how art (and architecture) interacts within and between the class systems of a society.

Bedoire’s methodology involved a detailed investigation of the social, political, economic and intellectual context of the era, and an explanation of how these forces were manifested in the architectural expression of his particular focus group. The dialectic of desire for integration within the culture contrasted with the acute sense of separation from larger social and cultural

forces, is skillfully interwoven throughout the narrative. Bedoire's multi-disciplinary research inspired a model for establishing context for the works studied within this research project.

Archival Research

For this dissertation, numerous repositories of archival data were consulted for information. In France, historical documents are located in the repositories of national, departmental and local archives. On the national level, the Archives Nationales (AN) contains official documents pertaining to government-owned properties, correspondence within government and public agencies, records of the recipients of the Legion d'honneur, and files on publically owned major historic buildings. The department of Cartes et plans conserves original drawings prepared for governmental buildings, and a wealth of maps and other graphic documents. The Bibliothèque Nationale (BN) manages the Gallica database, an online source of documents, photographs and other resources, and an invaluable tool for locating a rich variety of historical data.

The Archives départementales du Val d'Oise (ADVO) contains historical research data pertaining to historic buildings and events within the department of the Val d'Oise, and some useful resources were found while researching the career of architect Léon Ohnet.

Sources for buildings within the city of Paris were found at the Musée Carnavalet (MC), Archives de Paris (AP), Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris (BHVP), Bibliothèque Administratif de la Ville de Paris (BAVP), Bibliothèque Forney (BF), and the Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine (MAP).

In London, the Rothschild Archives, (RA), possessed drawings, photographs, official documents for property (deeds, plats, site plans and surveys) and persons (directories, letters, and media sources for life events), personal and professional correspondence for the Baronne Salomon de Rothschild and documents pertaining to her Parisian residence. The archives at

Waddesdon Manor (WM), contained a set of photographs that illustrated the property as it was in the late nineteenth century, which served as useful contextual and inferential sources for understanding the original presentation of the decor and furnishings for the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild.

Site Visits

The subject buildings and related structures were studied in situ during site visits. Information from available drawings and historic photographs for these works was obtained whenever possible and the buildings, sites and spaces were directly experienced, recorded and analyzed by this writer, who is also an architect. In addition to the Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild and Hôtel Saint-Florentin, visits to other Rothschild residences, the château de Ferrières and the mansion at Waddesdon, UK, provided rich sources of contextual evidence and were used as a basis for inferential propositions regarding patterns of use and experience of the subject properties during the period of study.

Topics for Future Research

This research work has identified topics for future projects, including the need for a comprehensive catalog and study of the life and career of architect Léon Ohnet. During the course of this research project, the discovery of some lesser known works by this architect makes such a study an important future contribution to the body of knowledge for understanding the interplay of ideas within nineteenth-century French architecture, as well as bringing to light the importance of his work.

Another topic for future research in the field of historic preservation involves the study of the trends of ownership and management of these properties. In the twentieth century, many of these grand mansions were donated or bequeathed to the central government to manage and maintain as a heritage site, often with a new administrative or public use, as was the case of the

Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild. In the twenty-first century, the radical shifts in the economic and political climates have produced a trend for public entities to divest their portfolios of these valuable properties back to the private sector. These new commercial uses often create a demand for significant intervention in the historic fabric of the properties, as in the placement of a large conference center below the aforementioned building. Whether these activities represent a viable and sustainable solution for the preservation and perpetuation of these significant cultural artifacts and sites is a subject for further exploration.

Notes

¹ Linda Groat and David Wang, *Architectural Research Methods* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 154.

² *Ibid.*, 154-160. The referenced source was used for the basic classification system for types of evidence. The elaboration of types of evidence and uses is based on extensive personal experience in this work.

³ Gilbert J. Gallaghan, *A Guide to the Historical Method* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1946), 338-367.

⁴ Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Use of Images as Historical Evidence* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2001), 179-180.

⁵ Robert L. Herbert, *Impressionism: Art, leisure and Parisian society* (New Haven: Yale University, 1988), 180, 195.

⁶ François Loyer, *Histoire de l'architecture française de la Révolution à nos jours* (Paris : Éditions Mengès Éditions du Patrimoine, 1999), 101. “La culture classique avait été longtemps le véhicule de la modernité...”

⁷ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁸ Loyer, *Histoire de l'architecture française de la Révolution à nos jours*, 102, 107. Also see François Loyer, *Architecture of the Industrial Age*. trans. R.F.M. Dexter, (Genève: Skira, 1983), 34-37 and 62-65.

⁹ Loyer, *Histoire de l'architecture française*, 134.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 137.

¹² *Ibid.*, 138.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁴ François Loyer, “Avant-Propos” (Preface) in *Les Rothschilds: Bâtisseurs et Mécènes*, by Pauline Prévost-Marcilhacy, (Paris: Flammarion, 1995).

¹⁵ Pauline Prévost-Marcilhacy, “Architecture et décoration des maisons construites par la famille Rothschild en Europe” (PhD dissertation [Thèse], Paris IV Sorbonne, 1992), 10.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Ibid., 10-11.

¹⁸ Ibid., 15.

¹⁹ Ibid., 18.

²⁰ Ibid., 32-33.

²¹ Ibid., 33.

²² Fredric Bedoire, *The Jewish Contribution to Modern Architecture 1830-1930*, trans. Robert Tanner (Jersey City: KTAV Publishing, 2004), 507.

²³ Ibid., 503.

²⁴ Ibid., 504.

²⁵ Ibid., 153.

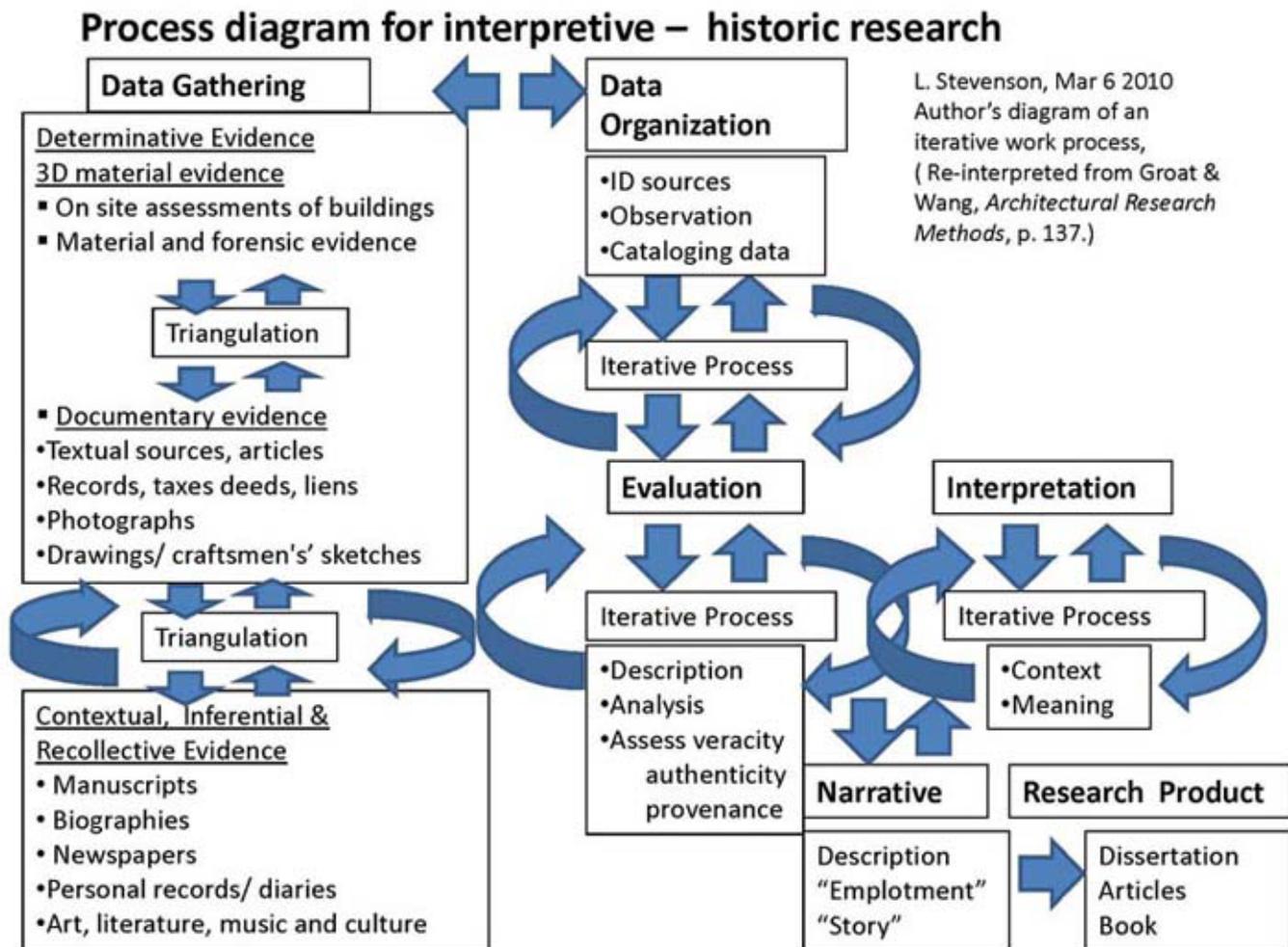


Figure A-1. Process Diagram for Interpretive-Historic Research [Author's diagram]

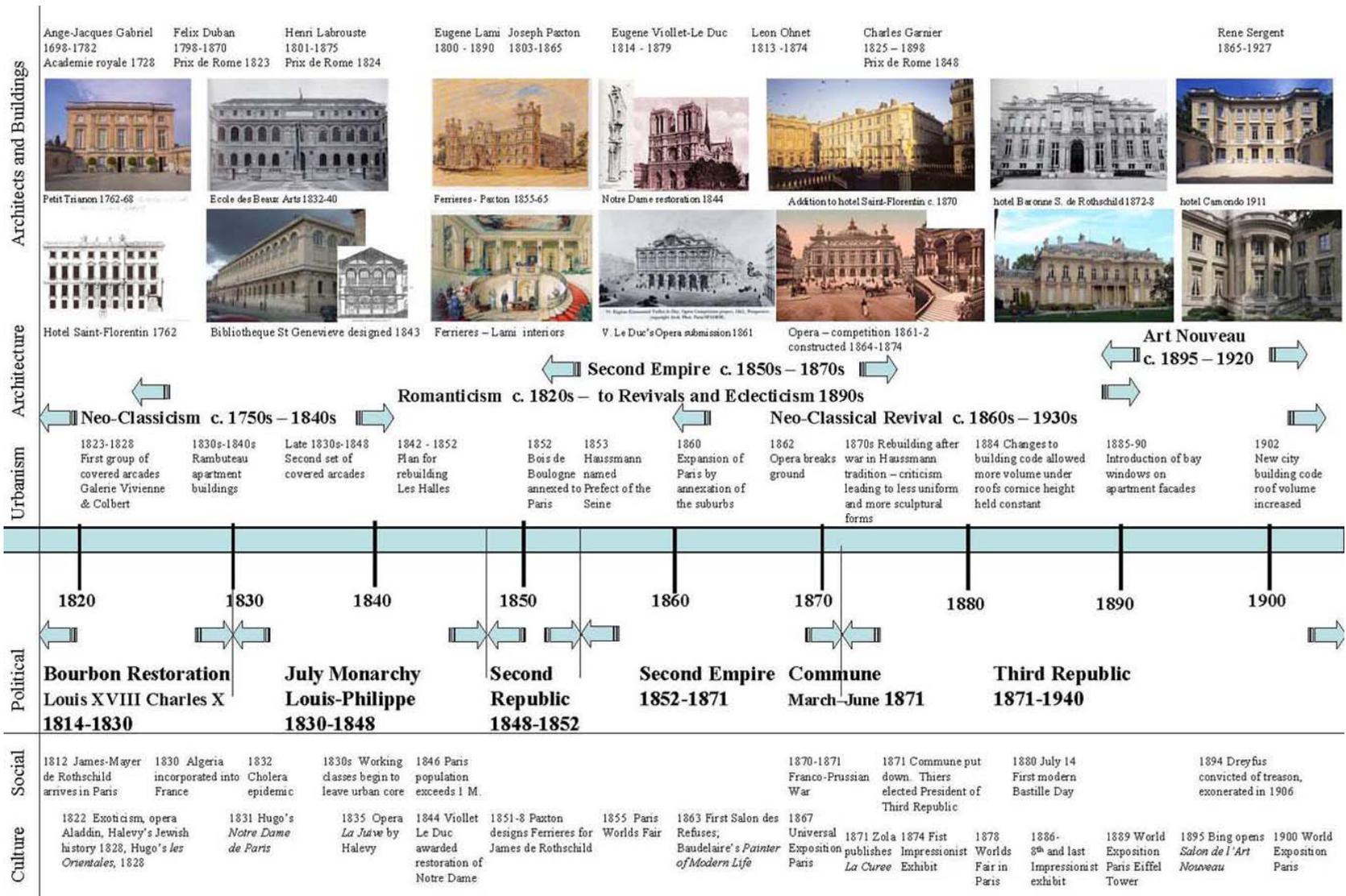


Figure A-2. Nineteenth-Century Timeline [Author's diagram]

APPENDIX B LIFE AND CAREER OF LÉON OHNET, ARCHITECT

Introduction

A cursory study of the architectural works produced by Léon Ohnet (1813–1874) might lead to the conclusion that Ohnet was a competent, yet not especially inventive, architect within the mainstream of mid-nineteenth-century architectural trends. On closer examination, these projects reveal his unique architectural vision and interest in modern materials. While Ohnet is best known for his refined residences for wealthy Second Empire clients, his particular design aesthetic was formed by his early experiences as an architect specializing in religious buildings as well as his experiments with industrial architecture.

Early Life

Born in Paris on May 25, 1813, Ohnet was the second son of Jean and Martine Ohnet. His father, Jean Ohnet (1773-1853),¹ was an Alsatian from Sermersheim who had settled in Paris prior to his marriage in 1805 to Martine Alexandre, a native Parisian. By profession, the senior Ohnet was a *tabletier*, a woodworker who specialized in small scale pieces, made from fine woods, bone and ivory and who produced small refined objects such as tobacco and snuff boxes, chess tables and chess pieces, and combs.² The demand for these types of luxury goods, as well as other forms of the decorative arts, exploded during the period of the Consulate (1799-1804) and First Empire (1804-1815) among the newly enriched administrative class and the returning émigrés of the post-Revolutionary period.

Paris was the center for this craft and a great source of clientele for the elder Ohnet. Léon's older brother, Antoine (1808-1882), became an engineer and an inspector for the railroads.³ Antoine might have been a possible source for his younger brother's connections with the

Compagnie de Chemin du Fer du Nord, although no documentary evidence has been found to support this idea.

Education

Admission to the *École des Beaux Arts* during the 1820s was through a process of acceptance into an *atelier* (workroom or studio) of an established artist or architect and demonstration of a basic proficiency in drawing. The student had to be between fifteen and thirty years of age. There were two classes for architecture students, in the *seconde classe* (second class), the students were called *aspirants*, and this title gave them the right to attend classes and participate in the competition for formal admission. Medals were awarded for exceptional work in the categories of mathematics, construction materials (wood, iron, masonry and general construction,) architecture and perspective drawing. After achieving a specified number of points for the medals, a student could progress into the *première classe*, or the first class, where the students obtained the official title of *élève*. Only the *élèves* were allowed to compete for the major prizes, such as the Grand Prix de Rome.⁴

Admitted to the *seconde classe* in January 1832,⁵ Ohnet studied for at least four years, where he earned several medals and awards for his work, including a *première mention* (first mention) for wood design, masonry design, and general construction, and a third place medal for mathematics.⁶ Ohnet's 1833 project for iron and metal construction, entitled "Classification méthodique de tous les différents genres d'assemblages des fers et métaux soit tirant soit portant appliqués a la construction du bâtiment," won a third place mention.⁷ Promoted to the *première classe* in 1836,⁸ Ohnet participated in at least one competition for the Grand Prix de Rome in 1837, and he was listed in *Journal des Beaux-Arts et de la littérature* among the group of students admitted to the competition.⁹ The program for that year was "Un Panthéon," the competition winner was Jean-Baptiste Guénepin.¹⁰

In the *repertoire biographique* (biographical summaries) of the 1895 publication, *Les architectes élèves de l'École des Beaux-Arts*, by David de Penanrun, Ohnet is listed as a student in the *atelier* of Callet.¹¹ It is not clear if this reference is to the architect Charles-François Callet, author of *Notice historique sur la vie artistique et les ouvrages de quelques architectes français du XVIe siècle* of 1842,¹² or to his son, Félix-Emmanuel Callet (1791-1854), the winner of the Grand Prix de Rome in 1819, who had an *atelier* with students. The younger Callet was known for his pioneering works in iron design.¹³ Along with Victor Baltard, F.-E. Callet, collaborated on the revolutionary design of the iron and glass pavilions for the covered markets of Les Halles, built between 1854-1857 and 1860-1866.¹⁴ The association with F.-E. Callet no doubt influenced Ohnet's interest in industrial architecture and the use of iron and glass in structures.

A portrait of the young Ohnet, painted by Thomas Couture, was exhibited at the Salon of 1843.¹⁵ Couture entered the École des Beaux-Arts painting division in 1831, and was also a competitor for the 1837 Grand Prix de Rome in painting, taking a medal for second place. It is very likely, given the congruity of their tenure at the École, that Ohnet and Couture were friends during their early years of study. Couture is best known for his historical paintings, including his works in the chapel of the Virgin at the church of Saint-Eustache; *The Return of the Troops from Crimea* and the *Baptism of the Imperial Prince*.¹⁶

Marriage and Family Life

On June 10, 1847, Ohnet married Claire Lydie Blanche.¹⁷ His new in-laws were politically prominent; his brother-in-law, Alfred Blanche, was a conseiller d'État and the director of Bâtiments Civils, the government division that oversaw civic (public) construction. This was a fortuitous opportunity for Ohnet's career, as Alfred Blanche provided valuable connections and recommendations for Ohnet to enter the government establishment for architectural work.

Politically, Ohnet was a “Bonapartist” and his active career, in both the fields of architecture and politics, coincided with the period of the Second Republic and Second Empire.

The marriage produced one son, Georges Ohnet, (1848-1918). Educated at the Lycée Bonaparte, Georges was interested in law studies, but eventually chose the profession of journalist. He was a columnist and commentator for the publications *Le Pays* and later *Le Constitutionnel*. Writing in several genres, Georges became one of the most popular novelists and dramatists of his day. His principal works included the 1880 novel *Serge Panine* which was adapted for the stage in 1882. He produced his best known work, *Le Maître des Forges*, in 1881, which was translated into English as *The Ironmaster*, and dramatized in 1883.¹⁸

The Ohnets’ residential moves in the capital were catalogued in the *bottins*, (annual city directories) produced by the publishing firm of Firmin Didot Frères. In the 1850 city directory, Ohnet’s professional and personal address was listed at 12, rue Boursault, in the 17th arrondissement. By 1856, Ohnet was listed at 7, rue Notre Dame de Lorette, in the 9th arrondissement. By 1860, Ohnet had moved to 4, avenue Trudaine, 9th, where he remained until his death.¹⁹

Ohnet died in June 1874,²⁰ and is interred at the cemetery of Montmartre, in the second section, division 4, along the Avenue de Montebello. The 1878 guide to the cemetery by Edward Falip, designated Ohnet’s tomb, located close to the Blanche family’s tomb, as having special artistic merit.²¹

Early Architectural Works

Ohnet’s interest in, and his understanding of, the use of modern construction materials continued to develop with the design of a project from early in his career. The historic resource inventory of culture heritage of the Ministry of Culture, the *Inventaire générale du patrimoine culturel*, lists Ohnet as the architect for a textile mill building in the commune of Le Petit-

Quevilly, in the department of Seine-Maritime, of the Haute-Normandie region. Originally built as a flax spinning mill, the building was the first in France to incorporate the “fireproof” design for mills, conceived earlier in the century by the Scottish engineer William Fairbairn. The structure is notable for its cast iron structural frame, columns and beams, with brick vaults supporting the floors and a brick masonry exterior.²² The masonry structure is approximately 130 meters long and 35 meters tall, the façades are built from brick and stone from Caumont (a regional, white chalk stone with a high lime-carbonate content), and is articulated with 40 window bays and a central pediment with a medallion containing the coat of arms of the city of Rouen and the date of construction, two side pavilions and a roof of long span framing and slate covering. The site was designated as a *monument historique* (historic monument) in 2003.²³ The source of this early commission and the reasons for selecting Ohnet to execute this work have not been determined from the documentary evidence uncovered to date.

Diocesan Architect and Conservator 1848-1874

The advent of the Second Republic produced significant changes in the management of the historical buildings associated with the dioceses and Ohnet was one of the first group of architects named to the new governmental service. His brother-in-law, Alfred Blanche, along with Viollet-le-Duc and Vaudoyer organized the first round of projects.²⁴ The diocesan architects were an elite group of architects; almost all were trained at the École des Beaux-Arts and were based in Paris. The diocesan architects would visit their assigned regions on a regular basis, and have the opportunity to acquire additional commissions from the region in which they worked. The projects were reviewed by the newly formed Commission des arts et édifices religieux, (Commission for the Arts and Religious Buildings) whose membership consisted of many of the same architects associated with the Commission des monuments historiques, including Duban,

Labrouste, Mérimée and Viollet-Le-Duc, who was named to the post of Inspector General for the diocesan buildings in 1853.²⁵

In November, 1849 Ohnet was appointed as an *auditeur* for the Commission des Arts et edifices religieux. The *auditeurs* reviewed the work status for their assigned dioceses and made reports to the full commission at their biweekly meetings. In the same year, Ohnet was named as the diocesan architect for Ajaccio, in Corsica and for Fréjus. The diocese of Perpignan was added to his architectural duties in 1850. During the period between 1851 and 1854 Ohnet served as the Conservateur for Carcassone and Ajaccio. Projects designed by Ohnet included renovations to the cathedral of Fréjus. At Perpignan, in 1851, Ohnet oversaw the reconstruction for three of the stained glass windows in the cathedral and designed a renovation project for the Grand Seminary of Perpignan. Other major renovation projects included the Dominican monastery and the *hôtel* of the comtes de Provence at Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baum.²⁶ During this period, all of his diocesan responsibilities were located in the south of France. The need to visit his projects became increasingly demanding and eventually led to his decision to demission from Ajaccio by 1855, citing the difficulties of travel to the island of Corsica.²⁷ He served as the diocesan architect of Carcassone until 1856. His projects there included a design for the choir stalls of the cathedral, which was in turn implemented by Viollet-Le-Duc, who took over the role of diocesan architect for Carcassone in 1857.²⁸

Drawings for several of Ohnet's diocesan projects are conserved in the Archives Nationales, département des cartes et plans, including the design for renovations to the Episcopal palace in Carcassone, dated 1850.²⁹ The principal façade, facing onto a side garden, is organized with a slightly projected central pavilion, whose corners are defined by colossal fluted pilasters with Corinthian capitals. The architectural style has an Italianate character, enhanced by the

building materials; pale stucco walls and a red terra cotta clay tile roof. The wall at the *rez-de-chaussée* (ground floor level), is textured to represent ashlar masonry blocks, with round arched top window and door openings. The wall openings at the level of the *premier étage*, or *grand étage*, are treated with shallow arched window openings, capped with a molded window hood supported on brackets and the keystone is enhanced with a sculpture of a face and floral motifs under the hood molding. Fluted Corinthian pilasters defined the corners of the pavilions.³⁰

The site plan indicates the acquisition and the removal of some of the existing structures between the public street entrance and the carriage drive, which allowed Ohnet to reorganize the site distribution of the residential functions, by creating a u-shaped interior *cour d'honneur* which organizes the functions around a central space. The existing building entrance was through a *portail* on the rue de la Mairie. The carriage access remains in the same location further along the street wall, but the area inside the wall is now designed as a vegetated landscape, and the carriage entrance *portail* opens into the side yard garden space. The stables and service functions were moved to a new building along the street façade.

The residential section of the palace complex faces a side garden and a large rear garden, and comprises three stories, the *rez-de-chaussée* level, with service spaces that support the public reception rooms, the *premier étage* which contains the less formal and more intimate reception areas and the private apartment of the bishop, and the *second étage*, under the eaves, for housing the servants.

The palace building has two entrances. One entrance is aligned with the principal street gate and is on axis across the *cour d'honneur*, leading into the existing open vestibule and the *escalier d'honneur* off to one side and spatially defined by two columns supporting a beam line and defining the zone of the vertical circulation space. On axis with the entrance vestibule is a

central vestibule that organizes the circulation to the principal ground floor areas. The Salon d'antichambre (antechamber), is aligned with the entrance axis and continues this visual line out into the garden. The Salle des Billards (Billiards room) and a Salle à manger (Dining Room) flank the antechamber space. The second entrance, accessed from the side garden, leads to the residential services spaces, the kitchen and preparation areas and the servant's dining space. The *grand étage*, contains the chapel over the street entrance, linked to the palace by a new gallery space. The public spaces within the residence face the large garden in the rear of the property and consist of a Bibliothèque (library), petit Salon, grand Salon and the Oratoire. A gallery connects this space to the bishop's Chambre à coucher (formal bedroom), and ancillary spaces, baths, storage rooms, face the side garden and *cour d'honneur*. The third level has a lower ceiling height and houses the servants' rooms.

Ohnet designed an Episcopal palace, in the early French Renaissance style for the diocese of Ajaccio in 1851.³¹ The architectural vocabulary included steeply pitched roofs, rendered to appear as constructed from slate shingles, stone tracery "balconies" across the second level glazed openings, ogival arched windows and *rempages* (ogival-shaped overdoor moldings). The central pavilion of the garden façade contains a pair of lancet windows topped by a six-lobed oculus. The two story structure is organized around a central court, the Cour d'honneur. The palace *distribution* has much in common with that of an elegant *hôtel particulier*, the *rez-de-chaussée* is accessed through a Grand Vestibule that leads to the interior court. The entrance is located between two tower masses. Other spaces include an archive and administrative offices and servants' lodgings. The Grand Escalier is placed at the center of the wing that is perpendicular to the Vestibule, across the court from the large vaulted Salle à manger with a rounded bay at the end of the space. The principal spaces on the *premier étage* are located on the

external walls and a circulation gallery runs around three sides of the interior court. A formal dining room, with a coffered ceiling, is located above the Vestibule and is accessed by the gallery at either end. The Chapel sits above the ground floor Dining Room, with a groin-vaulted ceiling and curved end bay. One tower bay contains the Billiard Room flanked by two Petit Salons. The Grand Salon, with an ornate coffered ceiling and central ceiling medallions is placed above the Archives below. The corner tower contains a formal office for the monsignor and support spaces. Two Chambres à coucher, another Salon and the Bibliothèque (library), are located on the other side of the grand stair.

These two palaces from early in Ohnet's career provide an insight into design issues that he would explore along the course of his career. The dynamic potential of alternating light and dark spaces, along with varying spatial proportions, while moving through a building is considered with careful attention, and in his later works is more fully developed.

Ohnet's political and social connections proved useful in obtaining other architectural commissions. The Princess Mathilde Bonaparte (1820-1904), famed for being the brilliant hostess of a literary, artistic and political *salon*, the owner of the celebrated *jardin d'hiver* at her Paris *hôtel particulier*, and a cousin of Napoléon III, decided to rebuild the parish church of Saint-Gratien, a small town north of Paris, which was the place of her country chateau. In 1857 she retained the services of Ohnet, who matched the generosity of the Princess by apparently waiving his architectural fees, "*l'architecte fait don au Ciel de ses honoraires.*"³²

The Princess was quite a skilled negotiator, successfully convincing the Rothschilds to significantly reduce the freight charges for shipping the building materials along their northern rail line. The church was built with Saint Leu stone, from the Saint-Leu-d'Esserent quarries, located some 40 kilometers to the north of Saint-Gratien, in the department of Oise. According to

one source, the new building was consecrated on 29 May 1859,³³ and a year later, a new sepulcher was dedicated to Maréchal Nicolas de Catinat (1637-1722), the lord of Saint-Gratien and an important figure from the reign of Louis XIV. The Maréchal's original tomb had been despoiled during the Revolution of 1789 and the tomb stones and his remains were found in the excavations for the foundations of the new church. Princess Mathilde commissioned the sculptor Émilien de Nieurwerkerke (1811-1892), who served as the Intendant des Beaux-Arts for the Emperor's household, and as a companion to the Princess, to create the reclining stone figure of the Maréchal.³⁴

Differing stylistic attributions for the new church reflect both the eclectic approach to architectural style during the Second Empire, and also the view of this eclecticism in the later twentieth-century. A contemporaneous article (circa 1860) described the building as “this charming church,” in a Romanesque style, [that] was constructed following the plans and under the direction of M. Léon Ohnet, architect of the government.”³⁵ In Des Cars' 1988 biography of the princess Mathilde, the church was called a Gothic masterpiece, a “*chef d'oeuvre gothique*.” The west façade combines the massive masonry walls of the Romanesque building with narrow ogival arched openings at the lower windows and in the over door sculpture, capped with a stone pinnacle. The top of the entrance door and the belfry tower openings are defined by a stepped cove section under the lintel. The belfry tower mass is capped by inset dentils and a steeply pitched pyramidal roof.³⁶

The interior of the church is organized in three bays, the central doorway opens under the choir loft above. The ribbed ogival vaults form a simple, four part vault over each bay. The *abside* end of the church, formed by a half octagon in plan, contains three ogival arched windows, each with paired lancets surmounted with a trefoil

As part of his work for the commune of Saint-Gratien during this period of the late 1850s, Ohnet executed a study on the existing 16th century church building, and recommended the demolition of the structure and the salvage of the stones for reuse in the additions planned for the town's school building.³⁷

In 1862, Ohnet was named architect for the diocese of Meaux, located in the Ile-de-France, with the benefit of being closer to home, a position he retained until his death in 1874.³⁸ His work in the cathedral is most well known for the restoration of the bishop's pulpit, dating to the era of the bishop Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, (1627-1704), a renowned theologian who served as the court clergyman to Louis XIV. Other work included the design of decorative grill enclosures for the altar area, which were executed by the *serrurier* (ironworker, particularly of gates, grills and locks), M. Gaillardon, and installed in 1868.³⁹

Railroads and Rothschilds

After Ohnet was demissioned from his long-distance diocesan responsibilities, he focused his architectural career in the region of Paris and the Île de France. During the period of 1858 to 1860, Ohnet worked for the railroad company of the Rothschild family, the Chemin de Fer du Nord. In Karen Bowie's study of the Gare du Nord, evidence is presented to support the notion that Ohnet worked in parallel with the company's architect Lejeune, on developing several schemes for the proposed Gare du Nord project, and he is credited with developing the architectural *parti* and the *avant-projet* (preliminary design) for the new station project for James de Rothschild.⁴⁰

The principal design issue in the Gare du Nord appears to have been the break between the traditional *parti*, the 'Beaux-Arts plan', that shatters against the new demands of these ensembles where the disposition should be conceived as a function of the various and essential activities that do not lend themselves to a symmetrical and balanced plan organization.⁴¹

Several of the renderings produced by Ohnet and Lejeune from this period contained elements that were later adopted in the final design for the principal façade, including the large central pavilion crowned by a raking cornice, lit by three arched glazed window bays, separated by monumentally scaled pairs of engaged columns surmounted with a large “Florentine style” entablature.

The selected *parti* was designed around the separation of the administrative offices from the public services offered in the station, and this concept was adopted by the *Conseil d'Administration* on 11 May, 1860, following the recommendations from a report by M. Couche. Several proposals were developed by Ohnet and by Lejeune. The façade studies produced in March and April of 1859, and in two undated studies, illustrate the evolution of the façade design. The project entitled “Projet de façade sur la place Roubaix. Project No. 2” dated 20 March 1858, depicts a massive masonry façade with a raised four-story central pavilion and two end pavilions in a symmetrical composition with uniform round arched window openings and paired Ionic columns at the end pavilions. The April 1859 rendering entitled “*Projet de façade sûr la place Roubaix. Project No.1*” treated the central band of the façade as a frontispiece and expressed the three glazed bays of the train shed behind the front “screen.” The two undated studies are much closer to the final design of the façade. “Style Corinthian No 2” is organized around a large central gable end form, with one large and two smaller semi circular glazed bays, the central bay is flanked by paired monumentally scaled, colossal Corinthian columns and the ends of the central pavilion marked by flat projecting pilasters. The end pavilions are lower than the central bays and have large arched and glazed openings. The rendering entitled “Style Corinthian No 5” is essentially the same design with minor alterations; the square pilasters flanking the central pavilion have been exchanged for paired engaged Corinthian columns.⁴²

James de Rothschild finally conferred the commission to the renowned architect Jacques-Ignace Hittorff (1792-1867), who served as the project's principal architect from 1861 through the construction of the project. According to Karen Bowie's analysis of the documents it appears that Hittorff's intervention came later in the design process and was primarily focused on the refinement of a design for the classical façade treatment.⁴³ In Hittorff's final design for the station's principal façade, the columns became pilasters and the entablature is in a style described as "Empire Romain."⁴⁴ Coverage in the architectural journals of the period addressed the duality of the architectural issues in the project. In an 1863 issue of *Gazette des Architectes et du Bâtiment*, written two years after construction commenced, a commentary by the architect Anatole de Baudot questioned the seemingly disparate characters of the monumental stone classical exterior and a utilitarian industrial train shed built from iron and glass. Baudot found the train shed structure easy to read as a response to functional considerations and the structural nature of the material limits of iron, However, the form of the principal façade is driven neither by functional concerns or by the nature of the material, in this case, large stone blocks, but rather the result of a whim, a "*fantaisie*," with the material choice and the ornamentation chosen to produce a visual effect. He concluded that the two parts were not conceived in the same spirit.⁴⁵ In contrast, a twentieth-century assessment of the building, proposed by Karen Bowie, sees the final design as expressing those characteristics that are associated with Hittorff; "a richness in the historical references, that rendered his elevations 'cultivated, even erudite,' as well as a concern for lightness and elegance in the overall effect."⁴⁶

Urban Residences for the Rothschilds

After Ohnet had worked with James de Rothschild on the railroad projects, he became one of the extended family's favored residential architects, designing projects for two generations of the family. It appears that James initially consulted with Ohnet on modifications to the hôtel de

Talleyrand as well as on renovations to the adjacent building at 4, rue Saint-Florentin, during the 1860s.⁴⁷ The addition to the building was constructed at some point after James' acquisition of the adjacent properties at numbers parcels 1 through 5 along the rue Mondavi, in 1863,⁴⁸ and was completed before 1871.⁴⁹ Alphonse and Leonora de Rothschild had moved to the residence by 1865, as this was the first year that the city directory listed their address at 2, rue Saint-Florentin,⁵⁰ and Alphonse became the sole owner by 1871.⁵¹

Ohnet was retained by Alphonse in 1872 to perform additional design work on the interior of the mansion.⁵² The small Dining Room, also called the Music Room, contains two signature traits of Ohnet, the integration of the eighteenth-century paneling from the owners' collections, a popular practice of this generation of collectors, and the introduction of more light into the space via the corner bay window, an early application of this type of feature on the principal street façade.⁵³ Ohnet may have collaborated with the architect Émile Petit on the interiors of the other principal space of the addition, the Rothschild Grand Dining Room, although documentation of the nature of their collaboration has not been found to date. Petit is not listed among the students of the *École des Beaux-Arts*, nor does he appear in the list of diocesan architects. He is listed in the 1860 city directory, under the heading of architects, at 4, côté Pigalle.⁵⁴

There is some discrepancy in the archival records as to the identity of the architects who worked on the *hôtel particulier* at 33, rue Fbg. Saint-Honoré. A notice in the March 1-14 1865 edition of the journal *Le Constructeur*, credits Ohnet with the design for the “new mansion for M. Rotschild (sic),” which shared a party wall with the property of the Péreire brothers, hence the property of Nathaniel and Charlotte de Rothschild. In the referenced article, the structure was reported to have been completed up through the second floor level.⁵⁵ However, in the book *Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré*, the architect identified with some work is Émile Petit, under the

direction of the architect Robillard.⁵⁶ There are extant interior elevation drawings of the *galérie Louis XVI* within the mansion, attributed to Robillard, in the archives of the Musée des Arts Decoratifs.⁵⁷ Petit worked on several Rothschild commissions, including an unexecuted design in 1867-8 for a new *hôtel* for Salomon and Adele de Rothschild, at 3-5, rue Messine, which echoed the neoclassical façades by Gabriel for the palace wings flanking the *place d'armes* of the chateau of Compiègne, but in the heavier manner of the Second Empire aesthetic.⁵⁸ It appears that Ohnet and Petit collaborated on at least two residential projects for the Rothschilds, although the precise nature of their collaboration is not clear from the archival record.

Ohnet's master residential work is the *Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild*, the subject of the analysis in Chapter 5. Design work began in 1872, and despite Ohnet's death in 1874, the building was constructed according to his drawings and overseen by his student, Julien Ponsard.

Other Residential Works

Ohnet's own residence embodied the essence of the eclectic spirit of the Second Empire. After the acquisition of the property in 1858, the address at 4, avenue Trudaine was listed as both the residence and commercial address for Ohnet in the 1860 *bottin*. Acquiring the adjacent parcel in 1860, Ohnet built an apartment building along with a *hôtel particulier* for his family since

The possession of a *hôtel particulier* was always a sign of a greater success than owning an apartment, even an exceptional one. At the beginning of the Second Empire, the new managerial class had recently become quite wealthy, and taking the model of the aristocracy of the ancien régime, built in all of Paris, residences, some quite sumptuous, such as the *hôtel* that Ohnet created for the Baronne Salomon de Rothschild, or more simply, such as the many small *hôtels* that are found in the 16th and 17th arrondissements.⁵⁹

In one article, the address for Ohnet's *hôtel* is listed as number 14.⁶⁰ The numbering system for the side of the street with even numbers was changed by an *arrêt* of 21 mars, 1872⁶¹, which occurred after the construction of the Collège municipal Rollin (constructed between 1867-

1870), now the Lycée Jacques-Decour, on the site of the demolished slaughterhouse (*abatoir*) of Montmartre.

The site is bounded by three streets; avenue Trudaine, rue Bochart de Saron, and the rue Say. The three-story building has four window bays on the avenue and nine bays along the rue Bochart de Saron. The window openings of the upper two floors have shallow segmented arch tops and are capped with a sculpted hoods with Louis XV inspired decorative motifs. The contemporary appearance of the façade is austere and may be the result of a later (and poorly executed) façade refurbishment.

Ohnet's hôtel has a unique architectural *parti*. The entrance door on the avenue Trudaine is quite modestly scaled and opens into a small foyer; a set of eight steps leads up to a vestibule that opens onto the main stone staircase, covered with a glass and iron roof. This space opens onto the main rooms of the elevated first floor. The back of the ground floor along the rue Say is dedicated to the kitchens and service spaces. The first floor is treated as the *grand étage*, with taller ceilings and decorative moldings, and contains the rooms arranged around the central space and a corridor that leads to the grand Salon at the north end of the building, overlooking the rue Say and the rue Bochart de Saron. Along the long façade on the rue Bochart de Saron, from north to south, are a smaller salon, a dining room and the master suite that faces the avenue Trudaine. The second floor contained the rooms for their son and the servants' quarters.⁶²

The décor of the Grand Salon is an excellent example of Second Empire aesthetics. The room is a long rectangular shape, and the decor is conceived around twelve paintings on canvas, set into wood paneling enframed with wood moldings. The ceiling is ornamented with plaster moldings in the style Rocaille with some neoclassical elements. Of the seven large wall panels, four date from the eighteenth century. These panels, dating from 1758 and attributed to the

painter Johann Heinrich Keller (1692-1765), were likely acquired by Ohnet from an antiques dealer.

Four small painted panels are placed over the doors. One end of the room terminates in an oval-shaped bay, in the manner of the décor of the 17th century. Centered within this bay is the white marble chimneypiece of the fireplace, surmounted by two cherubs and a vase in plaster. Above this element, a small oval painted panel, illustrating a floral composition in a porcelain vase is placed within a gilded frame flanked by neoclassical fluted pilasters. The painting is signed “to Madame Ohnet, Ch. Hugot, 1867.”⁶³ The flavor of this décor, albeit on a grander scale, is found in other interior spaces attributed to Ohnet, such as the Grand Salon of the *hôtel* for the baronne Salomon de Rothschild.

Other residential works attributed to Ohnet include a small *hôtel particulier* at 10, rue Christophe-Colomb designed for an owner named M. Alrad. An article in the weekly publication *La Construction: revue hebdomadaire des travaux publics et particulier*, identified some of the construction personnel, including the mason, M. Rémond, *entrepreneur de maçonnerie* (masonry contractor) and M. Decourtoux, *chef d’atelier* (head of the workshop), with M. Jusset, *apprenti*.⁶⁴ The three story façade has an Italianate flavor, with a symmetrically organized three part façade, with a 2-3-2 rhythm of fenestration on the upper two levels. The central bay is formed by a gable end and bracketed cornice, over a triple-arched window subdivided by column with vegetative capitals. The central windows and door openings are capped by convex and concave wall openings.

Juries and Awards

On November 12, 1863 an Imperial decree removed control of the École des Beaux Arts competition from the Académie and created a new commission charged with management of the competitions program.⁶⁵ From 1864 to 1866, Ohnet served on the jury for the architectural

division, along with many of his colleagues. In 1864, 37 architects participated. The list included Abadie, Ballu, Duban, Duc, Garnier, Girard, Hittorff, Labrouste, and Vaudoyer, among this elite group of the Second Empire architectural community.⁶⁶ In his acceptance letter for the 1864 jury, Ohnet expresses his pleasure at the invitation to participate.⁶⁷ The following list identifies the subject of the competition and the first prize winner for each year.

- 1864 *Hospice dans les Alpes* (Hostel in the Alps) Grand Prix won by Julien-Azais Guadet,
- 1865 *Vaste Hôtellerie pour les voyageurs* (Large Hôtel for Travelers) Grand Prix won by Louis Noguet. This project is notable for the exposure of the large scale iron structural frame, rather than concealing the structure within masonry.
- 1866 *Hôtel à Paris pour riche banquier* (Town house in Paris for a Rich Banker), Grand Prix won by Jean-Louis Pascal (1837-1920).⁶⁸

The 1866 jury consisted of architects Lebas, Lesueur, Hittorff, Gilbert de Gisors, Duban, Lefuel, Baltard representing member of the Institute, along with the architects Abadie, Bailly, Boeswilwald, Clerget, Cendrier, Diet, Domey, Duc, Durand (Alph.), Garnier, Girard (Alph.), Godeboeuf, Guillaume, Isabelle, Labrouste (Henry), Lance, Laval, Lisch, de Mérindel, Millet, Mimey, Nicolle, Normand, Ohnet, Pellechet, Ruprick-Robert, Thomas, Trélat, Uchard, Vaudoyer, and Viollet-Le-Duc.⁶⁹

On August 11, 1866, Ohnet was honored with the award of *Chevalier* of the *Légion d'Honneur* for his work in the arts and his career as a diocesan architect. His nomination was supported by his brother-in-law, Alfred Blanche.⁷⁰

Political and Civic Life

Ohnet became active in civic life during the 1850s, in part through his family connections. In 1855, he became a member of the Conseil d'hygiène et de la salubrité for the 2nd and 9th *arrondissements*. In 1856, Ohnet was appointed to the Commission des Monuments Historiques for the department of Aude,⁷¹ working again with his colleagues Viollet-le-Duc and other

renowned architects on this important governmental commission. His interest in politics eventually extended to elected office, when he becoming the *adjoint au Maire*, or deputy mayor, of the 9th *arrondissement* in 1865.

What is known of Ohnet's character comes from a description in the short biographical sketches for the new members of the Conseil Général du département de la Seine, (municipal council of the department of the Seine), the public body to which Ohnet was elected in 1871, as a representative of the ninth *arrondissement*, Quartier Rochechouart.

With an open face, an affable and smiling air, this is how, among his plans and drawings, this new elector from the Ninth arrondissement who lives in a small hôtel on avenue Trudaine appears.

M. Ohnet was born in Paris on May 25, 1813, an architect of diocesan monuments; he is responsible for the restoration of Meaux cathedral, and the bishop's pulpit (*chaire*) of Bossuet, (bishop of Meaux, from 1681 -1704).

Decorated in 1866 for his work in the arts, M. Ohnet before this time was named deputy mayor (*adjoint au maire*) of the ninth arrondissement, from which he was demissioned on 4 September, it was then that, despite his 57 years of age, he entered in the ranks of the National Guard and did his duty to protect the city. Patriot, friend of Order and deeply attached to the city of Paris, no circumstance could make him leave, and after the second siege, he thought only of returning to his work, when the choice of his fellow countrymen called him to his new duties.

The special knowledge of M. Ohnet is of incontestable usefulness to the council who counts on his architectural expertise.

M. Ohnet married the sister of M. Blanche, one of the two gentleman had to withdraw as the two brothers-in-law could not sit on the same municipal council.

After a vote by the advisors to the Prefecture, M. Blanche withdrew.

M. Ohnet was elected *questeur* (responsible for budget) of the council.⁷²

Ohnet's dual role as architectural expert and financial advisor to the *Conseil municipal* were contributing factors in his appointment to the jury for the architectural competition for the reconstruction of the Hôtel de Ville. The proposals were displayed in the Palace of Industry on

the Champs-Élysées,⁷³ and the winning project was designed by Théodore Ballu (1817-1885) and Édouard Deperthes (1833-1898).

The Prefect of the Seine charged the municipal council with developing a plan for the reconstruction of the Hôtel de Ville, after the damage caused during the siege of the Commune on May 24, 1871. A special commission within the *Conseil municipal* was named in the meeting, consisting of Ohnet as secretary and official reporter, M. Binder as president, and council members Nadaud, Wattel, Féraud, Cantargrel, Dupuy, Callon and Delzant.⁷⁴ In M. Binder's report of January 1872, to the council, he summarized the debate within the administration regarding the new building program. The issue was debated by both the *Commission des Beaux-Arts and Travaux historiques* and the *Conseil d'Architecture*, which recommended three programmatic considerations:

1. Adoption of the comprehensive space program, including the installation of all the administrative services, offices for the Prefect, and the Conseil municipal.
2. Restitute the entire first mansion of Francois 1, research how to present the architectural value and exquisite proportions;
3. Conserve the work of MM. Godde et Lesueur in the façade on the place Lobau as a handsome example of architecture from the reign of Louis-Philippe.⁷⁵

The two commissions also proposed solutions to the circulation issues and the lack of adequate natural light in the existing structure, by enlarging the two buildings fronting on the rue de Rivoli and the quai, along with the corner pavilions to allow for two galleries, one for the administrative offices and the other for the offices of the Prefect. The administrative offices should be modeled after those of the large financial institutions, with all of the employees in one large space.

On the question of architectural style, the commissions recommended five items:

1. The setback of the façade between the old towers and the corner pavilions

2. A sharp distinction between the style of the original building and the new sections
3. Setting the building by Boccador (Francois 1^{er} pavilion) apart from the other wings
4. The new construction should have a modern style, “sober yet vigorous”
5. Enlarge the side buildings (rue de Rivoli and the quai) about 3 meters on each side to allow for the enlargement of the offices if necessary

The commission further recommended that a competition be held for the best architectural solution, and that the chosen architect should possess the skills of an artist, builder and effective administrator.⁷⁶ The total budget for the project was set at around \$17 million francs.⁷⁷

Ohnet, in his role as secretary of the special commission, delivered a report to the *Conseil municipal* on June 20, 1872. Part of the sub-commission’s review on project finances, of which Ohnet was a member, involved the issue of reusing parts of the remaining structure of the Hôtel de Ville within the proposed new design. The salvageable sections of the structure were valued at 6,715,285 francs, 8 centimes.⁷⁸

Ohnet’s Architectural Vision

The body of work produced during Ohnet’s career can be seen as a mirror for the trajectory of the French academic tradition. Educated in the Beaux arts methods of composition, his academic training was enriched with early forays into industrial architecture, at the textile mill in Normandy and in the studies executed for the rail terminal buildings. The railroad projects contain the dual characteristics of nineteenth-century architecture, the expanding source of historical references for use in the exteriors of the buildings, and the inventive possibilities of exploiting the great advances in building materials. The rise of Eclecticism in the 1850s is seen in the design of the Episcopal palaces, the late Gothic elements of Ajaccio of 1850 form a wonderful contrast with the light Italianate motifs of the palace façades at Carcassone. These façades are overlaid onto the spatial compositions of axial planning and local symmetries of the

Beaux-Arts' design methods. The later works for several *hôtels particuliers* adopted the “national” style of the Second Empire, the preference for façades featuring elements drawn from *tous les Louis*, with his particular skill in the invocation of a neo-Louis XVI architectural vocabulary

As Ohnet's work matured, his plan organizations illustrate a skill at manipulating the experience of the spatial sequence, through the innovative use of varying levels of natural light, to accentuate changes in the volumetric proportions of spaces along the circulation path. His works illustrate the various effects achieved by toplighting, corner lighting and introducing light high up on the wall to create dramatic effects. The technique of accentuating the space in which the circulation path shifts onto a perpendicular axis is not new in itself, this compositional device is seen in the *hôtel particulier* since the late seventeenth century. It is the coupling of this movement with the wash of illumination from the top-light over the pivot point of the plan that is an innovative blending of architectonic techniques.

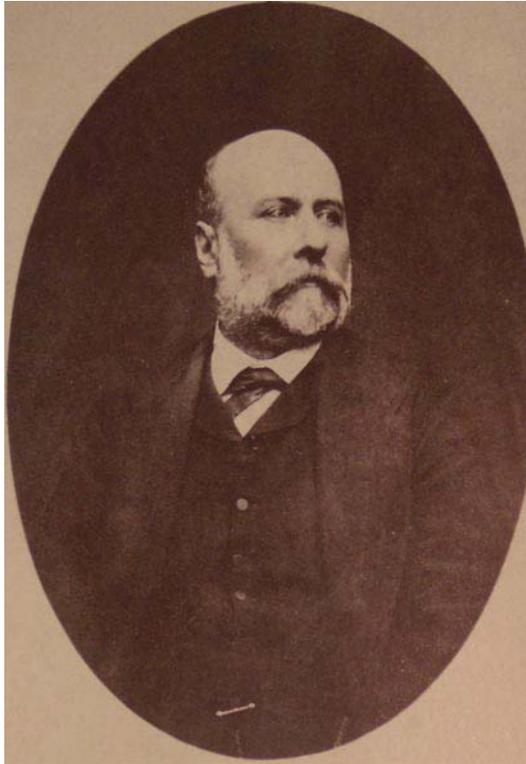


Figure B-1. Ohnet around 1874. [A. Cary, Léon Ohnet, plate 6]



Figure B-2. Filature du lin building (Ohnet, 1846-7) [Base Merimée, Ministère de la Culture]

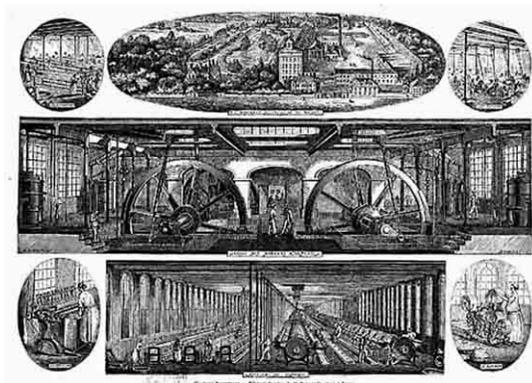


Figure B-3. Filature du lin drawings 1846-7 [Base Merimée, Ministère de la Culture]

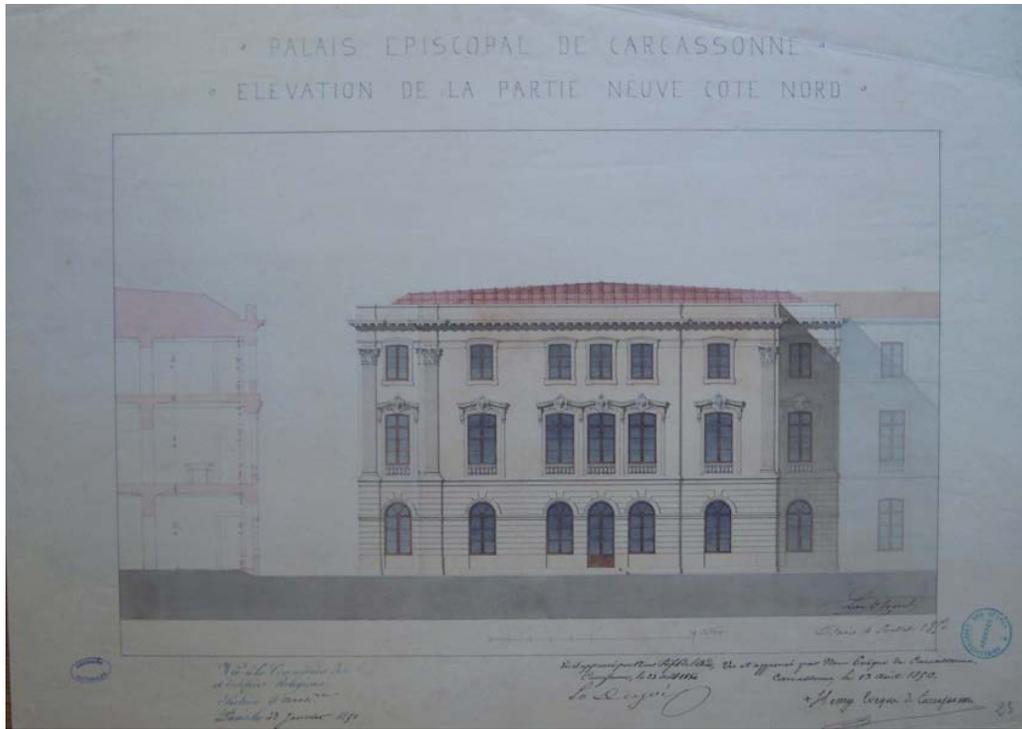


Figure B-4. Palais Episcopal Elévation de la partie neuve. Côte nord, Caracssone, Ohnet, 1851. [Author's photos with permission of Archives Nationales department des Cartes et Plans, herein after called AN/CP. See References for file number citations.]

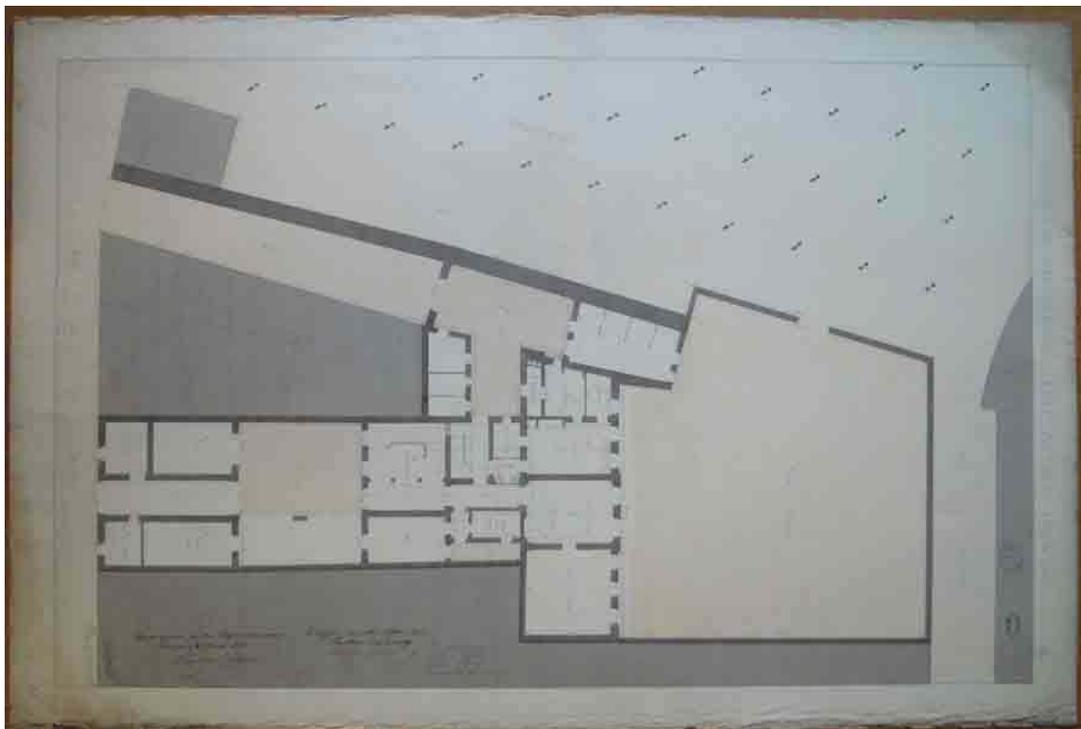


Figure B-5. Palais Episcopal État actuel Rez-de Chaussée, Caracssone, Ohnet, 1851. [AN/CP]

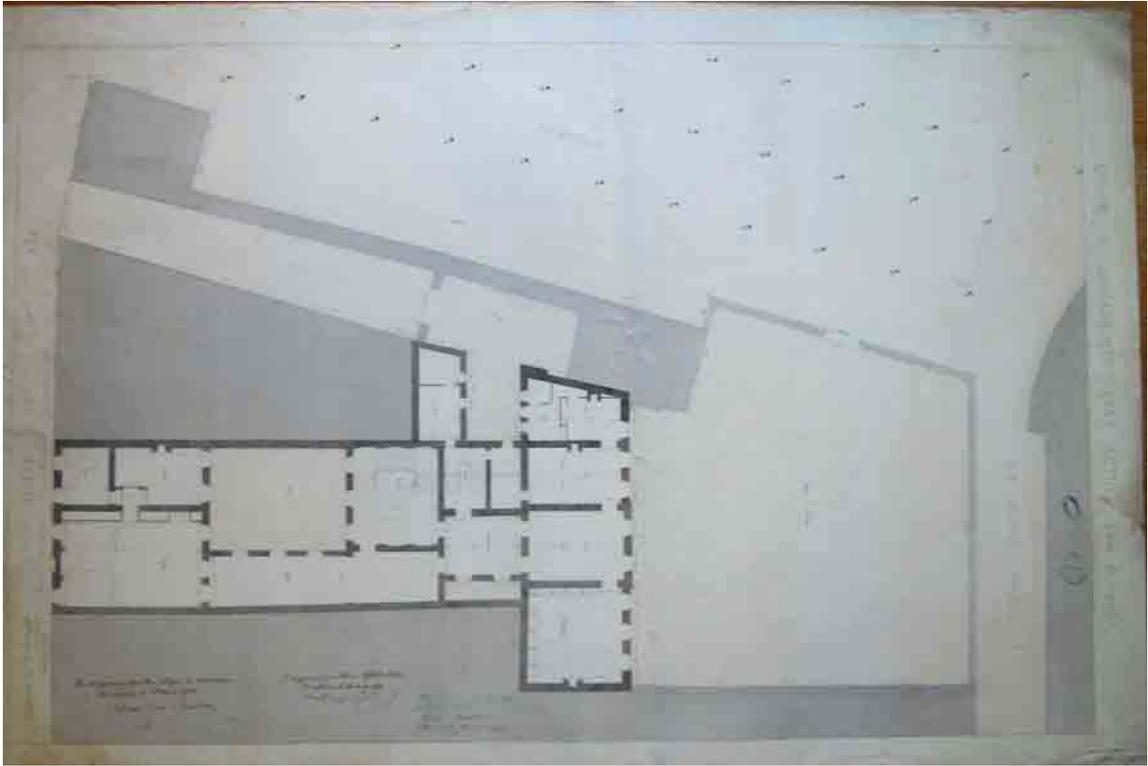


Figure B-6. Palais Épiscopal État actuel Premier Étage, Caracssone, Ohnet, 1851. [AN/CP]



Figure B-7. Palais Épiscopal Plan Restauration Rez-de-Chaussée, Carcassone, Ohnet, 1851. [AN/CP]



Figure B-8. Palais Épiscopal Plan Restauration Premier Étage, Carcassonne, Ohnet, 1851. [AN/CP]

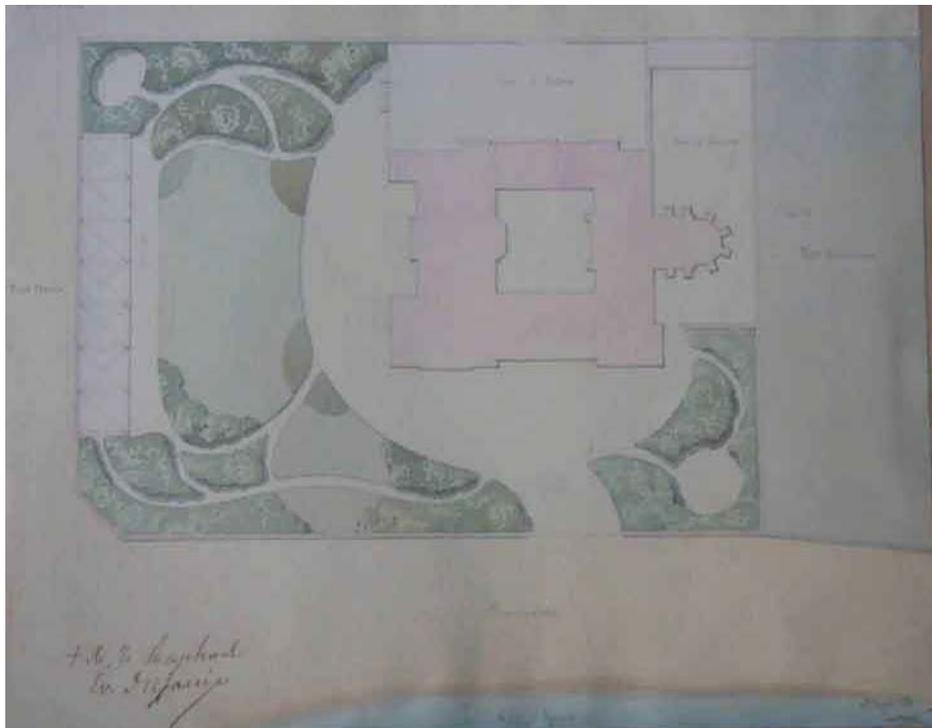


Figure B-9. Palais Épiscopal Plan général, Ajaccio, Ohnet, 1850. [AN/CP]



Figure B-10. Palais Épiscopal Elévation façade sur le jardin, Ajaccio, Ohnet, 1850. [AN/CP]

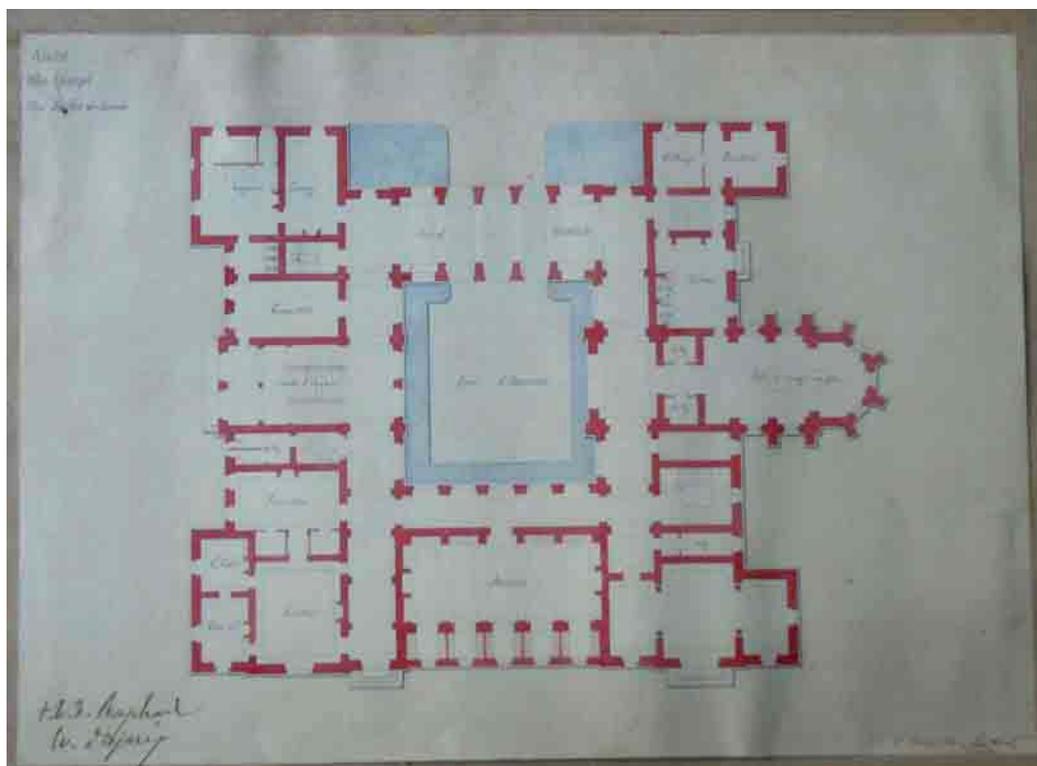


Figure B-11. Palais Épiscopal Plan Rez-de-chaussée, Ajaccio, Ohnet, 1850. [AN/CP]

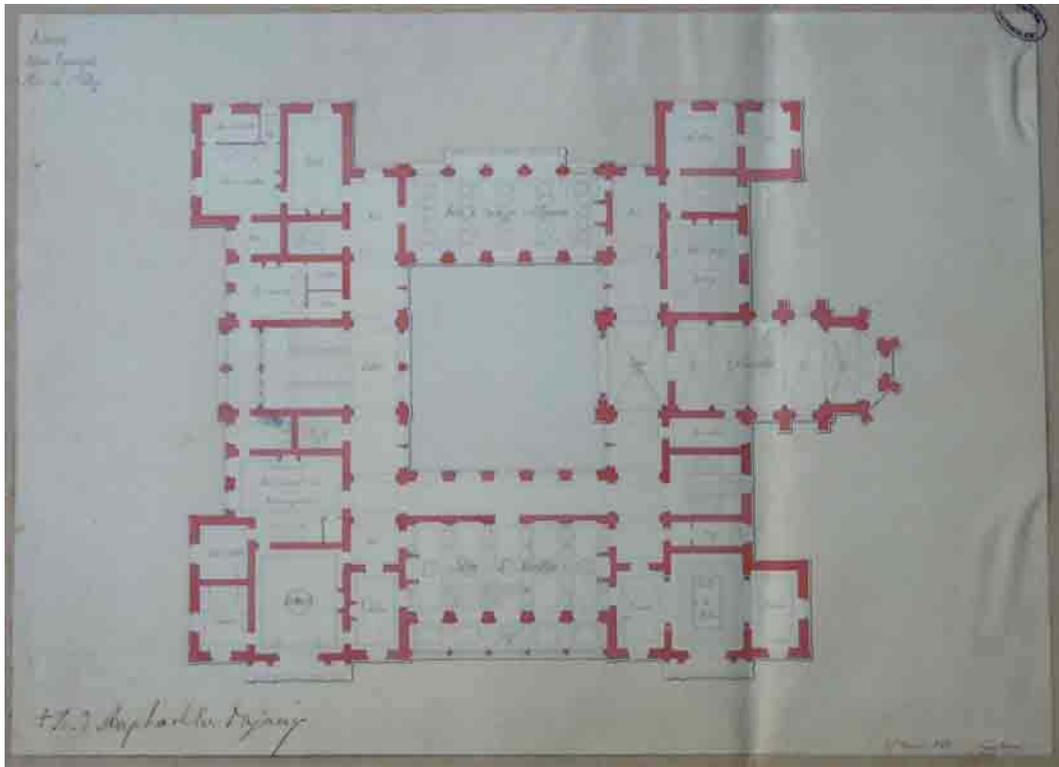


Figure B-12. Palais Épiscopal Plan Premier Étage Ajaccio, Ohnet, 1850. [AN/CP]



Figure B-13. Cathédral de Meaux Plan de la clôture du collateral sud, Ohnet, 1864. [AN/CP]



Figure B-14. Church of Saint Gratien, watercolor, anonymous, 1857. [Author's photo with permission of the Archives départementale Val'd'Oise, herein after called ADVO]



Figure B-15. Historic photograph of church of Saint-Gratien, c. 1910. [ADVO]



Figure B-16. Town of Saint-Gratien historic postcard, 1968. [ADVO]



Figure B-17. Church of Saint-Gratien west façade. [Author's photo]



Figure B-18. Church of Saint-Gratien west porch detail. [Author's photo]



Figure B19. Church of Saint-Gratien, east façade. [Author's photo]



Figure B-20. Church of Saint-Gratien, interior view of west entrance. [Author's photo]

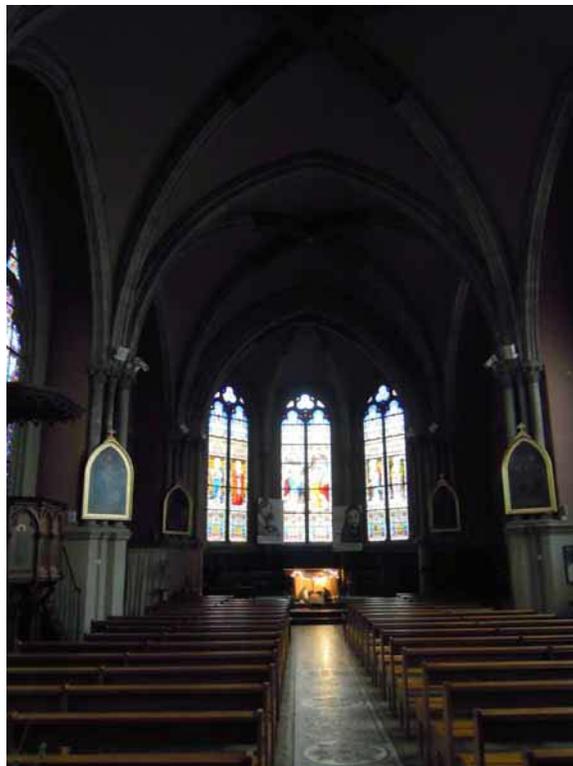


Figure B-21. Church of Saint-Gratien view towards altar [Author's photo]

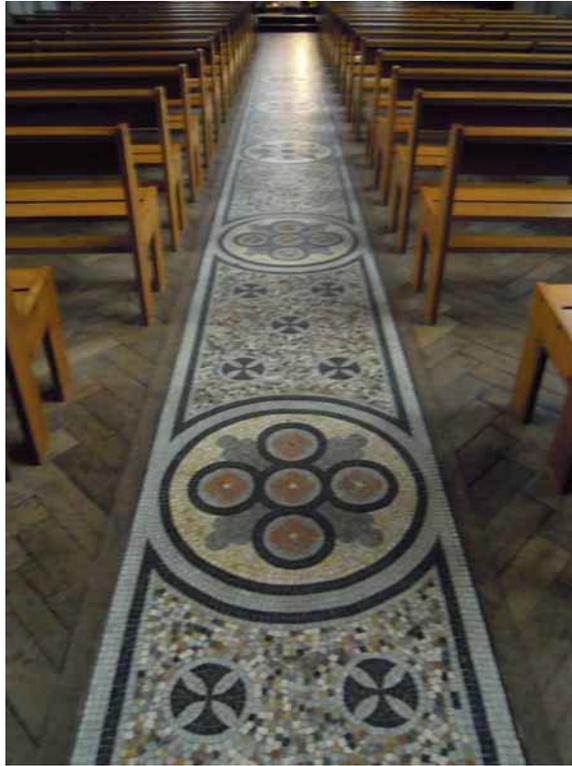


Figure B-22. Church of Saint-Gratien mosaic floor detail. [Author's photo]



Figure B-23. Hôtel Ohnet. Detail of wall panels and painting. [Author's photo]



Figure B-24. Hôtel Ohnet view of salon and cheminée wall. [Author's photo]

Notes

¹ "Ohnet," Geneanet arbre en ligne website, accessed February 24, 2011, <http://gw1.geneanet.org/index.php3?b=garric&lang=fr&m=NG&t=N&n=Ohnet&x=6&y=7>.

² Information on the art of the *Tabletier* is taken from *Encyclopédie méthodique ou par ordre de matières. Arts et métiers mécaniques*. 3535 Tome huitième (Paris: Panckoucke, 1791), 26-43. http://books.google.com/books/download/Encyclop%C3%A9die_m%C3%A9thodique.pdf?id=R5-YzKRR-TQC&hl=fr&capid=AFLRE728brMa2esTsVysl38OQr-gaMROO5-HzbJAQWapaf2Iw8KYUYbeLVGAY60MkTaUGu_0CD50CWIHjEpPbIPQv5L3vSGL-Q&continue=http://books.google.com/books/download/Encyclop%25C3%25A9die_m%25C3%25A9thodique.pdf%3Fid%3DR5-YzKRR-TQC%26hl%3Dfr%26output%3Dpdf

³ *Ibid.* Because Antoine Ohnet was already connected with the railroads as an engineer and inspector of construction works, it is a logical connection, although no direct evidence supporting this idea has been found to date.

⁴ David de Penanrun, *Les architectes élèves de l'École des Beaux-Arts par David Penanrun, Roux et Delaire* (Paris: Imprimerie de Chaix, 1895), 55-58.

⁵ From Ohnet's École des Beaux-Arts file at the Archives Nationale (AN) file number AJ52-377, file covers only the years 1932-1933. Dates confirmed in de Penanrun, 5.

⁶ AN, AJ52-377, Ohnet's École des Beaux-Arts file.

⁷ AN AJ52-377. Drawing is available in the archives of the *École des Beaux-Arts* and listed on the Cat'zArts data base, call number CF 38. <http://www.ensba.fr/ow2/catzarts/>

⁸ De Penanrun, *Les architectes élèves*, 33.

⁹ Anon., "Nouvelles," *Journal des beaux arts et de la littérature*, No. 19, 7 mai 1837, 304.

¹⁰ De Penanrun, *Les architectes élèves*, 83. Donald Drew Egbert, *The Beaux-Arts Tradition in French Architecture. Illustrated by the Grand Prix de Rome*, ed. David Van Zanten. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 182.

¹¹ De Penanrun, *Les architectes élèves*, 217.

¹² Charles Bauchal, *Nouveau dictionnaire bibliographique et critique des architectes français* (Paris: Librairie Générale de l'Architecture et des Travaux Publics, Andre, Daly Fils, 1887), .See also Sybille Bellamy-Brown, "La Renaissance au service du XIX^e siècle à propos de l'ouvrage de Charles-Francois Callet, " *Livraisons d'histoire de l'architecture*, No. 9, (1^{er} semestre 2005), 21-44, accessed June 6, 2011, doi: 10.3406/lha.2005.994.

¹³ Charles Gabet, *Dictionnaire des artistes de l'école française au XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Bibliothèque S.J., 1854) 111-112.

¹⁴ Bernard Marrey, *Le Fer à Paris Architectures* (Paris: Picard Editeur et Pavillon de l'Arsenal, 1989), 40.

¹⁵ Couture at Salon of 1843. One of Couture's most famous students was Manet who studied with Couture 1849-1856.

¹⁶ Émile Bellier de La Chavignerie, *Dictionnaire général des artistes de l'École française depuis l'origine des arts du dessin jusqu'à nos jours : architectes, peintres, sculpteurs, graveurs et lithographes*. T1 / ouvrage commencé par Émile Bellier de La Chavignerie ; continué par Louis Auvray. (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1882-1885), 311, accessed June 6, 2011, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1133832/f22.image.r=couture.langEN>.

¹⁷ Geneanet site, see note 1.

¹⁸ "Georges Ohnet dead at 70," *New York Times*, May 30, 1918.

¹⁹ Archives de Paris, cote AP 2mi 3 series microfilms. 1850, :2mi3/22 ; 1856, 2mi3/34 ; 1860, 2mi3/42 ; 1870, 2mi3/59.

²⁰ There is some discrepancy in the precise dates of death for Ohnet, in June, 1874, among the various biographic sources. 9 June is cited in Bauchal. Both Leniaud, Alaux and the *Revue générale d'Architecture*, 31, no. 4, (1874):176, give the date as June 30.

²¹ Edward Falip. *Guide aux sépultures des personages célèbres*. (Paris: Lagrange et C^{ie}. Première édition, 1878), accessed October 9, 2010, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k56848724.r=ohnet%2Cleon.langEN>.

²² Historic structure listing on the *Inventaire générale du patrimoine culturel*, Base Mérimée, Architecture & Patrimoine, Ministère de la culture. Filature la Foudre, reference IA000021523. http://www.culture.gouv.fr/public/mistral/merimee_fr?ACTION=RETROUVER&FIELD_2=DENO&VALUE_2=FILATURE&NUMBER=8&GRP=9&REQ=%28%28FILATURE%29%20%3aDENO%20%29&USRNAME=nobody&USRPWD=4%24%2534P&SPEC=9&SYN=1&IMLY=&MAX1=1&MAX2=100&MAX3=100&DOM=Tous .

Images at Base Mémoire, photographer Christophe Kollman, 2003, for ADAGP.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Jean-Michel Leniaud, *Les cathédrales au XIX^e siècle. Étude des édifices diocésains* (Paris:ECONOMICA. 1993), 51.

²⁵ Ibid., 804.

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- ²⁶ Some of these drawings are conserved at the Médiathèque de l'Architecture et Patrimoine. See List of References for list of documents.
- ²⁷ Leniaud, 759, citing Ohnet's letter of 9 September 1855, AN cote f/723.
- ²⁸ "Cathédrale Saint-Michel. Carcassone France Gallery organ and chancel organ," University of Quebec, Canada, accessed May 26, 2011, <http://www.quebec.ca/musique/orgues/france/carcassonnesm.html> .
- ²⁹ Léon Ohnet. Drawings for the Episcopal Palace, Carcassone. 4 juillet 1850, Archives Nationales, Cote AN CP/f/19/*/1876. Plates 1 – 5.
- ³⁰ Léon Ohnet. Drawings for the Episcopal Palace, Carcassone. 4 juillet 1850, Archives Nationales, Cote AN CP/f/19/*/1876. Plates 1 – 5.
- ³¹ Léon Ohnet. Drawings for the Episcopal Palace, Ajaccio, 28 février 1851, Archives Nationale, Cote AN CP/f/19/*/1863. Plates 7 – 13.
- ³² Jean Des Cars, *La princesse Mathilde. L'amour, la gloire et les art.* (Paris: Librairie Académique, 1988), 286-287.
- ³³ There is some discrepancy as to this date in the archival record. The letter from Ohnet to regarding the demolition of the old church is dated 9 juillet (July) 1859.
- ³⁴ Newspaper article in files of regional archives, Archives départemental, du Val d'Oise, Cote 2O 5095 1, "Affaires communales de Saint-Gratien – église, mairie (XIX^e- début XX^e)". Date of the article is implied, refers to the consecration of the tomb in May of the previous year (hence article dates from 1861).
- ³⁵ See note 27 above.
- ³⁶ See photographs by this author.
- ³⁷ Des Cars, 287.
- ³⁸ Leniaud, 759. Monseigneur August Allou. *La Cathédrale et le Palais Épiscopal de Meaux* (Meaux: A. Le Blondel, Imprimeur-Librairie de l'Évêché, 1884), 29, 37, accessed December 2, 2010, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5473395b.r=.langEN>. Correspondence regarding his appointment is conserved in the Archives Nationales, Cote AN f/19/7232.
- ³⁹ Monseigneur August Allou. *La Cathédrale et le Palais Épiscopal de Meaux* (Meaux: A. Le Blondel, Imprimeur-Librairie de l'Évêché, 1884), 29, 37, accessed Dec 2, 2010, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5473395b.r=.langEN>. Drawings for the grill are located in the Archives Nationales, Cartes et Plans, dossier CP/F/19/*/1896 Meaux. Plan 1 "*Plan de la clôture du collateral sud. Etat actuel et projet de restauration*", 14 février 1874. Signée: Léon Ohnet.
- ⁴⁰ Karen Bowie, *Les Grandes Gares Parisiennes* (Paris: La délégation à l'action artistique de la Ville de Paris, 1987) 105-112.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 109.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 107-8.
- ⁴³ Bowie, 107-108.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ De Baudot, architecte. "La Nouvelle Gare du Nord," *Gazette des Architectes et du Bâtiment*. No 14 (1863), 190. For a more complete study of the history of the Gare du Nord projects of the 1840s through the 1860s, see Karen Bowie, *Les Grandes Gares Parisiennes*, 95-116.

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- ⁴⁶ Bowie, 109.
- ⁴⁷ Robert Carlhian and Fabrice Ouziel, *Analyse historique & technique pour l'Hôtel de Saint-Florentin dit Hôtel de Talleyrand Pièces Historiques: Étude Préalable à la Restauration*. (Paris: United States Department of State Foreign Buildings Operation, Février 2000), 32.
- ⁴⁸ Carlhian and Ouziel, 32.
- ⁴⁹ Photograph of hôtel Saint-Florentin with barricades, Cowley, 154, Ouziel, 33.
- ⁵⁰ Firmin-Didot Bottin de Paris et Bottin du Commerce , (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères,1865).
- ⁵¹ Carlhian and Ouziel, 33.
- ⁵² Carlhian and Ouziel, 32.
- ⁵³ See Chapter 4 for a discussion of iron and glass bay windows on urban façades in the second half of the nineteenth century.
- ⁵⁴ Archives de Paris, Didot Bottin de Paris et Bottin du Commerce , (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères,1860), 2mi3/42 .
- ⁵⁵ Anonymous, "Travaux Particuliers" *Le Constructeur*. 1865/03/01-1865/03/14., 6.
- ⁵⁶ Pauline Prévost-Marcilhacy. "Hôtel Salomon de Rothschild," in *Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré*, eds. Beatrice De Andia et Dominique Fernandes (Paris: Délégation à l'action artistique de la ville de Paris, 1994). 367-371.
- ⁵⁷ Pauline Prévost-Marcilhacy, *Les Rothschilds: Bâtisseurs et Mécènes*, 108.
- ⁵⁸ Pauline Prévost-Marcilhacy, *Les Rothschilds: Bâtisseurs et Mécènes*, 103.
- ⁵⁹ Thierry Cazaux, "Un lieu de 9ème arrondissement: l'Hôtel de Léon Ohnet, architecte et maire du 9ème, 14 avenue Trudaine," *Bulletin Revue 9eme histoire* 1 (2002), 17-18.
- ⁶⁰ Cazaux, 14-22.
- ⁶¹ Change in numbering on avenue Trudaine.
- ⁶² Cazaux, 18-19.
- ⁶³ Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ Anon. "Constructions récemment commencées à Paris.». *La Construction: revue hebdomadaire des travaux publics et particuliers*, no. 17, 231.
- ⁶⁵ Donald Drew Egbert, *The Beaux-Arts Tradition in French Architecture. Illustrated by the Grand Prix de Rome*. Editor David Van Zanten. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 185.
- ⁶⁶ AN Cote f/21/620. Report on the decision of the Surentendance des Beaux-Arts, Ministère de la maison de l'empereur et des Beaux-Arts, 1 avril, 1864.
- ⁶⁷ AN Cote f/21/620. Letters from Ohnet to the Superintendent of Beaux-Arts, 18 avril,1864. Ohnet's acceptance letter, 1865.
- ⁶⁸ Egbert, 185.
- ⁶⁹ Anon., "Ministère de la Maison de l'Empereur et des beaux arts," *Journal des Arts. Peinture, sculpture, architecture, gravure, arts appliqués à l'industrie*, No. 11, 1866/07/19, 1-2.

⁷⁰ AN Cote LH/2012/45, original file. File available on Léonore database at the Ministère de la Culture website, accessed June 6, 2011, http://www.culture.gouv.fr/public/mistral/leonore_fr .

⁷¹ Société française d'archéologie. "Centenaire du services des monuments historiques," Tome 1, *Congrès Archéologique XCVII Session*, (Paris: Derache, 1934) : 279, accessed 23 February 2011, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5613880f/f299.image.r=ohnet.langEN>.

⁷² Adolphe Paria, *Le conseil municipal de Paris: portraits et biographies des quatre-vingts conseillers et du Préfet de la Seine, precedes du plan de la sale des séances*. Paris: Rodier, 1871. (Electronic, BnF department Philosophie, histoire, science et l'homme. 8-2, LE SENNE – 6782.

⁷³ "Édilité Parisienne : Édifices municipaux, *Revue de l'architecture et des travaux publics*, XXIX, 1872, 259.

⁷⁴ Léon Ohnet, "Rapport sur l'état des foundations de l'Hôtel de Ville, Séance 20 June 1872," *Conseil Municipal de Paris. 1871-1872* (Paris: Charles de Mourgesfrères, 1872), 2. (BAVP : Cote 1783).

⁷⁵ Louis Binder, "Rapport sur la reconstruction de l'hôtel de ville, Séance 5 janvier 1872," *Conseil Municipal de Paris. 1871-1872*, (Paris: Charles de Mourgesfrères, 1872), 1-14.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷⁸ Ohnet, 5-6.

APPENDIX C
OHNET'S COLLEAGUES

Justin Ponsard

A student of Léon Ohnet, Justin Ponsard (1813–1874), assumed Ohnet's commissions after the latter's death in 1874 and worked from Ohnet's former office at 14, avenue Trudaine, for at least six years. From 1880-1894, he was based at 6, rue Gérando and from 1896 to 1900, at 5, avenue Trudaine.¹ His works included:

New construction: *Hôtels particuliers*,

- 9-11 rue Berryer (1874-1878) mansion for Baronne Salomon de Rothschild, and,
- Stables at 116, avenue Wagram (1878)
- 27-29 rue Bassano, (1877) semi-circular façades. The Commission du Vieux Paris (Historic review board of Paris) report of 1996 recommended against the demolition of these façades designed by Ponsard).²
- 36, rue Bassano

Expansion (addition of upper floor(s))

- 12, r. Christophe Colomb (1889)
- rue des Messageries (1886)

Immeubles de rapport

- 73, avenue Kléber (1880)
- 9, villa de Longchamp, 18 rue de Longchamp (1880)
- 114-116 blvd. des Courcelles, avenue de Wagram (1889)

Château des Abymes for Georges Ohnet (s.d.)³

Émile Petit

Émile Petit (dates unknown), appears to have collaborated with Ohnet on several projects.

His residence in 1860 is listed as : 4, cité Pigalle.⁴ Works attributed to Petit include:

- 33, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honore (Nathaniel and Charlotte de Rothschild), with Robillard, and possibly Ohnet.
- 3-5 rue Messine, façade drawings for new *hôtel* for Salomon and Adèle de Rothschild, with Croiseau.
- 2, rue Saint-Florentin, interior décor of the Grand Dining Room of the Hôtel Saint-Florentin, in collaboration with Ohnet.



Figure C-1. Rothschild Grand Dining Room Interior Décor, Ohnet and. Petit, c. 1870 [Author's photo]

Henri-Léopold de Moulignon

Léopold de Moulignon (1821-1897) was a Beaux-Arts trained academic painter, and was a student of Paul Delaroche and Edouard Picot . Moulignon exhibited at the Salon from 1847 to 1868, and is best known for his portraits and genre paintings. Moulignon traveled to Italy and sojourned in Algeria in 1851, and from these trips he developed an interest in “exotic” themes of the Near East.⁵ His works of architectural décor include⁶

- 1864 – château de Jean d’Heurs

- 1865 – château de Brestels (see list of paintings)
- Hôtel Fould
- 1876 - Interior decorative program for the hôtel baronne Salomon de Rothschild.
- 1875-1882 Mairie at Arpajon, the seat of the canton in the department of Seine-et-Oise.⁷ In the council meeting chambers, the Grand salle de conseil, Moulignon took inspiration from the theme of activities conducted within the place. At each end of the hall is a large fresco painting, at one end the Law is pictured with the motto *Omnibus une* (One for all). At the other end of the hall, is the figure of Justice, with balanced scales, and the motto *Suum cuique*. The four other paintings represent the four principal acts of life that are subject to civic law; the birth of a child, the inscription of a young man for military service, marriage and death. A winged figure depicted in each painting represents the presence of divine purpose that guides the social institution created by human reason.⁸ .

Paintings exhibited at the Salons 1847-1868

- 1848 – “Chevrier italien”; “Jockey Club”
- 1849 – “Deux portraits de M. L.M.”
- 1853 – "Portrait de l’auteur"
- 1857 – "Cain et Able", "Les orphelins de 1793"; "Alger"
- 1859 – "La charité"
- 1861 – "Mendiant arable" ⁹ (Ministère de l’État)
- 1862 – "Odalisque"
- 1864 – "La rêve de Sybille"
- 1865 – "Frise exécutée dans un vestiuble au château de Brestels" dessin a la sanguine. (Study for frieze in the vestibule of the château de Brestels)
- 1866 – "Les marionnettes de l’amour"
- 1867 "La sieste, souvenir d’Alger"
- 1868 – "La toilette d’une Mauresque, souvenir d’Alger"



Figure C-2. Wall mural at Arpajon Hôtel de Ville, Moulignon, 1872 [Author's Photo]



Figure C-3. "Odalisque", Moulignon, 1862 [Image courtesy of Musée des Art Decoratifs]

Notes

¹ Anne Dugast & Isabelle Parizet, *Dictionnaire par noms d'architectes des constructions élevées à Paris aux XIXe et XXe siècles. Période 1876-1899, t. IV* (Paris: Publications de la Sous-commission de recherches d'histoire municipale contemporaine. Ville de Paris, Commission des travaux historiques, 1996), 40.

² "Bulletin municipal officiel de la ville de Paris," *La Commission du vieux Paris* 125, No. 64 (Vendredi 18 aout 2006), 2091. Report of minutes from meeting 13 juillet 2006.

³ Preceding list of works is from Dugast and Parizet, *Dictionnaire par noms d'architectes des constructions élevées*, 40.

⁴ Archives de Paris, cote AP 2mi 3 series microfilms. 1860, 2mi3/42 ; 1870, 2mi3/59.

⁵ <http://orientaliste.free.fr/biographies/artistes1i.html#M>

⁶ Pauline Prévost-Marcilhacy. *Les Rothschilds: Bâtisseurs et Mécènes* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), 370.

⁷ Anonymous. *Le magasin pittoresque*. 1863, 389-390 and index, 411. "Arpajon est une petite ville, chef-lieu de canton du département de Seine-et-Oise. Sa mairie a été construite il y a trois ans, sur les plans de M. Jules Laroche, architecte. M. de Moulignon s'est généreusement chargé de la décoration intérieure."

⁸ *Ibid.*, 389-390.

⁹ Théophile Gautier, *Abécédaire du Salon de 1861*. (Paris: Librairie de la Société des Gens de lettres, 1861), 288-9. Commentary on the *Mendiant Arabe* by Théophile Gautier, points out the variety of iconographic symbols (almost clichés) of "exotic" eastern culture within this work.

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pl 3. "Portrait de Mme. Salomon de Rothschild."

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pl 6. "Portrait de Léon Ohnet."

pl 7. "Portrait de Léopold Moulignon, portrait de J. Ponsard."

pl 8. "Hôtel Beaujon. Galerie."

pl 9. "Hôtel Beaujon. Vestibule."

pl 10. "Hôtel Beaujon: Façade sur la cour d'honneur."

pl 11. "Hôtel Beaujon. Salle des curiosités, côté de la large vitrine."

pl 12. "Hôtel Beaujon. Salle des curiosités, côté de la cheminée."

pl 13.. "Hôtel Beaujon: Le tub."

pl 14. "Hôtel Beaujon: Chambre à coucher."

pl 15. "Hôtel Beaujon: Cabinet de toilette."

pl 16. "Hôtel Beaujon: Boudoir (côté de la chamber à coucher)."

pl 18. "Hôtel Beaujon: Boudoir (côté de la cheminée)."

pl 19. "Hôtel Beaujon: Salon Rouge."

- pl 20. "Hôtel Beaujon: Grand Salon."
- pl 21. "Hôtel Beaujon: Grand Salon."
- pl 22. "Hôtel Beaujon: Le Hall, (côté de la cheminée)."
- pl 23. "Hôtel Beaujon: Salle à manger (côté de la Serre)."
- pl 24. "Hôtel Beaujon: Porte Cochère sur la rue Berryer."
- pl 25. "Hôtel Beaujon: Le Hall. (côté de la galerie)."
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- pl 27. "Hôtel Beaujon: Façade sur le Jardin."
- pl 28. "Hôtel Beaujon: Jardin (côté droit)."
- pl 29. "Hôtel Beaujon: Oratoire (1^{er} étage)."
- pl 30.. "Hôtel Beaujon: Grand Escalier."
- pl 31. "Hôtel Beaujon: Bibliothèque."
- pl 32. "Hôtel Beaujon: Office d'Honneur."
- pl 33. "Hôtel Beaujon: Salle à manger (côté de la Galerie)."
- pl 34. "Hôtel Beaujon: Intérieur du kiosque dans le jardin."
- pl 35. "Ecuries de Mme la Baronne Salomon de Rothschild."
- pl 36. "Ecuries de Mme la Baronne Salomon de Rothschild."
- pl 37. "Vue de l'hôtel de Honoré de Balzac et la coupole de la chapelle St. Nicolas."
- pl 38. "Hôtel de Honoré de Balzac."
- pl 39. "Maison de Honoré de Balzac."
- pl 40. "Hôtel de Honoré de Balzac. Salon."
- pl 41. "Hôtel de Honoré de Balzac. Salle de bain."
- pl 42. "La colonnade de l'ancienne chapelle Saint-Nicolas dans le jardin de l'hôtel Rothschild."
- pl 43. "Chapelle St. Nicolas."
- pl 44. "La rotonde dans le jardin."

Maps

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Archives Nationales – Cartes et Plans

CP/F/19/*/1863 Ajaccio, (Palais Épiscopal) Léon Ohnet

plan 7 – Elévation façade sur le jardin. Watercolor rendering by Ohnet, signed 28 fevrier, 1851.

Plan 8 – Plan Second

Plan 9 – Plan Premier Étage

Plan 10 – Plan Rez-de-chaussée

Plan 11 – Plan général

Plan 12 – Plan Rez-de-chaussée

Plan 13 Plan 1er étage

CP/F/19/*/1876 Carcassonne, (Palais Épiscopal) Léon Ohnet

Plan 1 – Etat actuel Premier Étage

Plan 2 – Etat actuel Rez-de Chaussée
Plan 3 - Plan Restauration Premier Étage
Plan 4 – Plan Restauration Rez-de-Chaussée
Plan 5 – Elévation de la partie neuve. Côte nord.

CP/F/19*/Meaux

Plan 1 - Plan de la clôture du collateral sud. Etat actuel et projet de restauration. 14 fevrier 1874.
Signée: Léon Ohnet.

F/21/6032 Hôtel Baronne Salomon de Rothschild
Fondation Salomon de Rothschild
Drawings by architecte en chef de gouvernement, E. Bois, 9 octobre 1922
Plan du soubassement
Plan du Rez-de-chaussée haut
Plan Premier Étage
Plan Second Étage

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Ministère de la culture

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Linda Stevenson is a Florida-registered architect with extensive experience in the field of historic preservation. She received a Master of Architecture from the University of South Florida in 2004. She holds a Bachelor of Architecture and a Bachelor of Arts with a major in art history, from the University of Maryland. Her work experience includes a wide range of historic project types, in both the United States and the European Union. Linda was the 1995 Recipient of the Richard Morris Hunt Fellowship, a cultural exchange program for historic preservation issues in Europe and the United States, co-sponsored by the American Architectural Foundation and the French Heritage Society. In addition to her academic work in the University of Florida's doctoral program, she is the principal of an architectural firm, specializing in historic preservation and sustainable design.