

The Five Points of New Architecture

These were set out by Le Corbusier in 1927 to provide the theoretical underpinnings of the basic principles of the modern movement*.

Stilts

By using stilts, Le Corbusier created a “box in the air” construction with its base disappearing into the surrounding grass.

Roof gardens

The flat roof becomes a useable terrace where flowers can be planted. The horizontal line of the building means it stands out clearly against the sky.

Open-plan

Reinforced concrete frees the interior of load-bearing and separating walls. The posts support the floors, allowing for an open-plan design. Light partitions are sufficient to separate the different areas.

Free-floating facade

The facades were free of the load-bearing structure, and placed freely on the stilts. Their positions are determined by the views from the inside.

Horizontal window

The non-load-bearing facades can have long windows, creating light and airy interiors, two qualities which were highly prized in the Modern movement*.

* Explanations overleaf.

Glossary

CIAM: International Congress of Modern Architecture, founded in 1928 at La Sarraz in Switzerland by various architects and critics wishing to discuss new aspects of urban planning and architecture.

Lino: floor covering made from linseed oil and rubber laid on site on the floor slab.

Minimum one-family house: a construction model presented by Le Corbusier and his cousin Pierre Jeanneret at the CIAM congress in 1929.

Meridienne: day bed

Modern movement: a movement in the inter-war period which emphasised pure lines and functionality.

Practical information

Visit takes on average: 1 hour

Guided tours.

Tours suitable for disabled visitors.



The Centre des monuments nationaux publishes a collection of guidebooks about French monuments, translated into several languages. Éditions du patrimoine publications are on sale in the bookshop-giftshop.

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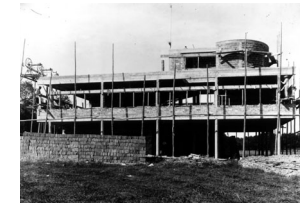
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Villa Savoye

A manifesto for modernity

The fruit of extensive research

The Swiss-born Charles-Édouard Jeanneret (1887-1965), better known as Le Corbusier, settled in Paris in 1917 and broke with traditional architecture. He set out his innovative ideas for urban planning and architecture in the



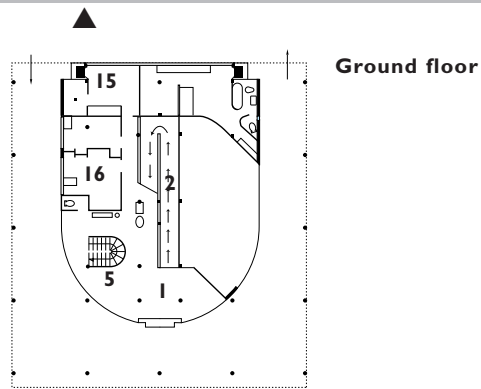
Site work,
1930.

magazine *L'Esprit nouveau* which he created in 1920 with the artist Amédée Ozenfant and Paul Dermée, and by taking part in the Ciam*, a congress founded in 1928. The villa, the weekend home of the Savoye family, was built between 1928 and 1931 and called “les Heures Claires”. This “box in the air” was the culmination of the architect’s formal research and the implementation of the Five Points of New Architecture.

Conservation work

Occupied first by the Germans, then by the Allies during the war, the villa suffered extensive damage. In 1958, the town of Poissy bought the property from the Savoyes in order to build a high school, then gave it to the State in 1962. Awareness of the villa’s universal value led to its restoration between 1963 and 1997. It was listed as a historic monument during the lifetime of its designer.

* Explanations overleaf.



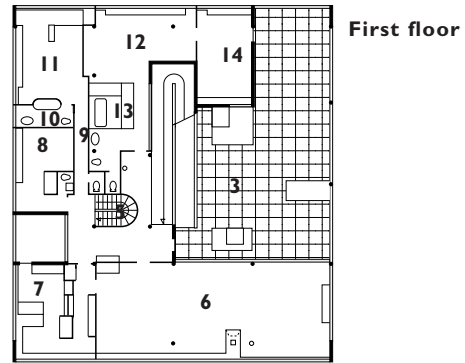
Ground floor

An “architectural walk”

The “architectural walk” suggested by Le Corbusier implements his concept of a sometimes intangible boundary between indoors and outdoors. The site is a lawn surrounded by meadows and orchards overlooking the Seine valley. According to Le Corbusier, “the house sits on the grass like an object, without disturbing anything.” The openings and symmetry of the approach and entrance facades do away with any idea of “front” or “rear”. The ground floor disappears in the shadow of the first floor, highlighting the floating effect created by the raised stilt construction.

The indoor route

- 1 The north-facing entrance hall**, has even lighting contrasting with light from the top of the ramp and stairs. Le Corbusier gives a new meaning to the hall table: it is made of a shelf set into a structural post and stands opposite a washbasin.
- 2 The grey lino* ramp** slopes gently upwards to the first floor.
- 3 The hanging garden** allows light right into the heart of the house. The walls frame the view of the landscape, acting as a prolongation of the bay windows which run right around the house.



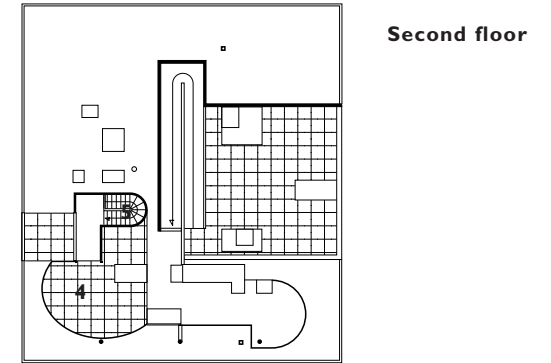
First floor

- 4 The solarium** is formed by a wind-break wall with curves echoing those on the ground floor. From the ramp, the view over the Seine is framed by a “hole in the wall” which focuses attention and acts like a diaphragm.
- 5 The encased spiral staircase** goes right down to the cellar.

Living areas

The Savoye family's apartment is on the first floor, set out around the hanging garden. In all the rooms there are concrete window ledges above cupboards with aluminium sliding doors.

- 6 The living room** has a bay window opening onto the terrace. At night time it is lit by a long nickel-plated steel chandelier.
- 7 The kitchen** is accessed via a pantry with fitted cupboards and a serving hatch. The numerous cupboards and tiled worktops highlight the importance of this room.
- 8 The guest room** has a parquet floor, as do all the bedrooms, as requested by Madame Savoye. There is a cupboard isolating the toilet, which is lit by a skylight.
- 9 The corridor** leading to the Savoye son's room is painted intense ultramarine blue on one wall and lit from above, creating a deeper perspective view.



Second floor

- 10 The bathroom** has two doors, providing access from both the guest room and the son's room.
- 11 The son's room** has a sleeping area and a work area, separated by a cupboard.
- 12 The parents' room.** The entrance is formed by a cupboard which also separates the bedroom from the bathroom. On the grey wall to the left, an alcove on two stilts forms a space for the bed.
- 13 The bathroom** has a staged feel with the meridiene*, canvas curtain and light well.
- 14 The boudoir** opens onto the hanging garden.

Ground floor

This is taken up by the service areas, including WC, garage and servants' quarters.

- 15 The laundry room's** exposure and brightness also makes it a veritable winter garden.
- 16 The servants' room** has an exhibition documenting the history of the Villa Savoye.

The caretaker-gardener's house

This is the only built example of the minimum one-family* house.

* Explanations overleaf.