



The Chancellerie d'Orléans Interiors Restored and Reassembled at the Hôtel de Rohan, French National Archives, Paris, France

On October 19, 2021, Roselyne Bachelot-Narquin, Minister of Culture, and François Villeroy de Galhau, Governor of the Banque de France, will inaugurate the reassembled interiors of the Chancellerie d'Orléans in the Hôtel de Rohan in Paris, France.

October 19, 2021, Paris, France – Built in the early eighteenth century by architect Germain Boffrand and redecorated in the 1760s by Charles de Wailly, the famed townhouse or hôtel particulier known as the Chancellerie d'Orléans stood on the edge of the garden of the Palais-Royal in Paris, France. Classified as a historical monument in 1914, it was demolished in 1923 as part of a real estate and urban planning operation. The Banque de France then began reassembling its interiors, which had been dismantled piece by piece and carefully preserved.

After the failure of several projects and an 80-year delay, World Monuments Fund (WMF) presented a project to the Banque de France and the Ministry of Culture in 2011 to reassemble the Chancellerie d'Orléans interiors on the ground floor of the Hôtel de Rohan in the French National Archives. The Hôtel de Rohan, built around the same time as the Chancellerie d'Orléans with a similar distribution of space, has been missing the original interiors of its first floor since the nineteenth century. After ten years of restoration and reassembly, the Chancellerie d'Orléans will soon be accessible to the public. The four reassembled rooms—anteroom, bedroom, dining room, grand salon—partly furnished by the Mobilier National, represent a magnificent sample of the splendor of Parisian decorative arts in the Louis XV and Louis XVI styles.

The Chancellerie d'Orléans at a Glance

An Eighteenth-Century Jewel

On the edge of the garden of the Palais-Royal, the Chancellerie d'Orléans was built in 1703 by the architect Germain Boffrand (1667–1754) for the Abbé Dubois, a favorite of the Duke of Orléans, the future Regent. In 1707, the Duke took over the house to give it to his mistress, Mademoiselle de Séry. A vast ceiling painted on the vault of the large living room (55 m²), created in 1708 by the painter Antoine Coytel (1661–1722), was added to this gift.

In 1764, the Marquis de Voyer (1722–1782), son of the Count d'Argenson and Secretary of State for War for Louis XV, entrusted Charles de Wailly (1730–1798), a young architect full of originality, with the renovation of the hôtel. While respecting the work of Boffrand and the ceiling of the salon, de Wailly



created different interior decorations for each room, illustrating his genius and the multiple forms that the neo-classical style was taking at the time.

With the help of important contemporary artists including Jean-Honoré Fragonard, Jean-Jacques Lagrenée, Louis-Jacques Durameau, Augustin Pajou (who created the sculpture), and Gabriel Briard (responsible for the ceilings), new works were added until 1772. The resulting space was admired by all of Paris, and foreign visitors sang the praises of the Hôtel de Voyer.

Following the Marquis de Voyer's passing, the Duke of Orléans took over the hôtel (1784) and installed his chancellor (affairs manager) there, thus making the Hôtel de Voyer the Chancellerie d'Orléans. Transformed into a gaming room during the Revolution and changing ownership multiple times, the hôtel survived the nineteenth century without any major damage to its interior.

A Contested Demolition

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Chancellerie d'Orléans was under a double threat: first from the Banque de France, which wanted to extend its real estate holdings to the south; and second from the city of Paris, which was planning to create a street parallel to the rue de Rivoli, linking the Bourse de Commerce to the avenue de l'Opéra by cutting through the Palais-Royal, and passing over the Chancellerie d'Orléans.

Twenty years of spirited heritage controversy—the first of its kind after the vote of the great law on Historic Monuments of 1913—led to a compromise: the Chancellerie d'Orléans would be demolished, but the Banque de France would rebuild the interior of its main rooms elsewhere. The building was demolished in 1923 and its interiors crated in a warehouse in the Paris suburbs where they remained for 80 years.

The Rebirth of a Masterpiece

After the failure of several plans to reassemble the Chancellerie during the second half of the twentieth century (including by the Domaine national de Saint-Cloud, the Musée Carnavalet, and the Musée du Louvre), an idea, proposed by World Monuments Fund, gradually took form: the reassembly of the interiors of the Chancellerie d'Orléans on the first floor of the Hôtel de Rohan, in the prestigious quadrilateral of the National Archives. Also built in the early eighteenth century, the Hôtel de Rohan lost its original interiors in the nineteenth century, and the distribution of its first floor is similar to that of the Chancellerie d'Orléans.

A wonderful adventure thus began. The Banque de France and World Monuments Fund, with the Ministry of Culture, began supporting the restoration of a puzzle made up of thousands of pieces. Over a period of eight years (2012–2020), the best craftsmen of France, including painters, carpenters, and gilders, opened boxes one by one and gradually brought the Chancellerie's exceptional interiors back to life. First overseen by World Monuments Fund, the project was then led by the Operator of Cultural Heritage and Real Estate Projects (OPPIC) starting in 2015 and managed by chief architects of the Monuments Historiques, Paul Barnoud and François Jeanneau.



**WORLD
MONUMENTS
FUND**

Chronology

1703–1707

Construction of the Chancellerie d'Orléans by architect Germain Boffrand

1764–1772

Renovation of the hôtel by architect Charles de Wailly

1923

Demolition of the hôtel and conservation of its interiors by the Banque de France for its future reassembly

2000–2001

Inventory of the boxes containing the interiors

2011

The Hôtel de Rohan is officially approved as the location for the interiors' reassembly; the restoration of decorative elements begins

2015

Preview exhibition at the Hôtel de Soubise (National Archives)

December 2020

Reassembly of the first room in situ

October 19, 2021

Inauguration of the reassembled interiors

The Partners

The restoration and reassembly of the Chancellerie d'Orléans was a collective adventure involving several partners.

THE BANQUE DE FRANCE

The owner of the hôtel's interiors since their dismantling in 1923, the Banque de France stored these in a warehouse in Asnières (Hauts-de-Seine) until 2011.

In 2015, the Banque de France signed an agreement with the Ministry of Culture outlining the reassembly of the interiors and securing financial support for the operation.

At the end of the project, the Banque de France will donate the reassembled interiors to the State.



THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

In close collaboration with the Banque de France, the Ministry of Culture oversaw the operation through its central administration departments (Directorate General of Heritage and Architecture, Sub-Directorate of Historic Monuments, National Commission for Heritage and Architecture) and institutions under its supervision:

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Headquartered in the Rohan-Soubise quadrangle since 1808, the National Archives is home to a remarkable environment of eighteenth-century decor. The reassembly of the Chancellerie d'Orléans interiors on the first floor of the Hôtel de Rohan will complete this ensemble in a particularly coherent way. The National Archives will be in charge of hosting visitors who wish to view the interiors. Until the completion of work on the Archives quadrilateral, scheduled for 2023, visits will be by reservation only.

LE MOBILIER NATIONAL

Associated with the project from its very beginning, the Mobilier National provided valuable expertise throughout the reassembly process. It was responsible for the supply of furniture and chandeliers, as well as providing the gilded bed placed in Mme de Voyer's bedroom, which was entirely refurnished in its workshops.

OPPIC

OPPIC (Opérateur du patrimoine et des projets immobiliers de la Culture), a public institution specializing in the restoration and enhancement of historic monuments, oversaw the restoration and reassembly of the interiors in the Hôtel de Rohan beginning in 2015.

WORLD MONUMENTS FUND

After initiating the project to reassemble the Chancellerie d'Orléans interiors, World Monuments Fund (WMF) oversaw the project and presided over its scientific committee until 2015. The organization financed the first inventory of the interiors in 2000–2001 and the beginnings of the restoration work. In 2015, the Ministry of Culture and the Banque de France took the lead on the project. In 2020, WMF financed the textile installations of the grand salon (armchair upholstery and curtains).

THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Under the presidency of Mr. Hervé Lemoine, Director of the Mobilier National, a scientific committee gathering experts on the Chancellerie d'Orléans and of eighteenth-century interiors presided over the restoration's authenticity. Committee members included: Colette di Matteo-Lablaude, Inspector General of Historic Monuments; Caroline Piel, Inspector General of Historic Monuments; Bertrand du Vignaud; Guilhem Scherf, Heritage Curator at the Musée du Louvre; Bertrand Rondot, Heritage Curator at the Château de Versailles; Alexandre Cojannot, Heritage Curator at the Regional Department of



Cultural Affairs of the Grand Est Region; and Emmanuel Pénicaud, Heritage Curator at the Mobilier National.

ARCHITECTS AND CONTRACTORS

The project management was led by Mr. François Jeanneau, chief architect of the Monuments Historiques, in collaboration with Mr. Paul Barnoud, chief architect of the Monuments Historiques. The principal companies involved in the reassembly and restoration work were the Atelier Arcanes (Mrs. Cinzia Pasquali) and the Ateliers de La Chapelle (Mr. Pierre Gilbert).

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About World Monuments Fund

World Monuments Fund (WMF) is the leading independent organization devoted to safeguarding the world's most treasured places to enrich people's lives and build mutual understanding across cultures and communities. The organization is headquartered in New York City with offices and affiliates in Cambodia, India, Peru, Portugal, Spain, and the UK. Since 1965, our global team of experts has preserved the world's diverse cultural heritage using the highest international standards at more than 700 sites in 112 countries. Partnering with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF draws on heritage to address some of today's most pressing challenges: climate change, underrepresentation, imbalanced tourism, and post-crisis recovery. With a commitment to the people who bring places to life, WMF embraces the potential of the past to create a more resilient and inclusive society.

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