THE LARGEST SITE IN EUROPE

CORBUSIER

FIRMINGY / SAINT-ÉTIENNE MÉTROPOLE

UNESCO


United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Graphic design: Kaksi design


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EDITORIAL

FIRMINY-VERT, 1ST LE CORBUSIER SITE IN EUROPE!

Everything has already been said and written on the great and sometime-controverted genius of Le Corbusier, an exceptional architect who deeply impacted the 20th century.

If the man was sometime criticized, his work is unanimously praised for its strength and originality, its visionary dimension, as well as its sometime austere beauty.

Our territory has the chance to host one of the most striking architectural complexes designed by the master, the Firminy-Vert district of Firminy. It is the first Le Corbusier site in Europe and the 2nd in the world after the one located in Chandigarh, India. La Maison de la Culture is part of this complex and listed as a World Heritage site.

Our territory driven by innovation and design therefore hosts one of the most important and innovative architectural creations of the last century.

It is an invaluable asset for the image and notoriety of our urban area this press kit will further explore through the history of this utopian urban project.

You will learn about the many events, exhibitions and activities offered to visitors from the entire world to discover and admire this exceptional masterpiece listed “Heritage of the 20th century” and protected as a French Historic Monument.

You will also be provided with some clues to Le Corbusier’s extraordinary architectural complex site of Firminy in order to understand his modern and humanist conception of urbanism.

Welcome to Le Corbusier site of Firminy.

AN EXCEPTIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT!

The serial submission of “the architectural work of Le Corbusier: an outstanding contribution to the Modern Movement” presented as cultural heritage and examined during the 40th session of the World Heritage Committee that took place in Istanbul from July 10th to July 20th. Seven countries took part in this transnational submission: Argentina, Germany, Belgium, France, India, Japan and Switzerland. With France as a project leader, it involved a series of 17 buildings designed by Le Corbusier across the world.

This submission aimed at shedding light on an exceptional body of work of the Modern Movement, which deeply impacted urbanism toward sculptural architecture. The specificity of this submission lies in its transnational nature, embracing not a single location but a series of places, which makes it an exceptional universal heritage.

The Maison de la Culture, prototype of a model cultural center, is part of this series. Being listed as UNESCO World Heritage, thanks’ to the quality of the heritage of Le Corbusier’s work and its preservation through the site of Firminy, will boost the attractiveness and dynamism of our territory on a national and international level.

Gaël PERDRIAU
Mayor of Saint-Etienne, President of Saint-Etienne Métropole

Marc PETIT
Mayor of Firminy, President-founder of the Association des Sites Le Corbusier
It is in Firminy, near Saint-Etienne, on the territory of the Communauté Urbaine de Saint-Étienne Métropole (Saint-Étienne Urban area), and in the heart of the new Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region, that Le Corbusier built one of his major architectural complexes in France and Europe. The site of Firminy-Vert designed by the architect is truly unique. It is home to the largest number of modern architectural works by the master in Europe. With a Maison de la Culture (cultural center), a Unité d’Habitation (housing unit), a stadium and a church, Firminy is the ultimate utopia of Le Corbusier.

The Maison de la culture is listed as UNESCO World Heritage since July 2016 for its significance in modern architecture, along with 16 other sites built by Le Corbusier in France, Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, India, Argentina and Japan.

The site was made possible by the vision of Eugène Claudius-Petit, mayor of Firminy and Minister of Reconstruction and Urbanism after the war, and the ambition of Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, aka Le Corbusier. Together, they decided to give the city a new start and implement the principles of modern architecture.

The architectural complex of Firminy built after Le Corbusier’s original designs, consists of:

- **The Maison de la Culture** (cultural center), built between 1961 and 1965.
- **The stadium**, built between 1966 and 1969, and only stadium listed as French Historic Monument in France.
- **The Unité d’Habitation** (housing unit) inaugurated in 1967: a project managed by André Wogenscky, Le Corbusier’s executor after the sudden death of the architect in 1965.
- **The church** inaugurated in 2006. The architectural project was a design by Le Corbusier, assisted by José Oubrerie, who oversaw and completed the work.
- **The swimming pool**, part of the initial project and built by André Wogenscky.

In 1961, the Firminy-Vert district won the Grand Prix d’Urbanisme for its avant-garde and innovative remodeling. Built in accordance with the principles of the Athens Charter (1933), the site exemplifies an urban philosophy that answers the needs of the body, the soul and the mind in an environment where sun, space and vegetation prevail.

Saint-Étienne Métropole and the city of Firminy conduct an active preservation policy of the site. The Tourism Office of Saint-Étienne is in charge of developing tourism in the area, thus allowing inhabitants and visitors from everywhere to fully appreciate this outstanding architectural heritage.
During the 40th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee held in Istanbul, Turkey, from July 10th to July 20th, the architectural work of Le Corbusier was listed as World Heritage: a universal consecration and acknowledgment for the architect, the first one of the 20th century to have a series of works across several countries listed as World Heritage, with 17 sites in 7 countries and 4 continents.

The Maison de la Culture (cultural center) is among the 17 listed sites, and, given the number of creations by the architect in the world, it is no random pick. Integrated in the cultural program put in place by André Malraux, it is the last building of Le Corbusier inaugurated during his lifetime in 1965, only a few months before his death. Beyond the historical anecdote, the Maison de la Culture represents the ultimate embodiment of Le Corbusier’s theories and ideas: a cultural center erected right next to housing buildings, as conceived in the Athens Charter, contributing to the renewal of spatial forms and conceptions of modern architecture. The Maison de la Culture also stands out for its technical inventiveness: its impressive curved roof, only supported by cables stretched out between two facades, is a true technical achievement.

Like the 16 other sites spread across France, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, India, Argentina and Japan, the Maison de la Culture is a prototype and a unique creation. It is a milestone in the creative process as well as a step in the chronology of the restoration process, since each building is a work of art in itself and represents an exceptional achievement in the field of architecture: a “high risk” achievement, as much for the interpretation of the original architectural plans than the experimental design of these buildings on a technical and architectural level.

The initiative taken over ten years ago by the seven partner countries—to which the idea of a serial submission seemed a necessity from the start—provided the opportunity to acknowledge the importance of this work as a major reference point of 20th and 21st century on a theoretical as well as artistic level, and reveal the need to have it listed as World Heritage as the best guarantee of its long-term preservation.

Being listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site is a major step in term of territorial attractiveness from a national as well as international standpoint. For the Maison de la Culture of Firminy, it also means being part of the international network of recognized UNESCO sites, like the city of Saint-Étienne, already member of the UNESCO Creative Cities network.

« The work of Le Corbusier is the key to our modernity. Everything he built continues to impact the next generations and remains an irreplaceable source of learning. It is vital to preserve the diversity of his work, wherever it is around the world. »

Alvaro Siza, architect, Porto, April 2011
THE 17 SITES
BY LE CORBUSIER
LISTED AS UNESCO
WORLD HERITAGE:

- 1923 **Maisons La Roche et Jeanneret**, Paris Île-de-France France
- 1923 **Petite villa au bord du lac Léman**, Corseaux, Switzerland
- 1924 **Cité Frugès**, Pessac Aquitaine-Limousin-Poitou-Charentes France
- 1926 **Maison Guiette**, Antwerp Flanders Belgium
- 1927 **Maisons de la Weissenhof-Siedlung**, Stuttgart Bade-Württemberg Germany
- 1928 **Villa Savoye et loge du jardinier**, Poissy Île-de-France France
- 1930 **Immeuble Clarté**, Geneva Switzerland
- 1931 **Immeuble locatif à la Porte Molitor**, Boutigny-Billancourt Île-de-France France
- 1945 **Unité d’habitation**, Marseille Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur France
- 1946 **Manufacture à Saint-Dié**, Saint-Dié-des-Vosges Alsace-Champagne-Ardenne-Lorraine France
- 1949 **Maison du docteur Curutchet**, La Plata Province of Buenos-Aires Argentina
- 1950 **Chapelle Notre-Dame-du-Haut**, Ronchamp Bourgogne-Franche-Comté France
- 1951 **Cabanon de Le Corbusier**, Roquebrune-Cap-Martin Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur France
- 1952 **Complexe du Capitole**, Chandigarh Pendjab India
- 1953 **Couvent Sainte-Marie-de-la-Tourette**, Éveux Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes France
- 1955 **Musée National des Beaux-Arts de l’Occident** (National Museum of Western Art), Taito-Ku Tokyo Japan
- 1965 **Maison de la Culture of Firminy**, Firminy Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes France
FIRST SITE IN EUROPE AND SECOND SITE IN THE WORLD AFTER CHANDIGARH (INDIA), Le Corbusier site of Firminy is the ultimate illustration of the principles of a unique architectural vision that brought architecture to modern age. It also embodies a chore concept of Le Corbusier’s philosophy: a space where inhabitants can access culture, sport and spirituality all together. Eugène Claudius-Petit has called this space: “a recreational center for the body and the mind”.

The completion of this late architectural project by Le Corbusier required the intervention of three architects after the death of the master in 1965: André Wogenscky as Le Corbusier’s executor, José Oubrerie and Fernand Gardien. All three of them trained by Le Corbusier, they finished the work in the spirit of the master and gave life to the Radiant City dear to Le Corbusier. Completed in 2006, it is unanimously praised by the 20,000 inhabitants of the town.
THE MAISON DE LA CULTURE IS A TRUE TEMPLE OF CULTURE AND SCIENCE AND THE FIRST BUILDING ERECTED BY LE CORBUSIER IN FIRMINY. THE BUILDING IS LISTED FRENCH HISTORIC MONUMENT SINCE 1984 AND A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE SINCE JULY 2016 IN THAT IT IS A SYMBOL OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE.

“Works of culture are, by essence, a common heritage, and the mirror of our society. It is vital that each of us can appreciate its wealth and look at him/herself through it.”
André Malraux, extract from the inauguration speech of the 1st Maison de la Culture at the Havre in 1961.

The financing of the building benefitted from the Malraux law on the Maisons de la Culture enacted in 1961. This project was part of the historic movement in favor of popular education and cultural decentralization: it is the prototype of a cultural center located right next to apartment buildings as Le Corbusier conceived it in the Athens Charter. Inaugurated on May 21st, 1965, in presence of Le Corbusier, the building officially opened to the public in 1966 under the name “Maison de la Culture et de la Jeunesse”.

Overlooking the stadium located in a former quarry and built against bare rock, the Maison de la Culture is fully integrated in its environment. Its tilted façade echoes the canopy of the stadium covering the bleachers right in front. With a composition that combines colorful mounts and glass panels – inspired by Iannis Xenakis’s drawings, then one of Le Corbusier’s collaborators - the Maison de la Culture and its curved roof is an outstanding architectural creation.

Inside, the building houses a theater venue, a library, an auditorium, a fine art studio and a bar. All these cultural activities are featured on outside the building on a bas-relief of the South gable end that seems engraved in the building concrete.

In the spirit of a complete work of art, interior designer Pierre Guariche created site-specific furniture, equipment and interior design. Appointed by Eugène Claudius-Petit, he worked under the direction of Georges Garby, the first director of the Maison de la Culture. The furniture of the Maison de la Culture echoes Le Corbusier conceptions in terms of functional architecture. The building serves as visitor reception, and hosts workshops, offices and meetings. Furniture consists of: desks, shelves, armchairs, library tables, stage furniture and lamps that visitors can still admire today.

The Maison de la Culture, which still functions according to its initial programming, houses the cultural office of the city of Firminy and offers several shows, cultural activities and mediation services during the year, providing visitors with clues to enter Le Corbusier site.

Restoration of the building
When restoring the Maison de la Culture between 2009 and 2013, the city of Firminy, the Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles Rhône-Alpes and the Le Corbusier foundation faced a double challenge:

Respecting the integrity of the work both in its technological audacity and social mission.

Ensuring the adaptability of the equipment to the evolution of regulations while guaranteeing its durability, in order for the Maison de la Culture to remain a regional place of creation and culture that also meets people’s expectations.
“The architecture of today concerns itself with the house, with the ordinary and common house for normal and common men. It lets palaces alone. Here is a sign of the times.”

Le Corbusier, Toward an architecture, 1923.

LE CORBUSIER’S UNITÉS D’HABITATION (HOUSING UNITS) ARE BASED ON A NEW SPATIAL ORGANIZATION THAT COMBINES THE BENEFITS OF COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL HOUSING INSPIRED BY THE FLORENCE CHARTERHOUSE IN ITALY. EACH SPACE IS MADE TO SUIT THE NEEDS OF MODERN MEN. FURNITURE IS FUNCTIONAL AND THE UNNECESSARY IS ABOLISHED.

“A house is a living machine”: it was with this idea in mind that Le Corbusier conceived his Unités d’Habitation (housing units). Among the five units he built across the world (in Marseilles, Rezé les Nantes, Briey-en-Forêt, Berlin and Firminy), Firminy’s was the last one. It is the result of a second town plan conceived by Eugène Claudius-Petit. This plan, which foresaw the building of three units, never came to full completion. On May 21st 1965, Le Corbusier made his last trip to Firminy to inaugurate the Maison de la Culture. During this trip, he laid the foundation stone of the Unité d’Habitation. The model apartment located in the “first street” was preserved: it was equipped and furnished by Pierre Guariche and remains the living proof of Le Corbusier’s accurate vision.

This apartment, a major stop in the tour of the site today, was used to enable the future renters to project themselves in these new spaces bathed with light. For the creation of his on-site furniture, Pierre Guariche followed in the footstep of Le Corbusier with a special attention paid to material, color and light. Current furniture consists of: beds, desks, chairs, lamps, a table and a pass-through.

The orientation has been set to provide maximum sun exposure, with large window panels opening up on the nature around. Firminy’s Unité d’Habitation was conceived based on the precise calculations and measurements of the Modulor concept: a 20 floors and 131x21x57m building made of 414 housings, with six model apartments, and a 6-rooms studio.

Le Corbusier thought this building like a true village with not only housings but also a 3,000-m² kindergarten and a theater on the rooftop as the village center point. The school –preserved with its original furniture- closed in 1998 after being in use for 30 years. Out of the three schools Le Corbusier designed, Firminy’s is probably the largest one and the more complete.

Today, one of the school wings is dedicated to the Heritage section of the Université Jean Monnet. Firminy has therefore become the 6th university campus of Saint-Étienne Métropole and welcomes over a hundred students every year.

Partially open to co-ownership, some apartments have merged in order to better answer the current need for bigger space.

A comprehensive restoration program has also enabled the reopening of the third party of the Northern unit closed during 20 years. As for the Southern part, it remains the property of the Office Public d’Habitat of Firminy. About 1,000 people currently live in the Unité d’Habitation.
Le Corbusier conceived a first project in 1961. At his death, he left only an incomplete draft and José Oubrerie was entrusted with the completion of the project. He drew and built on the initial plans in Le Corbusier’s atelier.

The construction work started in 1973 and stopped in 1978. It started again only in 2004 after the Communauté Urbaine de Saint-Étienne Métropole (Saint-Étienne urban area) became the contracting authority. The church was finished in November 2006 and put a final end to the architectural complex designed by the architect.

As a true “architectural walk”, Le Corbusier’s architecture is to be appreciated in motion, and not from a single point of view. Thus, the use of a banister enables multiple viewpoints on the architectural object.

In spite of some alterations to the initial project, José Oubrerie’s execution remained faithful to Le Corbusier’s vision. However, the ground floor of the building changed purpose and now hosts the cultural mediation service of Le Corbusier site. The church is also used as a conference hall and a performing stage.
**THE STADIUM**

For Le Corbusier, the cultivation of body was as important as that of the mind. This is why he located the stadium in front of the Maison de la Culture.


For its conception, Le Corbusier took advantage of the soil. Built in a stone quarry, the stadium adopts its basin shape, which can easily fit a football field, a 400 meter-long athletics track and bleachers. Concrete, the architect’s signature material, rules over the entire stadium from the bleachers to the canopy, a 16 meters-deep and 32 meters-long technical prowess that partially covers them. Here, the rooftop dear to Le Corbusier transforms into a “boulevard for spectators”, a ramp to access bleachers from above.

The stadium is now a living heritage very much appreciated by schools and sport associations. It frequently hosts big scale events.

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**THE ANDRÉ WOGENSCKY SWIMMING POOL**


Glass and concrete are the defining materials of the place: the Southern, Eastern and Western facades are mostly glazed with wavy glass panels separated by precast concrete stiffeners. André Wogenscky wanted the glazed facades to be identical in terms of execution and visual effects to the ones of the Maison de la Culture in order to create a harmonious architectural complex. He often said he wanted his building to stand “silently” next to the master’s work.

The swimming pool has been integrated to the French Supplementary Historic Monument list in 2005 and remains a unique environment for its many users today. André Wogenscky also built the Foyer Clairvive in Saint-Etienne (see page 14).
AFTER WORLD WAR II, FRANCE WAS REBUILDING AND THE BEGINNING OF THE "GLORIOUS THIRTY" GAVE A NEW IMPULSE TO ITS ECONOMY. IT WAS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT THE IDEA OF FIRMINY-VERT BLOSSOMED IN ITS MAYOR’S MIND.

“We must build the city in the sun and in the light. We must build it in harmony with the nature that has grown back around cities. This should guide our urbanism. We must build it with dignity and this should guide our architecture. And since we are poor, we must build it in simplicity.”

Eugène Claudius-Petit

When Eugène Claudius-Petit became mayor in 1953, Firminy was a former mine city. It lived of industry and steel, and was facing an important rise of population with unsanitary housing as a major concern.

Eugène Claudius-Petit decided to launch a big-scale renovation plan of the city through the creation of the new district of Firminy-Vert.

He commissioned a team of urban architects -Charles Delfante, Jean Kling, André Sive and Marcel Roux- to work on a draft project.

Built according to the principles of the Athens Charter (1933), the district reflects an urban conception that meets the need of the body, the soul and the mind in an environment where sun, space and vegetation prevail.

Eugène Claudius-Petit then naturally turned to his friend Le Corbusier to complete the project. In 1995, the city council of Firminy unanimously voted in favor of Le Corbusier’s plan.

"Firminy-Vert" was and remained the name of the city extension pilot program through which Eugène Claudius-Petit implemented his urban theories. Both humanist and convinced of Le Corbusier’s social genius as well as the theories of the Modern Movement, he was an active agent of their implementation in the city and especially in Firminy-Vert. After the sudden death of Le Corbusier on August 27th 1965, the architect’s disciples carried on the project.

Firminy-Vert district represented a model for the entire country at the time. It stood as a true manifesto of modern urbanism. The district was protected by a “Zone de Protection du Patrimoine Architectural, Urbain et Paysager” (architectural, urban and landscape heritage zone) and the buildings designed by Le Corbusier were all listed French Historic Monuments. On this basis, they are being restored since 2000.
SAINT-ÉTIENNE MÉTROPOLE (SAINT-ÉTIENNE METROPOLITAN) IS THE FIRST FRENCH COLLECTIVITY TO HAVE INTEGRATED DESIGN MANAGEMENT IN THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS PUBLIC POLICIES. WITH ITS CENTER-CITY, MEMBER OF UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK, THE METROPOLIS HAS BECOME A EUROPEAN REFERENCE IN TERMS OF USER-CENTERED INNOVATION. SAINT-ÉTIENNE MÉTROPOLE RECEIVED THE DESIGN MANAGEMENT EUROPE AWARD IN THE “PUBLIC OR NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION” CATEGORY. THIS AWARD WAS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS OF THE INNOVATIVE POLICY CONDUCTED ON THIS FRENCH TERRITORIAL COLLECTIVITY.

At the corner of the streets, on plazas, shops, schools or public buildings, designers, artists, town-planners and architects sit down, question, experiment and come up with ways to “live better in the city”. In Saint-Étienne, design has become an agent of urban transformation and a leverage of economic growth. The city has everything to be the French laboratory of innovative, sustainable and social design. Volunteering projects with schools, associations and social landlords in public space improve inhabitant’s quality of life.

The Creative Cities network was launched by UNESCO to promote cultural, social and economic development in the city. It fosters initiatives in favor of creation and exchange of knowledge, experiences and skills. In November 2010, Saint-Étienne became a member of UNESCO Creative Cities network, and a leading city in the field of design in France thanks to tangible initiatives such as the creation of the Cité du Design and the Biennale Internationale Design. Nourished by its modern industrial past, land of creators and inventors, Saint-Étienne is a city in constant change fueled by innovation and industry.

With the Maison de la Culture of Firminy listed World Heritage, UNESCO recognition confirms the importance of Saint-Étienne Métropole for the cultural development of the region, and contributes to further boost the territory on a national and international level.

The Foyer Clairvive by André Wogenscky in Saint-Étienne: a building with a strong identity

Since 1962, the Foyer de jeunes Travailleurs Clairvivre (center for young workers), now renamed “Habitats Jeunes Clairvivre” answers the housing needs of Saint-Étienne youngsters. The building, listed “Heritage of the 20th century”, was created by architect André Wogenscky and is located at the Crêt de Roc in Saint-Étienne. In 2010, the place was renovated in the aim of creating a hostel and maintaining the Foyer de jeunes Travailleurs (center for young workers). The « Auberge de Jeunesse André Wogenscky » (AJAW) association is a member of the « Ethic Etapes » network, a free union of international accommodation centers created around a set of chore values. Exchange, social economy, sustainable development, democratic education, melting pot and citizenship are the common values that the « Ethic Etapes » international accommodation centers commit to everyday.

A model-room has been preserved, with its original furniture designed by the architect. For this reason, AJAW is a major stop in the “Parcours Design” (Design tour) offered by Saint-Étienne Office of Tourism and the Cité du Design.

To know all about Saint-Étienne and around:

Saint-Étienne Tourisme & Congrès reflects the strong cultural identity of the territory in terms of design and innovation. Its mission is to provide a new visitor experience in a constantly updated place of information as well as a shop offering design objects for sale.

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Images of the Maison de la Culture, the stadium and Unité d’Habitation:
Saint Etienne Tourisme / Gabriele Croppi / Saint Etienne Métropole / Hubert Genouilhac © F.L.C/ADAGP (2016)

Images of the Eglise Saint-Pierre:
Saint Etienne Tourisme / Gabriele Croppi / Saint Etienne Métropole / Hubert Genouilhac © Conception, Le Corbusier architect, José Oubrerie assistant (1960-65). Execution, José Oubrerie architect (1970-2006)

THE MAISON DE LA CULTURE
ÉGLISE SAINT-PIERRE, FIRMINY-VERT

THE ANDRÉ WOGENSCKY STADIUM AND SWIMMING POOL
THE UNITÉ D’HABITATION

HASHTAGS
#FIRMINYCORBUSIER
#LECORBUSIER
#UNESCORBUSIER

PORTRAIT OF LE CORBUSIER AND AERIAL SHOTS
**GLOSSARY AND BIOGRAPHIES**

**MODULOR:**
Portmanteaux word combining the French words “module” (unit) and “nombre d’or” (golden ratio) forged by Le Corbusier to designate an architectural scale of proportions derived from the golden ratio and the Fibonacci sequence. This scale is patented since 1945.

Le Corbusier elaborated a system of proportions named “Modulor” and based on men height: using a standardized human silhouette as a measurement unit for the conception of the structures and scale of the Unité d’Habitation living spaces, the “Modulor” allows for maximum comfort in men relationship with their vital space.

This Modulor served as a reference in the design of Firminy’s Unité d’Habitation. With this new measurement unit, Le Corbusier was convinced to use a more adapted system than the metric one, because directly related to human morphology.

**ARCHITECTURAL PROMENADE:**
This chore element of Le Corbusier’s vision refers to the observers’ pathway through the built space. They are invited to imagine the space beyond its current configuration. It is a luminous choreography, a constant pathway in a loop in which a repeated walk allows for constantly renewed experiences of the architecture.

**LE CORBUSIER**
Architect, builder, urban planner, but also writer, theorist, designer, painter and sculptor, Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, aka Le Corbusier, is recognized worldwide, from Firminy to Chandigarh, Berlin to Sao Paulo, from the Chapelle Notre-Dame Du Haut of Ronchamp to the UNO headquarters of New York, or the Unité d’Habitation of Marseilles also known as Cité Radieuse. Today he is considered as one of the founders of post-war modern architecture.

Le Corbusier defined modern architecture in five key points:
- **Pilotis** free up space for pedestrians on the ground floor and allow for a better flow of people on ground level. Pilotis are the basis of a new aesthetics: “Pilotis are an essential architectural element, they clear out pedestrian’s view”.
- **The free designing of the ground plan**: concrete pillars allow for the absence of supporting walls and the free layout of the house inside since it is no longer restrained in its interior use.
- **The horizontal window** enables air and light to fully circulate.
- **The free design of the façade**, without supporting walls, allows for a free modeling of the structure. “Now, the façade can open up to the light”.
- **The roof garden** offers a free space where air and light can circulate. With the space freed up on ground level by the pilotis, and the roof garden on the top floor, there is more space after than before construction.
Emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, the Modern Movement is defined by minimalist interior design, pure geometric lines and rational construction through the use of new techniques and material. Beside formal simplicity, the rigor and organization that prevail in its architectural choices, the Modern Movement is rooted on a utopian vision centered around men and focuses on their happiness and well-being.

Le Corbusier’s creations draw on a constant analysis of the city and its transformations, as well as on the history of architecture. He wrote several books about his architectural theories, which contributed to his fame as an innovative architect. His action also had political implications. His goal was to convince the widest crowd of politicians of the accuracy and necessity of his views in order for architecture to bring answers to social challenges.

KEY DATES:

1887
Born on October 6th at La-Chaux-de-Fonds (Switzerland).

1908-1909
Works at the Perret brothers firm and learns the technique of reinforced concrete.

1917
Founds the Purism movement along with painter Amédée Ozenfant.

1920
Publication of the avant-garde review L’Esprit nouveau.

1923
Publication of Toward an architecture, the « bible » of modern architecture.

1931
Completion of the Villa Savoye in Poissy.

1945
Development of the Modulor that establishes architectural proportions from human scale.

1952
Completion of the Unité d’Habitation of Marseille.

1954
First visit of Firminy.

1955
Completion of La Chapelle Notre-Dame du Haut in Ronchamp.

1955-1965
Project in Chandigarh, Punjab capital city (India).

1961-1965
Building of the Maison de la Culture of Firminy.

May 21st, 1965
Last visit of Le Corbusier on Firminy construction site: visit of the Maison de la Culture and laying of the foundation stone of the Unité d’Habitation.

1965
Dies on August 27th, in Roquebrune, Cap Martin.

1966-1969
Building of the stadium of Firminy.

1968
Creation of the Fondation Le Corbusier in Paris dedicated to the conservation, recognition and awareness of Le Corbusier’s work.

1973-2006
2-phases building process of the Église Saint-Pierre designed with José Oubrerie.
A FEW ASSOCIATES AND PARTNERS OF LE CORBUSIER

**ANDRÉ WOGENSCKY (1916 - 2004)**

After his fine arts studies, André Wogenscky was hired in 1936 as a drawer in Le Corbusier atelier, 35 rue de Sèvres, in Paris.

Registered as an architect in 1944, he was appointed as Le Corbusier assistant in 1945. In 1949, he gave a series of lectures in France and Europe on Le Corbusier’s philosophy before quitting the atelier in 1955 to open his own firm the following year. In 1965, he became Le Corbusier’s executor after his death in order to complete the work of the architect in Firminy.

He oversaw:

- The interior design of the Maison de la Culture with Pierre Guariche (1965-1966).
- The construction work of the Unité d’Habitation started by Le Corbusier (1965-1967).

In 1973, he moved his office to Le Corbusier’s former apartment, rue Nungesser et Coli, in Paris. He died in 2004. Born in 1916, the centenary of his birth was celebrated on June 3rd.

**JOSÉ OUBRERIE (1932)**

French architect, he started as Le Corbusier’s assistant then former collaborator of Le Corbusier’s firm, and worked for the Atelier Wylde-Oubrerie. He was also a teacher at the Austin Knowlton School of Architecture, of the University of Ohio in Columbus.

José Oubrerie completed the Église Saint-Pierre of Firminy after having assisted Le Corbusier on this project before 1965. He had drawn the first draft and test model of the church in 1962.

**EUGÈNE CLAUDIUS-PETIT (1907 - 1989)**

Born on May 22nd, 1907, in Angers. Coming from a cabinet making background, he moved to Paris (Faubourg Saint-Antoine) before going to Lyon to become a drawing teacher. It was in this town that he met the networks of the French Resistance that led him to Algiers. Close to General De Gaulle, he became Minister of Reconstruction and Urbanism from 1948 to 1952, several times member of the Department of the Loire and Mayor of the city of Firminy from 1953 to 1971.

**PIERRE GUARICHE (1926 - 1995)**

French designer, he studied at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs of Paris, and graduated in 1949. He then worked with Marcel Gascoin and presented his first models at the Salon des Artistes Décorateurs and the Salon des Arts Ménagers. In 1953, he designed the famous plastic then plywood “Barrel” chair for Steiner –the second one being on display in Firminy. He founded the “Atelier de Recherche Plastique” (Plastic Research Workshop) with Joseph-André Motte and Michel Mortier in 1954. In 1957, he was appointed Artistic Director of the furniture company Meurop. Later on, he taught at the Ecole Supérieure d’Architecture of Tournai and the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs of Paris.

**IANNIS XENAKIS (1922 - 2001)**

Iannis Xenakis came from an engineering background and was also a composer. Settled in France since 1947, he entered Le Corbusier firm as an engineer. His scientific background allowed him to relate music with mathematics and invent a compositional system he called stochastic music. From this relationship, he created the “undulatory panels” of the Maison de la Culture of Firminy, interconnecting music with architecture.
USEFUL INFORMATION AND PRESS CONTACTS

HOURS
Site open every day
From 10am to 12:30am
and from 1:30pm to 6pm
(except on Tuesday from September to June)

ACCESS
By train: gare SNCF de Firminy [15 min]
By bus: ligne 1 Firminy/Saint-Étienne,
stop « église Le Corbusier » [30 min]
By car: N88, Exit n°32 (depuis Lyon),
sortie 33 (depuis Le Puy) Firminy-Vert.
2 parkings.

GPS address:
Boulevard Périphérique du Stade
42 700 Firminy

GPS coordinates:
Latitude: 45.38239414073881
Longitude: 4.288389269836443
Accompanied disabled access only.

TICKET PRICE
Self-guided tour:
Full price: 6,50€
Reduced price: 5,50€
Free for children under 8

Guided tour:
Full price: from 9,50€ to 17€
Reduced price: from 8€ to 14,5€
Free for children under 8
Tour of the 4 sites / Cultural mediation / Temporary exhibitions
Booking required for guided tours in French and English

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