

④ THE PEACE PYRAMID

Ronchamp veterans commissioned the building of the pyramid to commemorate their brothers in arms fallen on the hill in 1944. The stones from the remains of the old chapel were used for its construction. This pyramid is reminiscent of ancient architecture and serves as a platform from which the faithful can follow the pilgrimage ceremonies. The dove, symbol of peace, which surmounts the small steel pillar was designed by André Maisonnier, Le Corbusier's assistant responsible for the construction of the chapel.



⑤ THE CAMPANILE (BELL TOWER)

Le Corbusier wanted an electro-acoustic musical system instead of bells, but the project never saw the light of day. In 1975, after Le Corbusier's death, Jean Prouvé created a steel arch carrying three bells. The two largest bells (*E* and *F sharp*) came from the old chapel and the little one (*A*), cast in Annecy in 1974, bears the names of Le Corbusier's mother and his wife: Charlotte-Amélie-Yvonne-Marie. They ring every day, at 9 am, noon and 7 pm.



⑥ ⑦ THE MONASTERY AND THE ORATORY

In order to welcome the faithful and to maintain a spiritual presence, the owners decided to implant a monastery on the hill. To that end, they encouraged the Poor Clares of Besançon to settle at Ronchamp. The new monastery is the work of the Renzo Piano Building Workshop (RPBW) and was inaugurated on September 8, 2011. The firm also built a new reception center, the porterie (gatehouse), which hosts the offices and temporary exhibitions.

Renzo Piano's buildings sit on the hillside, in harmony with the chapel designed by Le Corbusier. The half-buried buildings are invisible from the Notre-Dame du Haut chapel. The monastery extends along two levels: downstairs, the bedrooms, and upstairs, the areas of community life (reception, library, workshops, kitchen, oratory). Large bay windows connect the nuns to nature and the outside world. Reinforced concrete is the material of choice to support the weight of the earth but also to link to the work of Le Corbusier. The nuns' daily life is punctuated by work (making liturgical garments in the workshops) and prayer.

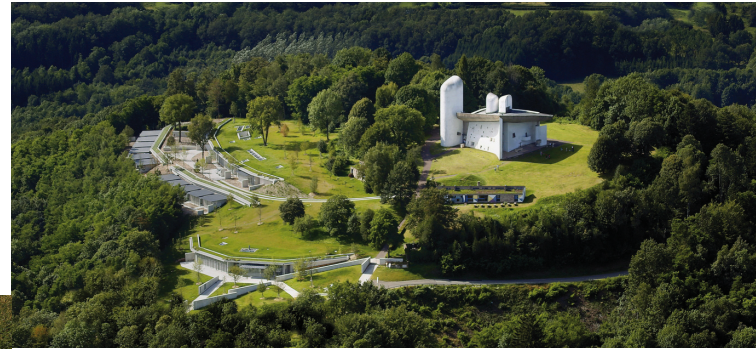


At the far end of the monastery, the oratory is the chapel where the nuns gather daily for prayer. Just like in Notre-Dame du Haut, a vault unsupported by the walls rises towards the choir to meet a zenithal light, source of eternal life. The large cross on the wall was presented to the poor Clares of Besançon in 1417 by the Spanish preacher Saint Vincent Ferrer (1350-1419). In accordance with the nun's wishes, the furniture of the oratory is made of wood and is a mixture of olive wood (the altar, the holy water stoups, the ambo) and beech (the chairs). The orange-colored floor gives the oratory an intense twilight atmosphere when the sun sets.

The monastery and the porterie are built underground and are thus naturally protected from temperature variations. Heat pumps, combined with winter gardens, contribute to energy savings.

THE LANDSCAPING

The landscaping is the work of Michel Corajoud, a French landscape artist. His task was to restore the horizons, invaded by vegetation for many years, to the way that Le Corbusier would have liked them to be. To integrate the monastery into its wooded environment, Piano and Corajoud chose to keep four oaks, retained on site during the construction. Other trees, characteristic species of the Comtois forest, were replanted at the end of the construction work.



LE CORBUSIER (1887-1965)

1927 - Publication of the *Five Points of a New Architecture*
1931 - Villa Savoye (Poissy, France)
1952 - Housing Unit - Radiant City (Marseille, France)
1960 - Convent of La Tourette (Éveux, France)

JEAN PROUVÉ (1901-1984)

1939 - House of the people, curtain wall (Clichy, France)
1956 - House for Better Days (prototype)
1966 - Nobel Tower, facades (Paris, France)
1984 - Bercy Omnisports arena, metal frame (Paris)

MICHEL CORAJOUD (1937-2014)

2005 - Sausset Park (Villepinte, France)
2006 - Landscaping of the banks of the Garonne (Bordeaux, France)
2006 - Gerland Park (Lyon, France)
2006 - Gardens of Éole (Paris)

RENZO PIANO (1937)

1977 - Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris)
1997 - Fondation Beyeler (Riehen, Switzerland)
2007 - New York Times Building (New York, USA)
2012 - Bridge Tower, known as The Shard (Londres, UK)



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1955 - Le Corbusier

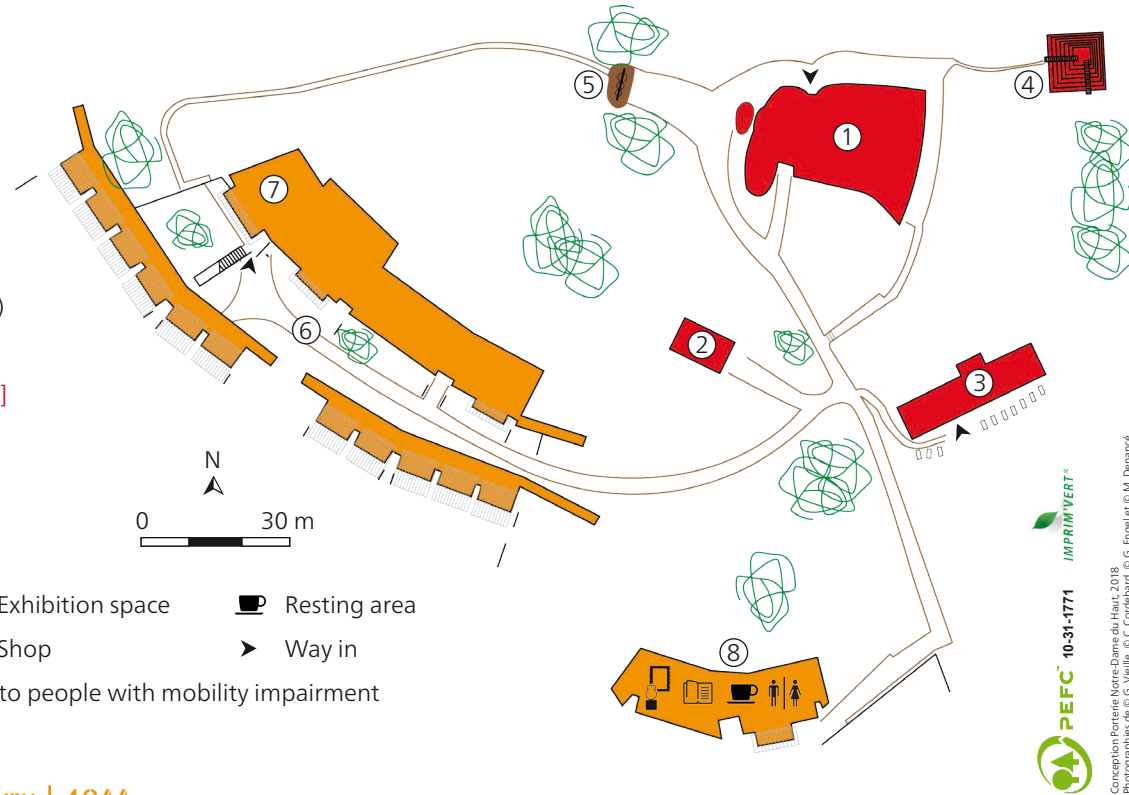
- ① Chapel Notre-Dame du Haut
- ② [Chaplain's House]
- ③ Pilgrim House
- ④ Peace Pyramid

1975 - Jean Prouvé

- ⑤ Campanile (Bell Tower)

2011 - Renzo Piano

- ⑥ [St. Clare's Monastery]
- ⑦ Oratory
- ⑧ Porterie (Gatehouse)



- [Restricted areas]
- Exhibition space
- Resting area
- Toilets
- Shop
- Way in
- Site largely accessible to people with mobility impairment

Around the 1st century

In Roman times, a sanctuary might have existed

1092

First mention of a church

1494

First mention of a pilgrimage on September 8 (Nativity of the Virgin)

1789

During the Revolution, the chapel becomes a national property

1799

168 villagers repurchase the chapel. Since then, the top of the hill has remained a private site.

1843

Reconstruction of the dilapidated chapel. Others follow during the 19th century

1944

The chapel is severely damaged during the fight for Liberation

1955

Inauguration of the new chapel, rebuilt by Le Corbusier

1967

Classification of the chapel as a French Historic Monument

1975

Jean Prouvé's bell tower

2011

St. Clare's monastery and gatehouse by Renzo Piano

2016

Registration of Le Corbusier's work in Ronchamp and 16 other sites around the world on the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites



① THE CHAPEL NOTRE-DAME DU HAUT

After the destruction of the chapel in 1944, the owners decided to rebuild it in a modern style. They did not turn to Le Corbusier (1887-1965) until rather late, after being disappointed by many unsuccessful projects.

Le Corbusier's construction work lasted from 1953 (construction of two houses, one for the chaplain and one for pilgrims) to 1955 (completion of the chapel). The whole site was inaugurated on June 25, 1955.

Moved by the landscape, Le Corbusier designed the chapel as "a word addressed to the place", a white lighthouse in the landscape which attracts the pilgrim on his way. Nature, architecture and religion have a fundamental relationship. The facades stretch toward nature, and symbols drawn from nature (flowers, birds, etc.) and the cosmos exalt the Virgin Mary in the chapel.

With his chapel, Le Corbusier reinvented the traditional sacred space, where light plays a big symbolic role. In the wall, the statue of the Virgin Mary dates from the 18th century and came from the previous chapel. The vault, which seems to be raised by the light above the choir, is in fact a hollow shell, supported by fifteen reinforced concrete pillars inserted into the walls. These walls, non-bearing, are made up of stones from the old chapel destroyed in 1944.

The architect added three side chapels, formed by the curving of both north and west walls. These chapels are just so many "wells of light" as they invite believers to turn their eyes toward the light from heaven. One of these chapels is painted red, which may refer to both the sacrifice of Christ and that of the soldiers who died in 1944.

The "wall of light" pierced with many openings is illuminated by the southern light. Painted with images of nature, the windows praise the Virgin Mary as "beautiful as the moon", "morning star", etc. The three meter wide enamelled gate is also the architect's work. It seems to represent, from the outside, an Annunciation. As for the inside, the meaning remains unclear, but we see two hands joined in prayer ascending to the sky, probably a symbol of prayer or resurrection.

The furniture was also designed by the architect: the confessionals, the benches, the altars, holy water stoups, candlesticks, crosses... Architecture and furniture are ruled by the Modulor, a system of measures invented by Le Corbusier, which puts in harmony the Man and his constructions.

A large outdoor choir stands on the east side. This choir hosts the Pilgrimages dedicated to the Virgin Mary twice a year on August 15 (Assumption) and September 8 (Nativity of the Virgin).



② THE CHAPLAIN'S HOUSE ③ THE PILGRIM HOUSE

The Pilgrim House was intended to house the workers building the chapel. It contains two large dormitories, a refectory and a kitchen. After the inauguration of the chapel, pilgrims or other groups could sleep here a few days. The other house, originally designed for the site caretaker, takes its name from the chaplain (the priest attached to the chapel) who lodges there.

At first, Le Corbusier intended to build them in wood and rammed earth, like the "muronin" type houses he devised during World War II. In the end they were built with stones from the old chapel and reinforced concrete. The vegetation on the roofs blends the houses into their environment and creates good insulation.

These houses are oriented to the south-west and south-east, and therefore receive natural light all day. The ingenious system of windows arranged in a line along the join of the two sections of the roof brings light to the back of the house. As in the chapel, the interior furniture was designed by Le Corbusier.

