# 45 AVENUE DE VERSAILLES





#### JEAN GINSBERG

French Architect, Jean Ginsberg, was considered a major figure in modern Paris. After working in the studios of Le Corbusier and Andre Lurcat, Ginsberg founded his own agency in 1931: Jean Ginsberg & Associates.

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Ginsberg built the Avenue de Versailles apartments in 1934. With his skill, the building effectively communicates to its site, the street, and adjacent structures. Today, the building stands as a symbol of evolution in Parisian residential architecture.



#### PARIS 1930'S

Swarmed with artists, musicians and writers, 1930s Paris was a mecca for the arts. Artists such as Cezanne and Picasso gave birth to Cubism and Surrealism. Le Corbusier changed the face of architecture in France - pushing the boundaries of creativity and beauty. In addition, jazz music took off with performers such as Josephine Baker and Maurice Chevalier.

The cultural arts movement also appeared in this time period. The opera, movie theatres and concert halls became popular sources of entertainment.

The 1937 World Fair in Paris was a major cultural event in which tension in Europe began to show. Facism and communist groups were on the rise. Furthermore, there was a large economic crisis after the first World War.

The end of the war also affected women strongly. Women were less confined to previous standards of beauty and behaviour, gained more independence and lived less conservatively.

# THE ART DECO MOVEMENT - [1925-1940]

The Art Deco Movement was the first architectural movement to go against the norms of historical architecture. The style suited tall buildings and was quite popular in urban environments. Features of Art Deco buildings include:

- 1. Smooth wall surfaces (stucco, concrete block, glazed brick, mosaic tile)
- 2. Linear appearance and sharp edges
- 3. Detail/decorative geometric elements
- 4. Stepped or setback front facade
- 5. Strip windows (horizontal)
- 6. Detail around doors and windows

In 1925, the Paris 'Exposition des Arts Decoratifs' promoted the Art Deco style in mediums such as jewelry and furniture. This may have been a potential influence on Ginsberg at the time of the design and construction of the building.

# THE MODERNIST MOVEMENT

The Modernist Movement appeared at the turn of the 20th century. Notable architects of the movement include Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe and Frank Lloyd Wright. The use of technological advances in construction and design strongly influenced this architectural movement.

Characteristics of Modernist buildings include:

- 1. "Form vs. Function"
- 2. Less elaborate detail work
- 3. Materials meeting at 90 degrees
- 4. Structural elements exposed and embraced
- 5. Materials left exposed in their natural appearance
- 6. Use of industrial materials and new technology
- 7. Visual emphasis on linearity, horizontal, and vertical elements



#### 2 Plan of typical floor 42 avenue de Versailles

 Access stair
Lft
Entrance/hallway
Lving
Dining
Bedroorn
Balcony
Kitchen
Bathroorn
Service lift
Siudio/bedsitting room
Lightwell
Area

# FLOOR PLAN



PARTY WALL

#### UNIT PLAN



SECTIONS

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# SITE PLAN



# SITE CONTEXT

Located in the 16th arrondissement (district/neighbourhood), 45 Avenue de Versailles is well known for neighbouring wide avenues, museums, parks and ornate architecture. The Bois de Boulogne park covers over half the district's area. The cost of living in this area remains relatively high, housing a neighbourhood of fairly wealthy residents. The population of the sixteenth district hit it's peak inhabitance in the 1960s.

The site of the apartment building began as a small infill parcel lodged between buildings, with a small square courtyard in the back. The building is in close proximity to the Seine River, and provides great views to the river and Eiffel Tower from the sun decks.

The building is recessed with a planter along the sidewalk of the street. In addition, the seventh floor cornice projects out to align with the adjacent building.



# THE STREET

The relationship between the building and the street is one of the most remarkable features about this building. With Ginsberg's expertise, he packs in the street corner, complimenting nearby buildings and allowing Avenue de Versailles to act as the dominant street on the site. The language between the strip-windows, balconies and terraces enhance this, drawing more attention to the side facing the avenue, showing how Ginsberg uses the traffic and vitality of the main street to his advantage.

The building is on the corner of Avenue de Versailles - the major avenue, and a minor street - Rue des Patures. The cylindrical structure at the corner helps define the entrance of the building and allows the building to respond to both streets instead of just the avenue. Additionally, the cylindrical elements are repeated on the roof.

To access the building, and due to the party walls, one may enter through the front or back of the building, but not from either of the sides.

# CLIMATE

The city of Paris belongs to an urban microclimate.

An urban microclimate is essentially a heat dome. Paris consists of curtain wall facades reflecting solar radiation, poorly insulated buildings emitting heat, smog trapped in warm air, less water, less energy, and tall buildings blocking light. Tall buildings can also provide shelter from winds, but may funnel the air and create turbulent forces. Although, due to party wall housing, air funnelling does not happen noticeably.



# CLIMATE



#### TRANSPORTATION: SUBWAY MAP



TRANSPORTATION: BUS MAP

# ADJACENT BUILDINGS

25 Avenue de Versailles was the first and only project Ginsberg did alongside Lubetkin. The building was completed in 1932 - only two years before the completion of 45 Avenue de Versailles. Ginsberg continued to design small exclusive apartments on nearby sites individually after that. He completed another infill site building in the same district as well, located on Avenue Vion-Witcomb.

In addition, Radio France is located near the building. The height of activity in the general area occurs around Radio France.

### PARTY WALL HOUSING

Party Wall Housing refers to a style of building in which two seperate buildings, belonging to seperate lots, have a shared dividing wall. This wall either sits on half of each lot, or entirely on one lot if it is agreed upon by both parties. A row of townhouses is an example of party wall housing.

There are two types of party wall housing: double orientation and open-ended.

DOUBLE ORIENTATION = A corner unit (e.g. north and west sides have party walls, south and east sides open to the street)

\*Double Orientation Party Walls are advantageous as they allow light into more rooms, as the party walls are at 90 degrees to each other, greatly increasing exterior surface area and opening rooms to a preferred side

OPEN-ENDED = Party wall on two opposite sides (e.g. north and south sides have party walls, east and west sides open)

# MATERIAL + STRUCTURE

The building is constructed of masonry walls and metal windows with an exterior stucco finish.

The design innovation continues throughout the building through the rolled steel door frames and German-fabricated bronze entry doors. Plastic is used in the facade, adding interest to the typical strip windows. Additionally, there are marble chips in the stucco for a hard durable finish and monolithic magnesium compound for the floor finish.

A glazed glass box that extends the full height of the courtyard also exists to hold a service elevator and provide light to a nearby stair hall.

# EXTERIOR COMPONENTS

The facade of the building is a reflection of the plan with an emphasis on verticality.

The exterior of the building consists of strip windows, balconies, terraces, and freestanding columns in the recessed entries and each balcony.

In addition, the sun deck is used as a shared space for the apartment inhabitants, often used for exercise. This roof feature may have been an idea borrowed from Le Corbusier.

All elements of the exterior respond to the avenue, making it the dominant street on the corner.



# INTERIOR COMPONENTS

The apartment resembles a general "L" shape, with the stairs and two elevators located in the corner of the L. Two bedrooms face the street and one studio faces the back courtyard.

Baths and kitchens face the rear court as well. They are strategically placed back to back to compact the plumbing systems and enclose ducts in cupboards.

Living and dining spaces share a small balcony overlooking the street.

## CIRCULATION

There are three siginficant areas dominating circulation in the building. One is the central staircase and elevator system. The other is a staircase and entrance by the courtyard. Finally, there is a front entrance on the ground floor by the cylindrical facade.



# LIGHT

In this diagram, it is evident that since the party walls are located on the north and west side, that the windows are located on the east and (mostly) south side. The rear courtyard also allows for some northern and western light for certain units on the building.



# AIR CIRCULATION

There is good overall ventilation for the building due to operable windows and balconies. There may be a nice crossbreeze at some units from windows facing the courtyard and front facade.

In Paris, wind generally comes from the southwest side. Since most windows are located on the south side, it allows for good air circulation.

This ventilation also makes up for the lack of shading on the side facing Rue de Patures.

# PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE

In the floor plan, the public spaces are highlighted in red, while the private spaces remain grey. The rear courtyard is a major public space in the building. The stairway and elevators are another, making way for circulation. Additionally, there is a rooftop garden that acts as another major public area. The seperate apartment units make up the rest of the building as private spaces.





[rooftop garden]

# SUSTAINABILITY

The building is mostly made of masonry - but not completely. If it were to be built completely out of masonry, there would be no room for insulation, making it unsustainable and driving up heating costs.

The balconies are located on the south-facing facade, optimizing light and providing shade for lower floors. Alternatively, the lack of elements on the cylindrical facade does not effectively shade from sun.

The cut-out courtyard in the back of the building also allows for light to enter the building. This was an effective solution for the time of building in the 1930s, by using the advantages of natural light over artifical.

Overall, sustainability is achieved quite effectively in this building.

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