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A new mathematics museum is taking shape in Paris

An exhibition and mediation space coupled with a space in which researchers and academics will be able to meet players from the economic, cultural, industrial, and social spheres: this will be the hallmark of the future Maison des mathématiques, located in the heart of Paris, in an exceptional building belonging to Sorbonne Université, one with a rich history and dedicated to scientific teaching and research. The architecture firm Atelier Novembre was chosen to create this institution dedicated to mathematics and theoretical physics. Affiliated to the Institut Henri Poincaré (CNRS/Sorbonne Université), in spring 2020 it will settle into the former premises of the Laboratoire de chimie physique - matière et rayonnement (CNRS/Sorbonne Université), created by Jean Perrin, recipient of the Noble Prize in Physics in 1926 and founder of the CNRS.

A place for research, sharing, conveying knowledge and communicating, the Maison des mathématiques, which is also dedicated to theoretical physics, will respond to the public's desire to understand scientific phenomena, discover what mathematics represents in the world we live in, ponder abstract concepts, and dream with a discipline that is constantly moving.

The museum has three objectives:

- to be a genuinely convivial place in which ideas are exchanged;
- to encourage interdisciplinarity and interactions between scientists from around the world;
- to establish a close link between mathematics, the general public, and society.

With the transfer of the Laboratoire de chimie physique - matière et rayonnement (CNRS/Sorbonne Université) to the Jussieu campus, Sorbonne Université decided to extend and convert the Jean Perrin building, opening up huge possibilities for the Institut Henri Poincaré (CNRS/Sorbonne Université), an international body dedicated to research in mathematics and theoretical physics. Their ambition: to take inspiration from the Maison des mathématiques et de l'informatique de Lyon (MMI), the museum "*das mathematikum*" in Giessen (Germany), and MOMATH in New York to create a 600m² exhibition and mediation space, entirely devoted to mathematics and theoretical physics, to the links between disciplines, and to the scientific spirit. The extension and conversion of the Jean Perrin building were conceived so as to enable the research rooms to be organized in a user-friendly way, with ample space given over to the exhibition and mediation section. The welcome area and scientific mediation space are thus located on the ground floor and the basement, while the conference spaces are found on the second floor.

The architectural project was designed in such a way as to preserve the integrity of the Jean Perrin building. The main intervention will consist in the addition of glassed areas to the original building, an supplementary layer displaying mathematics' avowed openness to the outside world. These glass areas will stretch from the ground to the upper floors. This stylistic choice will give the building great visibility, revealing the activities taking place inside the Maison des mathématiques. Parts of the building with strong heritage value will not be altered, while all the woodwork will be renovated and the parquet floors restored.



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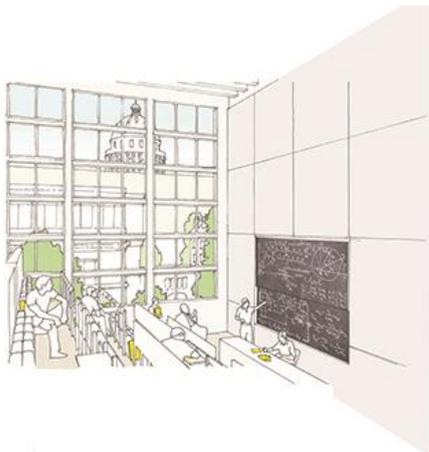
Inside, there will be a succession of open plan areas alternating offices and spaces for straight-talking meetings and discussions, reflecting the practice of mathematics itself.

Terraces on the upper floors will look out over the neighborhood, extending the inside spaces. Covering the technical premises, a wooded terrace will act as the foundation and extension of the glassed area, overlooking a landscape garden at the heart of the site. Its broad parapet will act as a large communal desk for visitors and researchers.

The museum visit, for its part, will take visitors on a varied architectural journey through a largely open contemporary space on the ground floor, and which will lead to the heritage rooms: Jean Perrin's study, the auditorium, the portrait gallery, and the tea room, where researchers used to meet to discuss their work. It will be possible to adjust these scenographic spaces to update their contents or design themed programs.

The renovation work will begin in winter 2019, with a budget of 14 million euros. The opening of the museum is planned for spring 2020. This project, made possible by the provision of the building by Sorbonne Université, is funded by the CNRS, the French state, the Ile-de-France region, and the city of Paris as part of a state–region contract plan (CPER). Sorbonne Université is the contracting authority and is being supported by the EPAURIF in this role.

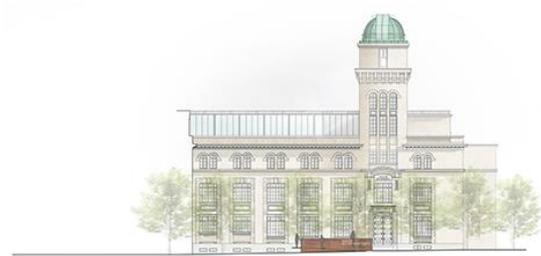
To find out more: Chapter 2 on the Maison des mathématiques is available on [YouTube](#)



Amphitheatre (left) and garden (right) © Atelier Novembre



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West facade (left) and south facade (right) © Atelier Novembre

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