

Stoclet House (Belgium)

No 1298

Official name as proposed

by the State Party: Stoclet House

Location: Brussels-Capital Region
Belgium

Brief description:

The Stoclet House was commissioned by the banker and art collector Adolphe Stoclet from one of the leading lights of the Vienna *Secession* artistic movement, the architect Josef Hoffmann. Built between 1905 and 1911, the austere geometric forms of its architecture and interior decoration signify a radical change of direction in Art Nouveau in one of its most emblematic centres. Both in its forms and volumes and in its concepts, this is a seminal monument which foreshadows Art Deco and the Modern Movement in architecture. From the outset it had a resounding international influence.

Category of property:

In terms of categories of cultural properties, as defined in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *monument*.

1. BASIC DATA

Included in the Tentative List: 31 December 1998

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the nomination: No

Date received by the World Heritage Centre: 28 January 2008

Background: This is a new nomination.

Consultations: ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committee on 20th century heritage.

Literature consulted (selection):

Sekler, E.-F., "The Stoclet House by Josef Hoffmann", in Wittkower, R. (ed.), *Essays in the History of Architecture*, London, 1967.

Baroni, D. & d'Auria, A., *Josef Hoffmann e la Wiener Werkstätte*, Milan, 1981.

Sekler, E.-F., *Josef Hoffmann, l'œuvre architecturale*, Brussels-Liege, 1986.

Archives d'architecture moderne, *Vienne-Bruxelles ou la fortune du Palais Stoclet*, Brussels, 1987.

Kurrent, Fr. & Stroebel, A., *Das Palais Stoclet in Brüssel von Josef Hoffmann mit den berühmten Friesen von Gustav Klimt*, Salzburg, 1991.

Leuthauser, G. & Gossel, P., *Architecture in the 20th Century*, Cologne, 2005.

Noever, P. (éd.), *Le désir de la beauté, la Wiener Werkstätte et le Palais Stoclet*, Brussels, 2006.

Freytag, A. *Le jardin du Palais Stoclet à Bruxelles, le « chef d'œuvre inconnu » de Josef Hoffmann*, Demeures Historiques & Jardins, 2008, #1, p. 2–22.

Technical Evaluation Mission: 23–24 September 2008.

Additional information requested and received by the State Party: Two letters were sent to the State Party on 9 December 2008 and 30 January 2009 about the following points:

1. Confirmation of the creation of a wider and continuous buffer zone along the Avenue Tervueren, including the neighbouring buildings, particularly to the west of the property.
2. Confirmation that the legal and regulatory provisions in force ensure the prevention of any project for the construction of a high-rise building inside the buffer zone.
3. Providing details about public interventions in the event of an accident.
4. Providing details about the arrangements for the public surveillance of the property.
5. Providing details of the application conditions of the order of 9 November 2006 about the scheduling of the furniture of the property under Belgian law.
6. Providing details about possibilities for visiting the property.
7. Providing details about the cooperation of the owners for the nomination.

The State Party sent a reply (6 pages), complete with its arguments, dated 26 February 2009, including in an annex a map of the new proposed buffer zone. An analysis of this documentation is included in this evaluation.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report: 10 March 2009

2. THE PROPERTY

Description

The property consists of the Stoclet House building and the garden that is closely associated with it. The two together form a private property, the clearly defined physical boundaries of which have not changed. Its highly visible location on Avenue Tervueren, at the time one of the most prestigious streets in Brussels, meant that immediately after it was built it assumed the status of a manifesto, in the midst of a set of recent villas belonging to the *grande bourgeoisie* of Belgium.

Josef Hoffmann, who designed the House and its garden in the spirit of the Vienna *Secession* (*Wiener Werkstätte*), was one of the most eminent figures in this group (see History).

Deliberate stylisation, as part of a critical re-examination of Art Nouveau, led him to use rectangular and square surfaces, symbolising balance, with clearly marked edges. His quest for purity led him to use a polychromy based on bright or dark contrasting tones and white and black surfaces.

The continuity of the architectural idiom is also to be found in the decoration, both interior and exterior, and in the layout of the garden. The exaltation of simple and primitive forms and their harmonious balance underline a sophisticated elegance which is reflected in the smallest

detail and is continued in the furniture. The furniture, which is in perfect stylistic harmony with its architectural environment, was designed by Hoffmann himself and by a large number of Vienna *Secession* artists.

The interior and exterior elements of the House, together with its garden, form a complete work of great coherence. Hoffmann's conceptual and formal approach led him to conceal the lines of constructive force, contrary to Art Nouveau practice, and to give pride of place to surfaces and claddings. This gives an almost timeless and intangible character to the building.

The building permit was subject to somewhat strict urban planning rules, such as the frontage line being 12m from the boulevard. The siting of the house was designed to make the best use of the space and the orientation of the ground, rather than the natural slope (as dictated by the dominant criteria of the time). The building has two main reception and living levels; a second storey is given over to guest bedrooms and functional rooms; a western wing is devoted to annexes and quarters for domestic staff. Dominating the House is a tower made up of an accumulation of rectangular forms, vertically prolonging the service stairs, at the meeting point between the main building and the annexes.

The street facade to the north is intended to be austere and protective of private life with its small apertures and functional in the organisation of the apertures and the open space in front of the building. The bay windows of the rear facade open up widely on the light and space of the garden, its pond, and the length of the central avenue. The facades are atypical, with cubic volumes that interpenetrate one another, and with smooth surfaces clad with white marble and outlined with bronze framing.

The main living building has an elongated rectangular shape, 60m long and between 13.5 m and 20 m deep. It is extended to the west by the wing of annexes, which are in line with the plot boundaries. A second axis, at right-angles to the first, is that of the great hall; it is prolonged by the terrace and then the main prospect of the garden, including the pond and the avenue; it is underlined by the rotunda on the street side and two symmetrical projections on the other side, at ground floor level, making the terrace a transitional space between the exterior and the natural elements.

The decoration of the interior of the House is exceptionally rich by comparison with the exterior. Designed by Hoffmann in perfect symbiosis with the architecture, it is also closely associated with it. The walls are covered with marble or decorated panels, the floors are of the highest quality, with marquetry composed of rare woods and marble tiles with rectangular motifs and vivid colours. The carpets, the ironwork, the stained glass windows, and the light fittings were designed down to the last detail in the *Secession* style, so as to be perfectly integrated into the lines and volumes of the mansion. The dimensional relationships between the parts and the whole are carefully studied. The furniture intimately participates in this theatricality by its forms and its polychromy, by the particularly careful choice of materials, and by the quality of the finishing.

In an interior space with a timeless atmosphere, with decorative elements often inspired by mythical antiquity, the electric lighting, the light fittings, and the chandeliers remind us that we are at the start of the 20th century.

Technical innovation is one of the options adopted within the House, but it remains discreet and harmonious with the whole and is sometimes invisible, as in the system for the integrated vacuum cleaning of the floors (which was highly innovative for the time).

The ground floor entrance leads into the vestibule, with an adjoining cloakroom. To the left opens out the great hall, a central space with columns, which is the essential hub of society life in the House. The hall is extended by a small drawing room and a fountain in the part that projects out towards the street; to the south it provides access to the terrace, and to the east to the main staircase and to the music room. The staircase leads to a mezzanine gallery above the music room; on the other side it opens out towards the hexagonal 'barbarian' drawing room. The hall also leads into the office of M. Stoclet and his smoking room, in one of the parts projecting out next to the terrace; in the other is the main dining room. The western part is extended by a small dining room, the office, and the kitchens, which themselves are linked to the western wing.

Upstairs are the master bedroom, the bathroom, the print collection room, the boudoir and bedroom of Mme. Stoclet, the children's bedrooms, and a small music room.

The interior is noteworthy for the quality of its decoration and furniture, which are always in refined agreement and display a calculated harmony of volumes, surfaces, colours, and materials. Each room has its own personality, forming a whole which is aesthetically homogeneous, with architectural choices appropriate for its function. The decoration still appears astounding today for its modernity, the richness of its materials, and the quality of its workmanship.

In the midst of a very rich ensemble, certain works and objects are particularly noteworthy:

- The entrance doors herald a journey through the aesthetic and cultural universes of the *Secession* and of Adolphe Stoclet.
- The vestibule features a nude mosaic inspired by classical antiquity, the work of Leopold Forstner, who also made the great mosaics of the dining room from designs drawn by Gustav Klimt and the bathroom decorations.
- Two sculptures of women by Richard Luksch, in enamelled ceramics, are today in the drawing room; they were also inspired by Klimt.
- The marquetry desk by Koloman Moser is a gift from the artists and craftsmen of the *Secession*, by one of its founder members. Moser was also responsible for the glassware and tableware, and the marquetry of the boudoir.
- Carl Otto Czeschka provided decorative plaques portraying Dionysiac celebrations for the small drawing room and a low relief in the dressing room.
- The decorative ensembles of the music room, the great hall, and the dining room are all remarkable. In the dining room, the atmosphere generated by the friezes and mosaics of Gustav Klimt gives rise to a bewildering evocation of the pomp of Vienna, Siena, Byzantium, and ancient Egypt.

- The statuettes and ceramics of Michael Powolny still appear remarkable today, and are a hallmark of the *Secession*.
- In the children's bedroom, Ludwig H. Jungnickel painted a fresco of animals, and the children's bathroom tiles are by Wiener Keramik and Berthold Löffler.

Rationalist refinement and technical innovation are two concepts reflected in the design of the Stoclet House. Some parts of the mansion demonstrate a high degree of functionality, which was an integral part of the aesthetics of the *Secession* movement: the ponds, the cloakroom, and the kitchen and its equipment in particular.

Designed by Hoffmann himself, the garden is closely linked with the House; it gives the appearance of a visual and aesthetic extension of the mansion, following the same geometrical principles and having the same proportions.

History and development

Adolphe Stoclet (1871–1949) came from a family of bankers. His first career was as a railway engineer. He then married Suzanne Stevens, daughter of the art critic Arthur Stevens. Stoclet was an eminent art lover and collector.

When working on the construction of a railway in Austria, he became fascinated by the Vienna *Secession* movement, its innovative spirit, and its avant-garde works. His meeting with Josef Hoffmann (1870–1956) was a decisive one. The architectural and decorative work of Hoffmann, and more generally the creativity of the *Secession* group, seemed in Stoclet's view to perfectly define what a bourgeois family residence should be, in phase with its time in aesthetic and moral terms, and also in its modernity and functionality.

Called back to Belgium on the death of his father, Stoclet succeeded him at the head of the Société Générale, a major Belgian bank. He then decided to establish his family residence in Brussels, calling in Hoffmann and his *Secession* colleagues so that the group's artistic and architectural principles could be applied unhindered.

The specification was entirely functional. In addition to housing the family, the residence was to provide a setting for a large art collection; it was to permit musicians and artists to give private concerts; it was also to offer the best possible conditions for welcoming distinguished guests and friends. Hoffmann and the artists of the *Secession* were given a free hand, but they had numerous meetings with Stoclet, for whom the construction of the residence was the accomplishment of a work of art in which he was participating both aesthetically and intellectually.

At the time of the commission Hoffmann was at the pinnacle of his art. Not only was his own architectural work already widely acclaimed, it was he who had designed from the outset the exhibitions of the *Secession*, of which he was one of the co-founders. He was also a teacher, which allowed him to have a significant influence on the new generation of artists from Vienna and more widely from Central Europe. In the critical spirit of the *Secession*, which aimed to renew the principles of an Art Nouveau movement that was increasingly influential at the time, Hoffmann had already designed several remarkable villas and residences; he was just completing the

Purkersdorf Sanatorium. The Stoclet project, on which no restrictions would be imposed, came at just the right time: Hoffmann was able to gather around him the most outstanding creative members of the Viennese artistic movement. He was able to advance and take further his stylistic research, moving even farther away from the initial influences of Art Nouveau and the Arts and Crafts movement, towards an exaltation of simple and geometrical forms, an austere primitive ideal, and total integration of the different art forms to serve the project. The same idiom is in evidence in the exterior and interior architecture, in the decoration and the furniture, and in the gardens and the approaches.

Designed in 1905, the House was built without interruption from 1906 to 1911.

The Stoclet family occupied the mansion continuously as its private residence until 2002, when the Baroness Annie Stoclet died. Since then the House has been managed by the real estate company 'Suzanne and Adolphe Stoclet' (SAS), the directors of which are the descendants of the founder and heirs of the House. Today the building is only permanently lived in by two caretakers.

The House has not undergone any major change in its history. There have been minor alterations of a functional or technical nature, and maintenance work has been carried out to preserve its integrity. The main changes made are as follows:

- The German occupation authorities removed the bronze elements from the roof during World War I. These were afterwards replaced by the owners in conformity with the initial plans.
- The entrance porch leading into the street was enlarged in 1954 when the garden was extended by the purchase of an adjacent plot.
- Terrace waterproofing works were carried out in the late 1980s.
- In the 2000s, the tiling of the entrance porch threshold was replaced, and the door and window frames of the west and then the south facades were repainted; the wooden garden shed was rebuilt according to Hoffmann's plans and new boilers were installed.
- The electrical wiring was brought into compliance with standards in 1950, and again in 2006.

No change has been made to the interior of the building, apart from the restoration of some items of furniture and the replacement of some furnishing fabrics, in conformity with the originals. Some carpets and light fittings have been placed in the attic, where they await restoration.

Stoclet House Values

Ever since its creation, the Stoclet House has been recognised as one of the most accomplished and homogeneous works of the Vienna *Secession*. It bears witness to the movement's influence and the dissemination of its ideas in Europe at the start of the 20th century. It embodies a conceptual and stylistic renewal of Art Nouveau, foreshadowing Art Deco and the Modern Movement in architecture.

Under the supervision of the architect and interior designer Josef Hoffmann, a large number of artists belonging to the Vienna *Secession* movement, including Koloman Moser

and Gustav Klimt, contributed to the decorations and furnishings of the House. The Stoclet House is an outstanding repository of their works, ideas, and craftsmanship, in an ensemble designed and devised to accommodate them, so that they could be appreciated and loved. The artists worked towards the creation of a ‘total work of art,’ (*Gesamtkunstwerk*), in which are embodied simultaneously all the architectural, decorative, and functional dimensions of a private residence, with the aim of integrating them into a coherent and harmonious whole, which includes every detail down to the flower beds in the garden.

The Stoclet House constitutes a monument of outstanding aesthetic quality and richness, intended as an ideal expression of art forms embodying the imagination of the Vienna *Secession* movement.

The Stoclet House is a unique edifice that is very well known by specialists for its architecture and for the works of art it contains, and which has inspired many architects both in Belgium and in other countries.

3. OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The Stoclet House has great integrity in its external architecture, its interior architecture and decoration, its furniture, and its garden. All the elements necessary for the expression of this value are included in the nominated property.

It has not undergone any major alterations (See History).

The buildings around the House and its urban environment have undergone few modifications. The only new building of any size in its vicinity has been designed in a way which allows for its presence in terms of the landscape integrity of the nominated property.

Authenticity

The Stoclet House and all its elements are authentic.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

Comparative analysis

The Stoclet House should first be seen in the context of the long historical tradition of patrician villas and aristocratic town houses to which it belongs. It may be compared with them because of its decorative richness, the quality of the materials and furniture, its aesthetic refinement, and its stylistic homogeneity. A certain number of such buildings are already inscribed on the World Heritage List, particularly for the Roman and Renaissance periods.

In the case of more contemporary buildings, comparisons may be drawn with the major residential buildings of the architect Victor Horta in Brussels – the Hotel Tassel, the Hotel Solvay, the Hotel van Eetvelde, and the house and workshop of Horta – which were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000. Horta was one of the founders of the organic style at the heart of Art Nouveau, providing a brilliant illustration of the transition from the 19th to the

20th century in art, thought, and society. Other artists also illustrate the European development of this school, in France, in Italy, and in Barcelona, where the works of Gaudí and of Catalan Modernism (Palau de la Música Catalana and Hospital de Sant Pau) have been inscribed on the List (1984–2005 and 1997).

In a second stage, there was a reaction against the proliferation of plant forms and sinuous curves, with the development of a critical form of Art Nouveau, based on geometrical and planar forms: this was reflected in particular in the Vienna *Secession*, but also in the work of Scotland's Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Belgium's Henri Van de Velde, and North America's Frank Lloyd Wright. The Stoclet House is a remarkable and particularly complete example of this breakaway movement inside Art Nouveau, which influenced the development of new schools in the inter-war period: Art Deco and architectural Modernism.

Up to now there has been very little representation of this movement on the World Heritage List.

The House was an international commission with a very high profile, because of its location in Brussels, one of the major centres of Art Nouveau in Europe, and its execution by artists of the Vienna *Secession*, which was also emblematic of the early 20th century in Europe.

As the commission imposed no aesthetic or financial limitations, Hoffmann succeeded in consummately expressing his architectural and decorative conceptions. He reflected the ideas of his time, which he enlivened and developed in the *Secession* movement, but also through contact with the man who trained him, the Viennese architect Otto Wagner. He adopted the construction principles of his master, using brick masonry covered by surfaces made of thin plates of marble or granite, or the use of a decorative motif to enliven a flat facade. Wagner had already treated entire buildings from the exterior to the interior, and had even supplied the furniture.

The concepts that harked back to ancient times of the architects who founded the *Secession* movement (and in particular Hoffmann and his friend Josef Maria Olbrich) stem from a Nietzschean interpretation of pre-classical Greek art, which reconciles reason and feeling in existence. This is one of the philosophical and moral roots of the ‘total art’ of Hoffmann. It underlies the decorative inspiration of the Stoclet House. In 1898 in his *Secession* Building, Olbrich had already given an interpretation of these themes and of the architectural renewal advocated by the movement. Open to many exhibitions and events organised by the *Secession*, and more broadly to Viennese cultural and intellectual influences, which at the time were brimming over with vitality, the *Secession* Building served as a veritable laboratory, whose architectural and aesthetic culmination is embodied in an exceptional way in the Stoclet House.

The principle of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* is not specific to Wagner and the *Secession*, or even to Vienna. It is at the heart of other Art Nouveau projects, particularly those of the Belgian architect Henri van de Velde, who was a staunch advocate of this idea. The Stoclet House is a particularly consummate and refined version of this concept which at the time was rapidly gaining favour.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.
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Justification of the Outstanding Universal Value

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The Stoclet House is a true work of anticipation and an important milestone in the history of modern European architecture, at the start of the 20th century. Stemming from a critical approach to Art Nouveau, it foreshadows Art Deco and modernising trends in architecture.
- It is the masterpiece of the architect and interior designer Josef Hoffmann, one of the founders of the *Wiener Werkstätte* (the Vienna *Secession*) and its workshops. Its aesthetic refinement and the richness of its decorations make it unique.
- The House is the result of a highly elaborate integrated construction concept, encompassing everything from the architecture to the garden, from the organisation of interior volumes to decorative principles, from the works of art to the furniture and the tableware. It is an archetype of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* of the Vienna schools and of its dissemination in Europe.
- Under the leadership of Hoffmann, the realisation of the aesthetic programme of the House mobilised some of the greatest names in the *Secession* movement, with the realisation of complete works, elements or items of furniture: Koloman Moser, Gustav Klimt, Carl Otto Czeschka, Richard Lüksch, Michael Powolny, Ludwig Heinrich Jungnickel, Urgan Janke, Edouard Wimmer, etc., and also of Belgian artists linked to the *Secession* group such as Georges Minne and Fernand Khnopff.
- The House expresses a conception of the lifestyle of modern man, according to the ideal of the *Secession* and of Adolphe Stoclet. It is impregnated with ancient values in a veritable monument to the love of art, while allying them with the functional values and the technical innovations of the early 20th century.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i) and (ii).

Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Stoclet House is exceptional in many ways: through its aesthetic and conceptual programme, through its architectural vocabulary, through the originality and quality of its decoration, and through the impact it has had on architects and artists since its creation.

It constitutes a symbol of constructive and aesthetic modernity, in accordance with the values set out by the *Wiener Werkstätte*. It is the masterpiece of its designer and builder, the architect Josef Hoffmann, one of the founders of the movement.

The House is the most consummate embodiment of the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, for which it mobilised some of the most important figures of the Viennese *Secession* movement, including Moser and Klimt. The harmony of the artistic vocabulary attains exceptional aesthetic

refinement, embracing all the dimensions of the residence, from architecture to decoration, from interior volumes to furniture, from the organisation of the garden to the objects and other works of art. The materials employed are of the highest quality and they have been used with remarkable craftsmanship.

Hoffmann systematically favours geometrically rectangular and square forms, parallel lines, and simple and firmly stated volumes. Their harmonious composition in all scales, combined with a set of works of art and decoration having an organic relationship with this ideal, leads to a new kind of work, which is an expression of modernity at the start of the 20th century.

The personalities of the man who commissioned the House, Adolphe Stoclet – an engineer, banker, sponsor of the arts and well informed collector – and of his wife made possible a programme that was exceptionally receptive to the aesthetic and moral values of its time. The Stoclet House is one of the most consummate architectural and aesthetic works of the *Wiener Werkstätte*. It is conserved to an outstanding level of authenticity.

ICOMOS approves of the arguments presented to justify criterion (i).

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the House provides remarkable testimony to the cultural history of the 20th century, through an architectural realisation which is particularly complete and consummate. It is a symbol, and for many people a real icon, of the critical renewal of the architectural and decorative thought of this period, particularly as expressed by the Vienna *Secession* movement and its followers in Europe.

At the end of the 19th century, particularly in Brussels, Art Nouveau had resolutely turned its back on eclecticism, which at the time was dominant, and the latest Romantic and neo-Renaissance tendencies. The Stoclet House, however, sets out a radically different programme in its aesthetic and cultural quest for modernity. Drawing on the values of the Vienna *Secession* according to which it was built, it abandons the contrived plant-inspired forms of Art Nouveau and its highlighting of structural lines, to use exclusively the purity of rectangular forms, to underline regular surfaces and parallel lines, to use simple volume and to combine them in a harmonious way.

The interest of the House is acknowledged all over the world. It directly influenced the birth of Art Deco and the Modern Movement in architecture. Even today it appears extremely modern and timeless. It is a remarkable illustration of the birth of constructive and decorative modernity, and is frequently presented today as an example in schools of architecture all over the world.

ICOMOS approves of the arguments presented to demonstrate criterion (ii).

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (i) and (ii), and that the Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated.

4. FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

Development pressures

Some urban development pressure is inevitable in a major metropolis. The measures taken with regard to the buffer zone and the status of the House as a protected monument are ways of controlling and regulating this threat.

Following the request made by ICOMOS dated 9 December 2008, the State Party confirmed in its reply of 26 February 2009 that the various urban regulations currently in force provide effective protection against any plan for a high-rise building or a building whose architecture is inappropriate inside the buffer zone.

Tourism pressures

There is no pressure from tourism. The building is not open to visitors and the owners have no plans to change this situation.

Theft and vandalism risks

The property is permanently occupied by the caretakers. Cameras and automatic alarm systems have been installed. These measures were strengthened in 2007.

Environmental pressures

These consist mainly of the exhaust gases from vehicles on the very busy Avenue de Tervueren. In the long term this could accelerate the corrosion of some exterior metal elements.

Natural disasters and impact of climate change

The new boilers are fitted with a fire detection device. The electrical wiring has recently been brought up to current standards (see History). No mention is made of any possible impact from climate change.

ICOMOS considers that the main threat to the property is urban development.

5. PROTECTION, CONSERVATION, AND MANAGEMENT

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The House and its garden have a total surface area of 0.86ha. There are two inhabitants.

The buffer zone comprises:

- The plot of land and urban area in which the Stoclet House stands, and the street at right-angles to the main avenue immediately west of the property, including the facades.
- The prospect of Avenue Tervueren, over a distance of slightly over 500 m to the west of the property and about 900 m to the east. The facades are all included in the buffer zone, except at the western ends.
- A public park.

The buffer zone area is 22.71ha. There are 1477 inhabitants in the buffer zone (2007).

Following the request made by ICOMOS on 9 December 2008, the State Party proposed in its reply of 26 February 2009 a new buffer zone, enlarged to include the buildings in the Avenue Tervueren, to the west of the property.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and the boundaries of its new buffer zone are adequate.

Ownership

The House and its garden are the property of the real estate company 'Suzanne and Adolphe Stoclet' (SAS), formed by the descendants and heirs of the founders, of whom there are seven. The furniture and art objects are their personal property.

Protection

Legal protection

The Stoclet House is a protected monument, under Royal Order of 30 March 1976.

Furthermore, the garden has been designated a protected site by order of the Government of the Region of Brussels-Capital of 13 October 2006, and the furniture by order of the same government dated 9 November 2006, as integral parts of the Stoclet House.

The legal framework which coordinates the protection of the property and its buffer zone is the Brussels Code of Land Use Planning of 13 May 2004, and more particularly Section 5, relating to "Protection of heritage property."

The coordinated provisions of the protection and the Code make it compulsory in particular for the owners of scheduled properties to maintain the building. Use of the property and works carried out are regulated by a system of authorisation and monitoring. They provide a means of taking legal action in the courts and replacement of an owner who fails to meet his obligations.

Following ICOMOS's request on 30 January 2009, the State Party provided in its reply dated 26 February 2009 details of the order of 9 November 2006, which involves the scheduling of some of the furniture, and defines the legal relationship linking it to the property itself, and the conditions of application of this order under Belgian law.

Buffer zone:

The provisions of the Land Use Planning Code set out the form of the planning permit application and how it is investigated.

Under the Land Use Planning code, the property and its buffer zone are covered by various regional and municipal plans:

- The Regional Development Plan contains no implications concerning the House zone.
- According to the Regional Land Allocation Plan the Avenue de Tervueren is a 'structuring element,' the built frontage of which is a 'zone of historic cultural interest for reasons of aesthetics or embellishment.' It

is a residential zone with restricted public and economic infrastructures.

ICOMOS considers confirmation that the urban plans and urban planning regulations applying to the initial buffer zone apply to the whole of the extended buffer zone to be necessary.

Traditional protection

This consists of the maintenance of the building by its successive owners (See Maintenance).

Effectiveness of protection measures

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection measures in place are satisfactory. Going beyond the letter of the texts, they include a genuine capacity for negotiation. There was a recent example of this when a proposal to raise the height of a nearby recent building was revised and modified to prevent visual impact on the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the existing legal protection is adequate.

Conservation

Inventories, recording, research

The plans and documents relating to the construction of the House are conserved at the Monuments and Sites Directorate. A detailed inventory has been drawn up for the building, the garden, the decoration, and the furniture for the purposes of the protection procedures (2006).

Following on from this, an assessment report on the conservation of the property is currently being produced under Phase 1 of the management plan (2007–2008).

Many studies, articles, and works by architects and art historians have been published since the construction of the House.

Present state of conservation

The state of conservation of the House is satisfactory (see History and Integrity/Authenticity).

Active conservation measures

The management plan consists of a conservation plan, drawn up jointly by the owners and the Monuments and Sites Directorate for the Brussels-Capital Region. The plan was signed and approved in 2007. Running from 2007 to 2014, it includes two phases: the first phase is in progress and the other is a medium-term phase.

Its main objective is to pass the property to future generations in the best possible state of conservation.

From the owners' viewpoint the House is a private residence of high artistic and cultural value, and no conversions or alterations are planned.

From the administration's viewpoint, the legal frameworks in place make it possible to monitor and provide scientific assistance to the owners in their conservation actions, particularly since the adoption of the protection orders. The administration today considers that it has a full and thorough knowledge of the property.

The plan provides for three phases for the building:

- Phase 1, the assessment phase (2007–08), produced a detailed report on the House. From this it emerged that no emergency or major works are needed over the next few years.
- Phase 2 sets out the details and the timetable of actions to be carried out between now and 2014. These consist mainly of maintenance and waterproofing actions and partial repairs and restorations aimed at preventing deterioration.
- Phase 3 is the control and monitoring of the quality of the works carried out under the management plan.

It is also necessary to plan the works to be carried out on the interior of the building; this has not yet been done.

Maintenance

The building has been protected and maintained very regularly and with very great respect for the buildings and works of art by the founders and then by their descendants. This is demonstrated by the excellent state of conservation and of integrity/authenticity. The current owners, the direct descendants of Suzanne and Adolphe Stoclet, intend to continue in the same spirit.

Effectiveness of conservation measures

ICOMOS considers that the conservation measures are good and effective.

ICOMOS considers, however, that it would be necessary to extend the management plan to include the assessment and the planning of works in the interior and on the garden.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation of the property is satisfactory.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The Monuments and Sites Directorate investigates applications for works affecting protected monuments and sites. The decision of the Royal Commission for Monuments and Sites is required; its decisions are binding on the administration and private individuals.

The Directorate monitors the correct execution of the works, as part of the management plan, in collaboration with the architect of the SAS company and the owners themselves. It allocates one of its architects to the monitoring of the property.

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

The management plan is the same as the property conservation plan.

ICOMOS considers that the plan should be extended to include the garden.

There are no plans for public visits. The State Party confirmed in its reply of 26 February 2009 that this has always been the case, as the House is the private property of the Stoclet family and there were no plans to change this situation. Musical events are occasionally organised by the owners.

Knowledge about the House and its collections is disseminated through specialised publications and by the organisation of exhibitions, such as:

- *Yearning for Beauty, the Wiener Werkstätte and the Stoclet House*, in 2006;
- *Les années Sécession, Vienne – Bruxelles*, in 2007.

The Region provides aid for publications and exhibitions. It requires high scientific and artistic standards in both cases.

Risk preparedness

The permanent presence of caretakers and a video surveillance system ensure a good level of prevention of risks, particularly theft and vandalism.

The civil protection of the property is the responsibility of the town authorities and the Brussels-Capital Region. There is, however, no mention of any priority of intervention or of any particular public surveillance.

In its reply on 26 January 2009 to the letter sent by ICOMOS on 9 December 2008, the State Party provided an overview of the system for prevention and intervention by the Brussels-Capital public organisation (SIAMU) in the event of fire or any other serious damage.

The State Party also outlined the mechanisms for the monitoring and public surveillance of private properties in the context of the relevant laws and regulations (see Protection): the role of the architect of the Monuments and Sites Directorate and the powers of the Land Use administration and of commune officers.

ICOMOS considers it necessary that there should be an emergency intervention plan in the event of a serious incident, and that initiatives should be taken to raise the awareness of and train the firemen who might be required to intervene in such circumstances.

Involvement of the local communities

The intervention of the Region of Brussels-Capital in the management process is essential.

Resources, including staffing levels, expertise, and training

The management plan includes the drawing up of costings.

The Government of the Brussels-Capital Region is planning financial aid of at least 40% of the total cost of restoration works, concerning agreed actions for the protected monuments and sites. Regional aid may be over 40% and even up to 80% of the cost of the works; however, in practice this aid averages 50%.

In 2007 the total amount of public aid for projects relating to the Stoclet House was close to 100,000 euros.

For its part, the company that owns the House has guaranteed an intervention budget for the management plan (2007–2014) of 1.3 million euros.

The company that owns the House employs two permanent caretakers and one architect.

The Monuments and Sites Directorate of Brussels-Capital has a permanent staff of 71, who are able to make professional contributions to the management plan. Three of these are engineers and architects and there are 25 historians, art historians, and archaeologists.

The Royal Commission of Monuments and Sites is a college of experts consisting of 18 members appointed by the regional government. They are chosen from the best specialists in Brussels and Belgium working in the various scientific and professional aspects of the heritage and its conservation.

Effectiveness of current management

ICOMOS considers that the current management of the property is effective.

ICOMOS considers that the management system for the property is adequate, but it recommends that it should be extended to include the evaluation and planning of interior conservation works and for the garden.

6. MONITORING

Everyday monitoring is carried out by the two caretakers.

An architect from the Monuments and Sites Directorate is designated to monitor the property. His mission is not exclusive but it is permanent. He advises the owner's architect and ensures that the dossiers are followed up.

General monitoring of the facades, for example, is carried out by visual observations and photographs on an annual basis, as is the case for most of the built, decorative, and landscape elements.

The monitoring is generally planned on an annual basis for the following main themes:

- maintenance of the character of the exterior and the interior,
- conservation of the House as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*,
- -implementation of the management plan (every second year),
- conformity of the works carried out with respect to the application and quality of the materials,
- assessment of safety devices (every fifth year),
- allocation of budgets,
- integrity of site and urban development in the buffer zone (every second year).

Each thematic dossier is held and updated by the Monuments and Sites Division.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring of the property is satisfactory.

7. CONCLUSIONS

ICOMOS recognises the Outstanding Universal Value of the Stoclet House.

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Stoclet House, Belgium, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (i) and (ii)**.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

The Stoclet House demonstrates Outstanding Universal Value:

- It is an outstanding testimony to the creative genius of the *Wiener Werkstätte*. It was designed and built in Brussels from 1905 to 1911 by one of the founders of the movement, the Austrian architect Josef Hoffmann, of whose work it is the masterpiece.
- The Vienna *Secession* movement bears witness to a profound conceptual and stylistic renewal of Art Nouveau. Ever since its creation the Stoclet House has been and remains one of the most consummate and emblematic realisations of this artistic movement, characterising the aesthetic research and renewal of architecture and decoration in the west at the start of the 20th century.
- Its decoration was the work of a very large number of artists from the *Wiener Werkstätte*, including Koloman Moser, Gustav Klimt, Frantz Metzner, Richard Luksch, and Michael Powolny. They worked under the guidance of Hoffmann to achieve a *Gesamtkunstwerk* ('total work of art'), which is expressed simultaneously in every dimension – interior and exterior architecture, decoration, furniture, functional objects, and the gardens and their flower beds.
- From its creation the House inspired many architects in Belgium and other countries. It heralded Art Deco and the Modern Movement in architecture. It bears witness to the influence of the Vienna *Secession*, and the dissemination of its ideas in Europe at the start of the 20th century.
- It bears witness to a monument of outstanding aesthetic quality and richness, intended as an ideal expression of the arts. A veritable icon of the birth of modernism and its quest for values, its state of preservation and conservation are remarkable.

Criterion (i): Created under the supervision of the architect and interior designer Josef Hoffmann, the Stoclet House is a masterpiece of the creative genius of the Vienna *Secession* through its aesthetic and conceptual programme of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, through its architectural vocabulary, through its originality, and through the exceptional quality of its decoration, of its furniture, of its works of art and of its garden. It is a remarkably well conserved symbol of constructive and aesthetic modernity in the west at the start of the 20th century.

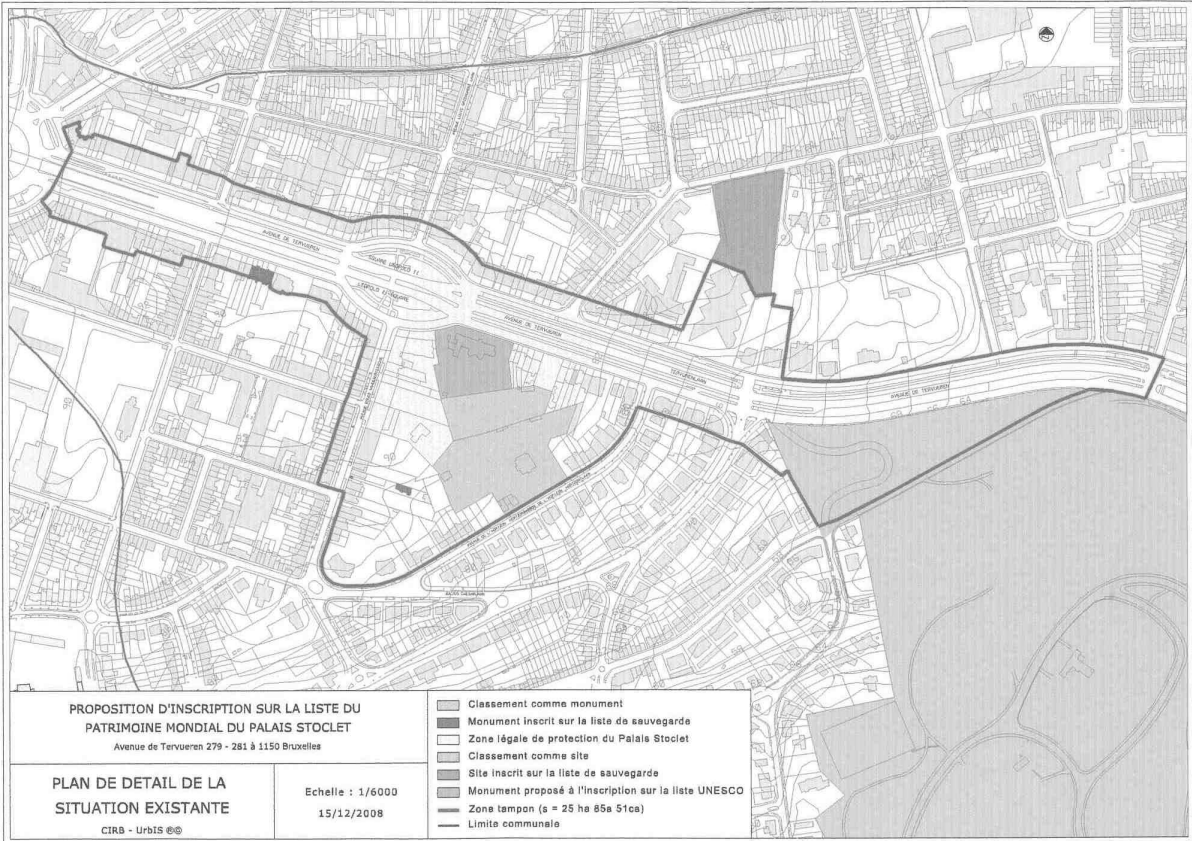
Criterion (ii): Drawing on the values of the Vienna *Secession* and its many artists, including Koloman Moser and Gustav Klimt, the Stoclet House was recognised from the beginning as one of the most representative and refined works of this school. Created in Brussels, a key location for Art Nouveau, it exercised a considerable influence on modernism in architecture and on the birth of Art Deco.

The authenticity and integrity of the Stoclet House are remarkable.

The management of conservation meets the most demanding criteria and international standards. The detailed programming of the works that have already been carried out would benefit from being extended to include work in the interior and in the garden.

ICOMOS recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- Extending the management plan to include the assessment and programming of work on the interior and on the garden;
- Confirming that the urban plans and town planning regulations that apply to the initial buffer zone apply to the whole of the extended buffer zone;
- Putting in place an emergency intervention plan to apply in the event of a serious incident, and initiatives to raise the awareness of and train firemen required to intervene in such circumstances.



Map showing the revised boundaries of the nominated property



Aerial view of Stoclet House



General view of the main façade



The garden



Interior view