

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Kering inaugurates new Paris offices with public art, fashion exhibitions

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Kering's headquarters at 40 rue de Svres in Paris; Cour d'honneur; photo by Thierry Depagne

By STAFF REPORTS

French luxury conglomerate Kering Group is opening the doors to its historical headquarters in Paris' 7th arrondissement during the 33rd annual European Heritage Days Sept. 17-18.

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Kering and fashion house Balenciaga both house their head offices at 40 rue de Svres in Paris, formerly the location of Laennec Hospital from 1634 to 2000. Kering and Balenciaga recently moved into its new offices at 40 rue de Svres after extensive restoration efforts to protect the historic building complex, which includes a chapel built during Louis XIII's reign.

Making historic moves

Seeking to respect the architectural and historic integrity of the property, Kering worked with Benjamin Mouton, France's chief architect for historic monuments. The restoration project involved 17th and 18th century buildings, many of which are classified and listed as historic spaces by France.

Once the renovations were complete, Kering and Balenciaga were able to move in their employees. The new space fits modern standards and requirements, including Kering's own environmental codes, a core value for the conglomerate ([see story](#)).

With Kering's involvement 40 rue de Svres is one of the first historic monuments to receive the french High Environmental Quality label, or HQE Rnovation.



Jardin du Chevet de la Chapelle at 40 rue de Svres in Paris; photo by Thierry Depagne

"From the outset I wanted Kering and Balenciaga's new head offices to reflect our identity and our values," said Francois-Henri Pinault, chairman and CEO of Kering. "The unusual project to renovate the former Laennec Hospital was an ambitious challenge.

"This unique place in the center of Paris, remarkable by its history, its size and its simple beauty, has a soul," he said. "The original harmony of the site and the high quality of the renovation work mean that 40 rue de Svres will not only be a source of pride for all our employees, but a place of sharing and inspiration.

"It perfectly reflects our nature as a luxury group, a group in motion that embodies a bold luxury, with the freedom to make its own choices."

For this reason, Mr. Pinault felt it would be fitting to invite the public for a visit during European Heritage Days Sept. 17-18. During the 33rd annual heritage event, themed "Heritage and Communities" for 2016, Kering will stage two temporary exhibitions at the site.



The chapel at 40 rue de Svres in Paris; photo by Thierry Depagne

The first will bring a selection of artworks from Mr. Pinault's private collection to the on-site chapel. Entitled "Echoes," the exhibition will display masterpieces re-envisioned by contemporary artists that reflect history and religious art.

Kering's second exhibition for the two-day event is dedicated to the haute couture dresses of Cristobal Balenciaga. The unprecedented selection of dresses designed by Balenciaga's founder will be presented in the fashion house's segment of the property.

The 27 original dresses were selected to represent Mr. Balenciaga's two creative periods: the Spanish period from 1930 to 1937 and the Parisian period from 1937 to 1968. On view will be signature Balenciaga designs such as the 1958 "Baby Doll" dress and the "Cocoon" coat of 1966.

"I was keen to give to the public rapid access to this architectural jewel, which is such a part of Parisian history, and which has now been given a new lease of life," Mr. Pinault said. "The temporary exhibitions we are presenting fully reflect this two-fold mission of heritage and creativity."