

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

LVMH plans public art center in Paris to spotlight savoir-faire

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Rendering of La Maison LVMH

By STAFF REPORTS

Luxury conglomerate Mot Hennessy Louis Vuitton has unveiled its proposal for a cultural hub in Paris that will house performances, exhibitions and workshops.

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La Maison LVMH/Arts Talents Patrimone complex, announced during a press conference on March 8, will be located in the former facilities of the Muse des Arts et Traditions Populaires in the city's 16th arrondissement. Expected to open in 2020 if all approvals are granted, the center is designed to be a space that upholds craftsmanship and creativity.

New lease on life

The Muse des Arts et Traditions Populaires, designed by architect Jean Dubuisson and opened in 1975, has been vacant since 2005. After closing, the museum's collection was moved to Marseilles' MUCEM museum in 2013.

The French Ministry of Culture has been looking for a new use of the building, which is owned by Paris. While the city has desired to establish a new cultural use for the property, any renovation was delayed due to the high costs associated with repurposing the space.

LVMH chairman and CEO Bernard Arnault is now looking to return the building to its artistic use with a proposed update. Architect Frank Gehry, who designed Fondation Louis Vuitton, will rework the building's design alongside Mr. Dubuisson's heirs.

This renovation process is expected to take two to three years. The completed center will include performance venues, exhibition space, workshops, a documentation center and a restaurant.



Rendering of La Maison LVMH

In keeping with the building's position as a city-owned facility, the center will be open to the public. School-aged children will be invited to visit to learn more about LVMH's craftsmanship in partnership with the company's Institut des Miers d'Excellence LVMH.

"I am delighted that the LVMH Group is contributing to this ambitious project and is helping the city of Paris further strengthen its appeal and attractiveness, both nationally and internationally, promoting the strength and diversity of our country's culture, along with its unique artisanal excellence," Mr. Arnault said.

"This initiative creates links between the Fondation Louis Vuitton, which is dedicated to artistic creativity, the vast amusement park at the Jardin d'Acclimatation, and this exceptional site that will celebrate the vitality of craftsmanship, the arts and artistic performance," he said. "We are proud to bring the same enthusiasm and ambitious vision to this new institution."

LVMH's proposed use of the space will be presented at a Paris municipal council meeting on March 27. The group's takeover of the building would require a concession granting use of the public property.

The planned 50-year concession would see LVMH pay the City of Paris a 150,000 euro, or \$158,000, fee each year along with between 2 and 10 percent of annual revenues. After the concession ends, the building will return to the City of Paris.

Situated on the heritage site Bois de Buologne park, the building's proposal also requires approval from the French Environment Ministry.

"Paris is world-renowned for its heritage, its vibrant culture and its unique expertise in the applied arts," said Anne Hidalgo, mayor of Paris, who co-presented the plan at the press conference. "To retain this vital position we must continue to invest, innovate and engage with the entire world.

"This is precisely what this new project will do, with its international resonance and support from public authorities and the LVMH Group," she said. "I am delighted that our city is attractive to private investors and that they are actively committed to its development.

"This is excellent news for Parisians and for everyone who loves Paris. At the same time, it sends a powerful message to young generations: artisanal craftsmanship offers tremendous potential and opportunities that we encourage them to discover and seize."

LVMH's Fondation Louis Vuitton saw 1.2 million visitors in its first year. The building, which acts as both a museum and event space, was also designed as a symbol of France's culture ([see story](#)).