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## **ÉDICULE LAMBEAUX**

PARC DU CINQUANTENAIRE, BRUSSELS (1889-97)

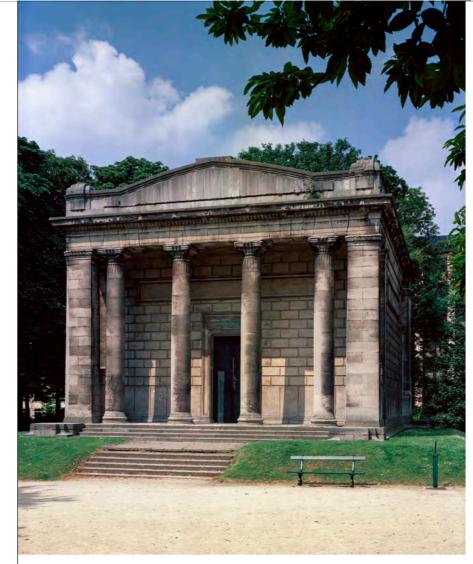
The Édicule Lambeaux was the first building of note to be completed by Horta,1 designed to house a large bas-relief, Les Passions Humaines, by the sculptor Jef Lambeaux. Although it was due for completion in 1897, in time for the Brussels World Fair celebrations in the Parc du Cinquantenaire that year, a difficult relationship with Lambeaux caused the project to be delayed considerably. It finally opened in 1899 (although Horta states that it was never formally inaugurated) and remains testament to Horta's classical training. It is an intriguing building on several accounts, not least because, chronologically, its design came so close to that of the Hôtel Tassel: the initial plans for the pavilion were in fact not submitted until May 1892, less than a year before the conception of the Hôtel Tassel. The two projects undoubtedly overlapped in the studio, which is curious, since at first sight they have little in common: the historicist language of the pavilion is precisely what Art Nouveau appeared to eschew.<sup>2</sup>

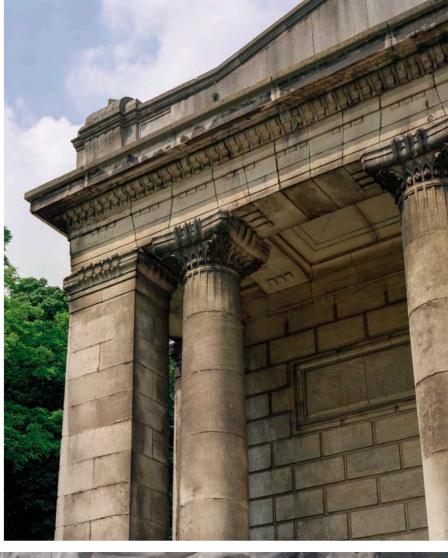
The original project for the pavilion, which Horta describes as 'a kind of little temple', comprises a single enclosure of load-bearing brickwork faced in stone. Its roof had a glazed strip along the entire width of the back wall, which cast a sharp top light over the sculpture. The front wall was to be of four stone columns to allow a distant view of the sculpture from the park, but by 1906 the authorities no longer wanted the nude figures of the sculpture to be open to public gaze. As a result, Horta revised his plans to include a solid wall behind the columns. Further disputes with the authorities and personal difficulties with Lambeaux left the project somewhat incomplete, but what survives clearly indicates Horta's preoccupation with Neoclassicism when he was designing the Hôtel Tassel.

While the Hôtel Tassel represents a shift from Horta's classicism, both styles can be identified as attempts to express a personal language. The details of the Édicule Lambeaux, like the abstract motifs of Art Nouveau, are personal and largely invented by Horta. The curved pediment and the detail of the rusticated walls and cornice all emphasize a *personalization* of the classical language rather than a rigorous application of its proportions and details.<sup>3</sup>

Horta referred to the building as the 'end of the prelude to my career'. Despite his attempts to find an original language and the chronological proximity of the Édicule Lambeaux and the Hôtel Tassel, the two projects are worlds apart.

- 1 Horta's first commission was for three houses in Ghent in Rue des Douze Chambres (1885). Horta collaborated with the sculptor Hippolyte Leroy and the painter Jules Dewitte on a stucco frieze at cornice level, but otherwise these houses are of little significance.
- 2 See the Archives de la Ville de Bruxelles, T.P. 10.211; Victor Horta, Mémoires, ed. C. Dulère (Brussels: Ministère de la Communité Française, 1985), p. 28. Building permission for the Tassel house was applied for in August 1893; see Horta, Mémoires, p. 34.
- 3 By designing in this way, Horta saw himself participating in Belgium's architectural revolution: 'After 1870 the revolution in architecture was such that one did not dare put into practice what one had learnt at school' (Mémoires, p. 10). The key buildings in this reaction against the Beaux-Arts are the National Bank in Antwerp (1872–79) by Hendrik Beyaert, the Maison Communale in Schaerbeek (1855–79) by J. J. van Ysendyck, and the Belgian Pavilion in the 1878 Paris Exposition Universelle by









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# HÔTEL AUTRIQUE

226 CHAUSSÉE DE HAECHT, BRUSSELS (1893-95)

In 1887 Horta entered the Masonic lodge known as 'Les Amis Philanthropes',¹ which he referred to as 'Le Groupe Tassel'. It was here that he met not only Émile Tassel, but also J. B. Charbo, Eugène Autrique, Ernest-Jean Henrickx and Godefroid Devreese,² all of whom became, as Horta recalls, 'brothers from the moment we first met'. Horta was no doubt influenced by the progressive ideas of these leading figures, and in particular their politics; several of his commissions came through these circles, including the Maison du Peuple.

Thanks to the encouragement of Tassel and Charbo, Horta entered the Université Libre de Brussels as assistant to Ernest-Jean Hendrickx, who taught graphics on the architecture course. Hendrickx was a keen disciple of Viollet-le-Duc, and his École Modèle on Boulevard du Hainaut and his building on Rue des Sols for the University of Brussels must have encouraged Horta in his use of iron and stone.<sup>3</sup>

Horta describes the first commission to come from his new contacts as 'devoid of luxury and extravagance; a habitable underground area with a noble hallway and stairs, a perfectly uniform living room and kitchen, a first floor with a bath and toilet ... [and] a second-floor attic for the children and staff'. He suggests that the house 'wasn't brand new' but 'of a made-to-measure variety'. Until the restoration by the architect Luc Maes, begun in 1990, much of Horta's experimentation had gone unnoticed, though the house may now be seen as representing the turning point in Horta's career, anticipating much of the language that was developed more fully in the house for Tassel commissioned the same year.

The Autrique house is a two-storey structure with a basement and a cleverly redesigned mansard roof that enlarges the interior and creates a loggia-like structure on the street façade. The back wall of the loggia slips behind a central wooden column. Scratched into its gently curved stucco surface is a composition of arabesque lines in sgraffito. The red lines match the colour of the grout used in the ashlar façade, and the coursing of the stone in the pillars that flank the loggia is aligned with the horizontal lines in the sgraffito composition. Unlike the lines of the stairwell mosaic, the sgraffito design appears to derive from a typical graphic form, resembling an enlarged frontispiece to a book. (By this time Horta was head of the graphic arts faculty at the Université Libre, Brussels.)

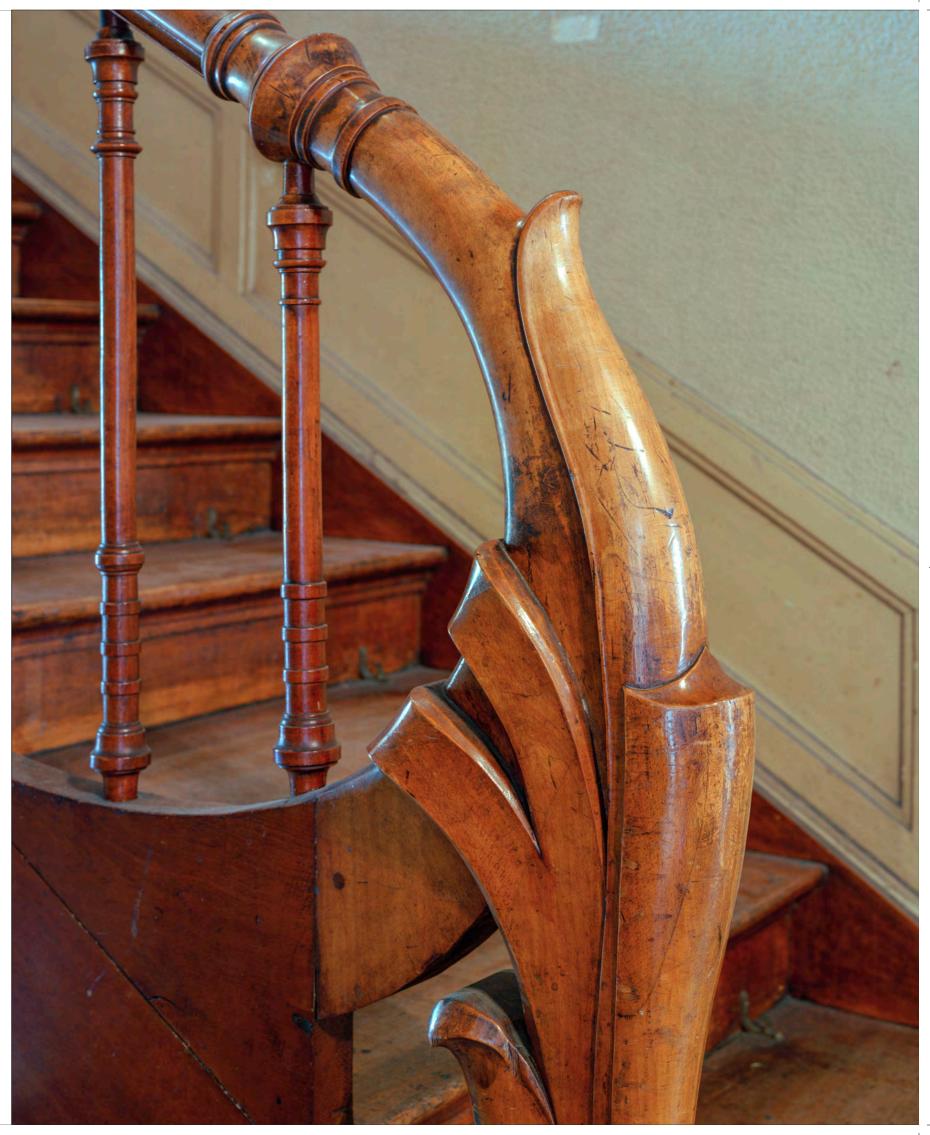
The plan resembles that of a typical 19th-century maison de maître, with two rooms arranged en enfilade running from street to garden, together with a passage and stair to one side of the main rooms. At basement level were the kitchen and servants' quarters; on the ground floor, the main salon and dining room; at first floor, Autrique's office (which took up the whole width of the street façade); and to the rear an evening living room, a bathroom and toilet. The second floor is in the mansard roof and given over entirely to bedrooms.

One departure from the norm was in the detail of the ground-floor layout. Here, the salon and dining room, which are divided by a framed opening, are brought to the street with a slightly raised *fumoir* seat adjacent to the window. This not only allows a winding stair to the basement kitchen to slip underneath it, but also sets the salon back from the street (this position for the *fumoir* is repeated, but at a mezzanine level, in the Hôtel Tassel).



Above. Magnis ea volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccull amendita aut lant milibuscidus.

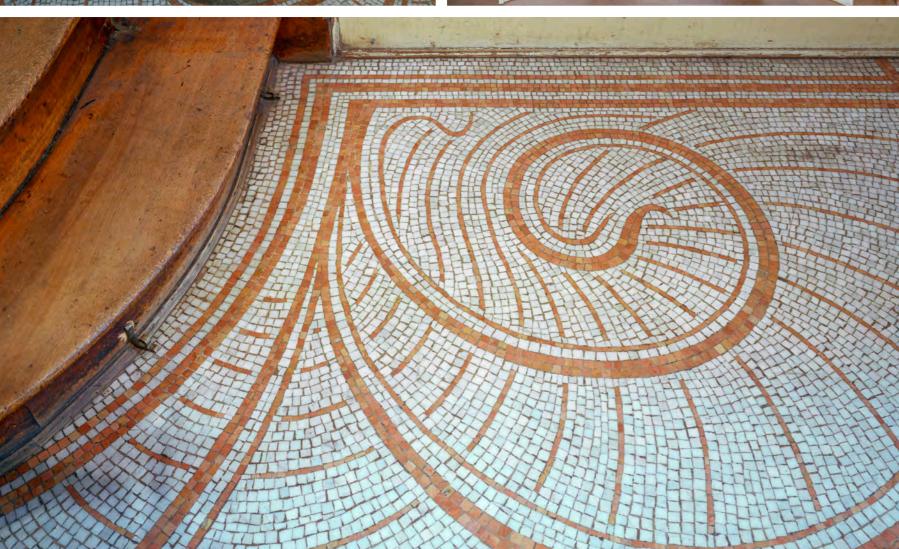
Opposite. Volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccu.











Opposite. Magnis ea volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccull amendita aut lant milibuscidus.

Below left. Volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccu.

Below right. Volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccu. The opening between the salon and dining room on the ground floor is formed by an exposed iron channel for the first time in a house of this kind. Its flanges are delicately riveted in a manner characteristic of Horta's subsequent Art Nouveau. Horta also employed exposed iron on the exterior; exquisite oval sections, reused in the Tassel exterior, support the first-floor window openings, and square sections those of the ground floor.

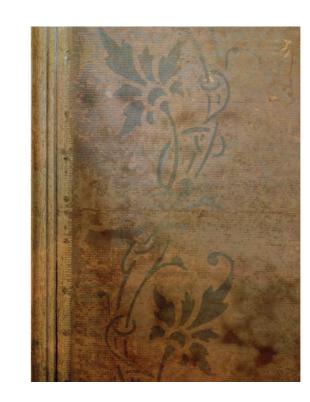
To one side of these rooms is the entrance and stair hall. Horta tended to raise the ground floor to accommodate a basement level that could receive daylight from the street. As a result, the entrance lobbies of most of his town houses are reached via a short flight of stairs. At the Autrique house these stairs, as well as the entrance lobby to dado height, are marble-clad.

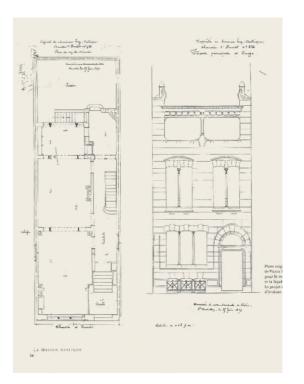
The entrance stairs arrive at the stair hall, which is paved with a mosaic of swirling lines in orange and white. The pattern flows like ripples from the curve of the bottom tread. The wooden handrail to the stair curves round into a sculpted newel post at the foot of the stair. While heavy in relation to the fine mosaic, this detail anticipates, at least in intention, the extraordinary sculpted woodwork of the later interiors.

Perhaps the most dramatic departure from the 19th-century house was the invention of the roof light over the landing stair, which occurs at first-floor level. As in the traditional maison de maître, the stair borrows light from the first-floor bathroom by means of a glazed wall, but Horta develops this idea in an ingenious sectional arrangement without precedent: the vertical glazing to the bathroom is combined with a glazed horizontal soffit. This is, in fact, the underside of a double-layered glazed floor to a winter garden accessed off the stair at a half-level between the first and second floors.

The resulting laylight, part vertical and part horizontal, is composed of textured and coloured glass in the form of a stylized landscape that has an unmistakably Japanese character. This exploration of interior lighting and the use of exposed iron together with the experimental inclusion of arabesque lines in mosaic provided Horta with the confidence to design the Hôtel Tassel. This often overlooked building thus remains an important precursor to Art Nouveau architecture.

- Horta became apprentice in the lodge on 31 December 1888, a companion on 23 December 1889, and a master on 10 March 1890. Information in the following notes is taken from Horta, Mémoires, p. 19.
- 2 Émile Tassel (1862–1922) was professor of descriptive geometry at the Université Libre, Brussels, from 1880. J. B. Charbo (1843–1901) was professor of integrated calculus at the same institution from 1880. Eugène Autrique (d. 1912) was an engineer. Godefroid Devreese (1861–1941) was a sculptor and medallist.
- 3 See L'Émulation, no. 16 (1891), pl. 29–43. Hendrickx's death meant that Horta was soon promoted to run the course.
- 4 Horta, Mémoires, p. 31.





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THE BUILDINGS: HÔTEL AUTRIQUE

# **HÔTEL TASSEL**

6 RUE PAUL-ÉMILE JANSON, BRUSSELS (1893-94)

The Autrique House was barely finished when Émile Tassel, professor of descriptive geometry at the Université Libre, Brussels, and a fellow Mason, commissioned Horta to design his private residence on Rue Paul-Émile Janson (formerly Rue de Turin). This opportunity allowed Horta to design one of the most remarkable interiors of the 19th century, for which he invented a remarkable decorative style and a spatial order that would challenge conservative taste and inspire Art Nouveau throughout Europe.

While the sources of Horta's 'modern' style are complex, it is clear that most of the individual architectural devices to be found at the Tassel house were already in place by the end of the 19th century: the whiplash line was widespread in the graphic arts; top-lit stairs were often a feature of maisons de maître; and the use of exposed iron had been encouraged by Viollet-le-Duc, among others. Horta's real contribution lay in his attempt to bring these elements together – a goal that, following his experiments in the Maison Autrique, he first achieved here in the Hôtel Tassel, producing a striking spatial and decorative unity.

Horta rejected the traditional arrangement for the narrow Brussels building plot, which divided the plan across its width between a stair corridor on one side, and three rooms running *en enfilade* through the depth of the plan on the other. In contrast, the Tassel plot, which measures 7.8 m (25 ft 7 in.) wide by 39 m (128 ft) deep, is divided into four bays running from street to garden. The plan of the house occupies the front three bays, which extend 27 m (89 ft), and the remaining bay is a small garden. Of the three bays of the house, the central bay, 5.3 m (17 ft 5 in.) long, is conceived as a light well across the whole width of the plan. Its

height varies and, in addition to housing a groundfloor winter garden and the principal stair to the first floor, it forms the internal connection between the front bay and the rear double bay. Above the glazing at second-floor level this connection is continued via a central passage.

The relative levels of the street bay and the rear bay of the house vary. The stair that accommodates this variation in level is in the south-west light well. A smaller stair connecting all levels in the rear bays is positioned in the south-west corner of the building. This is split into two at the first floor, forming a service stair below and a private stair above.

As in the Hôtel Autrique, in section the fumoir is located directly below the study. But whereas in the Autrique house the fumoir is raised only slightly, to allow for a tight stair to the kitchen basement, that of the Tassel house is raised to mezzanine level, the first-floor level of the street bay. On the façade it forms the base to a two-storey curved bay. Its window seat overlooking the street is glazed with yellow and blue American glass in a lead-work pattern in the form of a sinuous landscape.<sup>2</sup> The window sits low above the entrance door, and its form is articulated with five diminutive columns. These have carved capitals, which appear to clutch the underside of a curved, riveted iron lintel. Below, its weight is expressed in the form of massive stone brackets that frame the entrance door; above, the structure appears to lighten as the line of the four outer columns is continued vertically by means of slender iron columns. A second iron lintel completes the frame for the large area of glazing fronting Tassel's study, which is set slightly back from the iron columns. Above, this ensemble forms a balcony to Tassel's private studio, which has another large expanse of glazing, more suited



Above. Magnis ea volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccull amendita aut lant milibuscidus.

Opposite. Volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccu.









Opposite. Magnis ea volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccull amendita aut lant milibuscidus.

Above. Volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccu.

Overleaf. Volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccu. to a painter's studio, set back from the line of the façade. Dividing the structural opening into three, two iron columns support a further iron lintel at the level of the underside of the eaves, creating a loggia similar to that of the Autrique house.

The effect of the lower façade is to give an impression of impenetrability and mystery. It is treated as though the house had a quasi-religious significance, something reflected on by Horta: 'It looks like a chapel being built here, not a house.'3 In fact, the façade masks a sanctuary-like interior, where, up to the second-floor level, only the secondary rooms have transparent openings to the street. The main rooms are instead oriented towards the internal light well, which is removed from both street and garden, as a place of retreat.

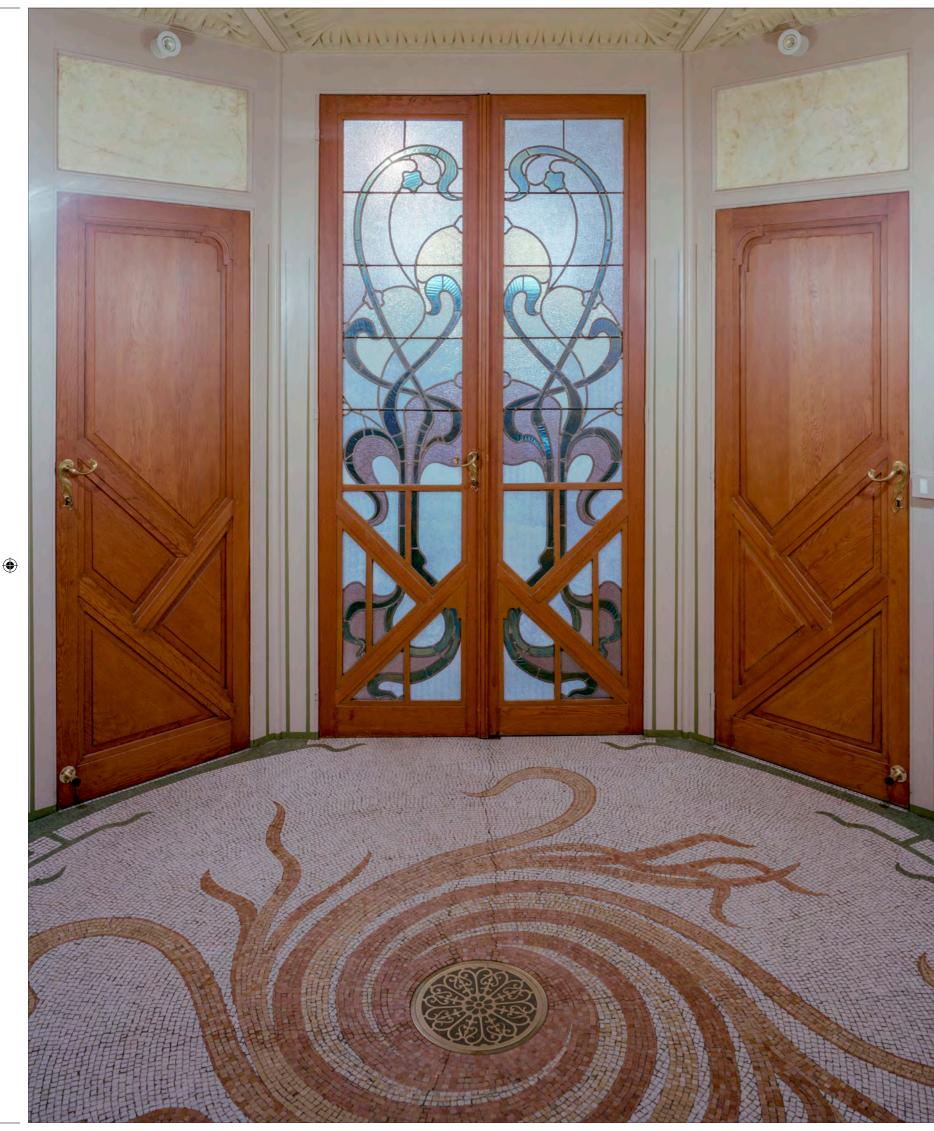
Upon entry into the lobby, a pair of doors glazed with translucent American glass present the interior as a source of light. These doors were normally kept locked. Visitors to the house would either pass through a wooden door on the left of the lobby into the cloakroom, or into the parloir (reception room) to the right, which gave access to the service staircase to the basement, stores, kitchen and furnace rooms. Two further doors – one from the cloakroom and one from the parloir – open onto an octagonal vestibule on the other side of the glazed double doors. The floor of this space is decorated with white and red mosaic in a radial, flame-like pattern. At its centre is a brass grille, which served as a hot-air outlet in the original heating system designed by Horta.

Ahead is a flight of seven marble steps rising one metre to the ground-floor level of the house's central and rear bays. A double curved soffit over the stairs rests at its lowest point on two oval iron columns whose marble bases are at the level of the top step. From this point the soffit vaults upwards towards an opening over the internal fumoir balcony on one side, and towards the top edge of the iron frame of the glazing to the salon in the direction of the garden. The oval columns have bud-like capitals from which emerge curved, plant-like T-iron sections. The ensemble appears to support a curved composite edge beam, though given its dimensions it is likely that this beam would be able to span from the flank wall of the stair to the iron frame of the salon façade without additional support. In effect, Horta manipulated the ironwork to establish basic spatial definition, conditions of transparency and a continuity of line at the same time as appearing to express a rational structural purpose.

To the left of the mosaic landing is the winter garden, and to the right the principal staircase to the *fumoir* and first-floor rooms. The winter garden,

THE BUILDINGS: HÔTEL TASSEL

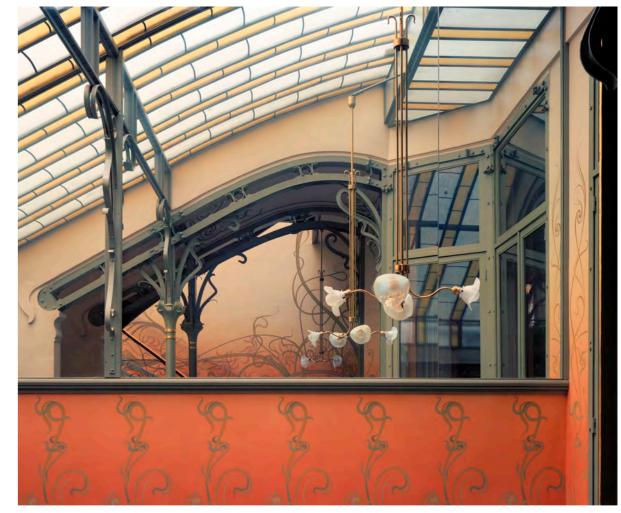




Opposite. Magnis ea volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccull amendita aut lant milibuscidus.

Right top. Volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibu scidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccu.

Right bottom. Volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibu scidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccu.



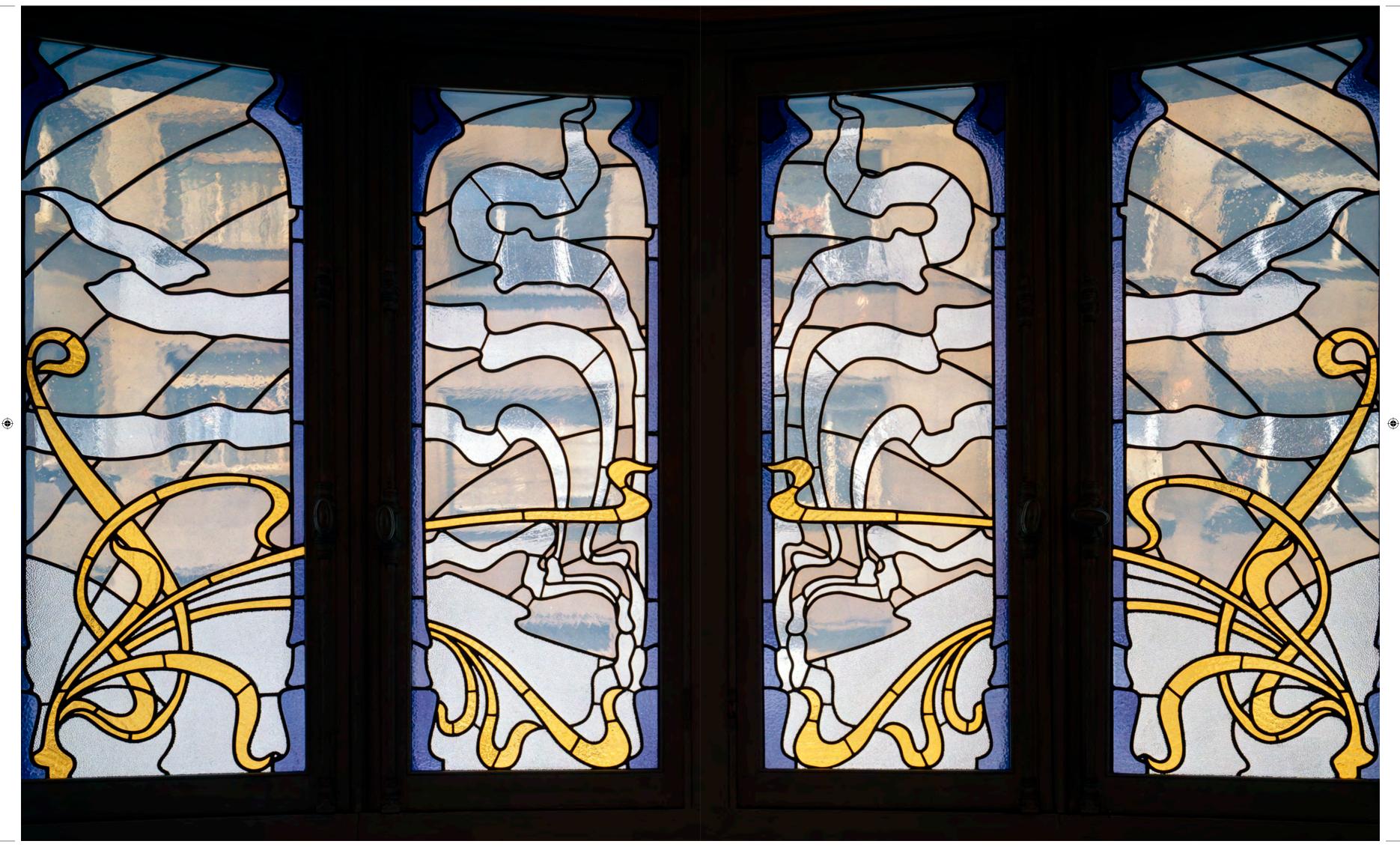


THE BUILDINGS: HÔTEL TASSEL





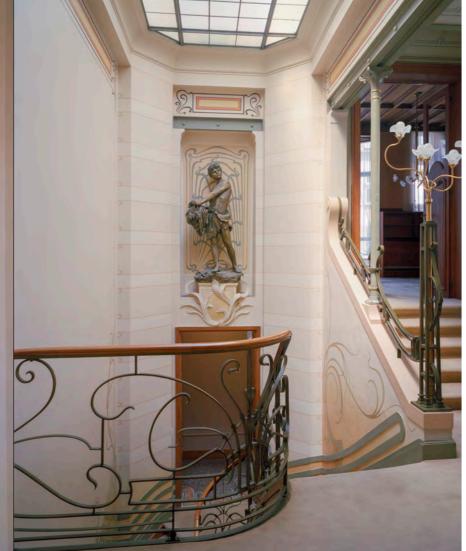




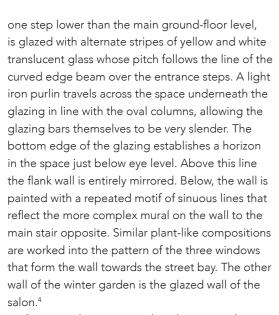












Opposite the winter garden, the principal stair rises to the *fumoir* and the first-floor landing in a top-lit stairwell whose laylight is at the ceiling level of the first floor. Restoration by the architect Jean Delhaye, which commenced in 1982, revealed the masterful composition of the mural on the stair wall, whose background fades from a deep orange near the floor to a Naples yellow near the laylight.

What still remains of the original paintwork reveals the delicacy of hand and subtlety of tonal change involved in the execution of each line.

The metal balustrading is finely detailed, with three thicknesses of iron strip used for the more complex configurations. In contrast to most of Horta's staircases, the design of the balustrade varies along its length. The iron strips were carefully bent to create curves that were not calculated geometrically but hand-drawn by Horta. The ends of the strips were tapered or thickened, and then riveted or welded together depending on each detail. Round-headed rivets seem to have fascinated Horta as decorative elements: they are used throughout the interior, punctuating the surfaces of the ironwork for visual effect rather than structural necessity. Their location is often highlighted with gold paint.

The winter garden and the stair hall – the central bay of the house – are removed from both street and garden to provide an artificial and intimate point of orientation. A sense of removal from the outside world is heightened through various architectural devices. The most direct is the use of large expanses of glass and mirror, whose

Above left. Magnis ea volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccull amendita aut lant milibuscidus.

Above right. Volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibu scidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccu.

Above left. Magnis ea volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccull amendita aut lant milibuscidus.

Above right. Volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibu scidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccu.

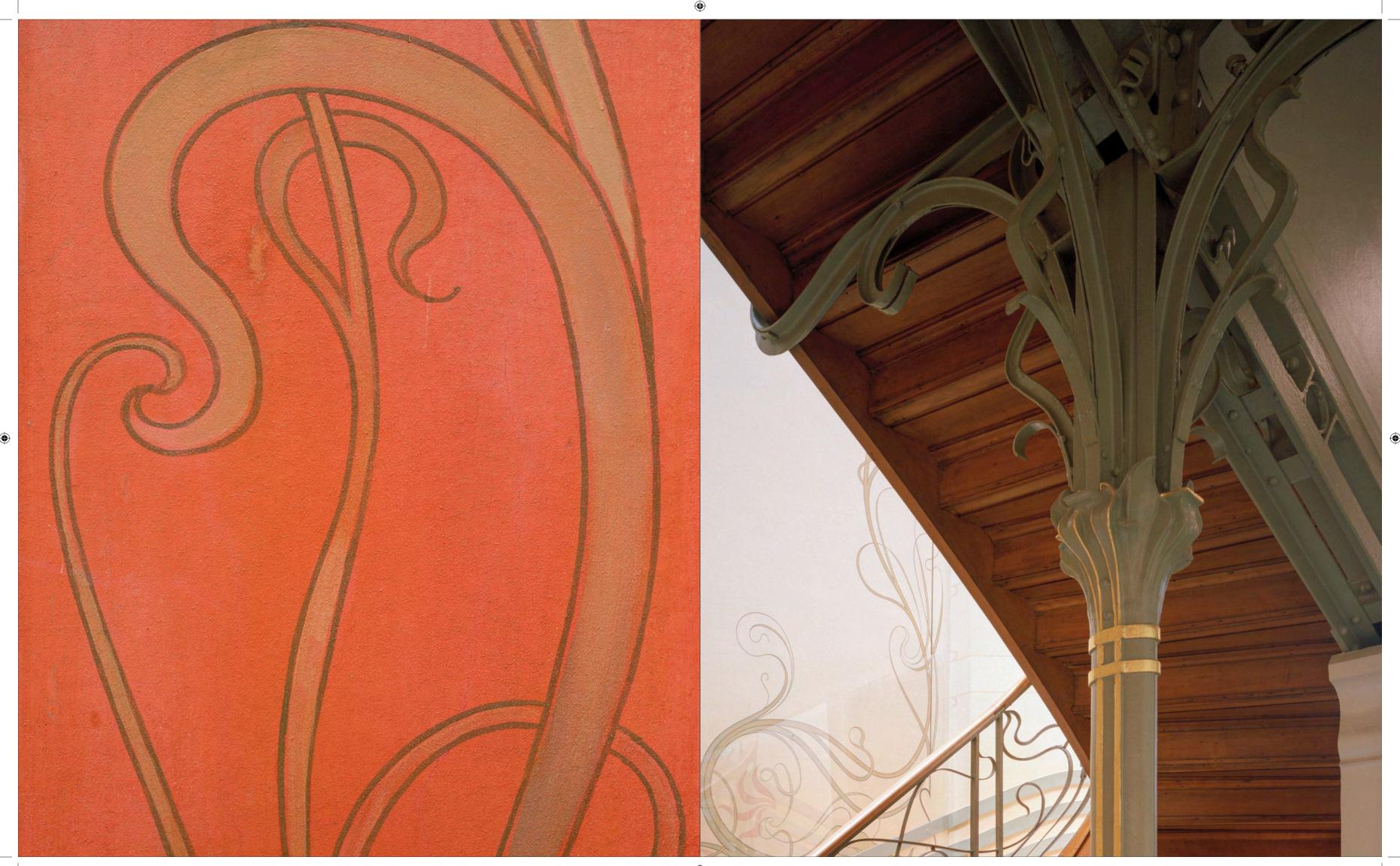
reflections render spatial structure ambiguous, and in which real and fictive spaces combine in effects of shadow and line. The continuity of arabesque curves, and the play between those that are structural and those that are reflected (the stair rail, mural and floor mosaic), give the interior a sense of completeness: a substitute for the world outside.

- 1 Horta incorporated a section in the *fumoir* balcony that rotates upwards to hold a magic lantern. Tassel was a keen enthusiast of optical devices, and the sectional arrangement across the central bay allowed projection from the *fumoir* balcony onto a screen that could be hung across the central section of the salon.

  Originally all the doors of the gazed façade of the salon could be opened to allow the guests to enjoy the show from within the
- 2 This glass was put in during Jean Delhaye's restoration (1982–85). The colour of the original glass is unknown.
- 3 Horta, Mémoires, p. 34.
- 4 The composite steel sections that frame the glazed façade to the salon were originally designed to carry hot air. Cold air was brought in at low level from the garden façade in an under-floor duct, then heated using a coal-fired furnace in the basement and ducted to the vestibule, light wells, salon and dining rooms. The upper floors were heated using gas and coal appliances.

100 VICTOR HORTA

101 THE BUILDINGS: HÔTEL TASSEL



## HÔTEL FRISON

37 RUE LEBEAU, BRUSSELS (1894-95)

As a result of legal difficulties resulting from his collaboration with the sculptor Jef Lambeaux, Horta was introduced to Maurice Frison, a lawyer and member of the Amis Philanthropes Masonic lodge. They were to become lifelong friends.

The commission for the Hôtel Frison was in many respects similar to that of the Hôtel Tassel: it was for a private house on a narrow site, whose frontage occupies almost the same width (7 m; 23 ft) as its predecessor. However, it is curious that, despite being so close chronologically to the Hôtel Tassel, the Frison house displays little of its spatial mastery and is organized in a more traditional manner. The original planning resembles the conservative arrangement of the Hôtel Autrique: the two major rooms of the raised ground floor – Frison's office and study – work en enfilade from front to back. To one side is a passage leading to the principal stair and the dining room at the rear, which is flanked by a top-lit conservatory. On the first floor are small and large sitting rooms, and the second floor is given over to bedrooms, as in the Autrique house.

The plan arrangement is emphasized on the façade, as the stair passage is extended vertically to become a tower-like element over the entrance door. The remainder of the façade lacks the innovation of the Hôtel Tassel but incorporates similar steel columns in the ground- and second-floor window openings. The latter is particularly impressive: the window is slightly set back behind a pair of cast-iron columns resting on a balcony that curves delicately out of the wall. The ashlar work at this level is executed with breath-taking skill and is perhaps unmatched elsewhere in Horta's oeuvre. Unlike at the Hôtel Autrique, where the bedding of the stone was highlighted in red, here the joints are flush. The effect is to emphasize continuity, since

the wall surface flows without interruption to form the bracket and balcony, in a manner reminiscent more of plaster than masonry.

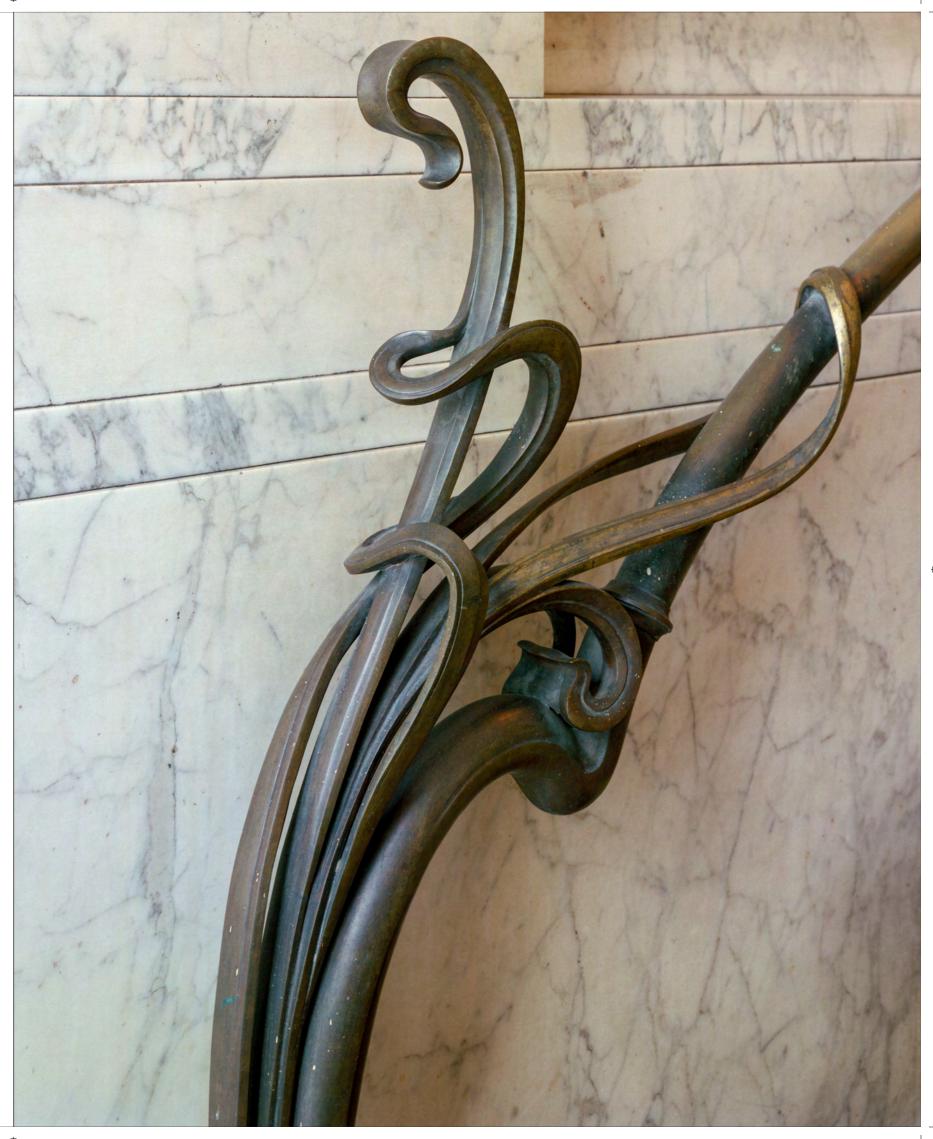
The interior of the house is in the process of restoration. The winter garden has been reconstructed, and the ground-floor rooms, which had been much altered, are in the course of returning to their former arrangement. Some features of the exquisite original mural on the ground floor survive, though little remains of Horta's interiors on the upper floors. The entrance lobby, however, is largely intact and, like the façade, contains exquisite detail. In common with many town house interiors of the period, the hall accommodates a half-flight of stairs raising the ground-floor level and allowing the basement to be lit from the street. Beyond the hall, through a pair of glazed doors, is a wooden stair with a carved newel post that rises from a mosaic floor. The mosaic is unusual in that its curving lines are in white against a background of orange (Horta normally uses a white ground).

The tall entrance hall has a soffit level at the underside of the first floor, and its walls are articulated with three sets of paired pilasters. These continue uninterrupted around a coved ceiling and down to a white marble base whose level is determined by the top edge of the skirting at ground-floor level. The thickness of the marble increases towards the ground, and the changes in thickness correlate with the nosing of the first, second, sixth and seventh risers of the marble stair. These levels are keyed to the design of a bronze handrail 38 mm (1½ in.) in diameter on either side of the stairs. It is supported by three brackets that harmonize beautifully with the detailing of the pilasters, marble and stair; one sits on the steps, one on a marble ledge, and the uppermost one springs from a pilaster.

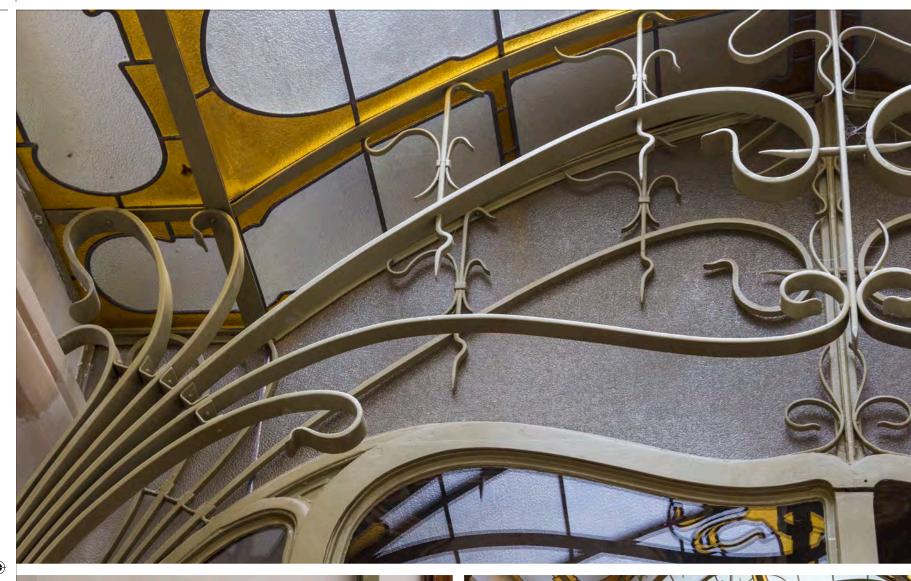


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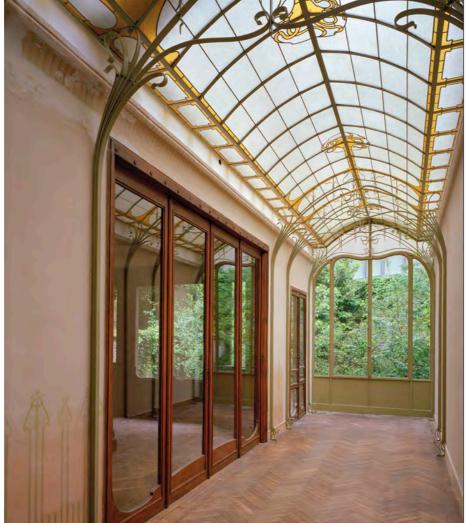
Opposite. Magnis ea volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccull amendita aut lant milibuscidus.













Above. Volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccu.

### Opposite

Top. Magnis ea volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccull amendita aut lant milibuscidus.

Below left. Volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccu.

Below right. Volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccu.

Right. Volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccu. Volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccu.







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## HÔTEL WINSSINGER

66 RUE DE L'HÔTEL DES MONNAIES, BRUSSELS (1894-97)

Chronologically, the Hôtel Winssinger belongs among Horta's most important Art Nouveau buildings, appearing between the Hôtel Tassel and the Hôtel Solvay. However, as a result of extensive alterations (carried out from 1927; Winssinger had died in 1924), only fragments of the interior had remained intact until a recent restoration of the main staircase.

The exterior, by contrast, has been altered comparatively little. Horta states in his memoirs that the design of the house was a response to the need for privacy on the apartment on the first and second floors (particularly since Winssinger's wife was ill) at the same time as providing a raised ground floor and mezzanine for the purposes of entertaining. So carefully did Horta tune the plan to these individual requirements (partly to satisfy Winssinger's meticulous character) that he later declared that the house 'should not only reflect the life of the occupant, but should be his portrait'.1

The disposition of the rooms is clearly articulated on the façade. A cluster of smaller windows around the entrance signal the main stair hall and mezzanine level, alongside a pair of tall ground-floor windows that belong to the salon. Above the diminutive mezzanine window of the stair hall a bay, like that of the Hôtel Tassel, runs through two storeys and opens onto a loggia-like structure under the eaves.

Compared with that of the Hôtel Tassel, the façade is relatively wide, at almost 11 m (36 ft). This allowed for a wide entrance passage to run along the side of the house at ground-floor level, similar to the arrangement at the Hôtel Solvay and Hôtel Max Hallet. A small flight of stairs from this passageway opens into a hall that houses the main stair and gives access to the salon towards the

street, and large and small dining rooms towards the rear of the plan. Archive photographs show a laylight of coloured, patterned glass over the large dining room, and a conservatory-like roof light that ran to the rear of the plan linking the two dining rooms. This elaborate suite of rooms for entertaining was continued on the mezzanine floor with a billiard room, which had a balcony with a glazed balustrade opening onto the hallway, and which was linked to a small sitting room through a hall. This hall housed a secondary stair giving access to the upper floors and to a small office on the ground floor, immediately to the right of the entrance doors. There is little detailed evidence for the arrangement of the private apartment, but it can be assumed from the plan at that level that it extended in depth only as far as the dividing wall between the salon and the dining room on the ground floor, that is to say around 8 metres (26 ft). This would allow for the roof lights of the groundfloor rooms.2

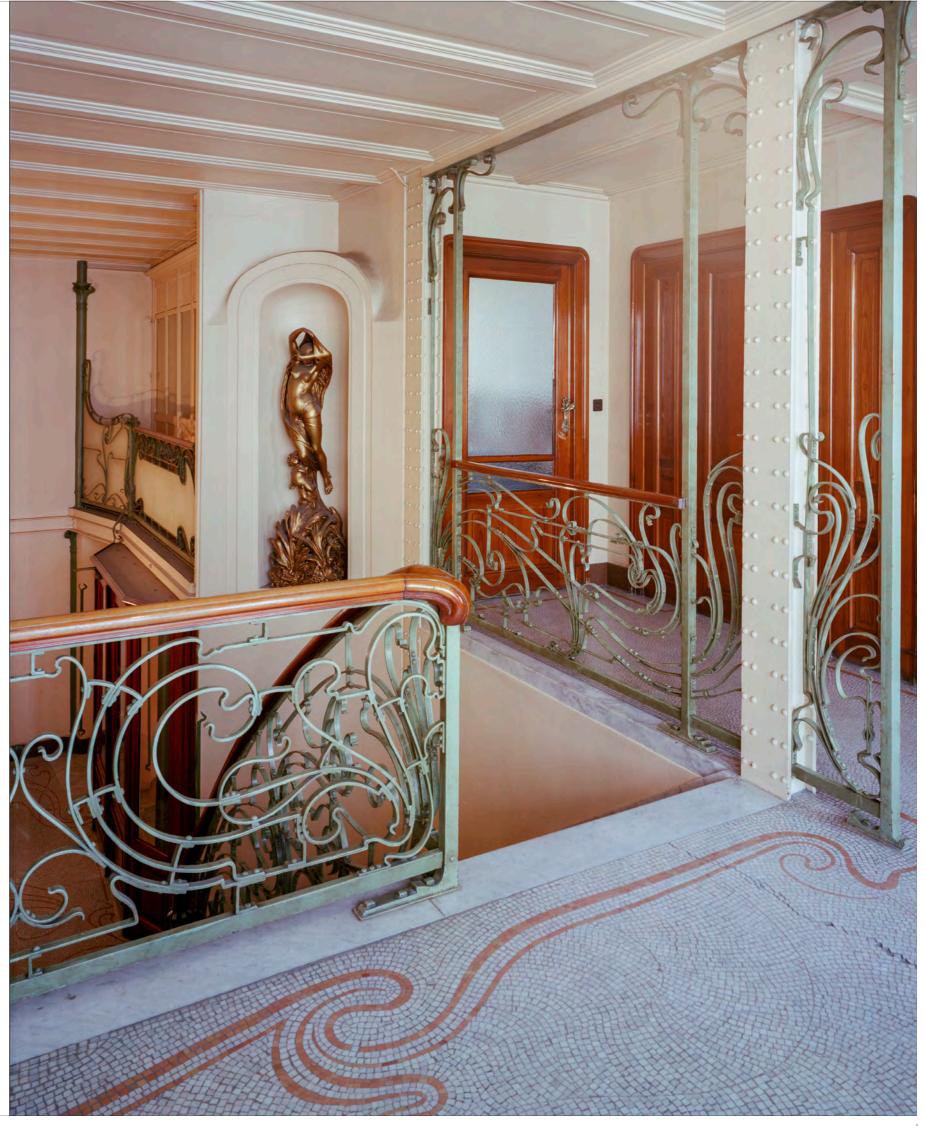
It is regrettable that this ingenious plan has been so much altered. The original interior would have been among Horta's finest, and there are still several exquisite details. Of particular note is the composition of delicate curves in the ironwork. The mosaic is also one of Horta's most accomplished, featuring swirling orange lines set against a white background, the pieces of which are laid so carefully that a secondary set of curves is created, in white against white.

- 1 Horta, Mémoires, p. 47.
- The relevant archive images are reproduced in Franco Borsi and Paolo Portoghesi, Horta (London: Academy Editions, 1991), pl. 249 and 240



Above. Magnis ea volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccull amendita aut lant milibuscidus.

Opposite. Magnis ea volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccull amendita aut lant milibuscidus.





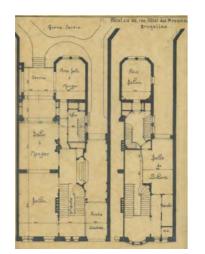




Above left. Magnis ea volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccull amendita aut lant milibuscidus.

Above right. Volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibu scidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccu.





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Below left. Magnis ea volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccull amendita aut lant milibuscidus.

Below right. Volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibu scidus et omnim sequ aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccu.

Opposite. Magnis ea volupta tiosand aereruptaes et et postrum ilignatem aut lant milibuscidus et pore laccull amendita aut lant milibuscidus.

