

## The Monduit Collection

Works from this collection are on display on the first floor of the guest wing and in the chapel.

### A dynasty of leadsmiths (1867-1970)

Stimulated by the architects, the Monduit workshops were able to revive lead-working techniques. These consist of hammering a sheet of lead or copper on a die in order to make lighter, hollow decorations with cut-out shapes to decorate monumental roofs. The greatest architects and sculptors (such as Viollet-le-Duc, Garnier, Bartholdi, and Petitgrand) entrusted the Monduit workshops with the restoration or creation of works such as the spire of Notre-Dame-de-Paris, the great lantern on the dome at the Paris Opera house, the spire on Amiens Cathedral, the Statue of Liberty in New York, the Lion of Belfort, the Archangel Michael on top of the spire at the Mont-Saint-Michel Abbey and the work on the roof of the Pierrefonds Castle.

### Major works

There are major works on display at Pierrefonds thanks to the donation made by Mrs. Pasquier-Monduit. The items displayed are not “copies” but true duplicates made by the Monduit workshops at the time the actual orders were supplied, to be put on public display at the Universal Exhibitions.

## Glossary

**Appanage:** the part of the royal estate given to the youngest members of the House of France to compensate for their exclusion from the throne.  
**Art Nouveau:** inspired by nature, this late 19th- and early 20th-century art movement favoured a new aestheticism contrasting with 19th-century styles which echoed those of previous centuries (Neo-Gothical, Neo-Renaissance, etc).

**Machicolation:** a stone overhanging gallery with openings in the floor for missiles to be shot downwards.

**Napoleon III:** the nephew of Napoleon I, president of the Second Republic before leading a coup d'état in December 1851 and imposing the Second Empire.

**Preux, Preuses (Worthies):** arising in the Middle Ages, the theme of the Worthies was inspired by characters drawn from the Old Testament, Classical times and the Middle Ages. They elevated the ideals of chivalry.

## Practical information

Visit takes on average: 1 hour  
 Guided tours.  
 Tours suitable for disabled visitors.



The Centre des monuments nationaux publishes a collection of guidebooks about French monuments, translated into several languages. Éditions du patrimoine publications are on sale in the bookshop-giftshop.

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# Pierrefonds Castle

English

## Viollet-le-Duc's vision of the Middle Ages

### The castle

In 1393, Louis of Orleans, Charles V's second son, had a fortified residence built near Compiègne. Pierrefonds was designed to keep an eye on trade between Flanders and Burgundy, which were the fiefdoms of the Dukes of Burgundy, who were rivals of the Orleans. Later on the citadel remained an appanage to the family.

### The derelict castle

In 1616, Louis XIII laid a fatal siege to Pierrefonds Castle, taking it then dismantling it. This great ruin was forgotten until it was bought by Napoleon I in 1810.

### The renovated castle

The growing interest in Romantic ruins in the 19th century induced Napoleon III\* to turn Pierrefonds into an occasional residence, then a museum which would be open to the public. In 1857, he entrusted the restoration work to the architect Viollet-le-Duc, who applied his architectural doctrine of the Middle Ages to this site, making Pierrefonds into a genuine innovation. After his death in 1879, his son-in-law, Ouradou, continued this work until he died in 1884.

\* Explanations overleaf.

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A Welcome desk

Ground floor

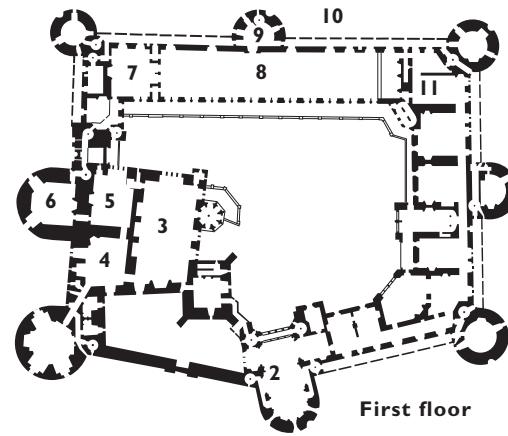
## The great courtyard

The courtyard, with its Renaissance-style decor, features the following: to the south-west, the tower used for apartments; to the north-west, the main building with the state rooms; to the north-east, the kitchen wing with the belfry; and to the south, the chapel and supplies courtyard.

- 1 Inside **the portico** there are three capitals by Viollet-le-Duc, illustrating the *Roman de Renart*.
- 2 **The chapel** is the only known religious building with a pulpit above the choir. On the central pillar of the doorway, Viollet-le-Duc is represented in pilgrim's clothes.

## The keep

- 3 **The reception room**, on the first floor, is sumptuously decorated. On the ceiling, the wooden sculptures inspired by the plant kingdom are almost 50 years ahead of the art nouveau\* style.



First floor

- 4 **The study** contains Viollet-le-Duc's plaster cast models, which he used to make the statues in the castle. This room is not finished.
- 5 **The emperor's dressing room** has wood panelling with sculptured upper sections.
- 6 **The emperor's bedchamber** is decorated with a painted frieze showing scenes from the life of a 14th-century knight. The sequence begins to the right of the fireplace.

## The state rooms

- 7 **The hunting room** is an armorial antechamber.
- 8 **The salle des Preuses\***, a former courtroom, embodies the luxury of feasting during the Second Empire. It is dominated by a large orchestra gallery. At one end, there is a double-hearth fireplace decorated with statues of the Empress Eugénie and her ladies-in-waiting shown with the features of the "Worthies"\*. The two circular benches designed by Viollet-le-Duc are the only remaining pieces of furniture following the removal of the collection of mediaeval armour belonging to Napoleon III.

## Medieval design

The towers were rebuilt from old stonework, providing the castle with a rare defence system: a double top for the walls and towers, two wall-walks on two levels, part within the wall itself and part on top, with the machicolations\*.

- 9 **The Alexander tower** or torture tower is in 14th-century style with its bare walls. The dungeons are at the foot of the tower.
- 10 **The wall-walk**, covered by a roof to afford protection from missiles, provides defence in several directions.
- 11 **The barracks rooms** are thought to have been used to train guards.
- 12 **The Renaissance-style double spiral staircase** has two stairways which never meet.
- 13 **The guardroom** or mercenaries' room. This was designed by Viollet-le-Duc as a shelter for the soldiers who were being watched from the gallery on the half floor above. There is still some stonework from the 15th-century castle.
- 14 **A stone model of the castle** was made for the Universal Exhibition in 1878 by Wyganowski, the inspector of works. A huge square shape, the upper crenellated enclosure is bordered by 8 towers, each of which bears the name of one of the Worthies\*: King Arthur, Alexander the Great, Godfrey of Bouillon, Joshua, Hector, Judas Maccabaeus, Charlemagne and Julius Caesar.

\* Explanations overleaf.