



THE NOTRE-DAME DE PARIS CATHEDRAL CONSTRUCTION SITE

The completion of the protection work, the key considerations
of the restoration and the challenges of the reopening

Second assessment

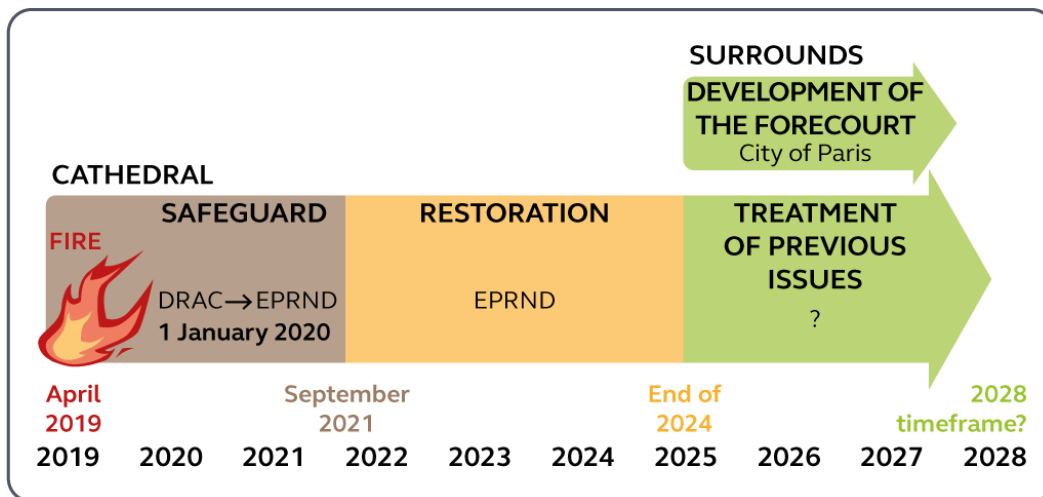
Public thematic report

October 2022

Executive Summary

Since 1 January 2020, the conservation and restoration work on Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral, following the fire on 15 April 2019, has been entrusted to the public agency *Rebâtir Notre-Dame de Paris* (“Rebuild Notre-Dame de Paris”). It was set up for this purpose and its main objective – formalised in its contract on targets and performance – is to reopen the cathedral for worship and visitors by the end of 2024. The huge wave of generosity and sponsorship after the fire has continued with the confirmation of pledges (98% of which are now contracted), the arrival of new donations and the arrangement of skill-based sponsorship for the public agency. Cash donations totalled €841.5m at the end of 2021, with donations in kind and skills sponsorship totalling at least €5m. These help to reduce the financial cost of the work and cover part of the work on public information and promoting heritage professions.

Timetable for the main phases of the work



Source: Court of Accounts

Donations from the national contribution, collected by the foundations designated by law, are paid to the public institution as the work progresses, in accordance with the provisions of the agreements signed with the Ministry of Culture. They account for three quarters of the funds needed to finance the project ownership and the works. Donations collected directly by the agency make up the balance of the funding.

The Court, which in this report follows up on the recommendations made in its previous report of 2020¹, notes that only the rent for the head office is subsidised by the Ministry of Culture from budgetary appropriations.

Protection work completed under satisfactory conditions despite lead-related constraints

The work to protect the cathedral, undertaken immediately after the fire by the Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs of Île-de-France, then by the public agency, under the urgent emergency regime facilitating the award of contracts, was completed in 2021 at a total of €151m. This amount is slightly lower than the budget that was revised in 2020 to take into account all of

¹ Court of Accounts, *Conservation and restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral. First assessment*, public thematic report, September 2020.

the damage caused by the fire, the extension of the project due to the pandemic and, above all, the consequences of the lead pollution after the fire.

The treatment of this pollution was successfully carried out and is a priority for the agency, although the lack of precise regulations applicable to lead pollution has meant that the provisions intended for housing and industry have had to be applied, which are partly unsuitable for work on historic monuments. This lack of regulation also applies to the possible treatment of rainwater after the work has been completed.

Restoration work should continue after reopening to address issues that predate the fire

The studies undertaken starting in March 2020 on the cathedral's state of health and the diagnosis established by the chief architect of historic monuments in 2021 have enabled the adoption of a master plan for the reconstruction and restoration work required to reopen the cathedral in 2024. The choice of an identical reconstruction of the spire, as close as possible to the pre-fire state for the roof structure and in line with the initial materials, was made and unanimously approved by the national commission for heritage and architecture.

The estimated cost in May 2022 for all of this work, including provisions and the enhancement of the site and its expertise, is €552m, in addition to the €151m incurred during the conservation phase. This work also concerns the treatment of certain issues that predate the fire and are closely linked to the restoration of the cathedral's interior and the clean-up of lead pollution.

Restoration of the cathedral, financial forecasts (in €m) in May 2022

Expenditure items	Estimated amounts
Restoration phase ensuring the reopening of the cathedral in 2024	
Project management and other intellectual services	59.7
Works	334.7
Showcasing the site and its expertise	5.6
Project ownership	19.5
Insurance	7.1
Provision for contingencies and unforeseen events	38.6
Provision for timetable risks	20.2
TOTAL AMOUNT	485.5
Provision for price increases	66.5
TOTAL AMOUNT EARMARKED FOR THE RESTORATION PHASE ENSURING THE REOPENING OF THE CATHEDRAL IN 2024	552

Source: EP-RNDP

It also provides an opportunity to improve reception in the cathedral, which is not financed by the public agency and the national contribution, and is funded either by the Centre des

Monuments Nationaux or through donations received for this purpose by the Notre Dame Foundation.

The estimated cost of the restoration work, including various provisions for contingencies and price revisions, should leave a substantial amount available, the exact amount of which will be determined after the results of all calls for tenders. This available amount could, with the agreement of the major patrons and foundations, be used to treat pre-fire issues on the exterior parts of the cathedral. It must be possible to assess these issues and prioritise emergencies before the 2024 deadline in order to assess the cost and define the financing arrangements. These could be inspired by the partnership mode set up with the Notre Dame Foundation before the fire.

Estimated amount of restoration work related to pre-fire issues (in €m)

<i>Issues to address</i>	Estimated amounts
<i>Restoration of the sacristy and presbytery</i>	13
<i>Exterior restoration of the forechoir, including arch-buttresses</i>	50
<i>Exterior restoration of the nave (North and South)</i>	30
<i>External restoration of the transept (north and south transept)</i>	25
<i>Cleaning and restoration of the western pillar</i>	15

Source: EP-RNDP

Questions requiring rapid responses to ensure a reopening under satisfactory conditions in 2024

The public agency, which has obtained the temporary transfer of the cathedral’s state management, has undertaken studies to plan ahead for the monument’s reopening. As recommended by the Court in its previous audit², this would provide an opportunity to resolve situations inherited from the past, which make its management complex, and to bring it into line with the legal provisions on religious buildings. In this context, the role of the Centre des Monuments Nationaux, a signatory of the October 2019 agreement with central government on the management of cathedrals, will need to be clarified during the discussions. Similarly, it is important for all of the human and financial resources necessary for safety to be determined before the reopening to the public and for the role of the Bâtiments de France architect, curator of the monument, to be specified in the context of the agreement transferring the property’s management to the public agency.

The decree establishing the agency gave it a strong executive presidency, as well as a set of particularly active advisory bodies that contribute to the quality of the decision-making processes. The existence of an audit committee open to outside figures, which is unusual in public administrative agencies, is an asset in terms of the quality of its work, as is the role played by the foundations, even beyond their simple obligation to inform donors in the works assessment process. The agency’s operating budget is under control and its staffing levels are within the target of 40 jobs set when it was created. However, it is struggling to retain some of its staff for positions subject to strong competition. This is not yet affecting the preparation and proper execution of contracts.

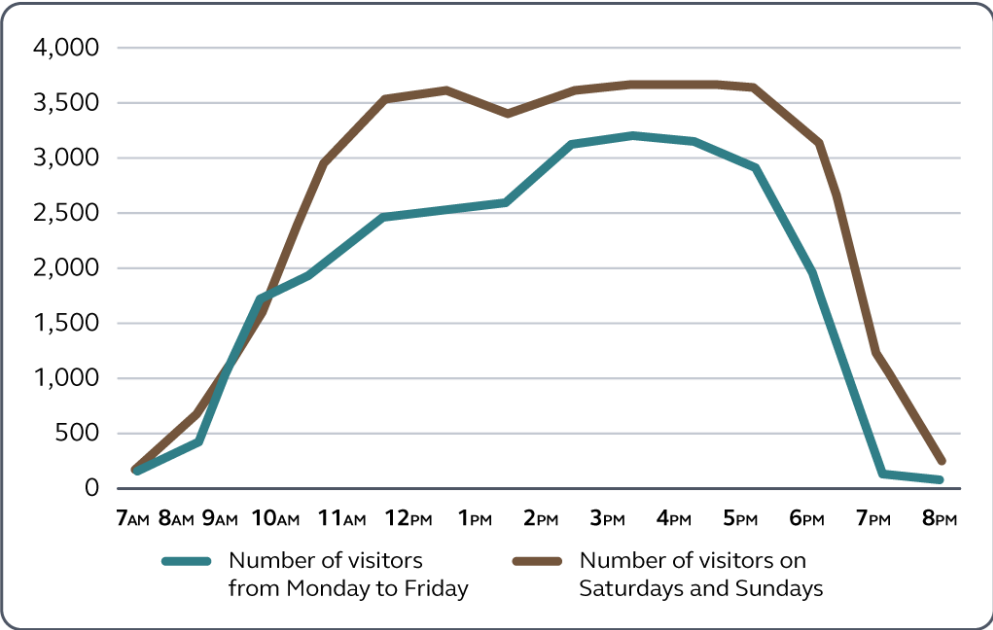
The regular provision of information by the foundations and the public agency to the many donors, in various forms, meets the legal obligations and enables them to maintain a connection

² Court of Accounts, *Conservation and restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral. First assessment, op.cit.*

with the cathedral’s restoration work. It also provides an opportunity for the public agency to promote art and heritage trades, in accordance with one of its missions, to which it plans to allocate significant resources, thanks in particular to the sale of the head office of the Institut Supérieur des Métiers, two thirds of the proceeds from which have been passed to it.

The conditions to ensure the reopening of Notre-Dame in 2024 therefore seem to be in place. The risks to the timetable have been analysed in detail and are regularly monitored. The cathedral, which will be returned to use as a place of worship by this date, will also see a growing flow of visitors, which could reach an estimated 14 million, two million more than before the fire. This would make Notre-Dame de Paris one of the most visited monuments in France. These larger visitor numbers, which the Court recently noted had consequences for the conservation of monumental heritage and the quality of visits³, constitutes a future liability.

Average number of visitors per day

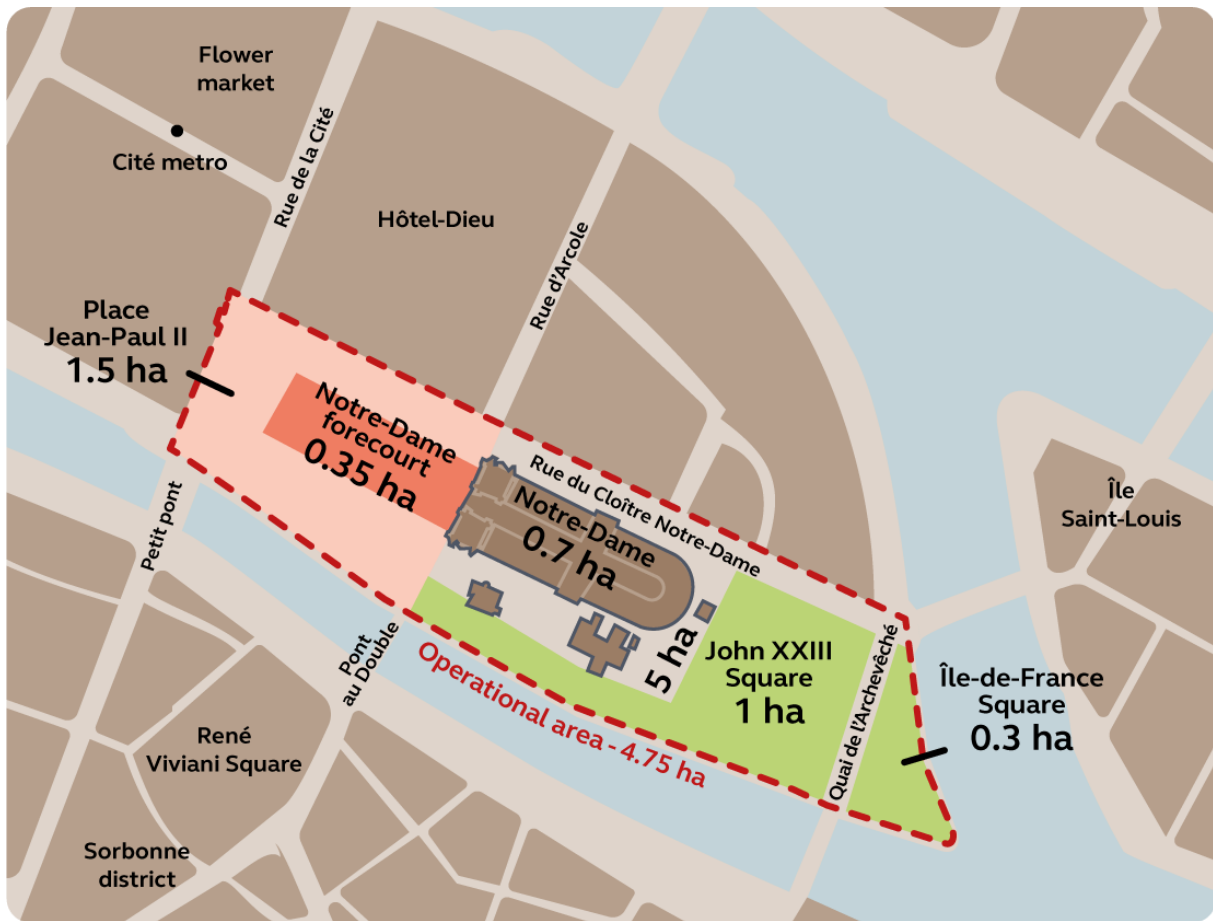


Source: Court of Auditors according to the Rectorate of Notre-Dame de Paris
 Reading note: extrapolation to 11,500,000 annual visitors, i.e. 29,000 visitors per day from Monday to Friday and 39,000 visitors/day on Saturdays and Sundays.

Beyond this question, the public authorities, chief among them central government, must rapidly initiate a process of reflection on the future of this prestigious site. Before the fire, the reception conditions at Notre-Dame de Paris were not commensurate with one of the most iconic and visited monuments in France, whether in terms of tourist reception, cultural mediation or security.

³ Court of Accounts, *Central government policy in favour of monumental heritage*, thematic public report, June 2022.

Area to be developed



Source: Court of Auditors based on a presentation to the National Commission for Heritage and Architecture (CNPA)

This is why the Court calls on the Ministry of Culture to rapidly initiate discussions with the various partners concerned in order to prepare a new reception framework worthy of this prestigious monument.

Action taken in response to the 2020 audit recommendations

Recommendation No. 1: Without waiting for the cathedral to reopen, initiate discussions between all parties concerned by the ownership and operation of the monument, in particular to implement the provisions of the agreement of 18 October 2019 concluded between the Ministry of Culture and the Centre des Monuments Nationaux (CMN). (*Ministry of Culture, Centre des Monuments Nationaux*).

Not implemented

Recommendation No. 2: Conduct an inventory of all objects contained in the cathedral in order to specify the responsibilities for their restoration (*Ministry of Culture*).

Implementation

Recommendation no. 3: Initiate an administrative investigation into the circumstances surrounding the fire of 15 April 2019, failing which, immediately identify together with all of the stakeholders concerned, beyond the ministry's departments alone, the lessons to learn operationally from this incident at all levels (*Ministry of Culture*).

Refusal to implement for administrative investigation, implementation on operational lessons

Recommendation No. 4: Set up a cost accounting system within the public agency to provide each of the organisations collecting donations with detailed information on the use of funds from the national campaign and to meet the obligations of French legislation on public generosity, as well as the specific rules of foreign foundations (*Ministry of Culture, public agency*).

Implementation

Recommendation No. 5: Provide directly from the budget to the public agency in charge of the conservation and restoration of Notre-Dame an annual subsidy for public service charges intended to finance all of its operating costs (*Ministry of Culture*).

Partial implementation for rent only

New recommendations

1. Define the legal framework applicable to heritage sites faced with the presence and use of lead (*Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty, Ministry of Labour, Full Employment and Integration, Ministry of Health and Prevention*).
2. Arbitrate the entire restoration programme for the cathedral and, to this end, before the 2024 deadline, conduct an inventory of all of the monument's issues, prioritise the urgent treatments and establish their costs and financing (*EP-RNDP, Ministry of Culture*).
3. Determine the conditions for operating the cathedral once it is reopened for worship and visits, and establish a framework for consultation between all stakeholders (*Ministry of Culture*).
4. Designate a single operational security manager (*Ministry of Culture*).
5. Immediately draw up a development plan for the cathedral, commensurate with the importance of this monument and the expected level of visitor numbers (*Ministry of Culture, CMN*).
6. Integrate the development of the forecourt into an overall plan for the enhancement of the cathedral and ensure that the schedule of works is compatible with the restoration work (*Ministry of Culture, CMN*).
7. Examine the possibilities of setting up a museum on the work and the methods of its management (*Ministry of Culture, CMN*).