

THE PARISIAN FACELIFT

Tuesday, March 3rd 2095

This semester for my grandsons History of Architecture elective his professor asked him to research a building in the city which he considered to have had the greatest influence in shaping the Parisian society of today. While many of his classmates picked buildings such as the Eiffel tower or the historic renovation of the Notre dame cathedral, he remained undecided. Upon his request for help, I couldn't help but to think most fondly about the *Chambre des Notaires* building.

The *Chambre des Notaires* building has been around since 1856 and though in its initial years it didn't flaunt too much historical status with its mostly privatized purpose, the building patiently waited for the day in which it would serve a greater purpose. It was as though the building was aware of its coming afterlife. Surely enough in the year 2020 at the height of many controversial nationwide discussions regarding the Historic Legacy of the city's architecture in the face of social and environmental change, the *Chambre des Notaires* building would forever be transformed into the site of the *Parisian Facelift Project*.

The sole basis of this project was to bridge the existing gap between the memory of architecture and its outdated relevance in light of the many issues our city faced. As I unearthed a series of old newspapers documenting the projects evolution, I found it particularly enlightening to reflect on the words Found in an old archived edition from 2020 of *La Petite République* which established mankind's undeniable reality as creatures who dwell on and romanticize the past. Rightfully so, If we think about the history of architecture, it has always seemed to have periods where it tends to go back to the past to repeat itself and find inspiration in earlier movements. It is almost as though the history of architecture has always moved in a nonlinear way constantly looking to regain the past. Despite the historical failure of many of these attempts which romanticized the past and which few times took the social and environmental sphere of those times into consideration, there still seemed and still seems to be today a generalized nostalgia which keeps society wanting to go back to the "good old days". *The Parisian Facelift* was in this conversation a metaphorical and at the same time literal creation of two inversely overlapping timelines which fused this nostalgia and inability to let go of the past with the undeniable necessity to respond through architecture to Paris' expanding social and environmental issues. One of those timelines dealt with the history and future needs of the interior of the building as it related to the profession of notarism and its evolution while the other with the exterior of the building as it related to the diverse needs of the city. By simply inverting one and overlapping the other each phase of the project was able to link two distinct periods of time.

Since then almost 100 years have passed and moved throughout several phases of the project's sensible growth and evolution. Each phase responding to the most relevant social and environmental issues of its times while maintaining the historical image of each previous phase. Though I wasn't around at the exact time of the projects birth, I have been witness to many of its greatest achievements and have seen it shape the lives of Paris' citizens for the better. I have no doubt this legacy will carry on beyond my time and well into grandson's who currently finds himself researching the *Parisian Facelift*.