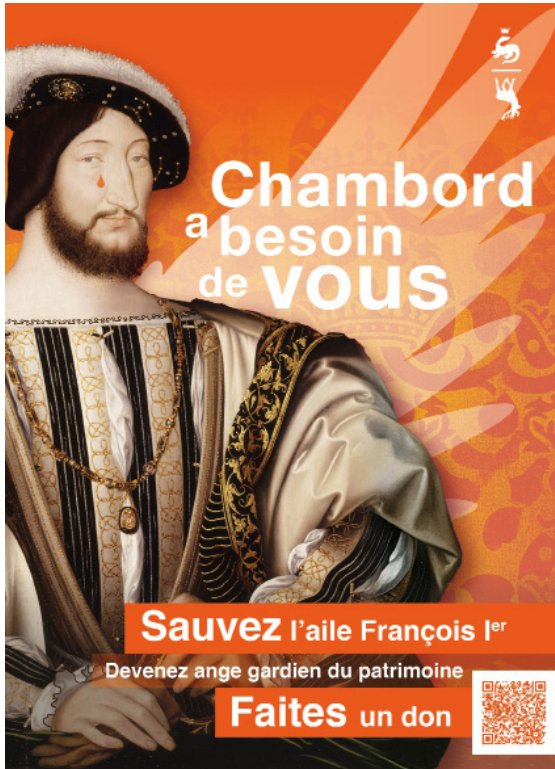


## CHAMBORD: OPERATION “RESCUE” OF THE FRANÇOIS I WING



For five centuries, Chambord has stood as one of the crown jewels of world heritage. However today, the monument faces a serious threat: the François I Wing, entirely closed to the public, is becoming increasingly fragile—primarily due to climate change. Cracks, foundation instability, and roof deterioration are just some of the alarming signs. An estimated €37 million is required to restore this royal wing, including €12 million for urgent safety measures.

Given the scale of this challenge, the commitment of the State as owner, private patrons, and the National Estate of Chambord is imperative. To enable all enthusiasts to play their part, Chambord launched a nationwide fundraising campaign on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025: “Save the François I Wing—Become a Guardian Angel of Chambord.”

### A NATIONWIDE APPEAL FOR DONATIONS

As a public industrial and commercial institution, Chambord is a pioneer in diversifying its resources, achieving a self-financing rate of 105% in 2024—a level rarely matched by other French public entities. This economic model enables Chambord to cover its operating expenses, including staff salaries, with minimal state support.

Chambord will therefore allocate €6 million from its own funds to launch urgent restoration work on the François I Wing. To finance the remainder, Chambord is seeking support from patrons and major donors. At the same time, the Estate is appealing to the public through a participatory fundraising campaign launched on September 19, 2025, during the European Heritage Days, under the theme “Architectural Heritage.”

The French public—whose growing numbers make Chambord the most visited castle in France after Versailles—has demonstrated a deep attachment to this Renaissance masterpiece. Chambord is counting on that bond to help safeguard this unique heritage.

“Thanks to its exceptional self-financing capacity, Chambord will fund 50% of the first emergency phase of the restoration project. However, even this virtuous economic model cannot cover the largest undertaking in Chambord’s history.

Today, we raise a solemn warning: what is at stake at Chambord goes far beyond its walls. It is about preserving the integrity of a monument listed among France’s first Historic Monuments and listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1981. Helping us restore this wing means saving a fragment of the world’s beauty and refusing to let our heritage vanish.”

**Pierre Dubreuil,**  
CEO of the Domaine national de Chambord

Chambord is launching its first nationwide appeal for individual donations.

To donate: [collecte.chambord.org](https://collecte.chambord.org)



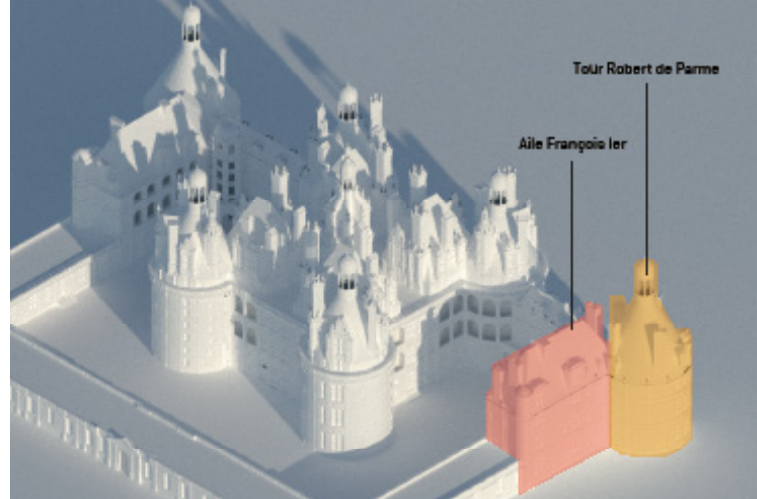
## THE FRANÇOIS I WING UNDER THREAT

Built between 1539 and 1545 on the most waterlogged part of the estate, the François I Wing of the Château de Chambord — home to the king's private apartments and council chamber — is facing an alarming state of deterioration. Though this issue has been known and documented for over twenty years, its progression has significantly accelerated in recent years.

The first visible signs of structural damage emerged in the early 2000s. Since 2023, nearly the entire wing has been closed to the public for safety reasons. Over the summer, new cracks appeared in the adjoining Robert de Parme Tower, indicating that the stress is now affecting the broader structure.

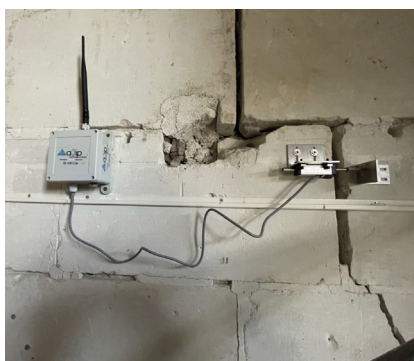
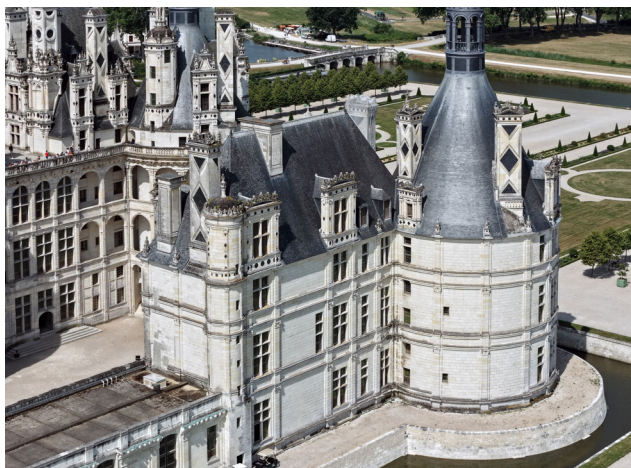
Studies carried out since 2022 confirm that the deterioration stems from various phases of construction and has been worsened by recent climate-related events. Repeated flooding and prolonged droughts have caused instability in certain floors and structural weakening across the wing.

This situation underscores the deep interdependence between the castle and its surrounding natural environment. Preserving the ecosystem — particularly the natural water system of forest ponds, streams, and wetlands — is now vital to safeguarding Chambord's architectural heritage.



“Floors, foundations, roofing — restoring the François I Wing means undertaking a comprehensive overhaul. This project marks the beginning of a wider plan for development and renewal. Conservation, visitor experience, enhancement of natural spaces — the François I Wing sets the stage for a major transformation. It is our responsibility to preserve and pass on this legacy.”

**Pierre Dubreuil,**  
CEO of the Domaine national de Chambord





## A €37 MILLION PROJECT FOR THE FUTURE

Under the supervision of Maël de Quelen, Chief Architect for Historic Monuments, this ambitious restoration project is set to begin in 2026, starting with essential safety and emergency works. At the same time, a full restoration of the François I Wing will be launched. Key phases of the project will include structural consolidation of the masonry, restoration of Renaissance sculptures, and reconstruction of the timber roof using traditional period techniques. A third phase will focus on reimagining the museum layout and scenography.

By 2032, the François I Wing will once again be open to the public through a redesigned visitor circuit. The new exhibition will shed light on the life and reign of King François I, who commissioned the castle, and on the key figures of the Renaissance. The space will also serve as a platform for dialogue and exploration of the “new renaissances” — the major cultural, environmental, and societal challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A new auditorium will be built to host a wide range of events — conferences, symposia, and concerts — welcoming thinkers, scientists, artists, and economic stakeholders. The restored wing will become a space for reflection and exchange, exploring the relationship between humanity and nature, and fostering a renewed sense of humanism.

This transformative initiative is part of Chambord's Master Plan for Restoration and Development, currently in preparation. The plan will guide and prioritize work across the estate over the next decade, including:

- The castle itself,
- Marshal Saxe's stables,
- The surrounding grounds,
- and the vast forest estate.

### PHASE 1

#### Safety measures: €12 million

structural consolidation essential to preserving the integrity of the castle: regeneration of foundations, treatment of cracks, chaining of beams, reinforcement of partition walls and floors.

### PHASE 2

#### Complete restoration: €15 million

Restoration of the facades, roofing, sculptures, and potentially accessibility improvements for people with reduced mobility.

### PHASE 3

#### Museography and scenography: €10 million

Museographic circuit covering the highlights of François I's reign, knight king, humanist king, prince of the Renaissance, patron of the arts and letters, father of hunters



## MAËL DE QUÉLEN, NEW CHIEF ARCHITECT FOR HISTORIC MONUMENTS AT THE DOMAINE NATIONAL DE CHAMBORD

On March 19, 2025, the French Ministry of Culture appointed Maël de Quelen as Chief Architect for Historic Monuments for the Château de Chambord. A renowned specialist in the restoration of French heritage, Maël de Quelen has overseen major conservation projects, including work at the Palais du Luxembourg and the Medici Fountain in Paris. Her in-depth knowledge of the Loir-et-Cher region is a key asset for Chambord, where she now takes over from François Chatillon and Philippe Villeneuve — respectively appointed to lead the restoration of the Louvre and Notre-Dame de Paris. Her appointment marks a new chapter in the conservation of one of France's most iconic landmarks, as Chambord embarks on an ambitious restoration and transformation plan for the coming decade.

## ABOUT THE DOMAINE NATIONAL DE CHAMBORD

Chambord has been inspiring admiration and fascination throughout the world for over 500 years. Listed as one of France's first historic monuments in 1840 and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1981, it is one of the most stunning Renaissance buildings and the largest walled park in Europe, covering 5,440 hectares. The second most visited castle in France, Chambord welcomes over a million visitors a year. Owned by the French state since 1930, Chambord is a public industrial and commercial establishment under the supervision of the ministries responsible for culture, agriculture, and the environment, and under the high protection of the President of the Republic. The establishment was incorporated into the Grand Parc de Rambouillet by decree of the Council of State on June 1, 2018. The Board of Directors is chaired by Philippe Donnet. Since January 2023, the public institution has been headed by Pierre Dubreuil.

## Domaine national de Chambord

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