

FOCUS

ARCHITECTURAL PATCHWORK

CHALONS-EN-CHAMPAGNE



VILLES
& PAYS
D'ART &
D'HISTOIRE



MEDIEVAL ARCHITECTURE

WOOD

Wood remains the most used material in the architecture of Châlons. When people mention «timber-framed walls», one thinks about the visible facades with wooden beams, filled up with mud and straw. But soon the wooden beams are out of fashion, and are covered with a coating. This coating also helps prevent fires. Many a house in Châlons have wooden beams hidden underneath this kind of coating.

BOTH VERSIONS CAN BE SEEN PLACE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE.

The Place de la République used to be called the Place du Marché au Blé (the Wheat Market Place). The actual structure of these houses is a reflection of the commercial aspect of the place. High in built, the houses are both places to live and places to work. The various levels are in fact functional separations. The lower ground with its cantilevering is dedicated to trade (shop, workshop, stockroom...). The upper floors are used as living quarters, and the top floor is a place for storage of equipment and food...

DID YOU SAY «CANTILEVERING»?

Sticking out from the building, the Cantilevering appears as a porch over the street. It shelters the shop based underneath from the bad weather and enables the construction of larger floors above it without paying more tax. In fact, the landlords have to pay an annual tax based on the width of their shop at street level. That's why houses with cantilevering are being built, for economical reasons and to maximise the space above street level.

Focus: Clemangis house

This house belonging to an important citizen was built with wooden beams at the end of the 15th Century and is located in Rue Clémangis (Clémangis street), which is perpendicular to the Rue de la Marne (Marne street). During the urban refurbishments of the 70's, the house is in danger of being destroyed. It is then deconstructed then rebuilt a few years later at its current location in Rue Nicolas Durand (Durand street), a short walk from the museum and from the garden of the Cloister of Notre Dame.



MEDIEVAL ARCHITECTURE

STONE

WOODEN BRIDGES... MADE OF STONE

The bridges made of wood are replaced step by step by bridges made of stone.

The Putte Savatte bridge, now in stone, was made of wood for a long time. Supposedly, in medieval times, it was given its name because of its proximity with the tanners and cobblers corporation and the stench coming out of it... («Putte» comes from «puter» in old French, and means «to stink»).

The Pont de Vaux (Vaux bridge) was also a wooden bridge initially, and placed at a lower level than its current one. It is destroyed and rebuilt during the 18th century as a single arch stone construction. This one can only be seen from one side. The development of the Place Godart on the 19th century hides part of it.

THE USE OF STONE IN THE SACRED ARCHITECTURE

The portal of the church of Saint-Alpin dates from the 12th century. Above the main central door, a carved frieze rest upon two human heads. Statues stand on each side of the door: one represents Saint André with a book, the

other one, Saint Alpin, bishop of Châlons. Legend has it that Saint Alpin met the Huns, headed by the terrible Attila, and arranged for the city to be spared from an attack..

Let's take a look → The southern portal of the collegiate Notre-Dame-en-Vaux, located near the entrance of the church, was hammered during the French Revolution. Imagine this: at the centre, a majestic Christ is surrounded by four evangelists, John, Matthew, Mark and Luke, symbolised by the eagle, the angel, the lion and the bull.

Focus: the Saint Etienne cathedral, a true testimony of the architectural evolution!

Its construction starts in 1120 and only ends... five centuries later. Financial difficulties, modifications during the construction and destructions have slowed down the work. The North tower, the actual entrance of the cathedral, remains one of the only example of the Roman style from the early days of the construction. The remaining of the construction work was done in a Gothic style, then in a Baroque style.



CLASSIC ARCHITECTURE

STONE, BRICK, CHALK

The Savonnières stone (chalk stone originating from Lorraine), the chalk or the brick are often used for construction work from the 16th and 17th century, especially for private mansions.

DID YOU SAY PRIVATE MANSION?

The private mansion appears in Châlons during the 17th century, and reflects the high social rank of its sole owner. One usually enters such a place through its impressive crafted porch, enabling the arrival of carriages in the courtyard.

One such example, built in chalk, can be found at **2 rue de Chastillon**. Other luxurious private mansions made in stone of Savonnières appear there and then, such as *the Hôtel Dubois de Crancé*, located next to the Hôtel de Ville (town hall). Built by Pierre Gargam, treasurer of France during the 17th century, it was extended during the 18th century.

The Hôtel Nicolas Durand, at 68 rue Léon Bourgeois (68 Léon Bourgeois street), is now hosting the «Châlons, Ville d'art et d'histoire» space. Previously the old Hôtel de l'Ecu, it was rebuilt at the beginning of the 19th century. The façade looking over the street was built

with Savonnières stone. It is based on the repeat of identical elements, as to accentuate the horizontality. The complete lack of mouldings and decorations on the carriage entrance demonstrates a form of modernity.

Let's take a look → Go through the porch; the façade overlooking the courtyard is made of chalk squares and possibly of recycled materials, such as the Faloise stone, which was no longer used for constructions since the medieval era. The head of a man coming out of a wall can be seen from underneath the porch, a potential remnant from the Hôtel de l'Ecu.

Focus: the Garinet home, the oldest stone home in Châlons

The 13 rue Pasteur (Pasteur street) has evolved with its successive owners. It was given to the city at the end of the 19th century by Jules and Marguerite Garinet, and is today one of its three municipal museums. An atmosphere of bourgeoisie is still present there. Yet it is the oldest house in Châlons built in stone. It was built in the 16th century by Claude Raulet, the King's representative, and has kept a large part of its original architecture.

CLASSIC ARCHITECTURE

STONE, BRICK, CHALK

The meulière stone arrived in Châlons at the end of the 19th century. With its rough and irregular appearance, it gives a playful effect to the decor and gives a «girafe skin» aspect to the façades.

This stone is initially used in the construction of houses for wealthy citizens on the left bank. It is then also used for the construction of houses for workers on the left bank. The Jeanne d'Arc avenue, the Vaubécourt boulevard and also the Chevalier and Kellermann streets, among others, are shining examples of the use of this material.

Focus: setting from the Champagne region

Chalk is a fragile, brittle and permeable material. In order to make it stronger, it is often associated with bricks, known for its strength.

Let's take a look → The façade made of bricks or alternate chalk layers sometimes represent simple horizontal lines or create more original or complex geometrical motifs.

The Sainte-Marie convent, now housing the departmental council, has a checkerboard façade overlooking the banks of the Mau. After the Second World War, bricks are used on their own for the great reconstruction works. At the end of the 1940's, in Jean Jaures street for instance, tall three-storey buildings made of bricks are being built.



CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

METAL AND GLASS

The indoor Market

Part of the Mau is covered in 1882 to gain some space that is needed for the construction of new halls.

A mix of iron, cast iron and glass, the indoor market does remind us of the parisian halls from the architect named Victor Baltard. Aesthetically pleasing and cheaper to make with these materials, this market is typical of the metallic constructions from the end of the 19th century.

Let's take a look → The decorations of the indoor market are quite original: the city armories are represented along with large fruit baskets. Mouth of lions - symbolising the Châlons motto «glory and strength» - are placed at the top of the outside columns.

Focus: Art Nouveau Vs Art Deco

There is sometimes some confusions between the two, even though dozens of years separate these trends.

Art Nouveau was developed at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the

20th century, before the First World War. This style is promoting modernity and breaks up with a very symmetrical and stark architecture. Nature is an inspiration, and one tries to combine the beauty and the usefulness.

2 Rue Croix des Teinturiers « À Figaro »

This stone building from early 20th century is characterised by its curved windows and its cornice decorated with a floral ceramic tiled frieze.

The international modern and decorative arts exhibition of Paris in 1925 gave **the Art Deco movement its name**. After the First World War, the trend advocates a return to order, to tradition, and breaks up with the Art Nouveau style, rich in floral patterns with curves and volutes.

The 7 cours d'Ormesson

Built with yellow bricks, chalk stones and concrete, it is the nicest example in Châlons of this architectural style: refined with clear geometric design and simple motifs.

CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

CONCRETE

Reinforced concrete, made of concrete and steel bars, appears at the beginning of the 20th century. Concrete is, as a matter of fact, an old material. A mix of limestone, clay, sand and water, it was already used in ancient Egypt and in ancient Rome.

The historical Circus

This building is one of the last eight stone circus in France. It was decided that it should be built in concrete, a novel process of building at the end of the 19th century. The decor on the façade is a reminder of the many activities of the circus: horses jumping out of the pediment, clown heads breaking through a hoop, juggling balls, musical instruments... The circus has been fully renovated in 2010 as to be adapted to the requirements of shows and artistic education. Colours, a recreated decor and the addition of the city's armories, previously ripped up during a storm in 1999, have given the circus its former glory. Today, the historical circus is hosting the CNAC, the Centre National des Arts du Cirque (the National Centre for the Circus Arts).

Focus: the large housing estates

The bombings of the Second World War bring about a lot of rehabilitation and

reconstructions. Thousands of housings are being built: it's the birth of the large housing estates. The districts of La Bidée and Schmit are built from 1947. The suburbs are preferred to the town centre from the 1950's. The urbanisation carries on from the south of the city: the future Verbeau district is built in the 1960's.

The name «Verbeaux» already existed in the middle ages; it might come from «vert bois» (green wood) and reminds us of the existence of the bishop's forests in that area.

The collective housing transform the landscape in Châlons. It's an architectural and technological revolution. These housing estates provide access to running water, lifts, garbage chutes...

The architecture in Châlons is a real patchwork, which gives the city a very original and singular heritage.

A single building could be made of a combination of styles and materials.

Between tradition and innovation, the architecture from the 21st century is inspired by techniques and materials from yesterday and today.

ARCHITECTURE IS NO LONGER A WHIM, A LUXURY OR A CALAMITY, IT HAS BECOME, BUILT IN CONCRETE, STEEL OR THE NETWORKS, OUR HOME.®

Franck HAMMOUTENE, architect and urbanist.

Discover the tale of Châlons-en-Champagne, a city of art and history...

With this document that propose you to discover the city at your own pace.

If you are part of a group

The tourist office of Châlons-en-Champagne proposes tours all year long by reservation. Brochures designed for groups can be send upon request.

The service for the Animation of Architecture and of the Heritage

coordinates the initiatives in Châlons en Champagne, city of art and history. It offers animations for the people of Châlons and for schools all year round, and remains available for any project. You are welcome at the «Châlons, Ville d'art et d'histoire (city of art and history)» space from Tuesday to Saturday 2pm to 6pm. This entirely digital and interactive space will show you the urban evolution of Châlons en Champagne and its territory as well as the specifics aspects of its architecture and heritage.

Information and bookings

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Châlons-en-Champagne belongs to the national network of Villes et pays d'art et d'histoire (Art and history cities and countries)

The ministry of culture and communication, the heritage management office, awards the registered term Villes et Pays d'art et d'histoire (Art and history cities and countries) to local authorities that are creating animations for their heritage. This ensures the level of competency of the guide-lecturers and of the heritage facilitators, as well as the quality of their actions. From ancient remains to the architecture of the 20th century, cities and countries are depicting heritage in all its diversity. Today, a network of 188 cities and countries offer its expertise all over France.

Nearby:

Reims, Langres, Sedan, Troyes, Bar-le-Duc, Charleville-Mézières, Metz, Strasbourg all benefit from the registered term Ville d'art et histoire (cities of art and history).

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