



PARCOURS

THE BELL TOWERS OF ROUEN

MÉTROPOLE ROUEN NORMANDIE



VILLES
& PAYS
D'ART &
D'HISTOIRE

CONTENTS

1	MAPS	4
2	THE HISTORY OF ROUEN'S CHURCHES THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES	8
3	A FEW KEY TERMS ABOUT CHURCHES	13
4	NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL	14
5	SAINT OUEN ABBEY	18
6	CHURCH OF SAINT MACLOU	20
7	CHURCH OF SAINTE JEANNE-D'ARC	22
8	STAINED-GLASS ART IN ROUEN	24
9	CHURCH OF SAINT ROMAIN	28
10	CHURCH OF SAINT PATRICE	30
11	CHURCH OF SAINT GODARD	32
12	CHURCH OF THE MADELEINE	34
13	CHURCH OF SAINT SEVER	36
14	CHURCH OF SAINT GODARD	38
15	CHURCH OF SAINTE CLAIRE	40
16	OTHER CHURCHES IN ROUEN	42

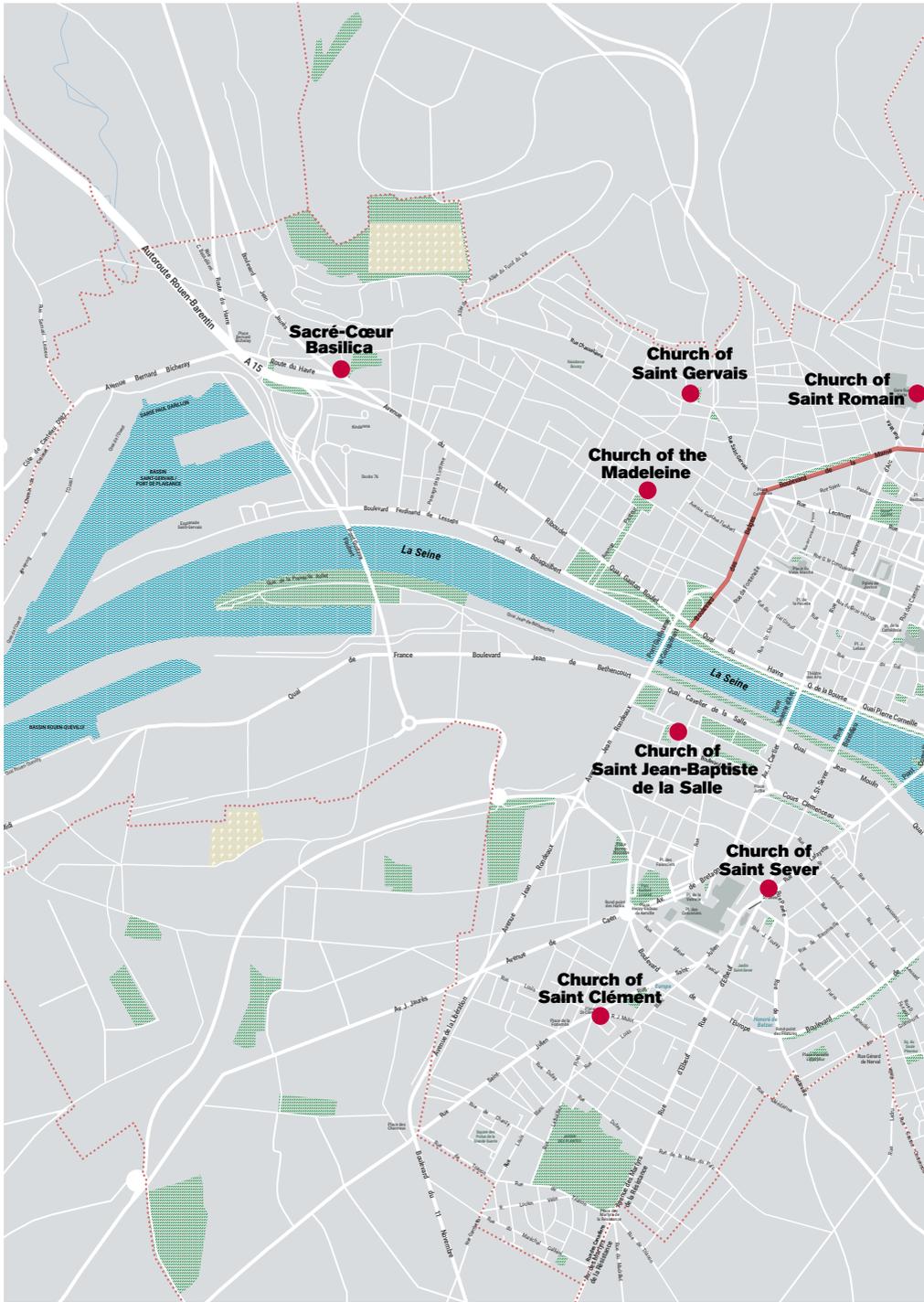
INTRODUCTION

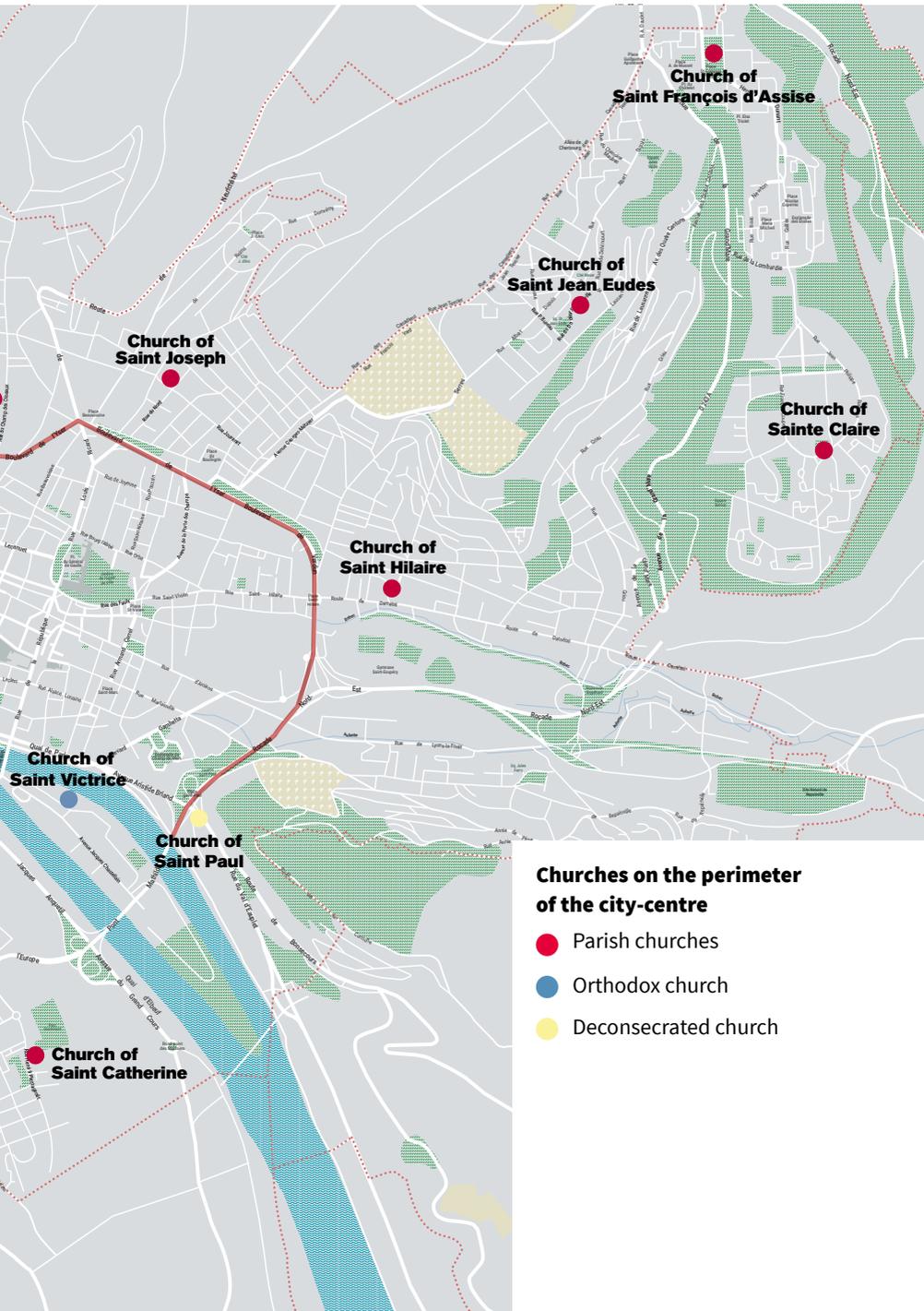
In his 1831 collection *Les feuilles d'automne* the poet Victor Hugo called Rouen the “city of a hundred bells”. The city is indeed famous for its many churches and its Gothic architecture and contains the largest number of churches in any city other than Paris. On the eve of the Revolution, Rouen numbered 104 bell towers including those of parish churches as well as convents and educational institutions run by the Church. Many of these were destroyed during the Revolution, or afterwards as a result of urban projects in the 19th century and damage inflicted during the Second World War. Nevertheless, Rouen still preserves an impressive religious heritage.

Among its bell towers, we often forget the one housed in the belfry of the Gros-Horloge, whose bells chime out civic time in a show of communal independence from religious power.

This itinerary gives you a glimpse of the architectural history of Rouen’s churches. You can refer to the following descriptions to guide you all along the way. Enjoy your visit!

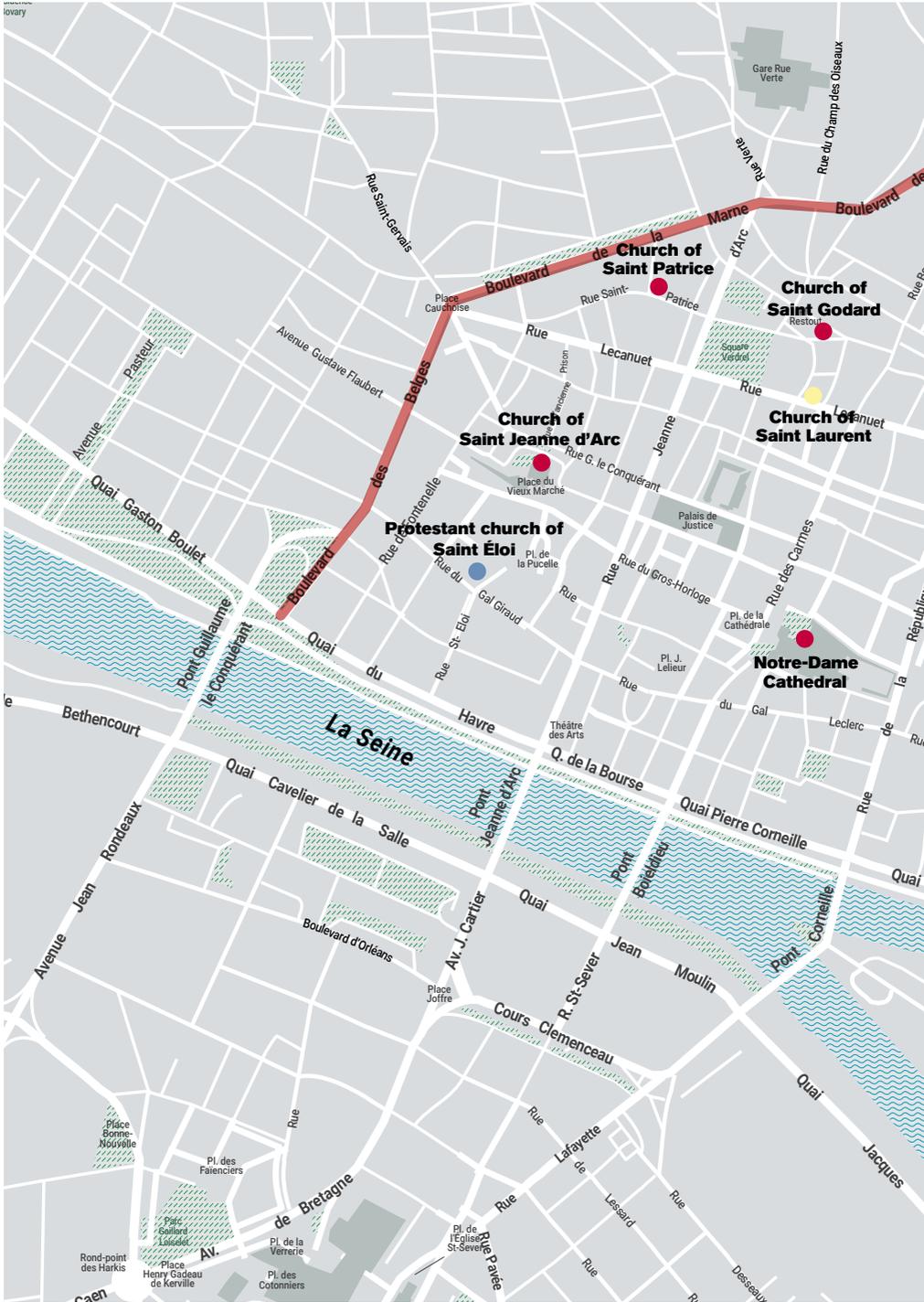
(Please note that some churches are closed: contact the Tourist Information Centre for details.)

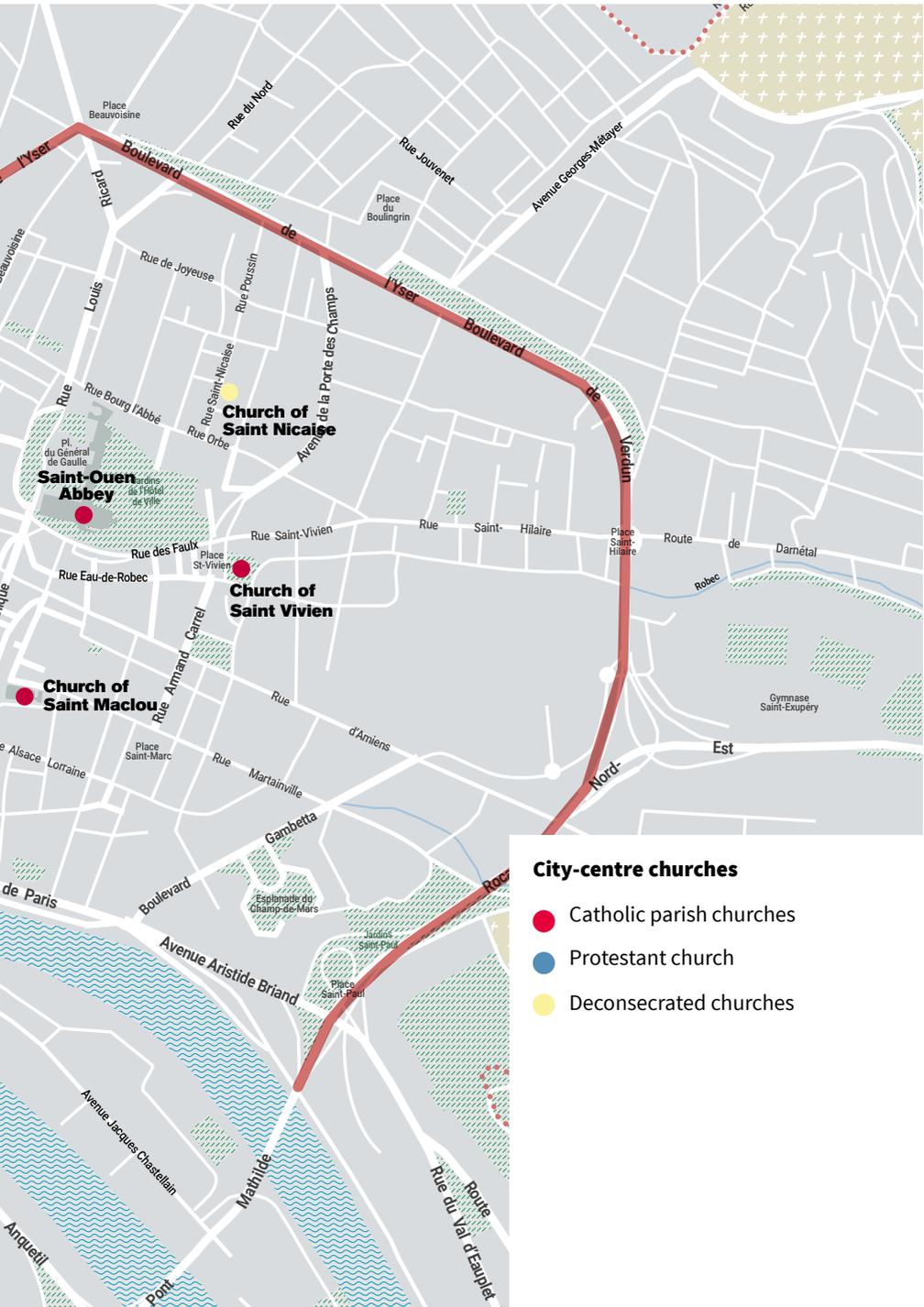




Churches on the perimeter of the city-centre

- Parish churches
- Orthodox church
- Deconsecrated church





City-centre churches

- Catholic parish churches
- Protestant church
- Deconsecrated churches

THE HISTORY OF ROUEN'S CHURCHES THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES



1. Tour aux Clercs (Clerics' Tower), a vestige of Romanesque architecture in the Saint Ouen Abbey
2. Gothic vaulted ceiling in the cathedral nave
3. Cathedral lantern tower



***Cathedral complex:** a group of buildings comprised of two churches and a baptistery (for baptism by immersion).



© Catherine Lancien

The city of Rouen has been an important religious centre since Roman times. It was one of the first dioceses in northern Gall from the 4th century, and became an archdiocese in the early 8th century.

During the 10th century, **the cathedral complex** and the Saint Ouen Abbey were the city's two main structural landmarks. Several other religious communities quickly followed, settling in the city and its outskirts between the 10th and 15th centuries.

At the same time, the division of the city into parishes occurred progressively starting in the 9th century and reached 36 parishes at the beginning of the 13th century.

Rouen retains only a few traces of its early medieval, Romanesque architecture (late 10th to mid 12th centuries); modest remnants such as the Grandmont Chapel (known today as the church of St. Catherine), the choir of the church of St. Paul, and certain elements incorporated into Gothic construction such as the Clerics' Tower from the older Romanesque abbey of St. Ouen, and the crypts of the church of St. Gervais and the Cathedral.

It is the Gothic period that stands out as the real golden age of religious architecture in Rouen. Wars, fires, renewed wealth, and an enthusiasm for the new style led to

reconstruction of many older churches. A new cathedral building was erected in the middle of the 12th century, and construction on the Saint Ouen Abbey began in the 14th, while the 36 parish churches were all rebuilt between 1450 and 1550.

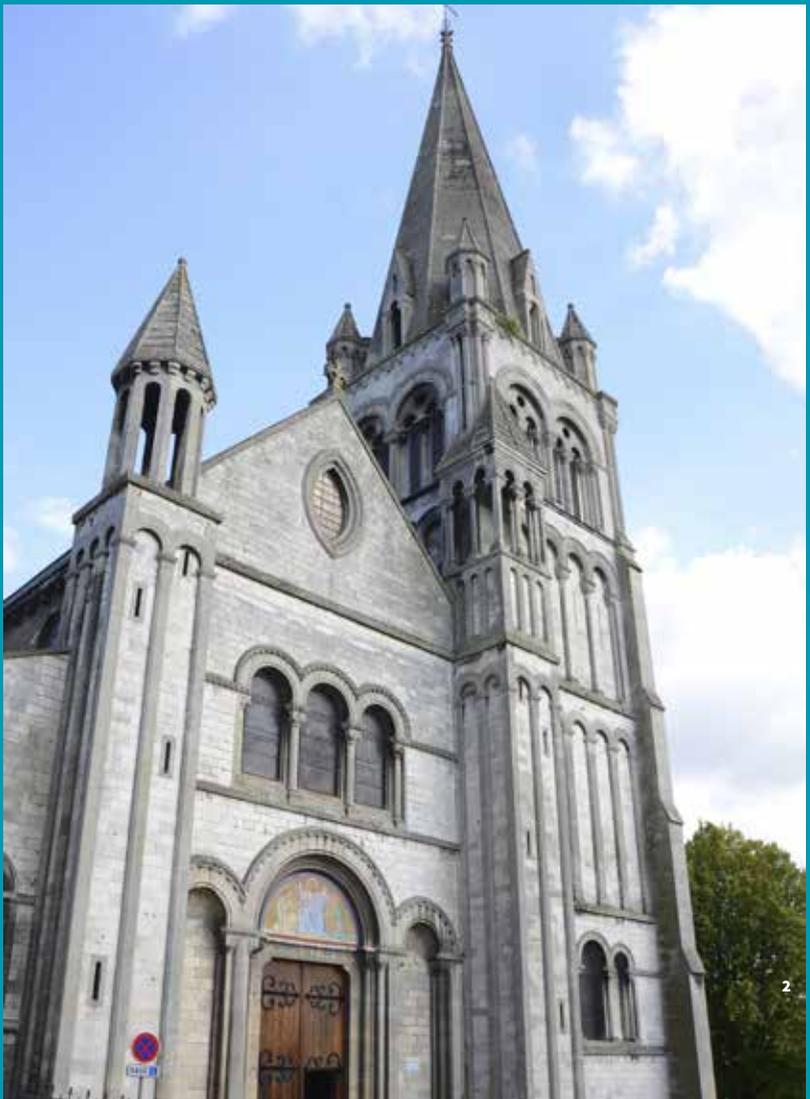
The architecture of this period is characterised by pointed arches and ribbed vaults. The latter help distribute the weight of the building onto pillars instead of the walls, making it possible to build the church higher and bring in more light through the addition of larger windows. Flying buttresses are placed along the exterior walls to exert inward pressure on the vault and its pillars. One specific feature of the Norman Gothic is the presence of a type of cupola called a lantern tower, which is built over the transept to bring light into the centre of the church. This element can be seen in many large churches and nearly all the province's cathedrals, such as those in Évreux, Lisieux, and Coutances.

During the 16th century, Renaissance influences can be found chiefly in decoration, such as the sculptures around the doors of the church of St. Maclou, or on the tombs in the Cathedral.

Rouen was subjected to the upsets of the French Wars of Religion, and Protestant reform resonated strongly with the city's population. In 1562, Protestants gained control of the city



1. High altar with canopy - church of St. Patrice
2. The neo-Romanesque church of St. Gervais
3. The neo-Renaissance church of St. Sever





for 6 months and many churches were sacked during this time, including St. Maclou's and the Cathedral.

As a result, the Counter-Reformation movement was very strong in Rouen, as Catholics retaliated in the face of rising Protestantism. The movement manifested itself in two ways: first, during the first half of the 17th century, by the installation of many convents on land available northwest of the city, increasing the total number from 17 to 43; and second, by the replacement of decorations and furnishings destroyed by Protestants, as well as the addition of new furnishings in keeping with the philosophy of the reform. The overall concept was to adapt religious buildings to preaching in order to win back their congregations.

- More open spaces became a feature in these new constructions.

- **Jubés, or rood screens*** were removed, as they blocked the congregation's view of the priest saying Mass.

- Pulpits were installed for preaching sermons.
- White windowpanes were used to bring in more light.

Great attention was given to the theatrical element of the faith with emphasis on the importance of the sanctuary, especially the

high altar at which Mass was performed. An altarpiece would be placed above the altar to embellish and draw attention to it. The altarpiece usually echoed the church's architecture, in the form of a richly ornamented façade stretching up to a vaulted ceiling, decorated with columns, sculptures, paintings and gilding. The whole piece was mounted on a riser to be more easily visible. Rouen contains some beautiful architectural examples from the 17th-18th centuries, such as the church of the Madeleine.

However, the French Revolution completely fractured this tendency towards ornamentation. Churches were closed, some were demolished, others were repurposed as smithies, saltpetre and lead shot production facilities, feed silos, or military hospitals, and their furnishings were confiscated or sold.

With the return of religious activity at the beginning of the 19th century, a huge construction project was launched with the goal of restoring and refurbishing religious buildings.

Rouen also experienced a major wave of construction starting in 1840. The increase in population due to the industrial boom on the city's left bank and the construction of residential neighbourhoods on the northern slopes of the right bank was followed by the rebuilding of churches that had become too

***Jubé, or rood screen:** an elaborate barrier separating the chancel in the choir from the nave.



Plan of the future transformation project for the church of St. Pierre du Châtel

© BABEL Architects

small or dilapidated (St. Sever, St. Gervais, St. Hilaire, St. Paul) and the construction of more churches for the new neighbourhoods (St. Clément, St. Joseph, and Sacré Coeur). These new buildings echoed the forms and ornamentation of previous architectural styles, ranging from the neo-Romanesque churches of St. Clement and St. Joseph to the neo-Renaissance St. Sever.

The need to decorate and furnish these churches sparked a new wave of religious art. Parisian workshops were called upon, but it was above all Rouen's sculptors, painters, and glass artists who contributed to and prospered from the rising demand.

The 20th century was marked by two major processes. Urban expansion continued along the city's northwest plateau, with the construction of the church of St. Jean-Eudes during the interwar period and the foundation of the modern design churches of St. Claire and St. François d'Assise to serve the new neighbourhoods built in the 1960s and 1970s.

The post-World War Two reconstruction of certain parts of the city was also an opportunity to erect new buildings, like the church of St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle on the left bank and the newly rebuilt church of St. Jeanne d'Arc, financed with war reparation funds and inaugurated in 1979.

And what about the 21st century? Some churches were deconsecrated and reconverted for new uses. A call for projects was published in 2019, concerning 4 of the churches that make up Rouen's municipal heritage. The objective of the projects is to preserve and restore these heritage sites while allowing them to assume a new identity. For the moment, three proposals have been approved.

The church of St. Pierre du Châtel will be transformed into a restaurant and bed and breakfast, with glass and steel architecture added to reunite the restored ruins with the contemporary part of the building.

The project for the church of Sainte Croix des Pelletiers aims to transform the premises into a multi-use residential, office, restaurant and event space.

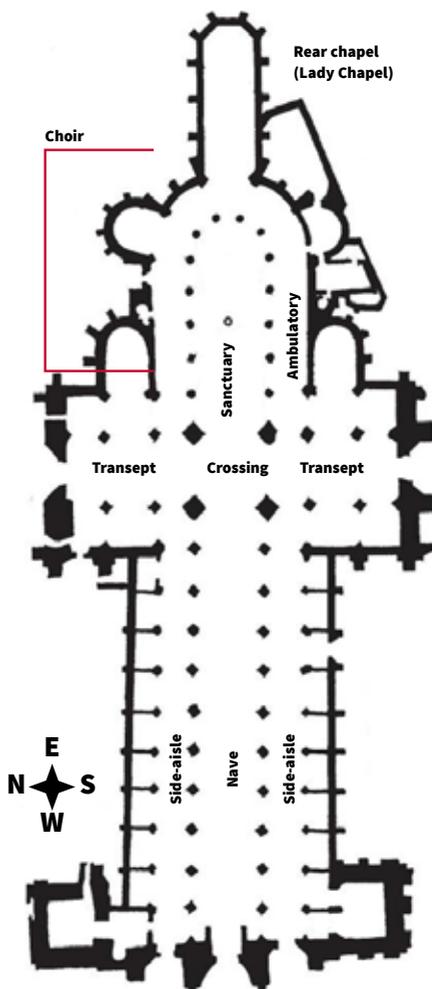
The church of St. Nicaise is destined to become a brewery, with both beer brewing facilities and space open to the public. The project will highlight the original building and its furnishings, which will remain in place.

Most of the churches that make up the city's rich heritage belong to the City of Rouen, or the State in the case of the Cathedral, and are in constant need of maintenance as well as significant periods of restoration, such as at the church of St. Maclou between 2011-2013, the turrets and spire of the Cathedral during the last few years, and Saint Ouen Abbey.

A FEW KEY TERMS ABOUT CHURCHES

The traditional church floorplan is often in the shape of a Latin cross, with the choir located to the East. The vertical axis is made up of the nave and the choir, and the horizontal axis is created by the transept. Dense urban development can place limitations on this layout, with the length of transept arms or the size of the choir being reduced. This phenomenon can be seen in several parish churches in Rouen, such as those of St. Patrice, St. Vivien, and St. Romain.

The ensemble of the nave and its side-aisles are referred to by the generic term “vaisseau”, or “vessel” in French.



Floorplan of the Rouen Cathedral

NOTRE-DAME CATHEDRAL



1. Eastern façade of the Cathedral
2. 16th century tomb of the Amboise cardinals



The Cathedral is Rouen's central building around which the rest of the city progressively developed.

Its first period of construction dates back to early Christianity (around the end of the 4th century). It includes the two churches and the baptistry which make up the episcopal or cathedral complex.

The construction of a Romanesque cathedral began in the 11th century, and was inaugurated in 1063. The growing enthusiasm for the new Gothic architecture of churches like the Basilica of Saint Denis near Paris led the archbishop of Rouen to launch a large-scale construction project in the middle of the 12th century, eventually giving birth to the Gothic cathedral still in existence today.

The main façade of Rouen's cathedral displays some rather unusual features. Its two towers are built on either side of the lateral doors rather than above them as is usually the case in other Gothic cathedrals. The wide space between these towers opened up more areas for ornamental work, turning the façade into a sculpted wall upon which one can read the entire history of Gothic art spanning the 12th to the 16th centuries.

- The Tour Saint-Romain (Tower of St Romain), to the North, was built starting in around 1145, towards the beginning of the Gothic period.

At the time, the tower was separate from the rest of the Romanesque cathedral's façade. Its lower section is one of the oldest elements in the Cathedral today.

- The two side doors date from the late 12th to early 13th centuries. The north door is dedicated to St. John and the south one to St. Stephen.

-The central façade dates back to the 14th century. This decorative screen in **Rayonnant Gothic*** style is made up of multiple levels of stacked niches on either side of the rose window, harbouring a series of 72 statues.

- Towards the end of the 15th century the pinnacle of the Tour Saint-Romain was finished with a final storey and an axe-head shaped roof.

- The asymmetry of the façade was balanced out with the addition of the Tour de Beurre (the "Butter Tower") at the end of the 15th century. With construction completed in 1506, its slenderer form echoes the basic characteristics of the Tour Saint-Romain. However, its upper part, which finishes in a sort of octagonal crown, is drastically different.

- The construction of the Tour de Beurre disturbed the central part of the façade, so reconstruction was started at the beginning

***Rayonnant Gothic**: this style takes its name from the sun-ray like design used in rose windows during the period.

***Wimperg**: a peaked ornamental gable above a door or window, usually decorated with lace-like tracery.



Portail des Libraires (Librarian's Door)

of the 16th century to complete the central door with its rose window and impressive **wimperg***. This latest project was designed to correct the building's structural weakness with heavy **buttresses***. This would also provide an opportunity to add a flurry of sculpted decorations typical of the **Flamboyant*** period.

The current spire is actually the Cathedral's third. The previous spire, erected in the 1540s, was hit by lightning and burned down in 1822. The reconstruction project was given to the architect Jean-Antoine Alavoine, who decided to build with cast iron in the **neo-Gothic*** style. Construction was halted during nearly a quarter of a century and only finished in 1875. This eight level spire's 151-metre height is supported by the lantern tower. It is the tallest spire in France to this day. In the early 1880s, four copper ridge turrets, made in Rouen by master smith Ferdinand Marrou, completed the construction of the spire and gave it its final look.

Inside the building, the sides of the 60-metre

long nave rise up in 4 levels: the great arcades, the false **tribunes***, the **triforium*** and the upper windows. The later-style choir with its three levels and cylindrical pillars is typical of the early 13th century. The choir also houses the tombs of the 4 Dukes of Normandy, including Rollo the Viking and Richard the Lionheart, as well as a display of the statues originally located on the west-facing front façade.

The lantern tower is built over the transept crossing in a typically Norman Gothic style. Its windows illuminate the most sacred part of the church, the choir. The tower is supported by four massive pillars.

The north transept is particular in that it contains a majestic late 15th century staircase, which allowed the **canons*** to access their library, in annex to the church.

The transept arms each open with late 13th century doors, with the Portail des Libraires (Librarian's Door) to the North and the more richly ornamented Portail de la Calende to the South.

***Buttress**: a stone support built perpendicularly against a wall to brace it against sideways pressure.

***Flamboyant Gothic**: this style takes its name from the flame-like double curves that were characteristic in ornamentation at the time.

***Neo-Gothic**: a 19th century style which reiterated architectural and ornamental forms associated with Medieval Gothic architectural.

***Tribune**: an upper gallery located over the side-aisles, and of matching width.

***Triforium**: a narrow gallery built over the great arcades or the tribunes, looking out over the interior of the building through a series of smaller arches.

***Canon**: a priest who assists the bishop in the administration of the diocese.



Rose window from the north transept of the Cathedral - Portail des Libraires

© Catherine Lancien

Both doors are famous for their low relief carvings, especially the humorously fantastic animals sculpted around the Portail des Libraires.

The rear chapel, known as the Lady Chapel, was rebuilt in 1302. Here stone gave way to glass to represent the real prowess of Gothic art. This is the area where archbishops were traditionally buried. We can see a series of tombs, including that of the Amboise cardinals with its beautiful Renaissance decorations located along the south wall. The altar is decorated with a gilded 17th century altar piece featuring the *Adoration of the shepherds* by official court painter Philippe de Champaigne.

The Cathedral's windows were installed progressively as construction on the building continued. We can admire a group of 13th century stained-glass windows, the oldest still installed in Rouen, as well as windows from the 14th, 15th et 16th centuries. Damage incurred during the war left many of **the leaded windows*** blank, as can be seen in the upper levels of the church and both the western and southern rose windows. However, some windows were repaired with new stained-glass during the 1950s.

The Cathedral was horribly damaged by air-strikes in 1944. During the night of April 19, three bombs fell on the church, destroying nearly all of the southern side chapels and impacting the lantern tower's southern pillars. Massive reconstruction was needed to reinforce the Cathedral before it reopened in 1956. Some of the furnishings had to be reconstructed, such as the **pulpit***, the choir gate, the lamps, and the altar. The ironwork was done by Raymond Subes, one of the 20th century's most prominent master smiths, whose work can also be seen in the Palais des Consuls in Rouen.

Since then, the Cathedral has gone through frequent periods of renovation. Since the 2000s, the following elements have been restored:

- The doors and statues on the western façade
- The four turrets around the spire made by master smith Ferdinand Marrou, after one of them fell down during a storm in 1999
- the Cathedral chimes
- the iron spire

***Pulpit:** a structure consisting of a small staircase leading up to a raised stand from which the priest can address the congregation.

***Leaded windows:** windows constructed by joining smaller panes of glass, coloured or not, within a framework of soldered lead rods.

SANT OVEN ABBIEY



1



2

© Métropole Rouen Normandie

© Catherine Lancelin

1. Outside view of the abbey from the park
2. The nave and the organ
3. Upper bank of windows



© Catherine Lancien

St. Ouen's is an abbey church rather than a parish church. Its impressive dimensions are stiff competition for those of the Cathedral.

The stylistic consistency in its Gothic architecture is due to the great respect for the original plans maintained by the future succession of architects.

This Benedictine abbey was founded in the 8th century around the chapel where the bishop-saint Ouen was buried in 684. During the 11th century, a huge Romanesque abbey was constructed by the Abbot Nicolas, in order to receive pilgrims at the saint's tomb. The clerics' tower is the only remaining vestige of the previous Romanesque abbey to be integrated into the existing structure.

After the collapse of the choir in the 14th century, the Abbot Marc d'Argent undertook the reconstruction of the church as we know it today. The choir was built rapidly between 1318-1339, after which the lower transepts and the beginning of the nave were added. However, construction was slowed by the Hundred Years War, and it took nearly a century to complete the transept and another century for the nave. Notwithstanding the delays, the abbey retains a remarkable

architectural unity. The façade, left unfinished in the 16th century, was finally completed in the neo-Gothic style during the 19th century.

The abbey's 85 stained-glass window panels are also extraordinary. They were installed all throughout the construction process, attesting to the art of stained-glass from the 14th to 16th centuries.

St. Ouen's is also known for its world-renowned 1890 Cavallé Coll organ, considered one of the most beautiful instruments in provincial France.

Still used for worship, the Abbey also regularly hosts cultural events, such as art exhibits and concerts.

(For more information, please refer to the St. Ouen Abbey newsletter).

CHURCH OF SAINT MACLOU



1. Western façade of the church of St. Maclou
2. Renaissance-style door

***Flying buttress:** an arched structure built against the side of a building to reinforce it by providing a counterforce against the downward pressure of the vault.

***Capital:** a decorative sculptural element crowning the top of a column or pilaster.

***Rood beam:** a beam ornamented with a statue of Christ on the cross, erected in the middle of the entrance to the choir.

***Tree of Jesse:** depiction of Christ's genealogical tree.



Rood beam

The church of St. Maclou is one of the most beautiful examples of Flamboyant Gothic art in France. Construction began in around 1436 and the church was inaugurated in 1521. The architect Pierre Robin designed the church, but only oversaw its construction for two years. However, his successors scrupulously respected the original plans, lending a strong sense of stylistic unity to the finished building. Two different periods are represented in the church's construction. The exterior architecture displays the upwards movement and exuberant ornamentation typical of the 15th century. Arches, carved **flying buttresses***, and triangular wimpergs ornament the façade's 5 arched porch openings, giving the building a pyramid structure.

The balance and symmetry of the Renaissance style is also present in the sculpted church doors. These wooden masterpieces date to the second half of the 16th century and were somewhat damaged during the Wars of Religion. The scenes depicted on them are taken from both the Old and New Testaments, with added embellishments typical of the Renaissance period. The Rue Martainville side door is dedicated to the Virgin Mary, the baptismal font door to the left of the main door portrays Christ as the Good Shepherd, and the main door shows various scenes from the life of Christ, such as his circumcision and baptism. The 19th century neo-Gothic stone spire was designed by the architect Jacques-Eugène Barthélémy to perfectly fit in with the rest of the architecture. The interior of the

building contrasts with the exterior through its sober lack of extraneous decoration. The vertical nave is short and narrow. The lines of pillars, unadorned with **capitals***, emphasise the impression of height and lightness. This typically Norman church is well illuminated by its 40-metre high lantern tower, which can be seen from the crossing of the transept. The church lost the majority of its original furnishings due to air-strike damage in June 1944. However, one can still admire the Baroque-style **rood beam*** at the entry to the choir, a vestige of the church's 18th century decor. The beam holds up a statue of Christ on the cross, with an angel on each side. The double curves of the the Baroque style are also visible in the 18th century woodwork on the altar, altarpiece and confessionals in one of the north side chapels. The staircase leading up to the organ loft is another remarkable piece. Originally part of the old rood screen, it was transferred to its current location when the organ was installed on the interior side of the western façade. In order to support the weight of the organ loft, two black marble columns were added in the 16th century. They are attributed to the famous sculptor Jean Goujean, who is known for having created the Fontaine des Innocents in Paris. The majority of the church's windows were designed during the 15th century. The best preserved ones are located in the transept. In the north transept, we can find a depiction of the **Tree of Jesse***, while the only 16th century window in the south transept portrays the *Passion of Christ*.

CHURCH OF SAINTE JEANNE D'ARC



© Catherine Lancien



© Catherine Lancien

1. Exterior view of the church
2. Interior of the church with its pine panelling
3. Detail from the *Chariot Window* depicting the *Triumph of Adam and Eve*



© Catherine Lancien

This modern church was a part of a larger development project concerning the Place du Vieux-Marché [Old Market Square], regrouping several criteria: a memorial to Joan of Arc on the site where she was burned at the stake in 1431, a covered market to maintain the historical role of the square, and the integration of some remarkable Renaissance stained-glass windows into the new church.

The design process was entrusted to architect Louis Arretche, and construction ran from 1972 to 1979. Arretche designed the church as a pivot point around which are arranged the eight halls of the covered market and the memorial space sheltered by the porch roof.

The somewhat steep-sided concrete and slate church gives off a resolutely modern air, with its oddly curving roof shapes. Are they meant to symbolise the flames rising up around the stake, or the hull of an overturned ship?

To each his or her own interpretation. Arretche's interior design for the church is very sober. The curved pine panelling imitates the construction of a ship.

The northern part of the church is lined with a collection of 16th century stained-glass windows, perfectly integrated into the modern structure. They were originally part of the choir of St. Vincent's in Rouen, which was destroyed in the 1944 air-strikes, and were added to the building during its construction. The windows are considered true masterpieces of Renaissance stained-glass art; three of them are signed by the famous Le Prince de Beauvais workshop (*Chariot Window*, *Life of Saint John the Baptist* and *The Works of Mercy*), while the others were created by a Rouen-based workshop, greatly influenced by the Flemish master Arnold of Nijmegen.

STAINED-GLASS ART IN ROUEN



1

1. Detail from *Saint Julien l'Hospitalier* (13th-century stained-glass window) – Rouen Cathedral.

2. Detail from *The Life of Saint John the Baptist* (16th-century stained-glass window) - ambulatory of the church of Saint Jeanne d'Arc.

© Catherine Lanfien



© Catherine Lancien

The multitude of stained-glass windows in Rouen's churches trace the evolution of the art from the 13th to the 20th century.

- The 13th century is considered the golden age of stained-glass art. Windows from this period are full of colour, with red and blue predominating to provide sharp contrast. The only examples from this period that can be seen in Rouen are in the ambulatory and the lower windows of the north side of the Cathedral. They depict the lives of saints in a series of figurative scenes contained within squares or circular medallions.
- During the 14th and 15th centuries, lighter colours began to be used. *Grisailles*, untinted panes of glass, are incorporated in the upper or lower parts of the windows, around a central coloured section. The painted figures are often of a person standing as though placed in an architectural niche. Decorative motifs inspired by Gothic architecture are painted on either

side. Beautiful examples of this style can be found in both the choirs of St. Maclou's and St. Ouen's, as well in the Cathedral's Lady Chapel.

- Starting in the early 15th century, stained-glass began to be used to decorate **lancet windows*** as well. During the 16th century, the art became more realistic and the use of colour regained prevalence. Larger figures took their places in great scenes, with constant use of the art of perspective, hitherto unseen in stained-glass art. Gardens, landscapes, and ornamental elements inspired by classic architecture came to life on the glass. The astonishing realism of Renaissance stained-glass comes from its great attention to detail, from finery to hairstyles to facial expressions. The stained-glass in St. Jeanne D'arc's is a perfect illustration. Some of the windows are the creations of a Rouen-based workshop influenced by Arnold of Nijmegen, who passed through the city during the first decade of the 16th century.

***Lancet window:** a tall narrow window in the form of a Gothic arch.



© Métropole Rouen Normandie

15th century stained-glass window from the north aisle of the Cathedral.

- During the 17th century, the Counter-Reformation and the desire for more light caused a tendency towards simple white planes with a coloured border. The art of stained-glass was effectively put on hold until the 19th century.

During the 19th century, a renewed interest in the Medieval period sparked a return to this art. Large-scale restoration and rebuilding of churches at this time also contributed to the artistic boom, and new windows were created in neo-Gothic and neo-Renaissance styles. Rouen's own workshops began to develop from 1840 on, in particular the Boulanger workshop, which produced stained-glass for churches across the city (St. Patrice and St. Vivien, for example) for decades.

During the 20th century, modern stained-glass was inspired by other artistic currents and occasionally found its place in churches following post-war construction and renovation. The master glazer Max Ingrand was very active throughout the region, and his work can be recognized by its particularly clean lines. He is responsible for some of the windows in the chapel dedicated to St. Joan of Arc in the Cathedral, as well as in several of the south side chapels. More recently, many contemporary, sometimes abstract stained-glass windows have been added to Rouen's churches, such as those of St. Anne Le Chevallier, St. Maclou, and St. Ouen.

The growing of wheat, 20th century stained-glass by Max Ingrand, south aisle of Rouen Cathedral.



CHURCH OF SAINT ROMAIN



1



2

1. Main façade of the church
2. Nave and choir
3. Cupola of St. Romain's



St. Romain's is one of Rouen's rare examples of the Baroque* aesthetic, seen especially in its elaborate interior.

The site originally housed a convent of the **Discalced Carmelites***, an order which settled in Rouen in 1624. The church replaced the original convent chapel after reconstruction in the late 17th - 18th centuries. The Carmelites were forced out during the Revolution, and the church was subject to many upheavals until it became a parish church in 1804. It then took the name of the city's patron saint, St. Romain, and also received the saint's sarcophagus, previously preserved at the church of St. Godard. The heavily damaged building also underwent renovations all throughout the 19th century. The exterior façade features a **pilastered* gate** ornamented with **Doric capitals***. The entrance is flanked by two statues of St. Teresa of Avila and St. Joseph, patron saints of the Discalced Carmelites, and one can make out the figures of St. Roman and St. Jacques above on the second level.

The unusually-shaped bell tower dates from 1876. It was designed by architect Jacques-Eugene Barthélémy, who was responsible for many buildings in the region, and crafted in lead by Rouen's master smith Ferdinand Marrou. The interior of the building with its Baroque

decor is perfectly balanced and symmetrical. A floral motif frieze runs all around the church, while red marble pilasters topped with **ionic capitals*** and gilt decorations appear throughout the choir and nave. The church possesses a stunning collection of paintings. Of the original chapel's decorations, only the paintings and artwork in the choir **vault*** remain. The central **cupola*** is embellished with four scenes from the life of St. Romain, painted during the 19th century. Out of the 24 stained-glass windows installed during the 19th century, 21 come from churches that no longer exist.

***Baroque art** began in Italy around the 17th century; the aesthetic was present in architecture, sculpture, painting, literature and other arts. In French churches, Baroque styles are most commonly visible in the interior design. They can be recognized by their extravagant motifs and rich ornamentation which give the impression of constant movement.

***Discalced Carmelites** (from the Latin *disalcetorum*) owe their name to the monks' practice of going barefoot as a sign of humility.

***Pilaster:** an ornamental flat column integrated into the wall.

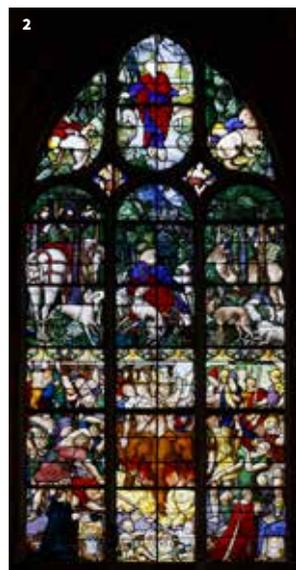
***Doric capital:** a simple round decoration at the top of a column.

***Ionic column:** double scroll-shaped decoration at the top of a column.

***Vault:** arched stone ceiling structure supported by columns.

***Cupola:** smaller dome-like structure built to ornament the top of a building and bring in light.

CHURCH OF SAINT PATRICE



1. Exterior view of the church
2. *St. Eustace*, 16th century stained-glass window
3. Nave of the church



This Gothic church was built in 1535 as the city's parliament church.

Its simple architecture, with only a nave and two aisles and no transept, succeeds that of two previous churches, one of which was dedicated to the Irish St. Patrick. The inside is structured with simple round pillars without capitals. The original wood panelling was replaced with masonry at the end of the 19th century.

St. Patrice's is special in that it houses one of the most beautiful collections of Renaissance stained-glass in Rouen, with the addition of some 19th and 20th century pieces as well. Two of the older windows in the north aisle display remarkable colours and composition, *St. Eustace* and *The Triumph of the Cross*, which shows some similarity to the Chariot window in the church of St. Jeanne d'Arc.

The choir contains an 18th century **high altar*** topped with an impressive canopy, as well as two **stucco*** low reliefs portraying the

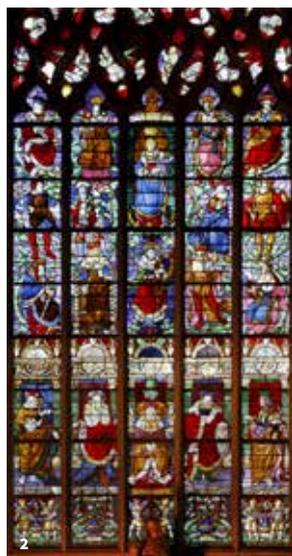
Adoration of the shepherds and the *Descent from the cross*.

During the Revolution, the church reapropriated furnishings from various of the city's condemned churches, such as a pulpit from the old priory of St. Lô, woodwork in the chapels from St. Eloi's and the Carmelite convent, **reliquaries*** from the St. Amand Abbey, and stained-glass from the St. Godard and St. Marie-la-Petite churches.

In the 19th century, architect Jacques-Eugène Barthélémy entirely redesigned the west gate, with sculptures done by the artist Edouard Bonnet, who was particularly active in Rouen.

***High altar:** main altar placed within the sanctuary of the church, at the centre of the choir.
***Stucco:** powdered white marble mixed with chalk and lime to form a plaster coating used for architectural decoration.
***Reliquary:** a precious casket in which the remains of saints are preserved.

CHURCH OF SAINT GODARD



1. Exterior view of the church
2. *Tree of Jesse*, 16th-century stained-glass window from the Lady Chapel
3. Interior of the church



3

The foundations of this church are ancient, likely from before the 12th century, at a time when it was undoubtedly named after the city's patron saint, Romain. An account of *The life of St. Romain* mentions that he was buried here in the 7th century, until his tomb was moved to the Cathedral at the end of the 11th century. During the same period, the church took on the name of St. Godard, another of the city's bishops.

The existing church can be dated primarily to the 16th century. Its sober Gothic architecture displays all the typical features of a hall church, with its 3 parallel wood-ceilinged naves of equal height. The church's 17th-century tower remains unfinished. St. Godard's was a victim of the Revolution's property seizures. Upon the return of worship in 1801, it was deconsecrated and left to the mercy of looters. The curates of St.

Romain and St. Patrice came and removed everything they could of what remained, such as furniture, woodwork, and the original sarcophagus of St. Romain. The parish was reinstated in 1829 and great efforts were taken to refurbish the church with new paintings in the choir, stations of the cross, a high altar, organ case, and windows.

Only four windows remain from the church's renowned original collection, including the magnificent *Tree of Jesse* by the Flemish master Arnold of Nijmegen located in the Lady Chapel. A local saying to describe a wine of good quality and colour compares it to "the colour of the windows of St. Godard's".

The surviving Renaissance windows were completed with high quality glass work from the latter half of the 19th century, by the Parisian workshop of Laurent-Gsell.

CHURCH OF THE MADELEINE



1

1. Exterior view of the church
2. Cupola

The monumental church of the Madeleine was built in 1773 following plans by architect Jean-Baptiste Le Brument. **It is the most imposing neo-Classic* building in Rouen.**

Before becoming a parish church after the Revolution, the Madeleine was the dedicated place of worship for the Hôtel Dieu, an old hospital whose two pavilions are still visible on either side of the church. The façade is strongly inspired by Classic temples, with four Corinthian columns supporting its triangular **pediment***. The depiction *Charity* on the pediment was sculpted by Rouen artist Nicolas Jadouille and recalls the site's vocation as a hospital. The whole structure is dominated by an **obelisk*-topped dome***.

Inside, the nave of the church is lined with orderly columns which support the rounded vault, giving off an atmosphere of sobriety. A **coffered*cupola** overlooks the transept crossing. Two more low reliefs by Jadouille, depicting *Faith* and *Hope*, can be seen above the lateral doors. A large balcony at the back of the choir connected the church with the hospital complex and allowed both nuns and patients to attend the service. The church is illuminated by two storeys of windows.



© Catherine Lancien

***Neo-Classic architecture:** a style arising in homage to ancient Classic architecture rediscovered during archaeological excavations towards the end of the 18th century, while still retaining the regular, orderly features of classical French architecture.

***Pediment:** a triangular architectural ornament above an entryway, door, or window.

***Dome:** the hemispherical roof often seen on a cupola.

***Obelisk:** a slender pyramid-shaped monument.

***Coffering:** a motif of sunken square panels with moulded borders used to decorate a roof, vault or cupola.

CHURCH OF SAINT SEVER



© the Guy Pessiot collection

1. Main façade of the current church of St. Sever
2. Former church of St. Sever
3. Nave

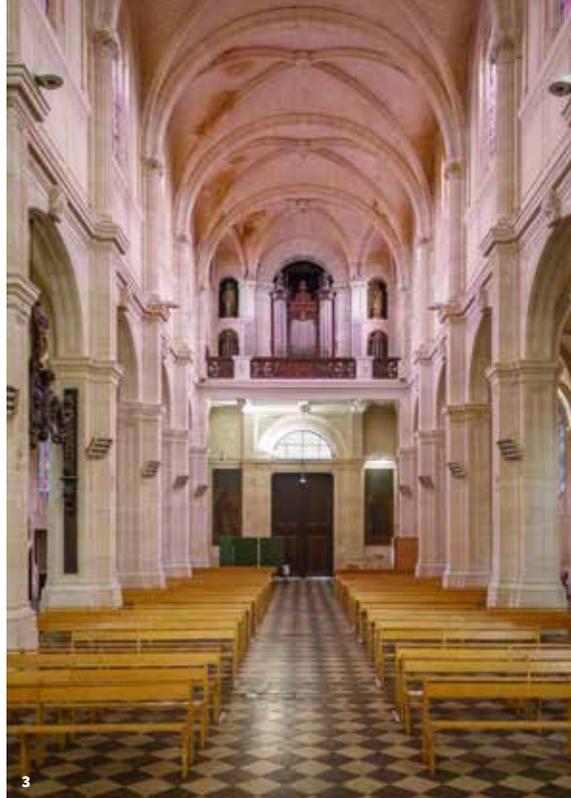
This neo-Renaissance church economically built with bricks and stone blends perfectly into its urban surroundings.

In 1856, the former 16th century church of St. Sever was falling into ruin. The neighbourhood had expanded due to its proximity to the booming industrial zone, so a new church was built a little farther south from the original one, in the very heart of the suburb.

Construction was finished in 1860 under the direction of city architect Charles Vachot. The church is laden with heavy flying buttresses and crowned with **roof lanterns***, with two levels of **cintré***-style windows all around it.

The façade features an arched main entrance whose tympanum depicts St. Sever blessing the pilgrims. On either side, the statues of four saints represent the four cardinal virtues. The four evangelists are featured on the upper level. The 1870 pyramid-shaped bell tower and clock overlook the entire structure.

On the inside, the nave is built on two different levels. The **apse*** of the choir features painted decorations, and the typically 19th century altar is done in the Renaissance style with stained wood, polychrome and gilt figures. The rose windows in the transept are from the



workshop of Gustave Drouin in Rouen. The rest of the windows are a combination of 19th and 20th century stained-glass.

The chapel of St Joan of Arc was inaugurated in 1919, a time when her adoration became more popular, and houses many marble plaques engraved with the names of young parish members who died in action.

***Roof lantern:** a small lantern-shaped structure, with or without openings, ornamenting the top of a dome, tower, belfry, Renaissance buttress, or stairwell.

***Cintré:** a perfectly semi-circular arch.

***Apse:** a semi-circular area at the rear of the choir.

CHURCH OF SAINT JEAN-EUDES



© Métropole Rouen Normandie

1. Exterior view of the church
2. Octagonal cupola
3. Interior of the church



2

Located in the outskirts of the city, this church breaks away from Rouen's typical religious architecture.

It was built between 1926-1928 by the architect Robert Danis and the parish head Abbot Maubec as a place of worship for the residents of the Sapins garden city development, then under construction and designed to house large families. The church is fittingly dedicated to St. Jean-Eudes, who was canonised in 1925 and declared the patron saint of the diocese's large families.

The large **centrally-planned*** building is surmounted by a cupola and a 32-metre bell tower. The whole structure is evocative of the **Byzantine*** period, the only building of this style in the region. The church's construction is radically modern, using reinforced concrete covered with brick and flint. The moulded concrete reliefs on the upper parts of the tower represent the **symbols of the four evangelists***.

On the inside, clean and sober lines balance out the decorative mosaics, modern stained-glass, and porcelain stations of the cross. The octagonal concrete cupola was originally inlaid with unique blue glass tiles. However,



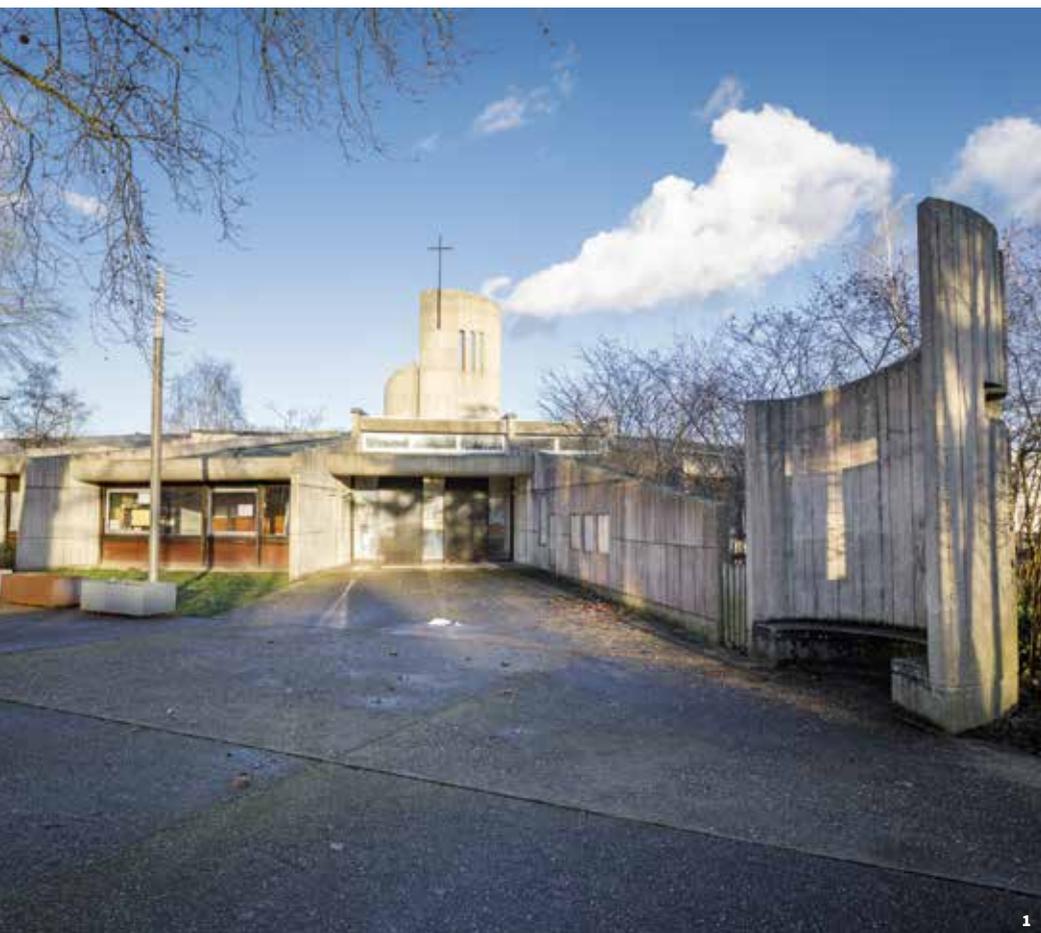
3

this original glass light source was eliminated in 1954 when the dome was recovered with copper to prevent leaks. Bernard Legrand's workshop was responsible for creating the stained-glass windows that were inserted around the base of the cupola to provide light.

At the end of the 20th century, the church was in a state of disrepair and threatened with destruction. However, a strong support group was mobilised to obtain its classification as a historic monument in 1998, opening the door for renovations.

***Central plan:** floorplan built around around a polygonal or circular shape rather than horizontal length
***Byzantine style** refers to the style of architecture developed in Byzantium and the Byzantine empire starting around the end of the 5th century. Churches in this style are characterised by their central plan, cupola, brick vaults, mosaics and murals.
***The symbols of the four evangelists** are the eagle for St. John, the ox for St. Luke, the lion for St. Mark, and the angel for St. Matthew.

CHURCH OF SAINTE CLAIRE



1. Entryway
2. Altar



This church was built for the new Grand'Mare neighbourhood on the city's north plateau in 1972, with plans by architects Alain and Guy Robinne, associates of Herbert Baum. Construction was partially financed by war reparation payments for the church of St. Vincent.

The resolutely modern building wagers on the simplicity of its decoration: stark, uncoffered concrete walls, concrete furnishings (not all of which are still present today), minimalistic glass work, simple pews, and few statues.

This soberness in decoration became the norm for churches in the years after the Second Vatican **Council*** (1962-1965), and St. Claire's is one example of this style in the greater Rouen area.

New directives from the council aimed at lightening the liturgy led to a simplification of the floorplan, allowing the faithful to

more actively participate in the service and placing the altar in the middle of the building to be visible and accessible to the entire congregation. For the same reasons, furnishings and decorations also became smaller and more sober.

The church's uniqueness lies in its doubly religious and lay role, conceived as a part of its construction. Modular partitions allow the liturgical space to be separated from other parts of the church, which can then be used as meeting rooms, for example. This multi-use aspect is no longer a part of the church's function today, but the originality of the architecture can still be seen, particularly in the alternation of the different geometric shapes, such as the concave entrance and the convex bell tower.

***Council:** an assembly of bishops who make decisions concerning the Catholic Church and its religion.

OTHER CHURCHES IN ROUEN

Rouen is home to other churches of great architectural value, whose characteristics are often similar to those of the churches previously described.

**CHURCH OF ST. VIVIEN
(15TH – 17TH CENTURIES)**



© Catherine Lancien

**PROTESTANT CHURCH OF ST. ELOI
(16TH CENTURY)**



© Catherine Lancien

**CHURCH OF ST. LAURENT
(15TH – 17TH CENTURIES)**



**CHURCH OF ST. PAUL (FROM ROMAN
RUINS UP TO THE LATE 19TH CENTURY)**



**CHURCH OF ST. JOSEPH
(LATE 19TH CENTURY)**



CHURCH OF ST. HILAIRE (19TH CENTURY)



**CHURCH OF ST. NICAISE
(16TH CENTURY - 1930s)**



© Catherine Lancien

**SACRÉ-CŒUR BASILICA
(LATE 19TH - EARLY 20TH CENTURY)**



**CHURCH OF ST. CLÉMENT
(19TH CENTURY)**



**CHURCH OF ST. JEAN-BAPTISTE DE LA
SALLE (20TH CENTURY)**



**CHURCH OF ST. VICTRICE
(LATE 19TH CENTURY)**



**CHURCH OF SAINT-FRANÇOIS
D'ASSISE (20TH CENTURY)**



“FRIENDS! SO THIS IS ROUEN, CITY OF ANCIENT STREETS... CITY OF A HUNDRED BELLS CHIMING THROUGH THE AIR”

Victor Hugo, *Les feuilles d'automne* [Autumn Leaves], 1831.

Information and reservations:

Rouen Normandie Tourisme et Congrès
25, place de la Cathédrale
76000 Rouen – Tel.: +33 (0)2 32 08 32 40
www.rouentourisme.com

La Métropole Rouen Normandie belongs to the national network of **Villes et Pays d'art et d'histoire** [Cities and Lands of Art and History]. The Ministry of Culture, General Directorate of Heritage, awards this label to local authorities who work to highlight their area's heritage. It guarantees the competence of guides and heritage event leaders, and the quality of activities offered. From ancient ruins to 21th century architecture, the network Villes et Pays highlights the diversity of the heritage they protect. Today, a network of 199 Villes et Pays provides you with its knowledge of art and heritage all throughout France.

La Métropole Rouen Normandie also organises guided tours for both tourists and residents, storytelling tours and theatrical tours. Visitors are accompanied throughout their exploration of the area by guides and professionals in the fields of heritage conservation and theatre.

Activities for young visitors

For school trips or holidays, a programme of exploratory activities is offered for younger children. Rouen Normandy Tourism and Conventions also welcomes groups by reservation.

Nearby places to visit

Bernay, Dieppe, Fécamp, Le Havre, le Pays d'Auge, le Pays du Coutançais, and le Pays du Clos du Cotentin all carry the label Villes et Pays d'Art et d'Histoire.

Document created by Métropole Rouen Normandie
Coordination: The Department of Culture, Heritage Services

Text: Marie Touchaleaume/Cécile Bellehache
Translation : ABAQUE GROUP, Worlds Beyond Translation

Cover credits

Métropole Rouen Normandie
Alan Aubry

Photo credits

Alan Aubry, Métropole Rouen Normandie
unless otherwise noted

Layout

PAO - Métropole Rouen Normandie

Designed by DES SIGNES Studio - 2021

