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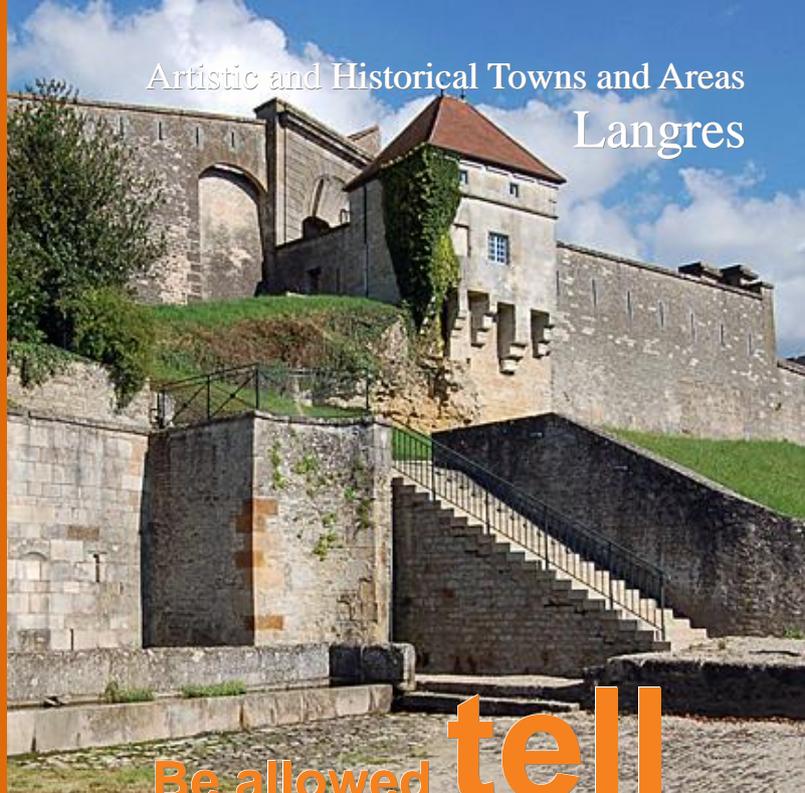
Antique vestiges in the architecture of the XXth century, cities and countries stage the heritage in its variety. Today, a network of 130 cities and country offers you its know-how throughout France.

near

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Artistic and Historical Towns and Areas Langres



Be allowed **to**

the ramparts of Langres

Informations



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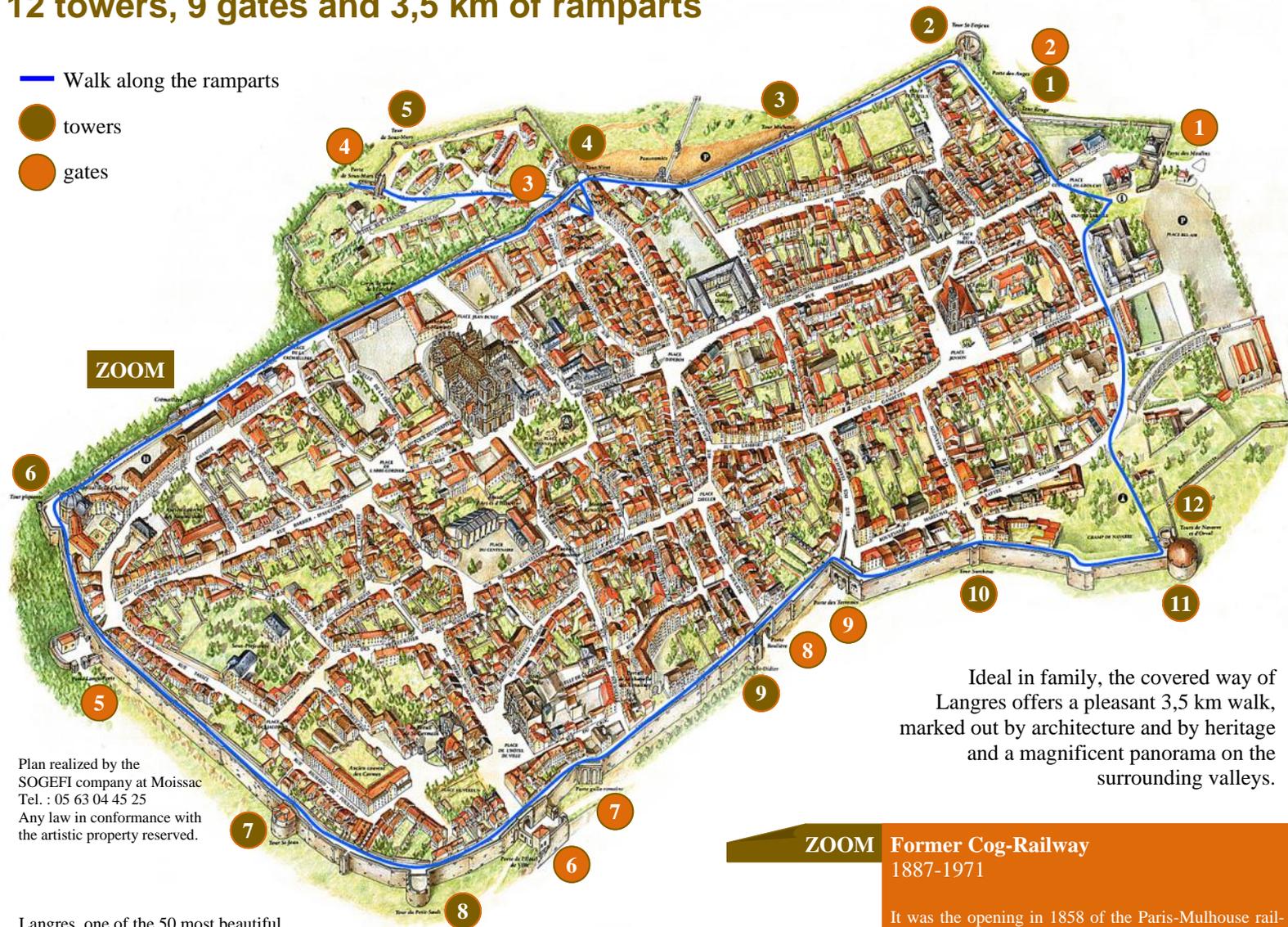
12 towers, 9 gates and 3,5 km of ramparts

— Walk along the ramparts

● towers

● gates

ZOOM



Ideal in family, the covered way of Langres offers a pleasant 3,5 km walk, marked out by architecture and by heritage and a magnificent panorama on the surrounding valleys.

Plan realized by the SOGEFI company at Moissac
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ZOOM Former Cog-Railway

1887-1971

It was the opening in 1858 of the Paris-Mulhouse railway line that permitted Langres to have its own railway station. However, the topography of the area meant that the station would have to be below the town, in the Marne valley. There was a wait of nearly thirty years before the creation of the cog railway, linking the station with the town. The first train of its type in France, it rose 132 metres for its 1447 metres of length. The incline achieves 17% at the viaduct. Originally powered by steam, the locomotive pulling two or three wagons took ten minutes to make the journey. The line was electrified in 1935 and an engine (here preserved) replaced the older vehicles. The line was closed in February 1971; the city having developed principally to the south, and the track and carriage having become aged and susceptible to breakdowns.

Langres, one of the 50 most beautiful towns in France. With its tall walls, impressive towers and countless belfries, Langres stands like a mighty fortress at the gateways to Champagne and Burgundy. From the 3.5 kms of parapet walk that have survived down through the centuries, there is a vast panoramic view over and beyond the town.

This spur of rock has probably been fortified since the 3rd century A.D. but the last development in military architecture was the austere 19th-century citadel, which has been given a new lease of life as a meeting-place for associations and a centre for cultural events.

Langres is like a living art and history book. The town has successfully adapted to the passage of time without losing anything of its essential character.

It is generous and warm-hearted, and always delighted to welcome visitors.



Gate of the Windmills

1

This gate owes its name to the earlier presence of windmills which were built outside the city walls in order to benefit from the wind (the “bel’air” which has given its name to the square (place Bel Air). The gate is part of the fortifications built between 1642 and 1647 to the south of the urban limits. The war-like decor evokes the outcome of the Thirty Years War between France and Spain, a denouement that favoured France. Trophies of weapons, plumed helmets and enemies in chains make of this gate a monument to the glorious victories of the monarchy, a gate that evokes the triumphal arches of the Roman period. Hammered out during the Revolution, the coat of arms of the King was set in the centre of the pediment.

Originally formed by a gateway for carts and carriages, and two smaller ones for pedestrians, it was transformed in 1855 by military engineers who added a second carriage gate and removed the drawbridge.

Red tower and Trough Gate

1 2

Today nothing more than a forward flank to the ramparts, the Red Tower, to the right, was built in the mid 14th century during the incorporation of the southern districts into the protective embrace of the town walls. Justified by the beginning of the Hundred Year War, these new fortifications gave Langres its final boundary, until the middle of the 20th century. Having a square plan, it originally had embrasures and a roof. The original bossed

facing gives it an ochre hue, thus the probable origin of its name. The tower was filled in during the changes made to the ramparts in the middle of the 19th century. This period saw the construction of the porte des Auges that gave onto the fortifications linking the old town to the new citadel built to the south between 1842 and 1860. A small tower placed on the top of the wall served as a warning to approaching enemies.

In the late 1960’s, the building of the Foyer des Jeunes Travailleurs (residence for young workers needing somewhere to live) was the chance to excavate the area which gave rise to the discovery of a artisans quarter from the Gallo-Roman period. Beyond are the buildings from the end of the 1950’s. These were built to house workers of the newly constructed factories in the Marne valley.

The Tower of St Ferjoux

2

This tower bears the name of a priory, situated on the place Saint-Ferjoux, which was demolished in 1673. This tower replaced a structure dating from the middle of the 14th century. This former tower was square and of

modest proportions, and was judged ill-adapted to the new and larger artillery of the day. At the end of the 15th century the tower was demolished and its place taken by a new cylindrical artillery tower. First of its type to be built in Langres, its structure was radically different. The walls are very thick, up to six metres in places; the two vaulted rooms are equipped with eight openings for the shooting of weapons and the summit terrace housed large calibre cannon used to protect the southern flanks of the fortifications.

Army engineers rebuilt the parapet and repaired the facing by replacing damaged bosses during the restoration of the tower in 1844.

Since 1989 the terrace has been home to a sculpture, the work of Dutch artist Eugene Van Lamsweerde, called “L’air et les songes” (Air and Dreams), a homage to the philosopher Gaston Bachelard, born in the Champagne region.

Michaux Tower

3

This tower was part of the 14th century walls, which protected the districts south of the town. It was initially equipped with three rooms, one on top of the other, with openings allowing the defence of the fortification base. During the renovation of the ramparts in the middle of the 19th century, this structure were completely transformed. The rooms were filled in and the facings totally renewed. Up until this time a covered gallery protected the walkway and the lookouts on the ramparts from bad weather. This was progressively taken down during the period 1814 and 1847.

Viot Tower

4

This tower is at the junction of the city walls and those of the Sous-Murs suburb. Built – or largely revised – during the 1470’s, it protected the Henri the Fourth gate, which controlled communication between the city and the nearby suburb. It is contemporaneous with the St Ferjoux Tower, but does not appear to have benefitted from the same influences on its construction as did the latter. Its weapon slits are clumsily made giving a very limited range of cover. Originally a roof made of flat stones called laves protected its terrace.

Henry the Fourth Gate

3

This gate leads to the Sous-Murs quarter (below the walls), given over, in the 13th century, to the tanners. This is not only the only eastern access to the city, it is also the steepest. The openings, for carriages and pedestrians, both had a ditch and a drawbridge, of which remain the housings for the beams used to lift the gates. A double door and a portcullis completed the defences of this structure. Until the Revolution a statue of Henri the Fourth astride Pegasus decorated this gate. A niche with a statue of the Virgin and Child assured the safety of the city in case of attack. In 1846, the military engineers improved the defences of the quarter and the gate with a defensive hideout in front of the Viot Tower.

Sous-Murs Gate and Tower

5 4

The protection of the Sous-Murs district was assured by

a forward gate—a barbican— within which was a building housing a tollbooth for paying taxes on merchandise entering the city.

The small artillery tower built in the early 16th century protected the nearby gate. Shaped like a horseshoe, it consisted of one room endowed with lateral embrasures giving onto the flanks. From this position soldiers with arquebuse (early rifles) could control the immediate surroundings, whilst small calibre cannon could be used above on the terrace.

Piquant Tower

6



The unusual name of this tower comes from its polygonal shape, the first to have been built in Langres. Conceived during the Wars of Religion, it took the place of a previous mediaeval tower. It is quite original; most artillery towers, such as St Ferjoux, were now considered too expensive in relation to their efficiency. Around 1550 Italian engineers devised pentagonal structures, which, filled with earth,

were cheaper to build and much better at absorbing the impacts of cannonballs. Vaulted rooms housing cannon were now judged too fragile when under attack from modern artillery, and so the cannon were now placed in the open air, on terraces specially constructed or on top of towers.

In 1850, military engineers restored this watchtower allowing improved surveillance of the base of the walls.

Longe-Porte Gate

5

Up until the middle of the 19th century the remains of a Gallo-Roman arch, marking the northern limits of the city, were still visible. It became a gate after having been incorporated into the fortifications of the third century, and owes its name either to the length of the structure, or to a legendary king named Longo, whose effigy could be seen on a wall on the city side.

At about 1538 a barbican was added in front of the gate to prevent a frontal attack. This also allowed artillery pieces to be installed to protect the northern flanks of the wall. Resembling a lock in the form of a chicane, this construction was equipped with a drawbridge at the first gate. A new guardhouse completed the work in 1619.

In 1851, military engineers got rid of all the antique vestiges, lowered the parapet of the barbican, and installed a new drawbridge, of which the wheels are still visible.

Saint Johns’ Tower

7

Dating from the same period as the Longe-Porte Gate, this tower owes its name to the nearby former priory of St Gengoul, today disappeared. Built on a rocky out-

crop, this was the last artillery tower to be constructed at Langres. Its structure is simpler than its predecessors, with one vaulted chamber equipped with two side openings, which is protected by a forward shield measuring seven and a half metres thick.

In 1883 a military pigeon loft, built in a mediaeval style, was installed on the terrace. Unnoticed and capable of flying 100km in 80 minutes, homing pigeons were used to deliver messages up until the eve of the First World War.

Petit Sault Tower

8

This tower, in a U shape with long sides, was destined to control the northwest corner of the wall, and the road to Paris which passed below. Equipped with huge openings and walls up to seven metres thick, the interior layout follows the slope of the land. The two strongly vaulted chambers are linked by a monumental stairway and support a large artillery terrace.

The exterior walls are bossed and feature gargoyles, adding an aesthetic dimension to the tower.

During the building of this tower the town authorities had a well dug, for public use, originally equipped with a coping.

Being naturally defended by the slope of the land, this part of the wall did not need too much in the way of defensive structures. Forming a particularly skilful ensemble, impressive and well dimensioned, this structure shows clearly the military role of Langres at the beginning of the 16th century.

Town Hall or Market Gate

6

Built on a rocky outcrop and constructed after the closing of the nearby Gallo-Roman arch, this gate possesses less than the latter in defensive terms. This change probably took place during the late Middle Ages and allowed for greater control of the access road in future situated at the foot of the walls.

Like the majority of the gates to the town, a barbican reinforced this one in the 16th century. Built in 1620, the guardroom sits on enormous supports on its outward side. Witness also to the commercial life of this part of the town, once through the toll-booth, access to the pig and wheat market was direct. These markets were on, respectively, the present day place de l'Hotel-de-Ville and place de Verdun.

The inner gate was enlarged in the 18th century. The barbican and its drawbridge would be restored one century later by military engineers.

Gallo-Roman Arch

7

Built some thirty years after the conquest of Gaul by Julius Caesar, this arch dignified the principal western entrance to Andematunnum – the earlier name of the town. This is the oldest preserved edifice in Langres, and it was oriented in such a way that the road coming from Reims could penetrate directly into the town. Being of little use in a defensive role, the arch was incorporated into the first fortifications, which date from the end of the third century. The twin access was also sacrificed at the same time in favour of the Hotel-de-Ville gate. As a result of its angle, projecting from the wall, it was



deemed sensible to transform it into a covered tower, equipped with a guardhouse and firing slits cut into the frieze.

Until the middle of the 19th century a house rested against the arch. Following the example of other sections of the wall, the military engineers appropriated this and other houses close to the arch for demolition during restoration work. During the work the cornice crowning the arch was restored to its original condition.

Saint-Didier Tower

9

The St Didier tower is the best-conserved mediaeval fortification in Langres. Its three superimposed rooms, its openings, and its roof, restored to original condition, give a fairly good impression of how the other towers of the period, since modified or destroyed, might have looked. Its role was to defend the immediate flanks of the Bouliere gate. During the Ancien Regime the last floor served as a tribunal for the four captains to the mace, whose role was to judge crimes committed on the ramparts. Facing the Bonnelle valley, a niche housed a statue of St Didier, Bishop of Langres in the middle of the fourth century, martyred, according to legend, by the Vandals.

Boulière Gate

8

Created at the beginning of the 13th century at the time of the first extension of the walls towards the south, this gate was to be further protected by the addition of a triangular barbican in the 14th century. An allegoric statue of the town of Langres, a young, armed female, ornamented this monumental gate.

Originally called 'porte boveliere', this gate seems to owe its name to the passage of animals on their way to be butchered, in the street of the same name.

Altered in 1854, the barbican was finally demolished in 1906 in order to allow access to the nearby 'porte des Terreaux'.

Terreaux Gate

9

The construction of this gate is the work of military engineers, who wished to avoid military convoys having to cross the town. To achieve this, a boulevard (present-day De Lattre) was laid down as far as the Windmill Gate (porte des Moulins). This gate had a double opening, and a double drawbridge to cross the defensive ditch. Called "Poncelot", after its inventor, the drawbridge used a heavy chain as a counterbalance. As the bridge was lifted, an increasing length of chain was laid

in the ditch, thus balancing the weight. Some of this mechanism can still be seen today.

The gate is crowned by a machicolation, which lends a mediaeval note to the structure.

Surchoue Tower

10

All that remains of this tower is its trapezoid outline, it having been filled in around the middle of the 19th century. It owed its name to nearby rue Surchoue, which was transformed in 1855 into the present-day boulevard De Lattre.

Before 1412, defence of the wall was assured by a structure called a 'Chaffaud', a wooden construction crowning and hanging over the rampart. Its replacement by a tower, called for stone, which came from a quarry to the south of the town, a place called Blanchefontaine. The roof was in flat stones, called Laves, which came from the village of Perrancey, about ten kilometres away.

The Navarre and Orval Towers

11 12

This building is situated on a piece of land, called 'le champ de Navarre', today a camping ground, which originally belonged to the Count of Champagne, who was also King of Navarre. It is an artillery tower on a monumental scale. Its diameter of 28 metres, its height of 20 metres, and 20 openings for firing spread over four levels make for a most outstanding structure. The walls are up to seven metres thick and house two strongly vaulted chambers with openings for defence. Artillery placed on the terrace would have protected the plateau forward of the Moulin Gate. More or less finished in 1515 after only four years of work, another 2.5 metres were added in order to increase the range of the cannon placed on the terrace. This addition, decided during construction work, necessitated a second level of gargoyles and the construction of a second tower - the Orval Tower - that housed a spiral ramp. This enabled cannon to be taken up to the terrace of the Navarre Tower safe from enemy fire.

In 1825 military engineers transformed the tower into a powder store. A conical roof was added to protect the lower chambers from the elements.



Nowadays the Navarre Tower houses a « Architecture and Heritage Learning Center »