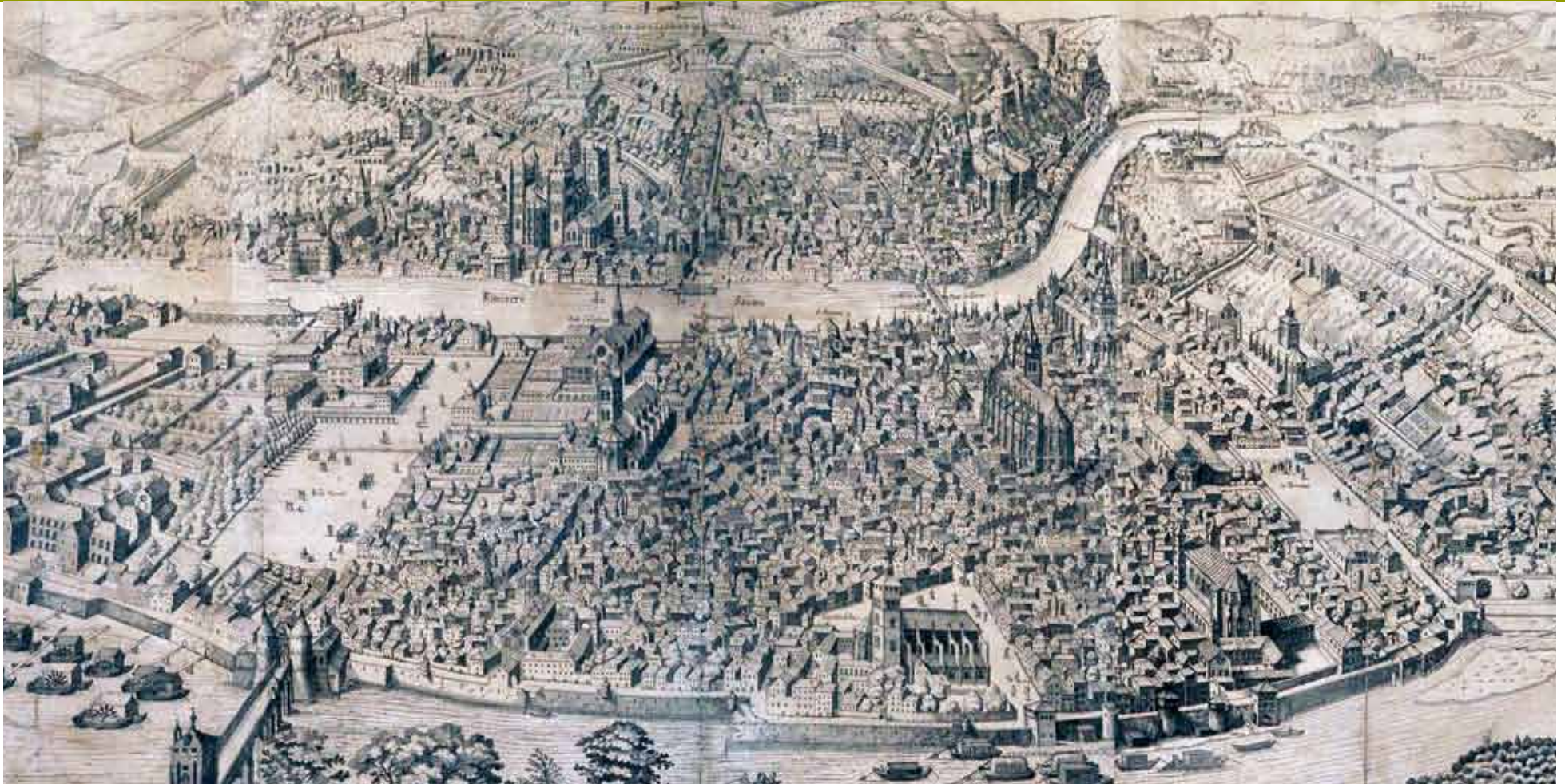


PHYSICAL CITY, DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING

ROOM 10: THE CITY IN THE 17TH C.



Street map of Lyon by Simon Maupin, detail, engraving, David Van Velthem, 17th c., Inv. 60.6.1

Designing the city

“Alignment permit”

In the early 17th c., the urban environment was still left over from the Middle Ages. The norm was to have deep narrow plots of land ranged along the streets, like “piano keys”. On the hillsides, however, they were square and much larger, often enclosed by walls.

Drastic changes were brought about to this traditional pattern. Urban planning and road maintenance fell within the remit of the Consulate and were the responsibility of the voyer, or road inspector. In 1680, the Consulate decided on a general realignment of the city of Lyon. All buildings now had to apply for an alignment permit!

To encourage private rehabilitation work, the city paid subsidies to private individuals or granted them tax benefits.

Confluence redevelopment project

In 1677, the first plan to redevelop the Confluence was presented by Jules Hardouin-Mansart, the Duc de Villeroy, then Governor of Lyon. The idea was to fill in an arm of the River Rhone and construct a large park, 620 m wide, on a number of different levels with stairs, mountains and waterfalls, to house 18 administrative buildings. This ambitious project never saw the day, but stands as testimony to what urban planners were thinking of at the time. They were seeking to expand the city but the walls all around it

formed a barrier. Between 1600 and 1650, the gates of Lyon, the symbols of the city’s power, were almost all rebuilt.

Greenery! Light! Fountains!

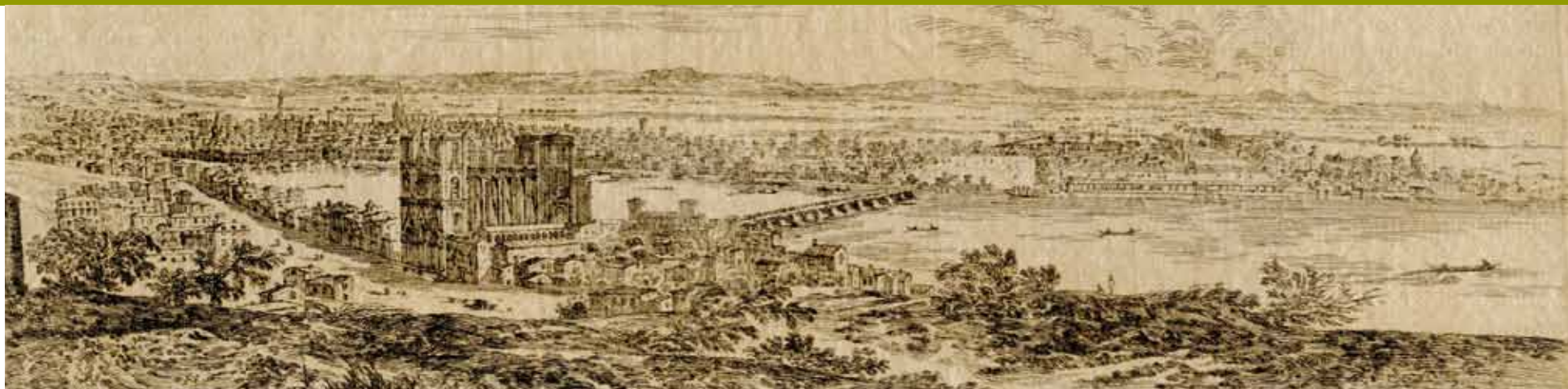
The beautification of the city meant the development of green spaces: as from 1628, the banks of the Rhone were planted with lime trees, as was the Place Bellecour. Flower beds were also created behind the City Hall and in front of the Hôpital de la Charité. At that time, the monasteries had large enclosed areas with vines and ornamental gardens or vegetable gardens. Private gardens were less numerous: they were to be found mainly in the townhouses built south of Bellecour.

In 1698, the Consulate undertook the first street lighting initiative. A thousand lanterns and candles were set up throughout the city.

Small public monuments, such as wells and fountains, were also built in various places.



Second fountain of Italian influence in Lyon, extract from *the Fire of City Hall in 1674*, 17th c., Inv. N 748



View of Lyon from the *Chemin Neuf*, board drawn on satin, designer and engraver Israël Silvestre, 1650-1651 Inv. 669

Living in the city

17th c. houses

In the 17th c., there were three main types of houses in Lyon. Modest houses, townhouses and income property*, also known as “tenements”. Between 1640 and 1680, the main period of construction, buildings were often modified to accommodate more people. One or two floors were added, on top of which an attic was placed. Courtyards could also house another building. Lastly, some houses were separated into apartments, either horizontally or vertically, for rent.

New construction land made its appearance: some plots were created on former cemeteries, others were sold by the monasteries.

Between 1669 and 1674, north of the Place Bellecour, Pierre Perrachon, a treasurer of France, had six houses built!

Small spaces

A quarter of all housing consisted of a single room. People ate, washed and slept in the same place. 17th c. also saw the creation of alcoves and lofts for sleeping. Frequently, they were intended for the servants, who also slept in the attic or in small rooms adjoining the apartments of their masters, while the coachmen and footmen lived in the stables.

Quiet rivers

(Inv. 3383.1 – *Fame, the Rhone and the Saône*)

Less expensive and safer than overland routes, the Saône was exceptionally important for trade. As so few bridges crossed it, the inhabitants used the many ferries for which tethers* were created.

The Saône and the Rhone were both used for bathing. All social groups came together there, including the clerics. Some people liked to swim naked... a habit that was firmly condemned by the Company of the Blessed Sacrament!

glossary

income property: building housing several housing units rented by the same owner, designed by the owner as an investment.

tether: cable stretched between two poles or two towers located on each bank of a river to enable a reaction ferry to cross.

Projecting the city

“Modern curiosities”

In 1694, Claude-François Ménéstrier, a historian from Lyon, listed the buildings he called “the modern curiosities”: they were the Benedictine monastery of Saint-Peter, the City Hall, the Trinity College, the great clock of Saint-John’s and the beautiful houses of Claire at Vaise and La Duchère.

Religious buildings

In the 17th c., many monasteries and convents were built, all with a cloister surrounded by arcades. Frequently, one of their facades was a remarkable building in the heart of the city. The best example of the monumental religious buildings of this period is the Benedictine monastery of Saint-Pierre, south of Les Terreaux, now the Museum of Fine Arts, built between 1659 and 1686.

Public buildings

A number of public buildings were also built as witnesses to the rich and innovative architecture of Lyon in the 17th c. The influences from Italy and southern France make this architecture very different from the capital. The facades are straight, pilasters are preferred to columns. The vaults and domes all boast healthy volumes. The decor, especially in the first half of the century, is floral and abundant.

- **The *hôpital de la Charité*** was built between 1617 and 1622, according to the plans drawn up by Jesuit brother Etienne Martellange. It consists of fourteen main buildings organised around nine courtyards.
- **The Jesuit college** was built between 1607 and 1617 around four unevenly sized courtyards. Education was an important concern in Lyon at the time. After being destroyed in a fire in 1644, it was almost certainly rebuilt under the orders of Simon Maupin (Inv. 60.6.1 – **Plan by Simon Maupin**).
- **The Hôtel-Dieu** was completely rebuilt from as 1622, modelled after the general hospital in Milan. The centre, a domed square built between 1636 and 1640 – the first of its kind in France – was home to a chapel.
- **The City Hall** was built according to the plans of voyer Simon Maupin to praise the glory of the municipal body. The upper parts of the building were redeveloped after the Great Fire of 1674.

TO READ:
Focus sheet
*Model of
the City Hall*