

URBAN PLANNING TRENDS IN THE 18TH C.

TOPIC

ROOM 15: THE CITY IN THE 18TH C.

Urban development

Small arrangements

In the 18th c., most of Lyon's streets were still narrow and winding and urban design had to take these constraints into account. Planners often simply widened streets or squares in order to rebuild on the same site, following fires or building collapses. Houses were also raised by adding a floor or transforming their attic. It was around this time that mezzanines first appeared, false floors jammed between the ground floor and first floor, which confused foreign visitors so much! The highest houses were concentrated around the Hôtel-Dieu and the Grenette neighbourhoods, which contained so much income property* housing artisans and workers.

Free quarters

In the 18th c., open spaces fell sharply in the city, whose area is estimated at 364 hectares. Abbeys sold land for housing, in order to overcome their lack of financial resources. Convents – like the Celestines in 1778 (**Inv. N 593.1**) – abandoned their estates as they went secular. The gardens belonging to the Consulate also disappeared: In 1754, the Hotel de Ville garden became the construction site of the Opera House.

Real estate operations

The subdivision of the former Celestine convent (**Inv. 96.4 – Façade**) was a large project. In 1785, the two hectares of land were sold to a dealer in Paris. A stock company was created in order to build a theatre, create new streets and build private homes. In 1792, most of houses had been completed and the first theatre opened its doors at the Célestins: it was the variety theatre. Around rue Sainte-Catherine and rue Sainte-Marie-des-Terreux, new residential buildings went up. With their four to five storeys and their symmetry, they were homogeneous islands in an extremely diverse urban fabric.

Major extension projects

Left bank of the Rhone: Morand's project

Between 1764 and 1768, Jean-Antoine Morand (1727-1794) (**Inv. 37.596**) presents his city expansion three plans, to the Consulate, the Hospices and the King. The project (**N 3502.1**) concerned mainly the left bank of the Rhone and formed a perfect circle with its centre at the Church of St. Nizier, thus doubling the area of Lyon.

While the plan was not completely implemented, it did give rise to a new district on the land of Les Brotteaux. Built according to a regular grid pattern, this district had airy squares either side



Draft outline of the city of Lyon and its extensions in a circular form on the land of Les Brotteaux, print, Jean-Antoine Morand, 1764, Inv. N 3502.1

of a great avenue, an expression of the Enlightenment taste for nature. The promenade, shaded by poplars, quickly became a favourite with the Lyonnais, who frequented the little huts selling food, drinks and ice cream!

The district was initially accessible via the two reaction ferries* installed opposite Les Terreux. Despite the hostility of the rectors of the Hôtel-Dieu, who collected the ferry tolls, Morand subsequently built a wooden bridge (**Inv. 292**) that opened to pedestrians in 1775 (**Inv. 508 and 511 – toll tickets**). The "Pont Saint-Clair" was quickly renamed "Morand Bridge" by the vox populi... and this is still the name by which the rebuilt version of the bridge is known today!

Right bank of the Rhone: Soufflot's project

Between 1746 and 1760, Jacques-Germain Soufflot (1713-1780), along with his associates, developed the new Saint-Clair district. It was built around the rue Royale and three perpendicular streets, on land that had remained vacant because it was steep and rather inaccessible. The district provided public spaces: a wharf and a square to the north with another to the south.



View of Lyon, print, artist François Cléric, engraver in the employ of François de Poilly, 18th c., Inv. 26.h.1 and 2

To the south of the peninsular: Perrache's project

After first being refused in 1765, the project presented by Antoine-Michel Perrache (1726-1779) (Inv. 47.293) began to take shape in 1769 under the name of "geometrical plan of the city of Lyon with extensions in the southern part" (Inv. 1452.1). It was accepted by the Consulate in 1771, provided that Perrache committed to provide all the financing for the project himself.



Portrait of Antoine Michel Perrache by his sister, detail, oil painting, Anne-Marie Perrache, 18th c., Inv. 47.293

The plans included a closed port, close to the modern cours Verdun, called a water station, fed by a canal from the Saône and whose waters were supposed to run the mills at the port entrance. But the port was a failure: because it was set too far from the city centre, it received almost no boats and, because it was poorly designed, the canal quickly silted up with deposits from the Saône and the current was not sufficient to turn the mill wheels.

The project also involved two distinct areas: a residential area in chessboard pattern around a central square between the old town and the water station and, further south, an area devoted to industry. The first area, grafted onto existing streets that were extended – rue Vaubecour and rue de la Charité – was partially subdivided in the late 18th c. The second could never be serviced because it was frequently submerged by the Saône when it broke its banks.

glossary

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

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

New buildings

Signals in the landscape of the city

The 18th c. saw the Consulate keen to develop major infrastructure projects orienting the city towards its larger river, the Rhone. It also demonstrated its resolve to mark the landscape of the city by a series of innovative buildings.

Between 1722 and 1728, on what is now the quai Saint-Vincent, on the banks of the Saône, the huge Abundance Grain Store was built. It was originally designed to replace the various warehouses leased by the Consulate for storing wheat, and soon transcended its utilitarian function to take on an aesthetic dimension. The architecture, designed by Claude Bertaud de la Vaure, is modelled on the great facades of the Place Bellecour.

1750 saw the completion of the expansion of the Church of Saint-Brunodes-Chartreux (Inv. N 4354.4) initiated by architect Ferdinand Delamonce (1635-1708). Its dome stood out in the landscape of the Croix-Rousse hill, which is what the Consulate had specifically funded it for. The decor was bountiful and was one of the last manifestations of Baroque architecture in Lyon.

Finally, much of the work by Jacques-Germain Soufflot – the expansion of the Hôtel-Dieu, the restoration of the Loge du Change (Inv. N 3917) or the creation of the Grand Theatre (Inv. N 3504.30) – bequeathed the city some of its most prestigious architecture.



Dome at the Charterhouse of Lyon, pen on paper, Ferdinand Delamonce, 1738, Inv. N 4354.7

