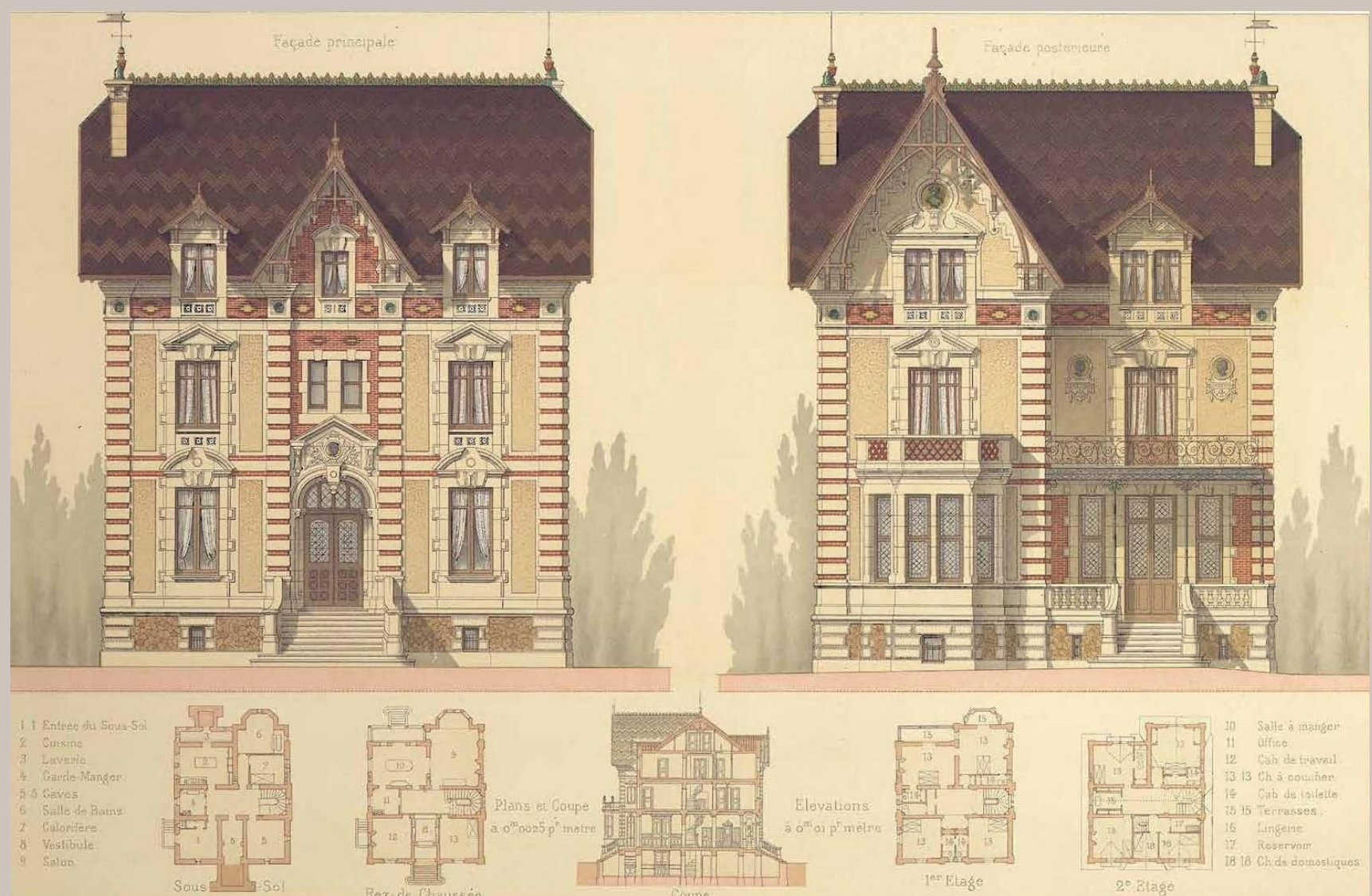


Esplanade Robert Vasse

Esplanade Robert Vasse – mayor of L’Isle-sur-la-Sorgue between 1995 and 2000 – was created in 1906 at the instigation of Emile Char, who wanted to have a monument erected in honour of Alphonse Benoit, the city’s benefactor.

The architecture of the captains of industry in the 19th century



Plans by architect E. Auburtin for the Château Giraud, published in 1884 in: *La brique ordinaire* [‘The Ordinary Brick’] by J. Lacroux.

In the 19th century, the ‘captains of industry’ in L’Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, such as the Char, Dumas, etc. families, began constructing remarkable residences or ‘châteaux’ featuring an eclectic style. These include the Château Giraud (Parc Gautier), Château Dumas (Caisse d’Epargne), Château Char and a grand Italianate villa (Fondation Villa Datris pour la sculpture contemporaine). These buildings symbolise the success of local businesses and the city’s prosperity under the Third Republic.

At the centre of the esplanade, a monument – which was designed by Victor Faure and sculpted by Félix Charpentier – pays tribute to Alphonse Benoit, the city’s benefactor. It comprises a series of bronze bas-reliefs recounting his life.



Turret of the Château Char,
circa 1885

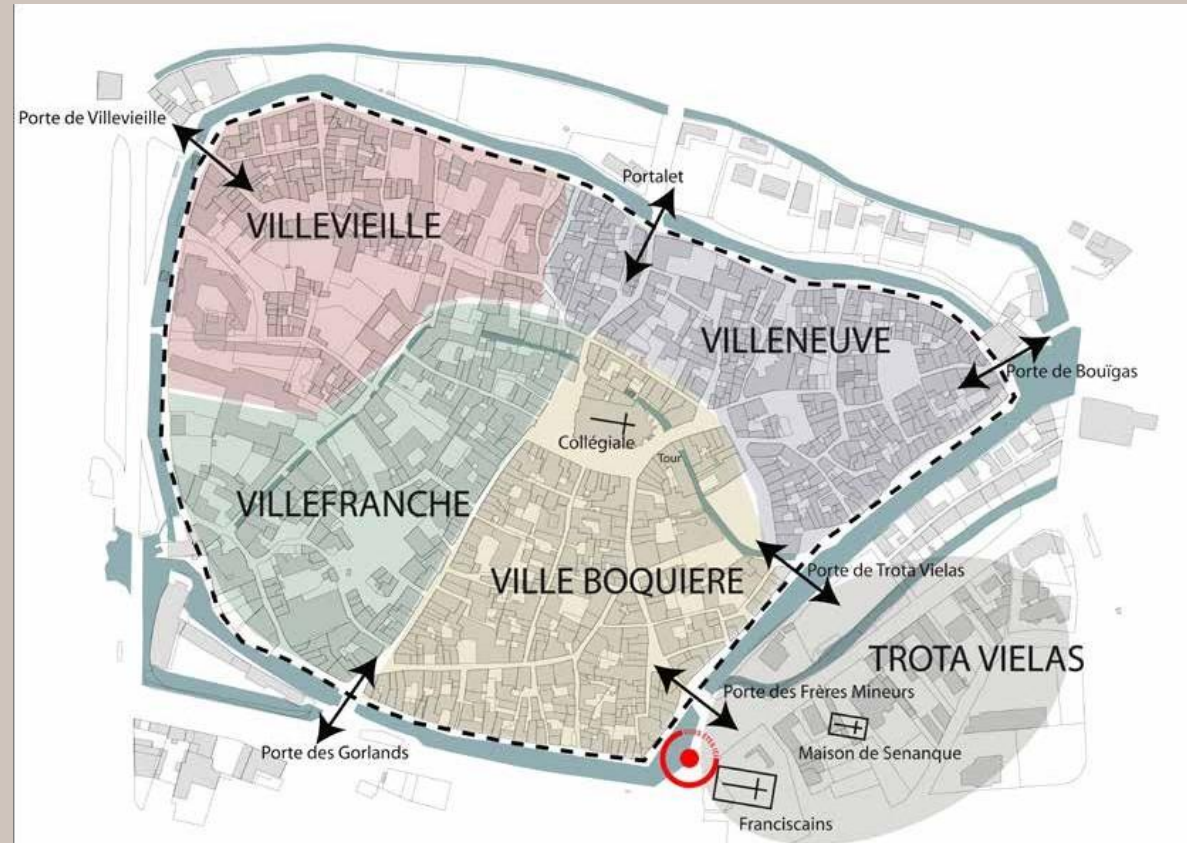
The walled city and former Couvent des Cordeliers

The walls of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue were constructed in the 12th century to protect a city that was expanding quickly. Over the centuries, they were improved and embellished, like the Friars Minor gate that was rebuilt in the 18th century. There is practically no evidence left of this medieval urban fortification, as it was gradually destroyed from the late 18th century.

In the early 13th century, Franciscans (Cordeliers or Friars Minor) settled to the south of the city, just outside the walls in the industrious suburb of Trotaveilas. The convent was destroyed as a security measure during the Wars of Religion. Hôtel Dongier, formerly Hôtel Saint-Martin, was established on this site in the 17th century.



L'Isle in 1597, British Library, London



L'Isle's suburbs and fortifications in the early 13th century



Creation of Cours des Quatre-Otages

In the 18th century, the city of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue constructed avenues or promenades along its old ramparts. In 1733, Cours Sainte-Anne (Avenue de la Libération) preceded Cours de Villevieille, which was constructed in 1741. Cours des Quatre-Otages, completed in 1783, connected the Friars Minor and Bouigas gates outside the walls. It was initially named Cours des Platanes, in reference to the plane trees planted there. In 1904, the avenue adopted the name of the founder of the League of Human Rights: Trarieux. After the war, it became Cours des Quatre-Otages in homage to the four Resistance fighters from L'Isle who were summarily executed by the Germans at Ecole Benoît on 22 August 1944. The city would be liberated two days later.

The antique dealers

In L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, industry gave way to antiques. It was in 1966 that Albert Gassier and René Légier created the first antique fair there. The movement rapidly gained ground, and now, Easter and Assumption fairs attract numerous visitors every year.

Today, L'Isle is internationally recognised for its antique dealers and collectors; it is the third largest marketplace in Europe for antiques after Saint-Ouen (Paris) and London.