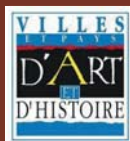


Town of Art and History
Pau



joffre

Here's the story



Here's the story of rue Maréchal Joffre: from the castle to the Place Clemenceau, go up the street and back in time !

Emerging in the Middle Ages, the Town of Pau grew from its emblematic castle. If in the beginning houses huddled around the fortress, the town rapidly grew along the two main axes, today's rue Maréchal Joffre and rue Henri IV, which prolong the rue du Château and the rue de l'église Saint Martin. These two routes channelled urban expansion on flat land overlooking the Gave river, eastwards from the castle's rocky spur. Rue Maréchal Joffre links the castle to Place Clemenceau.



Rue de la Préfecture seen from the Place Clemenceau

From Grande Rue to rue Maréchal Joffre

Over the years the street changed names many times. It was first known as **Grande Rue**, proof of the central role it played in the urban network. Then during the 18th century it became **rue de Morlaàs** or **rue de la Poudge*** indicating the new destinations it served. During the revolutionary period it bore the evocative names of **rue marchande**, **rue nationale**, **rue de la Constitution**, **rue de la Montagne** or **rue de la Loi** before becoming the **rue de la Préfecture** in 1791; the institution which lies at its eastern end had just been founded. For a short time, between 1845 and 1849, it changed to rue Louis Philippe, before retrieving the name of rue de la Préfecture which it kept until after the First World War; the street was then renamed Maréchal Joffre in homage to the exploits of this distinguished officer and military strategist in operation from the Franco German war of 1870 to the First World War. He was given the title Maréchal de France at the end of his career.

*Poudge: high place, hill



Place Reine Marguerite, a former marketplace

Ever eastward

At the end of the Middle Ages the fortifications of the little village which had grown up around the castle were cramping its growth. With the creation of Grande Rue urban development was able to spread towards the east. The medieval groups of habitat around the castle expanded in a linear fashion. Archives offer some indication of the extension of fortifications towards the east, adapting the system of defence to the larger urban area: successively there was a town gateway located at numbers 46-48 ❶ then another on the site of the former market hall ❷ now the Place Reine Marguerite, and finally another where the cours Bosquet now stands. It was only towards the beginning of the 17th century that expansion began across available land to the north, crossing the Hédas stream and giving birth to a new quarter bearing its name.

This extension of the fortified area followed the different stages of growth from the 17th century to our times. The street was used both as a highway and for new housing. Grand town houses showed off their best façades (numbers 12 and 17 the Darripe ❸ and Abadie ❹ mansions), or opted for a more discreet entrance from a courtyard (numbers 22 and 46 the Bayard ❺ and Laussat ❻ homes). Buildings intended to be rented out, less flamboyant but just as numerous, give the blocks a rhythmic succession of bays (numbers 24, 26 or 28 ❼). Venelles*, now blocked off, served as separations between buildings and also as sewers.

* Venelle : narrow open space between two walls.



Dormer window on the former Abadie mansion

During the 17th and 18th centuries, the institutions along the street gave it life: the castle ⑧, the Parliament of Navarre ⑨, the Daughters of the Faith convent ⑩ and the seminary (where the current Préfecture now stands), the convent of Notre-Dame (now the Place Clemenceau ⑪), and from 1790 the Préfecture ⑫. The convents and seminaries disappeared after the Revolution, creating sought-after space in the town centre. The Parliament was dissolved during the same period but its buildings remain; they became the property of the town, and then of the *département* at the beginning of the 20th century. Today the former Parliament hosts meetings of the Pyrénées-Atlantique General Council. The grand town houses originally belonged to town dignitaries, often magistrates working at the Parliament of Navarre.



Les Nouvelles Galeries rue de la Préfecture

At the end of the 18th century the head magistrate was even accommodated at the end of the street in a former private mansion. When the Parliament of Navarre disappeared after the Revolution this official accommodation was transformed quite naturally into the Préfecture when the system of *départements* was set up ⑬. The building was gutted by fire in 1908, but a new Préfecture was erected on the same site following a number of projects and hesitations. The present building, designed by the Pau architect Larregain was built in 1929. Extensions were added in 1936 and 1964.



L'Hôtel de la Préfecture

Shops and markets

By the end of the Middle Ages the historical heart of the town had become so densely packed that the market had to move away from the castle into the newly developed quarters, to the Place de la Vieille-Halle (the old market hall) which later took on its current name of Place Reine Marguerite ⑭. The market moved there at the end of the 16th century, but the arcades were built more recently (beginning of the 18th century with additions in the 20th).



The original Nouvelles Galeries building

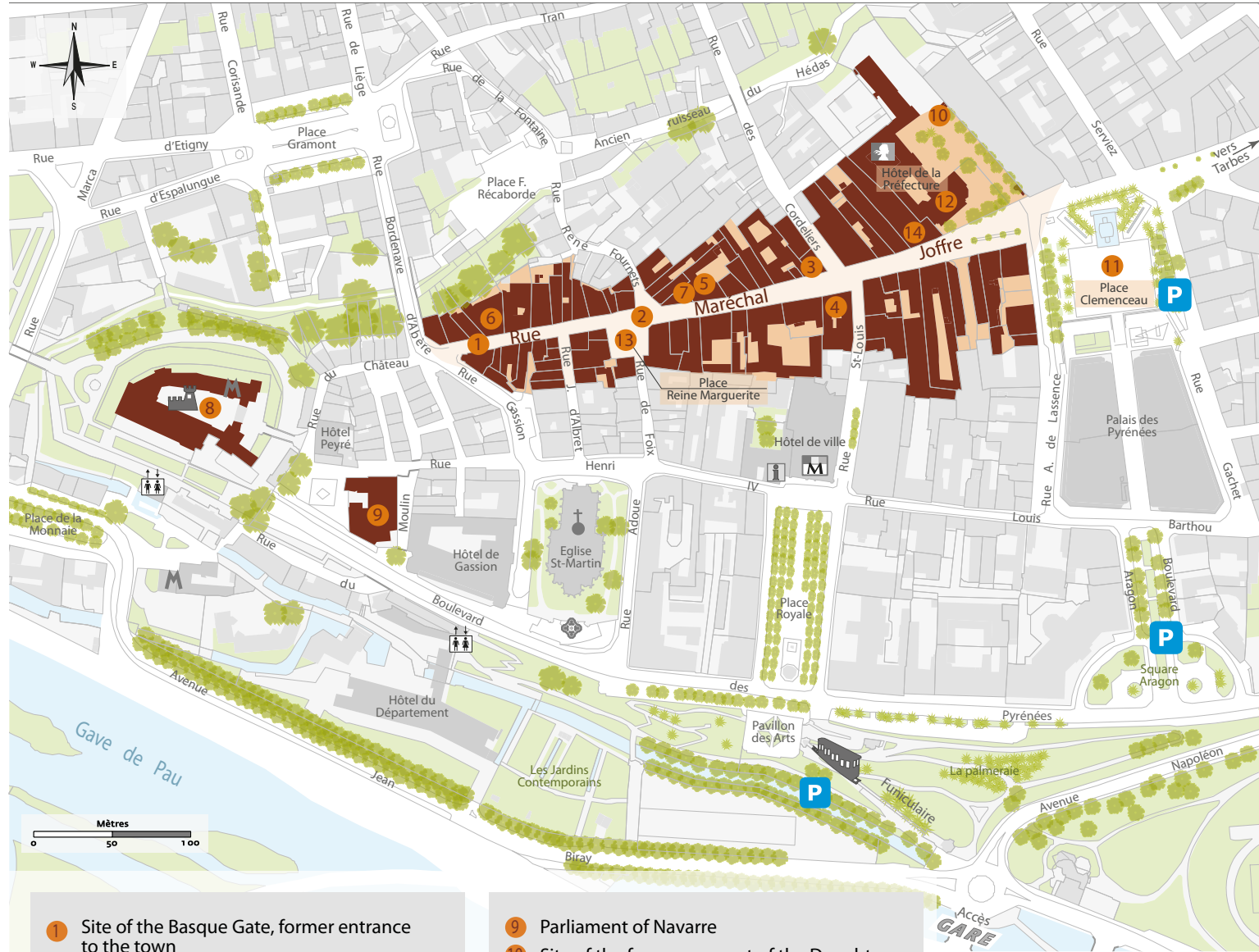
Throughout the 19th century the street confirmed its commercial vocation, as a direct consequence of the economic and tourist development of the Town of Pau. Ground floors of buildings giving onto the street were transformed into shops, and the stone arcades were often replaced by more modern cast iron posts. Elegant wooden shop fronts were added. Old postcards reveal how busy these shops were and the range of goods they sold. The fashion for department stores was launched in Pau by the Nouvelles Galeries (number 2 ⑮), built on an architectural model which mixed stone, ceramics and metal.

The store later moved to more spacious premises built in 1908 on the Place Clemenceau, following on from the rue Joffre (now the Galeries Lafayette).

The successive extensions are testimony to the popularity and utility of the street: rue Joffre today measures 450m long, linking the historic centre and the road to Tarbes. As more and more people used it, enlargements also became necessary: 7m wide at its start in front of the castle, it opens out to 12m at Place Clemenceau. After welcoming carts, tramways, omnibuses and cars, the street reverted to its original pedestrian status in 2012.



Au Grand Magasin Central



- 1 Site of the Basque Gate, former entrance to the town
- 2 Site of the Arribère Gate, former entrance to the town
- 3 Former Darripe mansion (1 rue des Cordeliers)
- 4 Former Abadie mansion (17 rue Joffre)
- 5 Former Bayard mansion (22 rue Joffre)
- 6 Former Laussat mansion (46 rue Joffre)
- 7 Rented-out property (24 rue Joffre)
- 8 Pau castle and national museum

- 9 Parliament of Navarre
- 10 Site of the former convent of the Daughters of the Faith and seminary
- 11 Site of the former convent of Notre-Dame
- 12 Site of the residence of the Head Magistrate of the Parliament
- 13 Former Place de la Vieille-Halle
- 14 Original Nouvelles Galeries building

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In 2011 Pau joined the national network of Towns and Lands of Art and History

In partnership with the Aquitaine Regional Council (Regional Heritage and Inventory Department), Pau began making an inventory of its cultural heritage in 2010. The aim is to study the town's architecture and the urban development in order to help protect its heritage, assist urban projects and develop a new cultural and heritage proposition for all.

<http://inventaire.aquitaine.fr>

To find out more

Consult the guide for Pau's shop fronts and signs. This will help shopkeepers, tradesmen, manufacturers and installers of signs to create shop fronts, signs and terraces which respect heritage and the urban landscape.

This document can be downloaded from www.pau.fr

The Pau Taskforce for the Promotion of Architecture and Heritage – Town of Art and History offers year-round visits and activities open to all and particularly to schools.

For more information or help with your project :

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Resources

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