



MUSEUM-CASTLE
PALAIS DE L'ÎLE
ANIMATED FILM MUSEUM

The Annecy Museums

ANNECY



Palais de l'Île

LISTED HISTORIC MONUMENT AND INTERPRETATION CENTRE FOR ARCHITECTURE AND HERITAGE

HISTORY

A “house shaped like a galley”

Thought to have been built on a mass of pebbles and a natural rock formation, the Palais de l'Île has formed part of the history of Annecy since the 12th Century. It originally served as a fortified house. Mention of the house as a prison was recorded in 1325, when the Count of Geneva paid Jean de Monthoux, the baron of L'Isle, for the rations of two prisoners.

In 1355, Count Amédée III of Geneva was granted the right by Emperor Charles IV to “mint gold and silver currency on his land”. A new building was erected to house a minting workshop, which ran until 1392.

In 1403, after the last Count of Geneva died without leaving any heirs, the territory of the County of Geneva was annexed to Savoy.

The house was purchased in 1473 by Janus of Savoy, grandson of Duke Amédée VIII of Savoy.



A prison cell © Musées d'Annecy

In the early 16th Century, the Palais de l'Île belonged to the dynasty of the Dukes of Genevois-Nemours. They restored the prisons and set up the courthouse, the Conseil Présidial and the Audit Chamber for the Genevois region.

Beginning in the 18th Century, the building took on an administrative role, while remaining a prison.

In 1729, it housed the offices that drew up the cadastre for the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia. In the 1760s, reconstruction work began on the building.

In 1865, after Savoy became part of France, a new prison opened in Annecy and began to house prisoners. The former building became an old people's home from 1865 to 1880.

Before it was listed as a historic monument in 1900, the Palais de l'Île was threatened with destruction. However, public opinion gradually swayed in favour of preserving it.

On 16 February 1900, the Palais de l'Île was listed as a historic monument by the French State.

An initial restoration project is scheduled. It allows the building to be restored in its entirety.



Detail of an ogee arch © Musées d'Annecy

A restoration campaign ran between 1983 and 1984.

Between May 2016 and September 2017, the entire frame, roofing and façades were restored.

The path of the visit allows visitors to discover the architecture and history of the Palais de l'Île and the region of Annecy, via exhibitions.

INTERIORS

RECEPTION ①

The entrance to the Palais de l'Île is via the former offices of the clerk of the court. A contemporary staircase has been fitted, which has disrupted the original layout.

THE FIRST FLOOR

② The first area is the small former hearing room, where the judges interrogated the criminals.

③ It is followed by three former prison cells.

④ When you enter the former court hearing room, you are entering the oldest part of the building.

The size of the blocks making up the south wall of the room is remarkable.

The ceilings date from the 16th Century. The first large room contains a scale model representing Annecy in around 1730. The population of the city at that time was around 5,000.

⑤ The second hearing room leads into the latrines.

Inside, you can see the tombstone of the canon François Voisin (18th Century), taken from the now-vanished church of

St. Sepulchre, which has been fitted upside-down. This former hearing room evokes the industrial, economic and cultural history of the location. You can access the second floor, devoted to temporary exhibitions, via a spiral staircase.

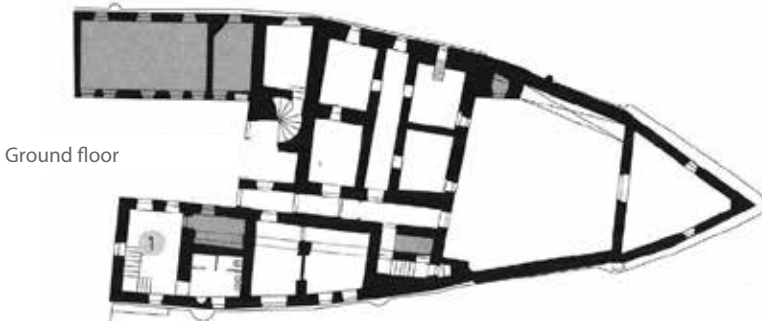
THE SECOND FLOOR

⑥ In the first large room, you can see a beautiful and well-preserved molasse stone fireplace.

⑦ The wall of the second room contains a former recessed wall cabinet with a rebate intended for a door.

THE ROOMS ON THE GROUND FLOOR

Four cells illustrate the function of the prison. A text from 1600 states that the cells on the ground floor had dirt floors. During the 18th Century, the prisoner saw around forty prisoners per year. The former kitchen, with its garden containing ember pots, evokes the prisoners' daily routine. This section of the building, which was rebuilt in its entirety during the latter half of the 18th Century, corresponds to the location of



Ground floor

the minting workshop of the Counts of Geneva in the latter half of the 14th Century.

Between 1905 and 1955, two rooms were set aside for housing the city's homeless drunkards overnight.

THE INTERIOR COURTYARD

The courtyard was used to store sculptures between 1906 and 2018.

THE CHAPEL

From 1928 to 1981, the former chapel of the Palais de l'Île was used for worship by the orthodox community of Annecy. It now houses temporary exhibitions from artists whose work explores the notions of space, architecture and countryside.



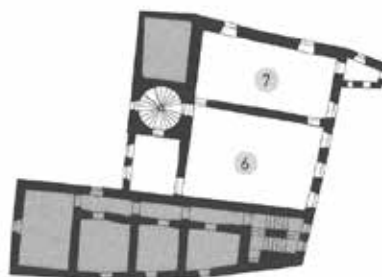
A prison cell © Musées d'Annecy



The jailer's kitchen © Musées d'Annecy



1st floor



2nd floor



Façade of the entrance © Musées d'Annecy

EXTERIORS

THE FAÇADE IN PLACE DE L'ILE ①

The façade is dominated by a tower containing a spiral staircase from the 15th Century. On the ground floor and first floor, two basket-handle arches create a broad opening. Judicial acts were pronounced from the ground floor. The sculpted coat of arms of a Duke of

Genevois-mours (Charles-Emmanuel or Henri) were set into the façade in the 16th Century.

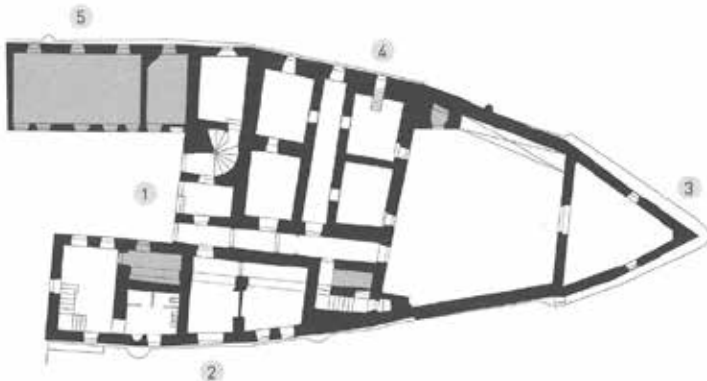
At the beginning of the 20th Century, a fragment of the tombstone of Louis de Pingon, councillor and esquire to the Duke of Savoy, who died on 13 January 1482, was placed on the façade.

THE MINTING WING ②

The wing of the building on the banks of the narrow course of the River Thiou, oriented east-west, is thought to be the original location of the minting workshop of the 14th Century. A recent archaeological dig confirmed that it was rebuilt in the 18th Century.

The stones that make up the structure of the wall are of two different types of limestone. A lewis hole passes through the middle of numerous blocks located in the lower part of the wall.

A lewis was a form of tongs used to lift quarried stone.



THE CHAPEL ③

The construction of the chapel is attributed to the wife of Janus of Savoy, H el ene of Luxembourg, who inherited the island in 1473. It is believed to have been a private oratory at first, before becoming the prisoners' chapel.

THE FORTIFIED HOUSE ④

The north wall of the fortified house is doubtless where some of the oldest parts of the building are located. Its masonry is eclectic: irregular rubble, pebbles and square blocks. They date from the same period as the former molasse bay window, traces of which still survive.

This ensemble, although subsequently modified, dates from the 14th Century.

THE BANCHES ⑤

In light of the decision of the Senate of Savoy to prohibit magistrates from presiding in their own homes, offices known as 'banches' were built. These banches extend the Palais de l' le. They used to house offices used for negotiating business, contracts and arbitration.



Minting wing   Mus es d'Annecy



Wing of the house   Mus es d'Annecy

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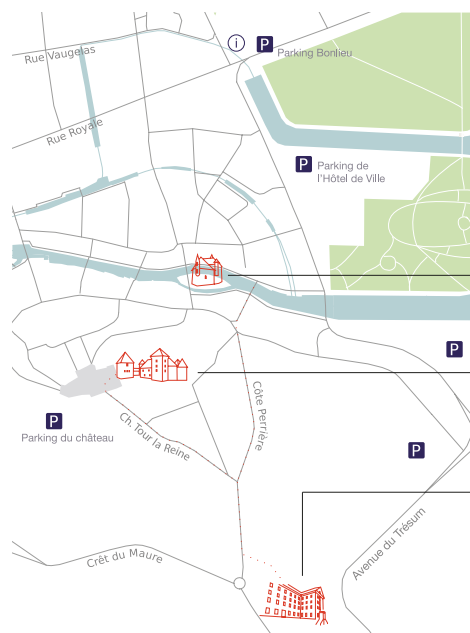
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Opening hours

01.06 – 30.09 : open daily except Tuesday, 10.30 AM - 6 PM

01.10 – 31.05 : open daily except Tuesday, 10 - 12 AM - 2-5 PM

Closed January 1st, Easter Monday, May 1st and 8th, Ascension Day, November 1st and 11th, December 24 and 25th.

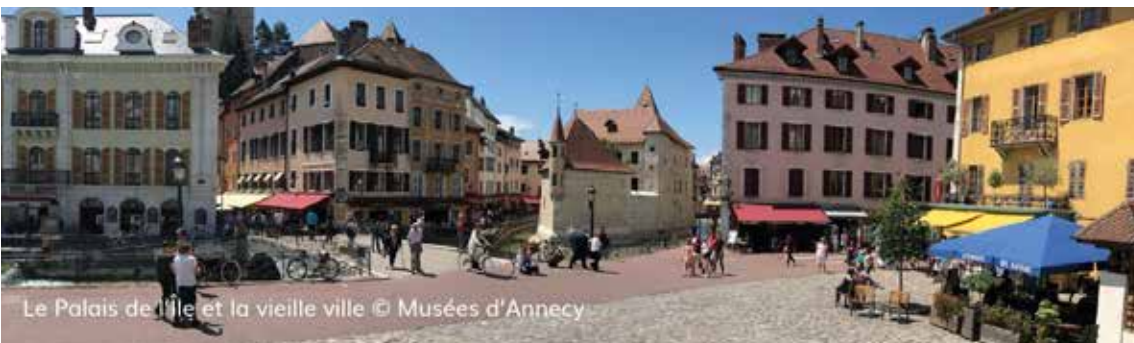


5 minutes' walk away

Palais de l'île
Passage de l'île

Musée-Château
Place du Château

Musée du film d'animation
Conservatoire d'art et d'histoire
18 avenue du Trésium



Le Palais de l'île et la vieille ville © Musées d'Annecy