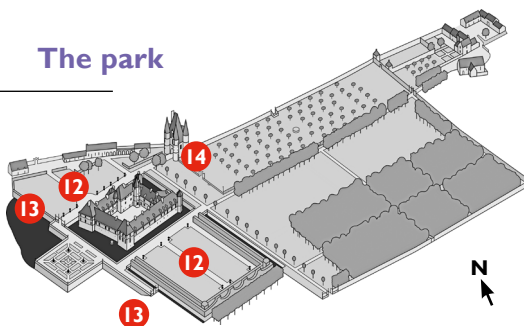


The park



- 12 The park** is an enclosed area with gardens, groves, canals, a terrace and lawns. The path, known as the Canons' Walk, which runs alongside the apple orchard conservation project, leads up to the château's former collegiate church, now the headquarters of the Normandy-Maine Region Natural Park.
- 13 The wrought iron gates and railings**, dating from the mid-18th century, came from the Carrouges forges: the main gate, south gate and balustrades.
- 14 The gatehouse**, at the entrance to the estate, is considered to be the first example of Renaissance architecture in Normandy. Its right tower features a mitre and two stylised croziers, a sign of the ecclesiastical rank of its commissioner, Jean Le Veneur, bishop and Count of Lisieux until 1533.

Carrouges, a brick château

The manufacturing of bricks had been mastered since antiquity and came back into fashion in the northern half of France with the Renaissance. It was chosen for use at Carrouges in the 14th century due to the presence of clay as a raw material. The bricks were made by hand. Much more than just a simple building material, its colours, shapes and use as stretcher* or header* allowed brick to be used decoratively. At Carrouges, the architects took advantage of this, alternating pink and black bricks to enliven and give colour to the facades.

Glossary

Arrow loop: a vertical slit for shooting arrows.

Domino wallpaper: rectangular sheets juxtaposed to form a pattern and glued onto a stretched canvas.

Gabriel: a family of architects from Argentan (Orne). The Carrouges builders, François and Maurice, worked mainly in Normandy. Their descendants rose to fame at Versailles.

Header: arrangement where the brick's thickness and width is visible on the wall face. As opposed to a "stretcher*" in which the thickness and length of the brick is seen on the wall face.



Machicolation: an overhanging stone gallery with openings in the floor through which projectiles could be dropped.

Stereotomy: art of designing stones or bricks for particular layouts.

Practical information

Average length of visit: 1 hour.

Adapted visits for people with disabilities.

 (ground floor only) 

Gift and book shop

The guide for this monument is available, in 2 different languages, in the *Itinéraires* collection in the gift and book shop.

Centre des monuments nationaux

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Château de Carrouges

An exceptional residence,
a prestigious history

The stronghold

During the Hundred Years' War, the first lords of Carrouges built a stronghold on the border of Normandy and the province of Maine. The property later returned through marriage to the Blosset de Saint-Pierre family.

The lordly residence



In the 15th century, Jean Blosset decided to build the residential wing. He was a confidant of King Louis XI, who visited in 1473. He named his

sister, married to Philippe Le Veneur, as his heiress. The Le Veneur de Tillières family lived on the estate from the end of the 15th century until 1936.

The stately home

Cardinal Jean Le Veneur was ambassador and chaplain to Francis I. He had the gatehouse tower built. Tanneguy I Le Veneur received Catherine de' Medici and her entourage at the château in 1570. Just before the French Revolution, General Alexis Paul Michel Tanneguy came out in favour of abandoning privileges. The château was listed as a historical monument in 1927. In 1936, the State bought it along with part of its collections and the ten-hectare park.

The inner courtyard

I The courtyard. The different stages of the construction of the château can be seen here. The 14th-century **keep** on three levels with its defences: arrow loops* and machicolations*. These are indicative of a stronghold which must have had both military and residential uses. **In the lower hall, a measuring instrument** in granite is a reminder of how loads were checked at fairs. The 15th-century **Blosset wing** has retained three of its original features: the arched door, opening onto the guard room, the staircase tower and a Gothic chimney stack. Its facade was reworked when the new wings of the château were built. The late 16th-century “**classical**” wings were built by François Gabriel*. Their stark facades are interspersed with regular granite strips. A partnership between the Centre des monuments nationaux and the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature in Paris has made it possible to showcase a unique collection in France of hunting companies. This collection is displayed on the ground floor in specially designed rooms.

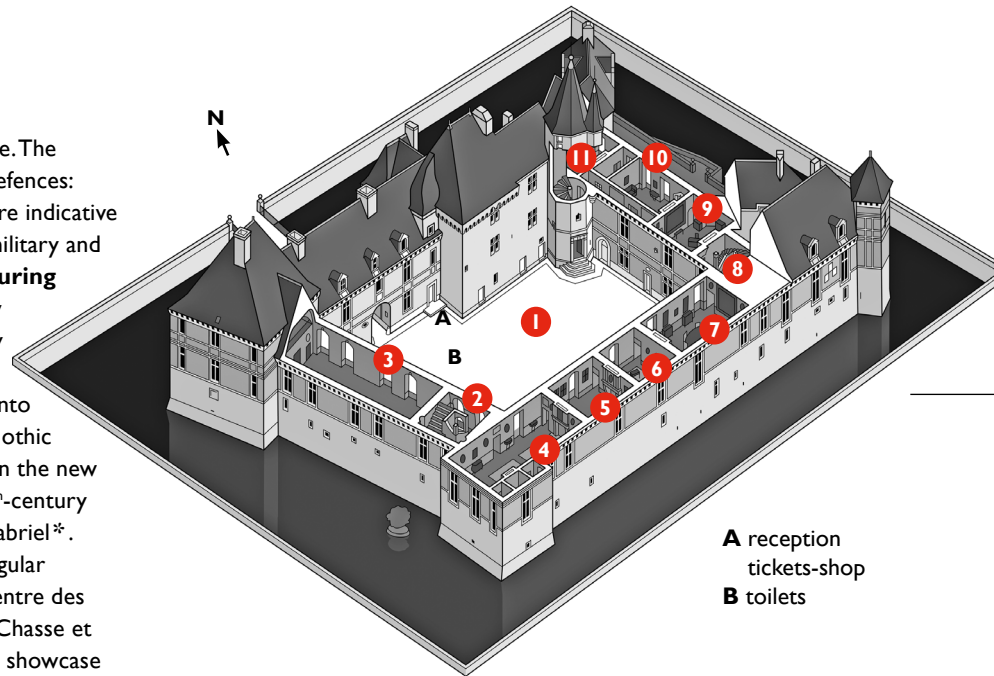
The “classical” wings

The classical wings and the stairs leading to them are the work of the architect François Gabriel*.

2 The main staircase

It was originally rendered and painted with mock brickwork which was removed during renovation work in the 1960s, revealing the stereotomy* of its construction. On the second floor, it leads to the bishop's room with its rare 17th-century decor.

3 The grand reception room, the former paintings gallery, was created at the end of the 18th century for theatre, music and dancing. Its height was achieved by removing the second floor. At the far end is the former hall or Pompadour salon, restored according to the sketches of General Le Veneur. It featured a musicians' gallery.



A reception
tickets-shop
B toilets

4 The great hall was created in the 19th century by removing a partition, as can be seen by the parquet floors and wood panelling. It has small studies to one side.

The windows look out onto the terraced garden below, the former lake which was drained at the end of the 18th century and grassed over to provide grazing for cattle. The “Île d'Amour”, with its little grove of trees in the centre, can still be made out.

5 The portrait room is filled with the images of the successive owners of the château. The chimney breast still has its 17th-century painted decor.

6 The summer room, with no fireplace, has been restored with domino wallpaper* and hand-printed fabrics, and features games tables.

7 The dining room was fitted out in the late 18th century. French windows and a walkway led directly to the parterre gardens. The late 16th-century monumental fireplace combines

Maine marble, polished granite and limestone. The water from the two finger-bowl fountains flowed directly into the moat.

8 The square central open-well staircase provides the link with the medieval residence. Its rendering is painted with mock brick and stonework. This staircase also enabled servants to pass through. On the ground floor is the **kitchen**, used from the late 18th century to 1936.

The Blosset de Saint-Pierre residence

This residence is still laid out as it was in the 15th century, with its two state rooms and its central hall. The current decor was installed by Maurice Gabriel* in the 17th century. The passageways were altered in the 19th century with the addition of a partition on the courtyard side, which still divides the North hall today.

9 The grand antechamber. The 15th-century fireplace is decorated with a 16th-century falcon hunting scene. The room still has the beam decorations from its sumptuous 17th-century decor created by Maurice Gabriel*. Two paintings, vestiges of this vast decor, are displayed in the corridor.

10 The North hall. The small door, imposing fireplace and the ogee arch leading to the chapel, which was destroyed at the end of the Ancien Régime, are typical of the 15th century.

11 Louis XI's bedchamber. The chamber has an adjoining privy. The king stayed in these quarters in 1473. On the fireplace, with its 17th century decor, is the Le Veneur de Tillières family coat of arms. The Chartrier tower leads to the courtyard.