

THE CASTLE OVER THE CENTURIES

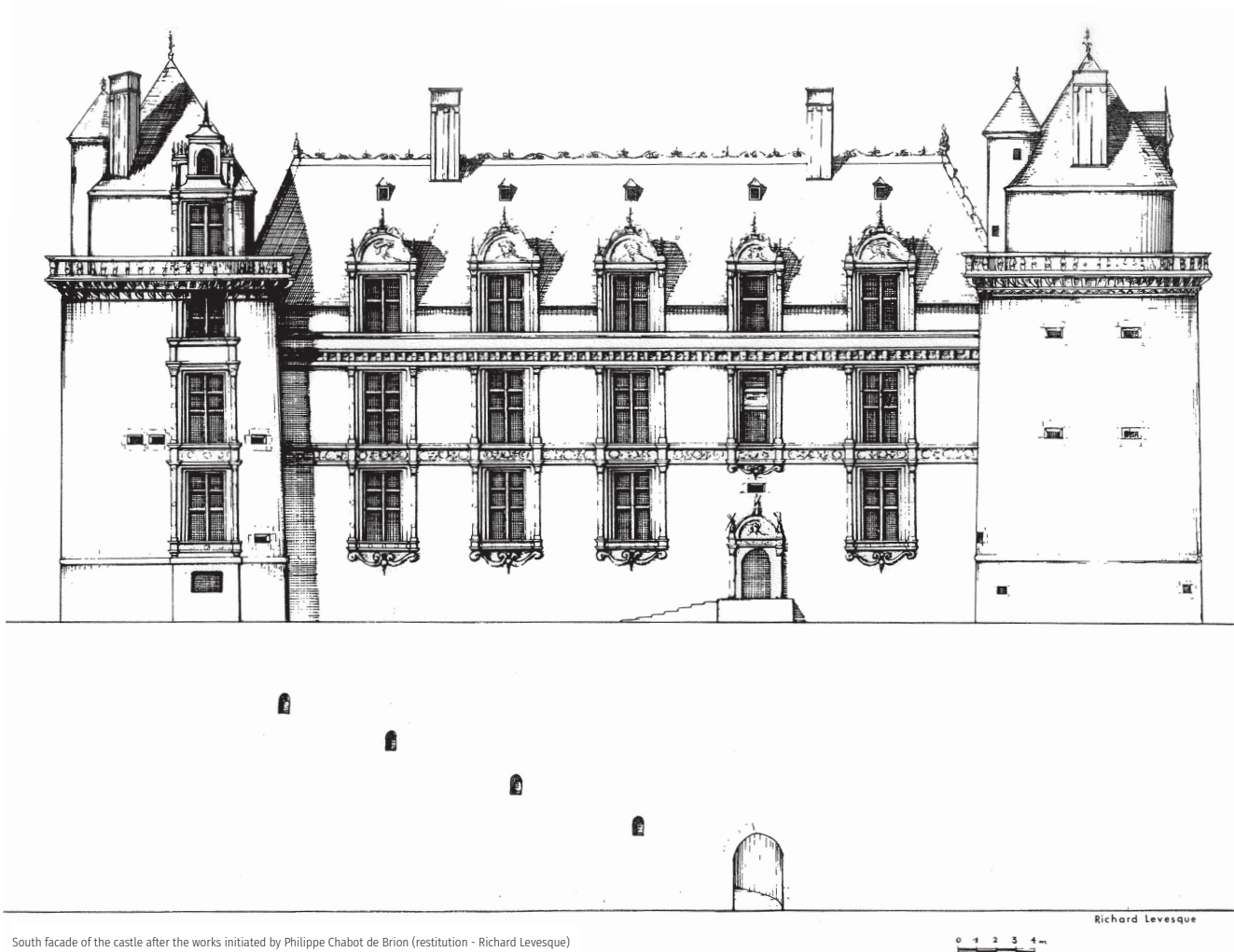
CHÂTEAU d'Apremont

Apremont (from the latin *asper mons* - rough mountain) owes its name to the first gallo-roman settlement on the left bank of the Vie, a 62 km coastal river that gives access to the land from the Atlantic Ocean.

As early as the 11th century, a stronghold was established on the right bank of the Vie, on the site of the actual castle. Its positionnement is perfect: on a **rocky spur**, surrounded on the south by the river and on the east and the west by two natural depressions. The medieval enclosure, as well as the main access through the north gate, are still visible.

In 1534, the owner of the castle, **Philippe Chabot de Brion**, undertook major works to transform the medieval fortress into a residence influenced by the Renaissance architecture. Childhood friend of king Francis the first, he went with him on military campaigns, especially in Italy. Appointed **Admiral of France in 1525**, he married Françoise de Longwy, niece of the king, in 1526: his properties were to reflect his social ascension.

In Apremont, he built a **large dwelling bathed in light, with an ornate facade and flanked by two towers**. He also wanted to impress his visitors and had a south terrace built, with had the originality of having in its embankment a **cavalry ramp** allowing the riders to climb from the banks of the river to the main door of the dwelling. He also wanted to create a port below the castle, by channeling the river from the ocean.



South facade of the castle after the works initiated by Philippe Chabot de Brion (restitution - Richard Levesque)

Unfortunately, **the Admiral fell into disgrace** and the castle went to **Jean de Brosse**, Duke of Etampes and Count of Penthievre - a penniless gentleman of ancient nobility, married to **Anne de Pisseleu**, the king's favourite. The couple had no children and the castle passed into the hands of **the La Tremoille and then the Montmorency-Luxembourg families**. In 1743, the castle is in a pitiful state, with some part falling into ruin. The owner decided to **demolish the central dwelling** and the stones were sold.

The castle is only important to its owner for the farmland attached to it. Buildings were added for grain storage, grape pressing and tenant housing.

In the 20th century, the Thébault family, owner of the castle, **bequeathed it to the municipality of Apremont in 1966**. The town hall moved in and will remain there until december 2019.

THE CASTLE STEP BY STEP

Underground ice house

Carved into the rock, this space of 10 meters long and 2m20 high was used to store ice throughout the year.

West tower

The windows are facing south, allowing a maximum luminosity throughout the day. Less well preserved than the East tower, it has lost its balustrade at the top, and has only two accessible levels of the four that existed. Following the destruction of the main dwelling, an exterior staircase was added to access the first floor.

👁️👤 Exhibition room

Cavalry ramp

Partly dug into the rock, the ramp allows the access of the horsemen from the banks of the river to the south terrace. The ascent of the horses was facilitated by low steps.

Accessible from the foot of the west tower, on the south terrace.

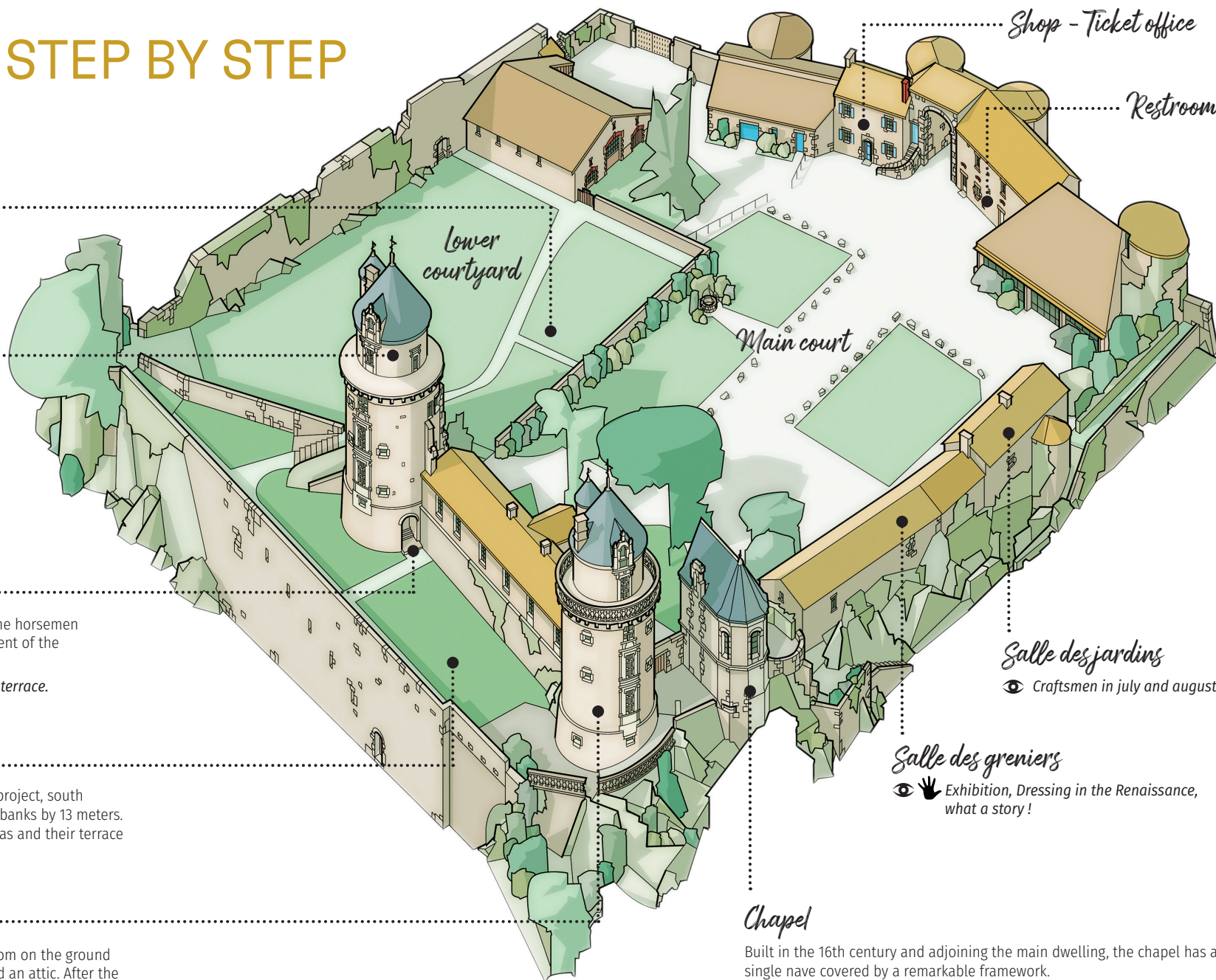
South terrace

Important element of Philippe Chabot de Brion's castle project, south terrace is built partly on the rock and overlook the river banks by 13 meters. It was inspired by the gardens of Italian Renaissance villas and their terrace over the landscape.

East tower

A 6 levels tower: a room in the basement, an old bedroom on the ground floor, later transformed into a kitchen, 3 apartments and an attic. After the destruction of the central dwelling, an interior staircase was built towards the end of the 18th century. Its balcony is 18 meters high and the thickness of the walls can reach 2m50. Thanks to the large mullioned windows facing east, towards the rising sun, the rooms are bathed in light.

Floors accessible only during guided tours.



Shop - Ticket office

Restroom

Lower courtyard

Main court

Salle des jardins

👁️ Craftsmen in july and august

Salle des greniers

👁️👤 Exhibition, Dressing in the Renaissance, what a story !

Chapel

Built in the 16th century and adjoining the main dwelling, the chapel has a single nave covered by a remarkable framework.

👁️ Exhibition, Philippe Chabot, the Admiral's dream

APREMONT

