



PALAIS DE LA BOURSE: HISTORY

The Place de la Bourse, originally called Place Royale, then Place de la Liberté and, later, Place Impériale, is one of the most successful examples of elegant French urban architecture.



The square ...

In 18th-century France, the idea of a statue of the King, set in the centre of a square surrounded by harmonious architecture, was conceived as a sign of the loyalty and patriotism of the local inhabitants.

The obvious location was near the Garonne River, so that foreigners would be impressed by their first sight of the city. *"I have never seen such a lovely sight and splendid spectacle as this port; it certainly deserves a masterpiece to be handed down to future generations"*, exclaimed the royal architect, Jacques Gabriel, when he fell under the city's spell on arriving in Bordeaux in 1729.

In 1731, Gabriel submitted 3 designs to the Jurats, or Municipal Council. The one that was finally adopted was reminiscent of one of his earlier projects, Place Louis le Grand in Paris, now known as Place Vendôme.

Although the Bordeaux project has links to two masterpieces of Parisian architecture, it has its own special beauty. Unfortunately, the monument that gave a focal point to the square has been lost: the equestrian statue of King Louis XV (inaugurated on 19 August 1743) was destroyed during the French Revolution (voted on 15 August 1792).



In 1818, the City Council erected a large Corinthian column-fountain, made of red Languedoc marble, to fill the space. In 1841, it was moved to the Place du Palais de l'Ombrière.

The statue of "Three Graces" was installed in the same location in 1869, by Gumery, a Parisian sculptor.



Palais de la Bourse...

Gabriel finished designing the buildings around the Place de la Bourse in 1739, but the Council of State order launching the construction was not issued until 9 May 1742, two weeks after the great architect's death. Ange-Jacques Gabriel, his son, took over the project and the Chamber of Commerce and Commercial Court finally moved into their new premises in 1749.

The present building does not give a very accurate idea of its appearance at the time.

Palais de la Bourse...



... from 1803 to 1865



... in 1953



... now

The Palais de la Bourse has undergone significant modifications.

Initial changes: A vaulted roof was installed, with alternating wood and glass. This was later replaced by a roof made entirely of glass.



In 1825, the Palais de la Bourse was damaged by a fire that started in one of the shops on the ground floor, ruining 5 shops and a number of pillars in the arcade. When the fire damage was repaired, the Chamber of Commerce decided to remodel the monumental staircases.



In 1925, a horizontal glass ceiling, still visible today, was installed below the glass dome.



Extensive renovation and upgrading work was carried out throughout the Chamber of Commerce and Palais de la Bourse buildings in 2009 and 2010, in order to install a state-of-the-art Conference Centre.

There are currently 17 rooms available, from 30 to 1,500 m², offering thoroughly modern facilities in a historic environment. Palais de la Bourse is an up-to-date event venue, equipped with the latest technology, in a superb, historic setting, which gives it a unique cachet.



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