

= Pentemont Abbey =

Pentemont Abbey (French : Abbaye de Penthemont , or Pentemont , or Panthemont , or Pantemont) is a set of 18th and 19th century buildings at the corner of Rue de Grenelle and Rue de Bellechasse in the 7th arrondissement of Paris . The abbey was a Cistercian convent founded near Beauvais in 1217 and moved to its current site in Paris in 1672 at the behest of Louis XIV . A reconstruction of the abbey was initiated in 1745 by the Abbess Marie @-@ Catherine Béthisy de Mézières and work was completed in 1783 . In the late 18th century the abbey was one of the most prestigious educational institutions in Paris for daughters of the elite , including two of Thomas Jefferson 's . The abbey also provided rooms for ladies of good standing who were in search of rest , including Joséphine de Beauharnais when the case of her separation from her first husband was heard .

The abbey was disestablished during the French Revolution and the buildings were turned over to military use , first as the home of the National Guard , then the Imperial Guard , and later the Cent @-@ gardes . It continues to be occupied by the Ministère de la Défense with the exception of the former chapel , which since 1844 has been a Protestant church , the Temple Penthemont . In August 2014 the Ministry of Defence , facing budget cuts due to austerity policies , sold the buildings to a real estate investment trust , Foncière des 6ème et 7ème Arrondissements de Paris , with plans to move all ministry offices out of the abbey by the end of October , 2016 .

= = History = =

= = = Beauvais (1217 ? 1672) = = =

Philip of Dreux , the famed crusader bishop of Beauvais , wished to found a convent of the Cistercian order . In 1217 he set aside an orchard southwest of Beauvais , on which were traced out the plans for construction , as well as seven arpents (6 @-@ 7 acres) of vines . Philip died before the project was completed and his successor , Bishop Milo of Nanteuil , raised the rest of the funds , and it was completed in 1218 . Pope Gregory IX issued a bull from the Lateran Palace on the 8 June 1230 which sanctioned the new abbey and declared the funds raised for its endowment protected . The abbey took its name , meaning mountain slope , from its location at the foot of the Montagne de St @-@ Symphorien .

In 1554 the abbey provided refuge to Charlotte I de Monceaux , the abbess of the neighboring Abbey of Saint @-@ Paul , whose election as abbess was opposed by Henry II . She fled to Pentemont after the arrival of the king 's soldiers at her own abbey . However , they followed her to Pentemont and demanded by force that she renounce her position , a request to which she was compelled to accede .

In 1671 , after the abbey was damaged in a flood , and for economic and geographical reasons , the abbess Hélène de Tourville moved the abbey to Paris . At the time , the convent had twelve sisters . The previous building was demolished and returned to agricultural work as part of the Pentemont farm .

= = = Paris (1672 ? 1790) = = =

In Paris the abbey took up residence in a former convent , recently suppressed , of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word , located on Rue de Grenelle at the current site of the abbey . The sisters dedicated themselves to the education of young women and later added rooms in which women of good standing could find rest . The abbey quickly acquired a distinguished reputation and by the time of its dissolution in 1790 had revenues of 58 @, @ 000 livres , a great sum for the era .

The final abbess , Marie III Catherine de Béthisy de Mézières , spent 45 years and a great deal of money rebuilding and expanding the abbey . A competition for plans for a reconstruction attracted multiple proposals including one from the royal architect , François II Franque , which drew praise

from Denis Diderot in the Encyclopédie for its combination of grandeur and simplicity . The winning proposal , however , was from Pierre Contant d'Ivry .

The many famous students educated at the abbey included the noted abbess and princess Louise Adélaïde de Bourbon , and Louise d'Esparbès de Lussan , the mistress of the Count of Artois , the future Charles X of France . Thomas Jefferson 's daughters Martha and Mary were both educated at the Pentemont Abbey while he was Minister to France . Their entry into the school was sponsored by the wife of the Marquis de Lafayette . The future first lady Abigail Adams was shocked that Jefferson would send his girls to a Catholic school but he assured her that there were many Protestants at the abbey . Conditions were austere for the students , despite the presence of three princesses , with no fires until the water froze and a prohibition on speaking outside of class and recreation . Her time at the school led Martha , nicknamed Patsy , to write a letter to her father expressing her desire to become a nun . Jefferson quickly removed his daughters from the care of the convent .

The abbey also provided elegant apartments to highborn women seeking independence from families or difficult marriages . The ladies were free to come and go as they liked , with constraints on the hours allowed outside the convent , often had their children and servants with them , and spent their evenings socializing and commiserating in the abbey 's salons . One such resident was Joséphine de Beauharnais , the future Empress of France , during her separation from her first husband , Alexandre de Beauharnais . The court granted her temporary independence from her husband and required her to stay at Pentemont with her children at the expense of Alexandre . It is also speculated that James Smithson , the founder of the Smithsonian Institution , who was born in Paris the illegitimate son of the Duke of Northumberland , was born in the Pentemont Abbey , as it had strong connections to the Duke , whose illegitimate daughters it educated .

== State Property (1790 ? 2015) ==

=== Military ===

During the French Revolution , the Abbey was suppressed and its properties confiscated . The abbey 's affairs were wound down in 1791 @-@ 2 , with its properties in Beauvais sold to pay off state debt . With the abbey now state property it came to serve first as home to the National Guard , then the Imperial Guard . In 1835 , the building was expanded to Rue de Bellechasse which required the demolition of some parts of the original structure . Under the Second Empire the abbey served as the barracks of the Cent @-@ gardes Squadron , an elite cavalry unit that provided personal protection for Napoleon III and the Tuileries Palace .

In the twentieth century , Pentemont Abbey housed the Ministry of War Pensions , Bonuses and Benefits . In 1937 , a bunker was constructed underneath the Court of Honor including two stationary bicycles intended to provide electricity in case of power loss due to enemy bombardment . The courtyard has a war memorial that reads " From veterans to their comrades who gave their lives for their country . In memoriam . " It is also home to a number of commemorative plaques , including ones for André Maginot and Henri Frenay .

=== Protestant Church ===

The chapel was used to store grain during the Revolution and later hay when the army took over the abbey . After the Concordat of 1801 provided formal recognition of the Reformed Church in France , it was decided that three former Catholic churches in Paris be turned over to Reformed congregations , Saint @-@ Louis @-@ du @-@ Louvre , Sainte @-@ Marie @-@ des @-@ Anges , and the chapel of the Pentemont Abbey .

In 1598 , Protestant worship had been forbidden in Paris by the Edict of Nantes . In 1685 , the Edict of Fontainebleau made non @-@ Catholic services illegal in all of France . This inaugurated a long period of persecution for French Protestants though some in Paris were able to worship in the

chapels of the Dutch and Swedish embassies . The handover of the chapel of the abbey as well as the other churches ushered in a new era of open Protestant worship in Paris .

The actual opening of the former abbey as a Reformed congregation was delayed by decades of bureaucratic obstacles as well as opposition during the Bourbon Restoration to turning over a former Catholic building to Protestant use . It was not until 1844 that architect Victor Baltard began work to convert the chapel into a Protestant church . He isolated the chapel from the rest of the building , added new doors in place of two of the previous windows , and converted the former choir to a nave . He also closed off the original entrance by adding a massive organ , built by Aristide Cavaillé Coll and installed in 1846 for the opening of the church . The organ has undergone various modifications over the years including a restoration from 2011 @-@ 14 to restore the remaining original elements . The church itself underwent restoration from 2005 @-@ 2007 commissioned by the City of Paris and accomplished by Benjamin Mouton , the chief architect of historic monuments , and the firm Aubert @-@ Labansat .

= = List of Abbesses of Pentemont = =

= = Gallery = =