Coudenberg palace
The palace on the Coudenberg was the residence of the Dukes of Brabant around which a prominent district developed in the 15th and 16th centuries. The palace was extended by successive rulers in the 15th and 16th centuries. Philip the Good had the Magna Aula or great hall built between 1452 and 1459, amongst other things. The Emperor Charles V added the chapel in 1522-1552. The City of Brussels funded a large part of the construction and refurbishment of the palace. The Balieplein (now place Royale) in front of the palace served initially as a display area where the people of the city came to admire princely ceremonies.

History
The building was destroyed by fire in 1731. The governors then moved into Nassau palace, after which the ruins of the old palace remained undisturbed for four decades. The place Royale and a completely new district in the classical style were built in the late 18th century. Today: Vestiges of the Aula Magna, the Balieplein and the inner courtyard can be found beneath the modern-day place Royale and can be seen at the 'Charles V' archaeological site.

Coudenberg gate
The gate was part of the original city wall and by the 17th century it no longer served any defensive purpose.

The main trading route through the city, the Sterneweg or Chausée, ran beneath the Coudenberg gate. From the second half of the 16th century onwards, the gate building itself was used successively as a prison, a storage place for archives and an arms store.

History
The gate, along with the other parts of the original city wall, was gradually integrated into the fabric of the city and finally demolished in 1761. The road was widened when the Royal district was established.

Today: All that remains of the gate today is part of the foundations, which lie three meters below the rue de Namur, where it crosses the rue de Bredereode.

Aerschot-Croÿ mansion
In the 17th century, this spacious manor house belonged to the de Croÿ family, lords of Aerschot, and included a forecourt and an inner courtyard.

Antoine de Croÿ acquired the old manor house in the 15th century and had it adapted at the expense of the City. The de Croÿs, lords of Aerschot, rose quickly once they entered the service of the Burgundians and remained in this residence for over two centuries. Charles de Croÿ had the house rebuilt in 1603-1605.

History
The residence was rebuilt in the classical style by the Countess of Templeuve when the Royal district was established in 1776-1787. Later on, it moved into the possession of the Arconical-Visconti family, after which it housed successively the Ministry of War and the Royal Grammar School of Brussels. Later still, the Count of Flanders lived here, and Ning Albert I was born here in 1875.

Today: The classical building in place Royale now houses the Treasury.

Merode-Lannoy mansion
The Merode-Lannoy family lived in this manor house.

The building was constructed on the basis of the same plan as the Aerschot-Croÿ mansion, with a forecourt and an inner courtyard. The entire building was separat-ed from the street by a porch decorated with ornamental foliage.

History
In the 18th century the Countess of Lannoy sold the house to the guild of brewers. In 1777 they erected a new pavilion in the classical style when the Royal district was rebuilt.

Today: The classical building in place Royale now serves as the cafeteria and bookstore of the Museum of Fine Arts.

Mansion of David Teniers II
The house of David Teniers II bore witness to the affluent lifestyle of the court artist in the 17th century.

When he moved from Antwerp to Brussels in 1651, David Teniers II, court artist of governors Leopold Guillaume and Don Juan of Austria, bought a piece of land when the old Ravenstein domain was sold. The mansion in the Flemish Renaissance style which he built included an inner courtyard with a fountain. The complex included a living area, a workshop and an exhibition gallery.

History
In the 18th century the façade was decorated in a simple, classical style, altering the earlier appearance completely. In the 19th century, the building accommodated a school. The house was torn down in 1910 when the Isabel district was demolished.

Today: The modern-day rue Villa Hermosa lies on the site of the old first Jewish Stairway. The former residence of David Teniers II had to make way for the Palais des Beaux-Arts, now known as Bozar.

High town

Cleve-Ravenstein court
Philip of Cleve built this residence in the Renaissance style in the 16th century. When Philip of Cleve settled in Brussels, he granted him financial support to rebuild the Mederchtschuur, previously the property of an old aristocratic family. During the religious wars of the 16th century, soldiers were housed here, and after this it fell into disrepair. David Teniers purchased part of the domain. The ‘Court of Ravenstein’ was sold on to the tapestry and silk merchant Gaspard Ruffin. The Jewish Stairways ran alongside the house stepped streets that derived their name from the Jewish district of the 13th and 14th centuries.

History
The outer façade of the left-hand wing was decorated in the style of Louis XV in the 18th century. In the 19th century the part of the building still remaining was restored by the architects Sainenoy and Malfait in the neo-Gothic style.

Today: The Court of Ravenstein next to the Palais des Beaux Arts or Bozar, is the only building in this part of the model that is still standing today. The Royal Belgian Film Archives are now stored here.

Nassau palace
The Nassau family lived in this palace. Its splendour rivaled that in the palace of the Dukes of Brabant.

Knight Willem van Duyvenvoorde, a confi- dant of Duke John III of Brabant, began construction in the mid-14th century. It was inherited by the Nassau family, who lived there until the mid-17th century. In the early 18th century, the palace was extenderd by Engelbert, Count of Nassau. It was built around a central inner courtyard reached through a porch in the form of a tower. Small towers with wooden spires were built in each corner and in the centre.

History
After the fire at the ducal palace in 1731, the governors moved in. Governor Charles of Lorraine purchased it from the Orange-Nassau family in 1756 and added a façade in the classical style. During the French rule, the buildings of Nassau palace were to be used first as the ‘Ecole Centrale’ and subsequently as a university. The park was transformed into a botanical garden. Under the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, a library, a museum, a gram- mar school and an academy were includ- ed. In 1827, an L-shaped building was added in the same classical style for the Museum of Industry. After 1830 the Royal Library, the Museum of Arms, Arms Equipment and Antiquities, the Museum of Art and Sculpture, the Natural History Museum and the State Archives were established here.

Today: The old palace garden corresponds to the current place du Musée, beneath which lies the Museum of Modern Art, illuminated by a semicircular light source.
**St Catherine’s dock**
The dock was part of the 16th century port within the city. Ships sailing to or from Antwerp along the Scheldt, the Rupel and the Wilboeckoo canal moored here.

St Catherine’s dock was excavated in 1564 on the site of the former Beghynengracht that ran along the original city wall. It was the last and the deepest of three docks that formed a continuation of the canal in the city. After St Catherine’s dock and the new port came into service, the old mooring place along the Senne was abandoned. A lively district grew up around the docks, a meeting place for tradesmen and citizens.

**History**
St Catherine’s dock fell out of use and was filled in 1853. This was the first phase of a gradual process during which the port facilities were moved to the canal zone farther and farther from the city centre, until eventually the entire inner port was moved outside the limits of Brussels. Filling in the dock created the space needed for the construction of the new St Catherine’s church.

● Today: The location of St Catherine’s dock corresponds to St Catherine’s church and the market square in front of it.

**Fish Market and Chausée**
The Fish Market was located at the cross-roads of the Chausée and the Senne.

This square, surrounded by covered fish stalls, was used as a fish market. The old quay became free when the port was moved to St Catherine’s dock. In 1601, Archdukes Albert and Isabella decided to move the fish market from the Chausée or Steenweg (at the site of the modern-day rue Marché aux Herbes) to this spot.

**History**
When the Senne was vaulted in 1867, the surrounding districts also disappeared. The Central Halls were erected on the site of the Fish Market. A few years later, the fish market was moved to a new building on the site of the filled-in Merchants’ dock. The Central Halls were demolished and replaced by a modern structure that includes ‘Parking 58’.

● Today: The building containing ‘Parking 58’ is still standing on this spot.

**Franciscan monastery**
This 13th century monastery still fulfilled an important role in the city in the 17th century. The Franciscans were more popular with the people than the richer monastic orders.

The 13th century monastery developed over the following centuries into an extensive complex. Its Gothic chancel was destroyed by the Calvinists in 1583 and rebuilt in 1588. The grave of Duke John I (1261-1294) was also vandalised during the plundering. The Archdukes Albert and Isabella (1598-1621) later built a cenotaph here to replace it. The old church building basically remained standing until the 17th century.

**History**
The nave was burned down during the bombardment of 1695. The church was rebuilt and extended further during the course of the 18th century. It was demolished during the French rule and replaced by the Butter Market. The stock exchange building was constructed here when the Senne was vaulted (1867).

● Today: Little remains of the foundations of the Franciscan church (which can be visited at the Bruxella 1238 archeological site). Most of it was destroyed when the Bourse was built.

**St Nicholas’ church**
St Nicolas’ church, dedicated to the patron saint of merchants, stood in the heart of the trading district.

Iconoclasts destroyed the old St Nicholas’ church in the 16th century, but it was quickly rebuilt. A whole series of Brussels guilds had an altar here. The tower next to the church was destroyed by a storm in the 14th century and rebuilt. In 1622, St Nicholas’ church became a parish church.

**History**
After the bombardment of 1695, the tower and church were rebuilt using the City’s last remaining funds. In 1741, the tower collapsed again, and this time it disappeared from the skyline for good. In 1789, during the French rule, the church was plundered.

● Today: The substantially restored church still stands in the rue au Bourre. Its original character was restored by rebuilding previously demolished houses against the outer walls of the church.

**Corner of the Grand-Place**
At this spot, where one of the oldest Brussels settlements once stood, a new church was built in the 16th century. The district was often cut off from the rest of the city by the flooding of the Senne, which meant that the faithful were unable to fulfill their religious duties. Consequently, in 1520 the parish became autonomous under pressure from governors Margaret of Austria, Charles V and the pope.

**History**
The church disappeared between 1789 and 1801 during the French rule. A pyramid-shaped fountain from Grimbergen abbey was placed in the new square. In the second half of the 19th century, the appearance of the district changed considerably. The Saint-Géry Halls also date from this period (1881). After the Second World War, traders began using the halls less and less. The building was closed in 1977.

● Today: The Saint-Géry Halls have housed an Info centre on urban development and the environment since 1999 (Brussels-Capital Region).

**Poor Clares monastery**
The Poor Clares arrived in Brussels towards the middle of the 14th century. From the 16th century onwards, they settled in the old buildings of the Brethren of Common Life.

At first, the Poor Clares settled in the neighbourhood of the Hal gate, but they moved to the Saint-Géry district in 1568 after their monastery was set on fire during the religious wars. The Malines architect Luc Faydherbe built a church for them in the Flemish baroque style in the 17th century.

**History**
The monastery ceased to exist in 1796 during the French rule and the church was converted into a storage facility for weapons. In 1804, the building was once again used as a church. It was now accessible to laymen and took in parishioners from the demolished Saint-Géry church.

● Today: The church still stands in the Saint-Géry district. Homes have now been established in a number of the monastery buildings dating back to the 17th and 18th century.

**Notre-Dame de Bon Secours**
This church near St James’ hospital was one of the starting points for a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

An old chapel belonging to St James’ hospital originally stood here. By the early 17th century, this chapel had fallen into disrepair. Thanks to a miraculously found statue of the Virgin Mary found by a cobbler on a refuse heap, the church gained new life. The Infante Isabella (1598-1621) placed the church under her protection. As the building soon became too small, the architect Cortvrintt built a new church in the Italian-Flemish baroque style in 1664, with a polygonal design and a hexagonal dome.

**History**
The church was closed in 1797 during the French rule.

● Today: The church still stands in the vicinity of place Fontaëns.