

## Saint Andrew's Cathedral

### A unique cathedral

From the outset, the cathedral was built in the south-west corner of the Gallo-Roman walls, close to the Bishop's palace, which is now City Hall. This location explains why there is no large western gate, characteristic of Gothic cathedrals. At Saint Andrew's, the main entrance has always been to the north. Recent archaeological excavations uncovered the remains of the grand entrance to the Romanesque cathedral: a porch tower which was replaced by the existing "Portail des Flèches" spired gateway in around 1330.

The cathedral is typical of the Gothic style which was the standard for large buildings in northern France between the thirteenth and mid-fourteenth centuries.

### The birth of the Pey-Berland Tower

Built on marshy land, the cathedral soon showed signs of weakness – the nave was reinforced by eight massive flying buttresses in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The bishop's decision to build a detached bell tower was therefore a precautionary measure which was also reminiscent of Italian campaniles. Following recent urban redevelopment, the site is now part of an unspoilt, preserved area. Saint Andrew's cathedral has been a Unesco world heritage site, along with the protected sector of Bordeaux, since 2007.

### Glossary

**Abat-son:** a wooden louver, inserted obliquely into a window opening to direct the sound downwards and protect the belfry from bad weather.

**Auguste Bartholdi (1834-1904):** sculptor of the famous statue of Liberty Enlightening the World in the New York harbour.

**Belfry:** timber frame which supports the bells.  
**Bourdon:** imposing bell with a deep, sonorous pitch.

**Double windows:** identical openings in groups of two.

**Peal:** the ring produced by swinging the bell so that the clapper hits the sides in a sustained, rapid manner.

**Pinnacle:** a small pyramid decorated with finials, on top of a buttress wall.

**Tracery:** stonework that reduces or divides a window.

### Information

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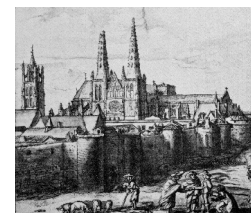
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# Pey-Berland Tower

Saint Andrew's cathedral bell tower

### A builder-archbishop



The cathedral c. 1630

Pey Berland (1375-1458), the son of a wealthy peasant, was one of the great archbishops of Bordeaux. During his bishopric, he founded the University of Bordeaux

and had Saint Andrew's cathedral embellished. Work began in 1440 to build the bell tower a short distance from the cathedral, in order to protect the building from the vibrations of the bells.

### A bell tower without bells... until 1853

Due to a lack of bells, the tower did not fulfil its function of bell tower. It was divided into dwellings. The tower was damaged by a storm in 1667, and plans were made to pull it down around 1790 due to work on widening the streets. Public opinion rose up against this move: the tower was sold and turned into a shot tower (for making shotgun pellets).

The tower was listed as a historic monument in 1848 and bought by Cardinal Donnet in 1851, who restored it to its original vocation by installing three bells and a bourdon\*, as well as a stone spire topped by a monumental Madonna and Child.

In 1925, electric motors replaced the bellringers.

\* Explanations overleaf.



## Inside

The tower has four levels served by a single spiral staircase with 233 steps.

### I Ground floor

The tower was built on the foundations of a chapel, of which only a Gothic window with capitaled pillars on either side remains - it has been transformed into a doorway. In 1882, a passageway was made in the north-western buttress wall to link this room to the staircase. It now houses the entrance and ticket office for the tower.

Three of the cathedral's bells are on display here. The oldest, dating from 1552, is decorated with scenes from the life of Christ and a Gothic inscription. Along with two other smaller bells cast in 1782, it formed part of the cathedral's mechanical clock system.

### 2 The bell chamber is the true heart of the building.



It houses the oak belfry\*, which is located 24 metres above the ground. It is 11 metres high and 6 metres wide, supporting four huge bells on two levels. They peal\* thanks to an electric motor which is controlled from the cathedral.

The Ferdinand André I bourdon\* was sponsored by Emperor Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie. This first bourdon\* was too heavy and when

it cracked was replaced by Ferdinand André II which, with its yoke, weighs 8 tonnes and is 2.32 metres in diameter. It rings out for religious festivals and high days in the life of the Church. Marie II, 1.90 metres in diameter, weighs only 4.2 tonnes. These bells were cast at the Bollée foundry.

**3 The first terrace** is 40 metres up and has concrete flooring through which two small bells can be seen. Marguerite, at 2.5 tonnes, is the only bell to have been cast in Bordeaux, by the Deyres foundry. Little Clémence, weighing 880kg, rings the Angelus.

The spire drum, surrounded by a gallery and decorated with large double windows\*, is supported by flying buttresses resting on the buttresses and staircase tower.

**4 The second terrace**, 50 metres above the ground, surrounds the 10-metre-high spire which is decorated with leaf-shaped ornamentation. Our Lady of Aquitaine is a monumental work made from copper. It is 6 metres high, weighs 1.3 tonnes and was made by the master goldsmith from Paris, Alexandre Chertier. The Madonna carries the Infant Jesus stroking a dove on one side, and holds a fleur-de-lis in the other hand. She faces Médoc and watches over the hamlet of Saint-Raphaël, at Avensan, where Pey Berland was born.

Commissioned by Cardinal Donnet in 1863, the statue uses copper plating over a steel structure and dates from the same period as the works of Bartholdi\*.

The statue was restored and gilded with gold leaf in 2002.

## Outside

The engraving on the northern buttress wall commemorates the laying of the first stone by Archbishop Pey Berland, on October 13, 1440. The decorations on the bell tower facade can be divided into four levels.

At the base, on the blind walls, there are no decorations.

Originally, the only way in was the door to the staircase in the north-western buttress wall. The large triangular-arched opening in the northern facade was made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to carry the new bells in through.

On the second level, to the north and east, Flamboyant Gothic of decorative blind-arcade tracery\* can be seen. The two other sides supported the dwellings demolished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The buttresses become narrower and are decorated with pinnacles\*. The double windows\* on the third level show where the bell chamber is. These large windows with Rayonnant decorations are fitted with wooden abat-sons\*.

The octagonal spire, topped by the statue of Our Lady of Aquitaine, forms the fourth level. Enclosed by two galleries, it offers the highest views over Bordeaux.

