

The chateau Puissant.

History

The chateau Puissant was built in 1811 by Fernand Puissant, the owner of several melting-furnaces, at the rue Neuve-Eglise in the gardens which were located at the rue du Rampart (now Léopold) and against one of the demolished bastions of the Ville Basse.

Since the time that the Dutch reinforced the town it was surrounded on the south-, east- and westside by military constructions. On the north side it was connected to the Place Verte by the rue de la Neuve Eglise. ¹

It was built in Empire style and had a wide staircase which gave access to a large hall. The walls were covered with Louis XVI style paintings. Its floors were covered with grey and white marble. From the hall, there was an entrance towards the dining-room and two rooms. Behind one of these rooms a staircase led to a bedroom. All these rooms were now reserved for the emperor and the dining-room was converted into a study. ²

Dégagée [?] in 1840 by the construction of a railroad it was in 1871 placed in a huge garden, of which the gate opened in the axis of the current rue Puissant.

In 1871 the building was sold to the Banque Nationale de Belgique. In 1911 the bank decided to demolish the building, which took place in 1912. The new building was finished in 1917, at the quai de Brabant nr.10. ³

Nowadays, a tablet on the front of the building reminds us of the old chateau. The tablet was placed there on 21st september 1952 by the SBEN, supported by the town of Charleroi and the bank. The text reads:

"Ici s'élevait le chateau Puissant dans lequel deux jours avant Waterloo Napoleon Ier empereur des francais établit son quartier général la nuit du 15 juin 1815. Société Belge d'Etudes Napoleoniennes. F.G.Schmidt, Charleroi,1952." ⁴

1. Anonymous. Le quartier général de Napoleon à Charleroi. In: Bulletin SBEN, no.6 October 1952 p.7 According to Jardin, attached to the imperial stables, the headquarters were at the Place des Promenades. Cf. Bulletin de la SBEN, ..

² Libioulle, M. Napoleon à Beaumont et à Charleroi. In: Bulletin of the SBEN, no.45 1964 p.16

³ Cf.Introduction of P.J.Prunier. Notice sur la ville de Charleroi p.14-15

4.For a photograph of the old chateau see: Lachouque, H. Waterloo.Parijs.1972.p.66.