

Scenic Design Research Packet — 15th-Century Paris & Notre-Dame (Hunchback of Notre Dame)

Architecture • Historical Background • Visual cues (drawings, engravings & plans)

Jacob Wallach

Jacob Wallach Concept Statement

Key themes of The Hunchback of Notre Dame are, the mistreatment of the romani people, the different types of love there are, and how religion can create both sinners and saints.

To show the Juxtaposition between qausimodo and society, qausimodo lives in the upper set, while most main characters are living below. To portray this, the rafter platforms seen in the set will be used to alienate actors, separating them from the ensemble to give a greater show of separation and inner thought of the actor.

With a gothic proscenium, and a set shaped like angel wings, we will show the whole story, through performers, recreating the events in the Notre Dame Cathedral and the audience will see how the church can morph into other places to show how the whole story is based in how the structure of the church can affect people, positivly or negativly.

Play location	Real life Equivalent
BARE STAGE.	Notre Dame Cathedral- Pewless
BELL TOWER	Notre Dame Bell Tower
TOWN SQUARE	Parvis De Notre Dame
INSIDE THE CATHEDRAL	Notre Dame Cathedral
TAVERN	15th century parisian brothels/ taverns
PRAYER STALLS.	Notre Dame - Prayer stalls
THE KING'S COURT	Château de Vincennes
STREETS OF PARIS	Parvis De Notre Dame
COURT OF MIRACLES.	Parisian catacombs
PRISON	The Conciergerie
THE BASTILLE	The Bastille

Notre-Dame Cathedral — Pewless Nave (15th-Century Practice)

For most of the Middle Ages, large churches and cathedrals did not contain fixed seating in the nave. Worshippers stood, knelt, or sat on the floor; portable benches might appear for the elderly or during long sermons. “Pews,” strictly speaking, were enclosed boxes and a post-medieval innovation. By the later 14th–15th centuries, some wooden benches became more common in parts of Europe, but the idea of a nave filled with continuous, fixed rows of seating is much later. In a 15th-century Notre-Dame context, imagine an open stone floor, with movement and gathering space framed by massive piers, aisles, and processional routes. This open plan is central to the staging vocabulary of the Hunchback story: markets, crowds, and processions can flow through a pewless nave.

Visual and spatial cues: an expansive paved floor (flagstones), scattered movable benches or stools, lecterns or pulpits that could be repositioned, and free circulation. Lighting derives from candles and lamps, with daylight pouring from the clerestory and aisles. The open nave also heightens verticality—unobstructed sightlines to the soaring ribs, pointed arches, and the distant chancel barrier (rood/choir enclosure).

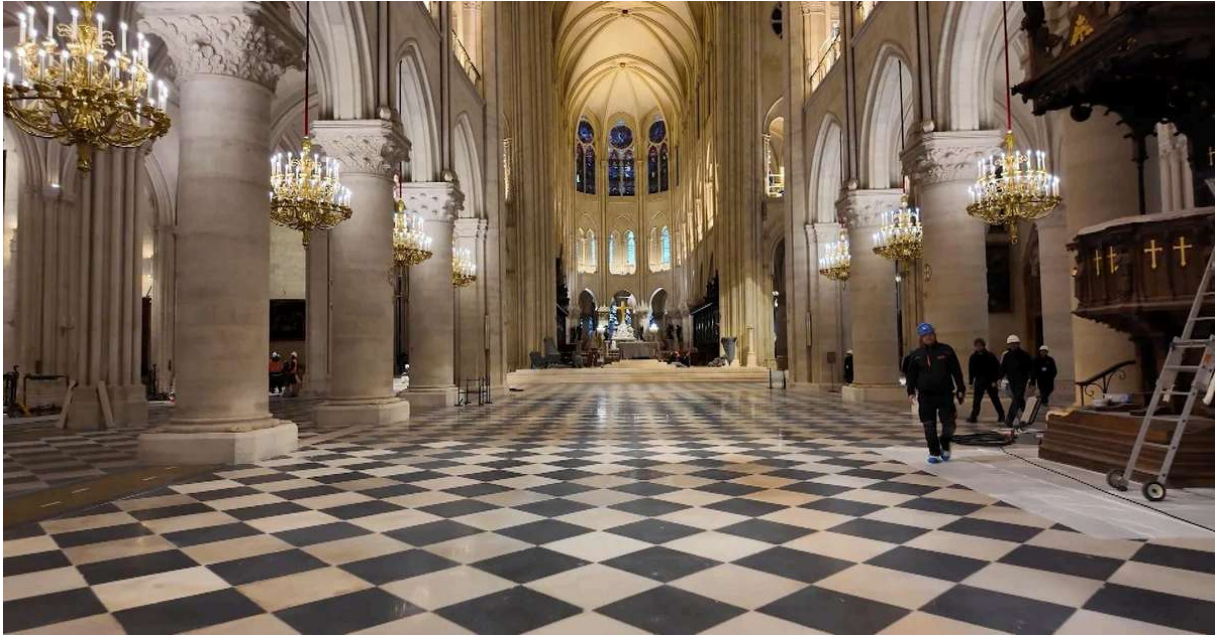
Design takeaways for stagecraft:

- Keep the nave floor open
- Allow modular seating/props for sermon or crowd scenes
- Emphasize verticality with columns, ribs, and a deep processional axis

Suggested Plates (click to view):

- **Short history of pews and late-medieval benches (overview)** — <https://aleteia.org/2019/02/16/a-short-history-of-the-humble-pew/>
- **On medieval churches being largely seat-free** — <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/explore/why/intriguing-insides>
- **Parish-church naves and benches context** — <https://www.buildingconservation.com/articles/sacred-secular/sacred-secular.html>

- **Britannica: Pew (definition & evolution)** — <https://www.britannica.com/topic/pew>







Notre-Dame — Bell Towers & Belfry

The twin west towers, begun in the early 13th century and completed in stages, hold timber belfries that historically carried multiple bells. In the 15th century, Notre-Dame already functioned as a sonic beacon for the city—bells marked the liturgical day and civic events. Within the towers, heavy timber frames braced the bells and dispersed dynamic loads through masonry. Stairs and tight walkways lead to the belfry platforms, with deep embrasures, louvered openings, and an austere timber-and-stone palette—ideal for atmospheric scenes around the bell ringer.

Key spatial/visual notes: narrow spiral stairs; timber bell cage; rough plank walkways; trapdoors/hoists; soot and wear on wood; views through the louvered openings to slate roofs, flying buttresses, and the Seine. While later famous bells (e.g., Emmanuel, recast in the 17th century) post-date the 1400s, the belfry typology and ambiance are already in place for a late-medieval setting.

Suggested Plates (click to view):

- **Drawing of the bell-ringer's workshop in Notre-Dame's north-tower belfry (1899, evocative of space) —**
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Auguste_Herbet_grand_sonneur.jpg
- **Notre-Dame roof/truss & frame category (reference to timber structures) —**
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Frame_of_Notre-Dame_de_Paris
- **Notre-Dame architecture timeline (official site) —**
<https://www.notredamedeparis.fr/en/understand/architecture/>

14 band members, 2 large bells, 18 small







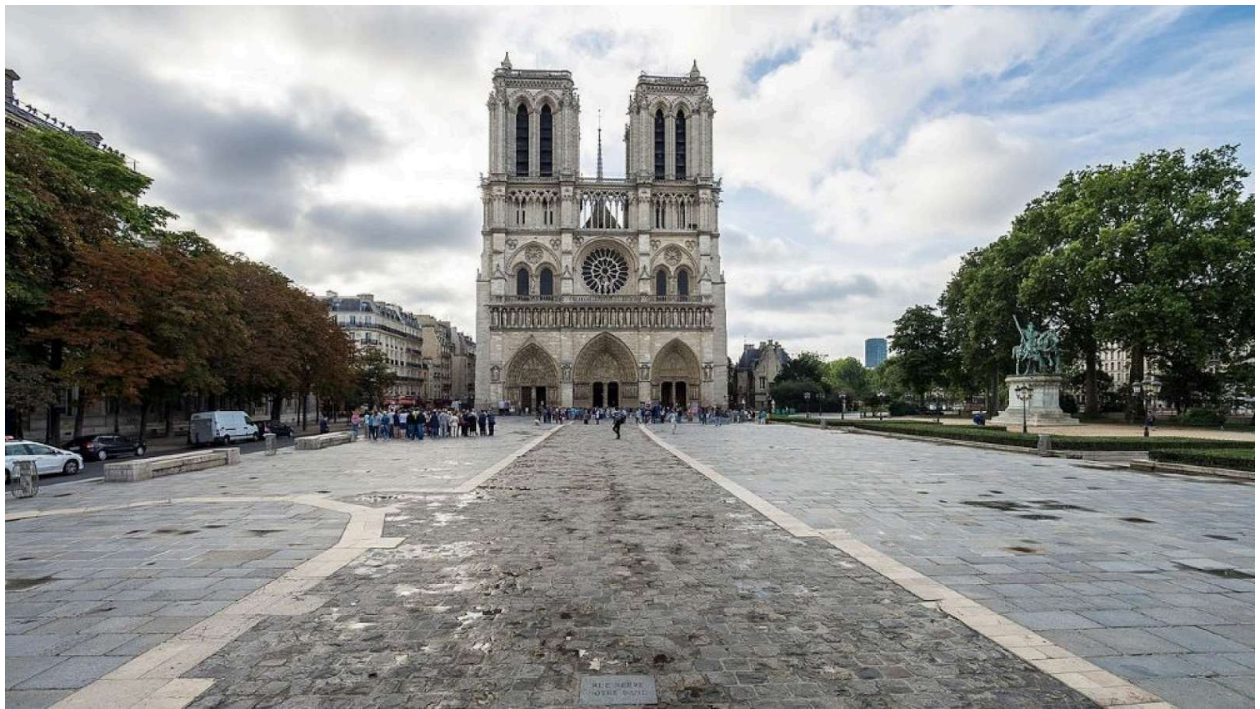
Parvis de Notre-Dame (Forecourt)

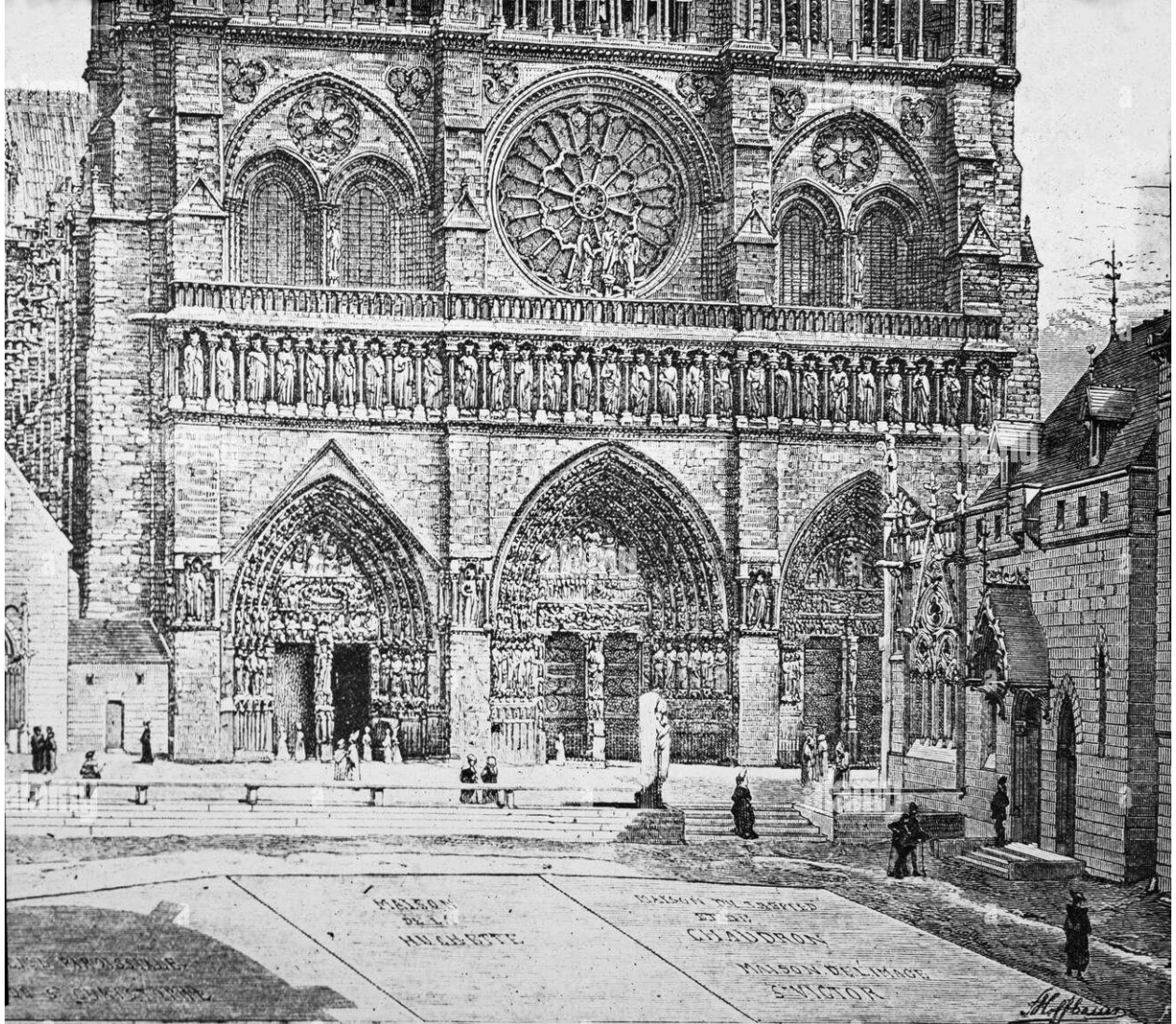
The Parvis—the open forecourt in front of Notre-Dame—has long served as a civic-sacred threshold for processions, announcements, markets, and festivals. In the late Middle Ages, it mediated between the cathedral, the bishop’s precinct, and the adjacent Hôtel-Dieu hospital. Crowds gathered here for sermons and civic rituals; pageant wagons and scaffolds could be erected for religious drama. Paving, drainage, and the edge conditions (steps, posts, stone benches, and perimeter buildings) frame the composition.

Visual references include early modern engravings and city views (e.g., Israël Silvestre) that show the cathedral’s west front rising over a busy square. While many surviving prints date to the 17th–18th centuries, they preserve the spatial logic useful for staging a 15th-century parvis: a wide, hard-surfaced plaza with side lanes, portable stalls, and a clear façade backdrop for public scenes.

Suggested Plates (click to view):

- **Engravings of Notre-Dame (category with multiple views)** — https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Engravings_of_Notre-Dame_de_Paris





Rond.

Porte de la Vierge.
LE PARVIS.

Porte du Jugement.
Le grand Jeûneur.

Porte Sainte-Anne.

Entrée de l'Hôtel-Dieu.
Rue Neuve-Notre-

— Place du parvis Notre-Dame au quinzisième siècle.

Prosp: der Kirche de Nostre Dame



Notre-Dame Cathedral — Architecture & 15th-Century Context

Notre-Dame is a showcase of mature Gothic: ribbed vaults, pointed arches, compound piers, and flying buttresses. Core construction spans roughly 1163–1250, with later campaigns adding chapels and decorative programs. By the 14th–15th centuries, works around the choir and chapels continued; a monumental sculpted choir enclosure (clôture) from the 14th century separated the canons' choir from the ambulatory, creating a powerful liturgical boundary that would remain until later Baroque alterations. A significant organ was in place by the early 15th century, amplifying the sonic presence of the liturgy in the vast stone volume.

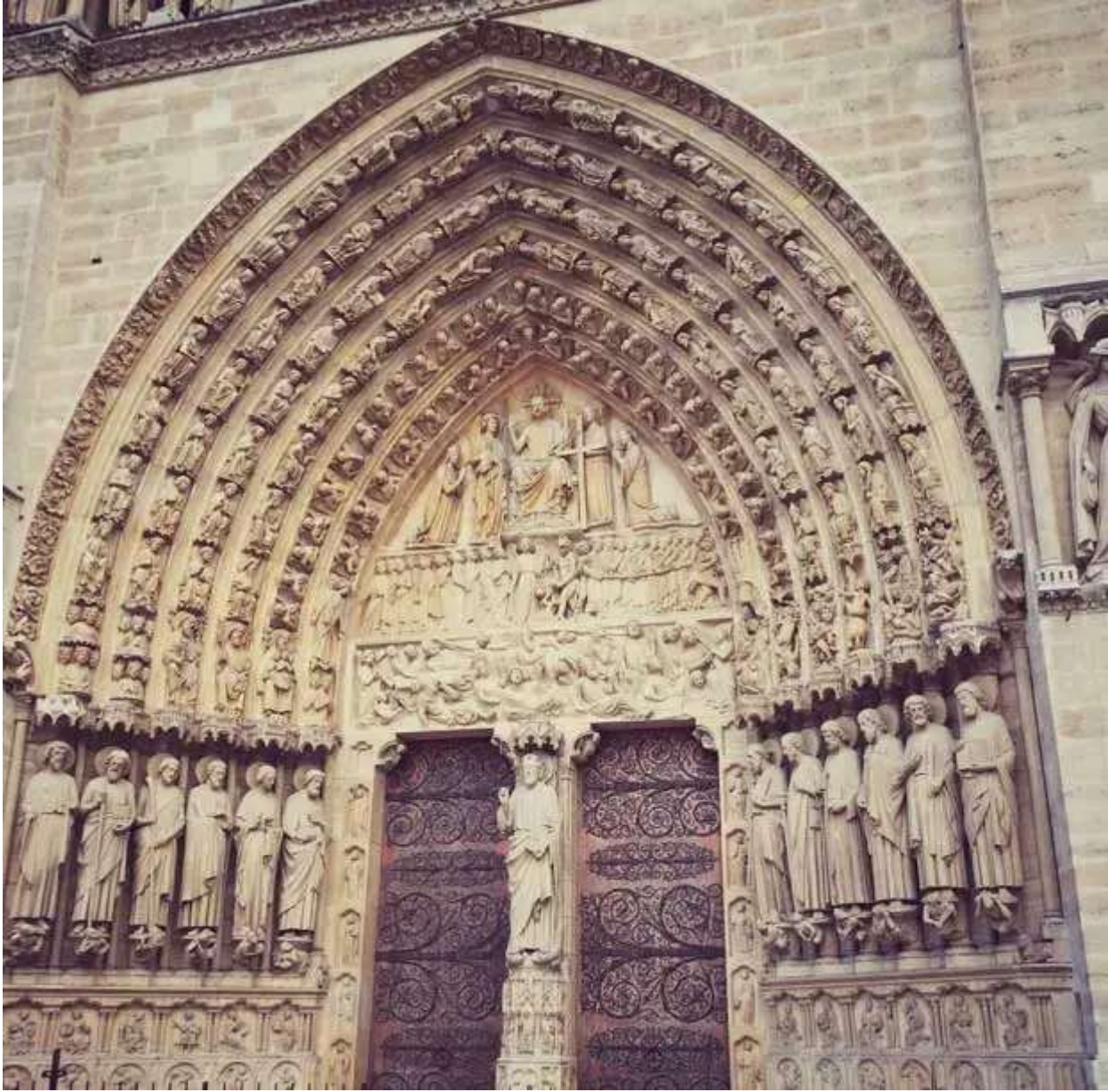
For a 15th-century staging, emphasize the cathedral's layered fabric: tall clerestory with tracery; deep triforium shadows; robust flying buttresses outside; the chancel enclosed by a sculptural barrier; and rich polychrome accessories (textiles, processional banners). Later centuries heavily modified the choir (removal of the rood screen and Baroque refit under Louis XIV and Robert de Cotte), but the medieval spatial grammar is still legible in scholarship and surviving elements.

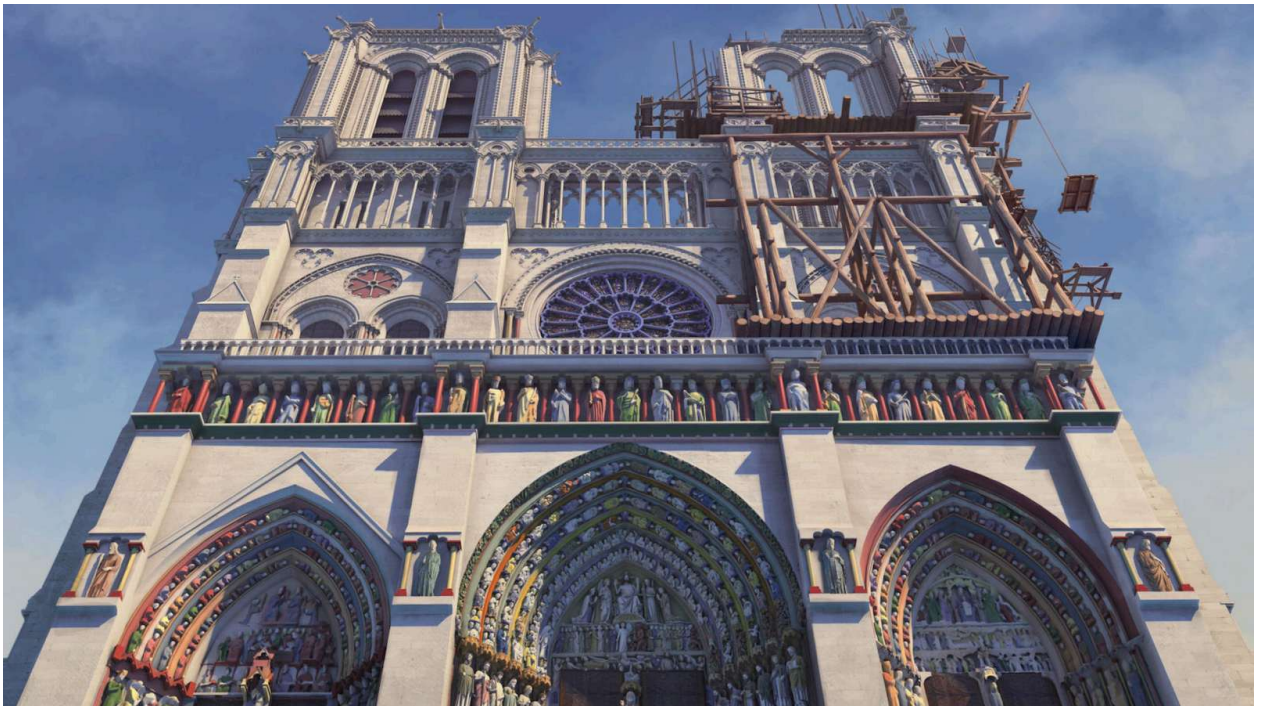
Suggested Plates (click to view):

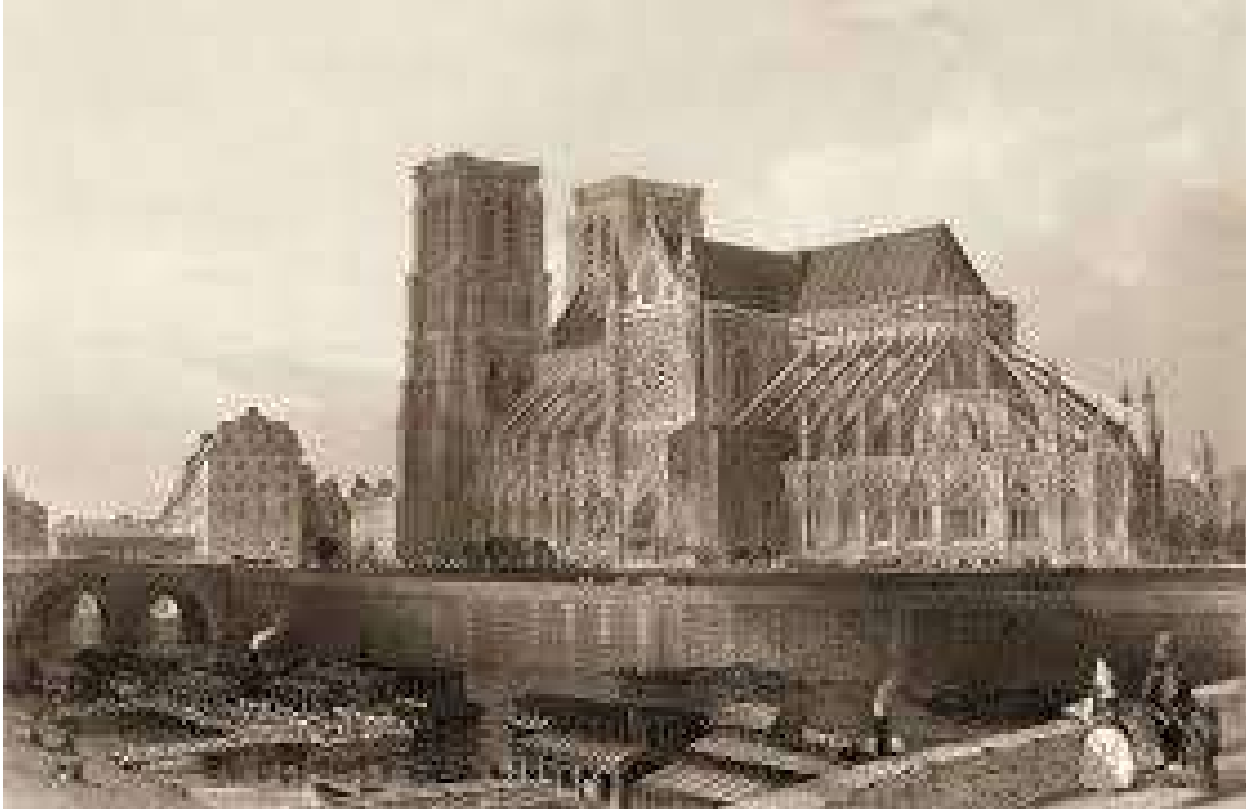
- **Notre-Dame architecture overview (official site)** — <https://www.notredamedeparis.fr/en/understand/architecture/>
- **The 14th-c. Choir Enclosure / Tour de chœur (official site)** — <https://www.notredamedeparis.fr/en/understand/sculptures/the-choir-enclosure/>
- **Notre-Dame's early 15th-c. organ (official page)** — <https://www.notredamedeparis.fr/comprendre/musique/lorgue-renaissance/>

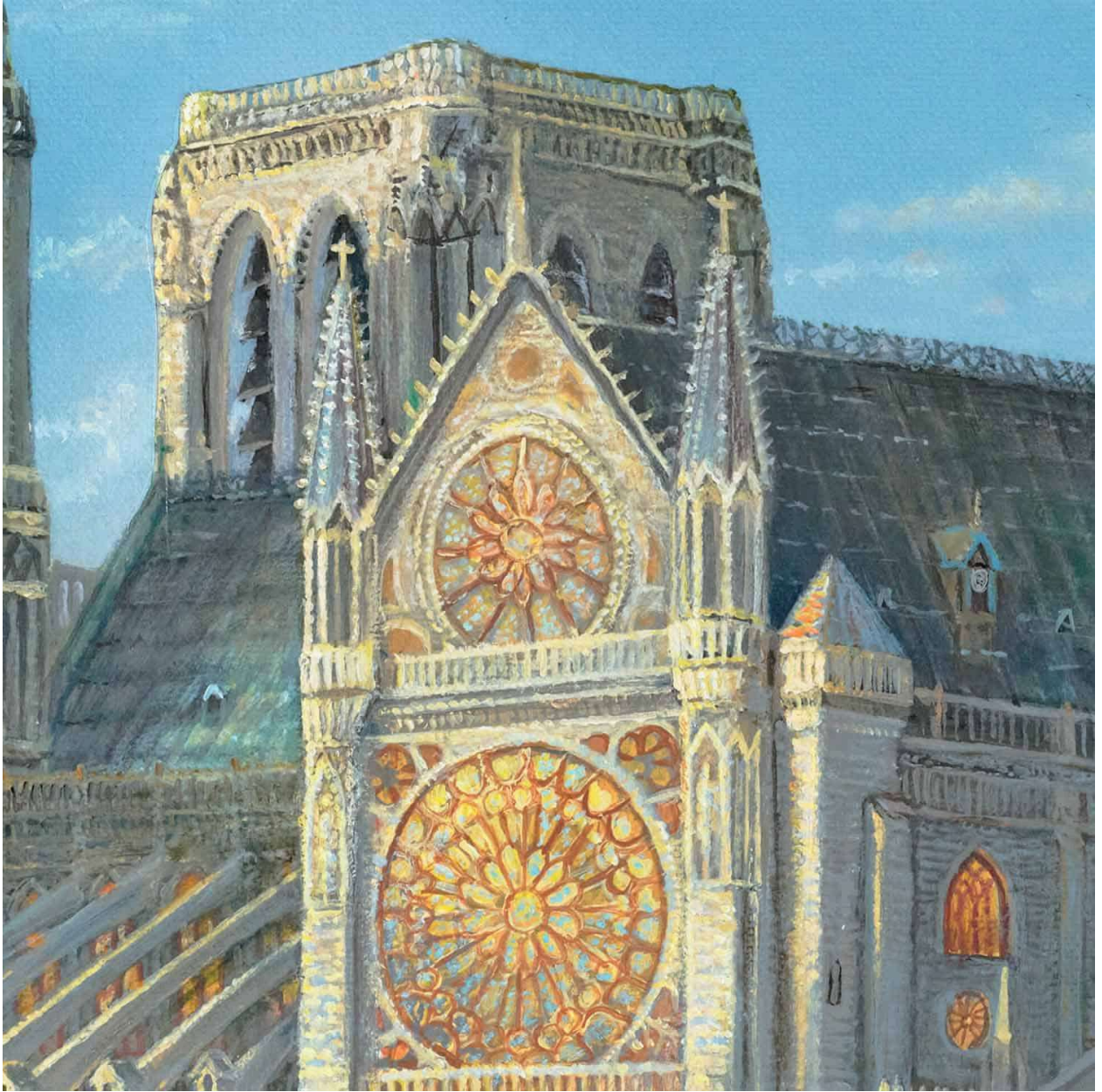














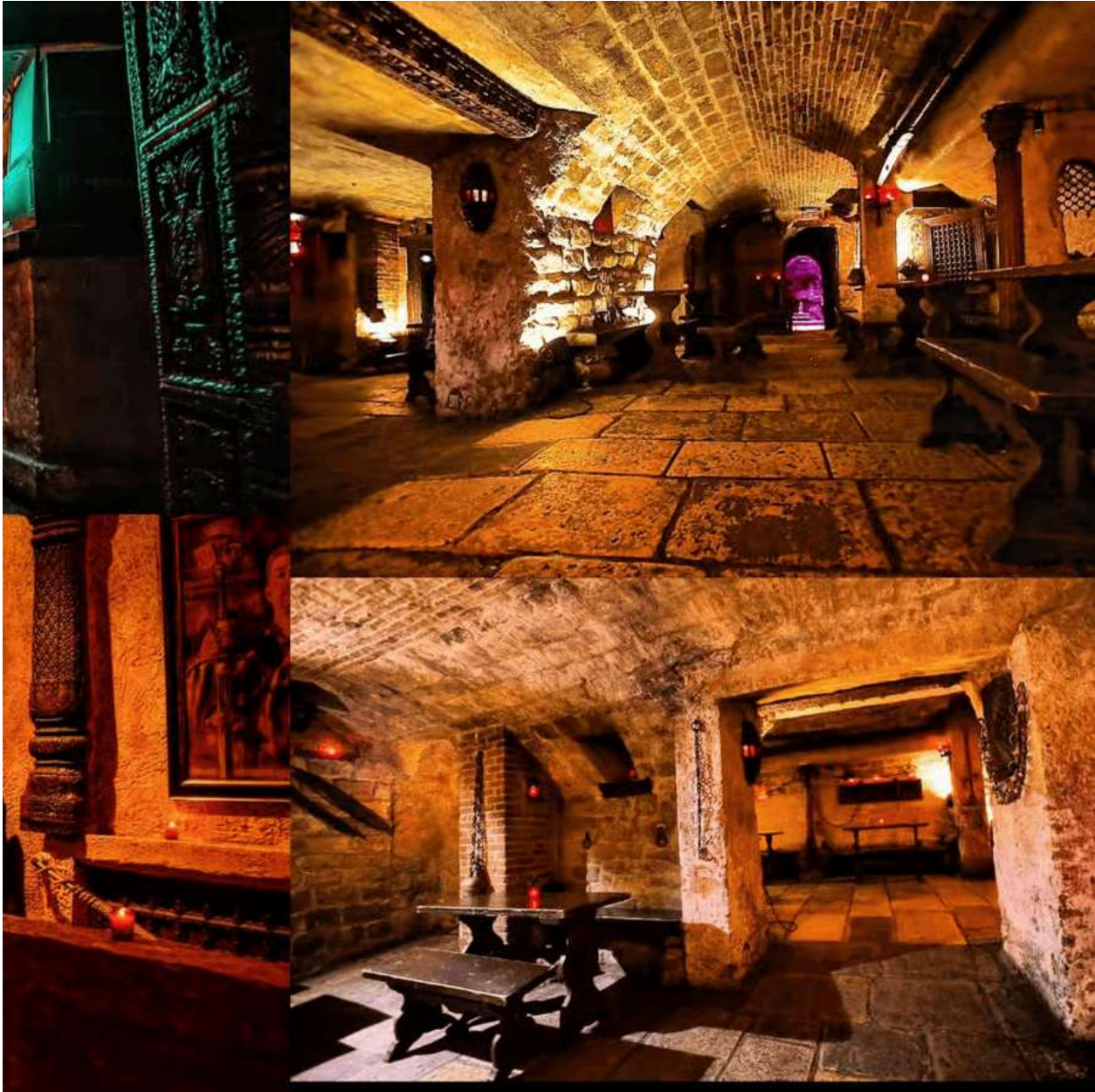
15th-Century Parisian Taverns / Brothels (Atmosphere & Visual Language)

Direct Parisian interior depictions from the 1400s are rare, but period-adjacent prints and later Northern European genre scenes capture durable features useful for scenic design: low timber ceilings with soot-blackened beams; whitewashed or timber-framed walls; packed-earth or plank floors (stone tiles in better houses); rough trestle tables and benches; wall pegs for cloaks; hearths or braziers; smoky candlelight; and hanging jugs and utensils. Public drinking rooms doubled as social theaters—gambling, music, brawls, and shadowy alcoves are recurrent motifs. Licensed brothels existed in medieval Paris with intermittent regulation and suppression; their interiors likely overlapped with upscale taverns/inns: enclosed booths, curtained beds in upper chambers, and tighter, more intimate lighting.

Design takeaways for stagecraft:

- Compress ceiling height; expose beams and smoke staining
- Use trestle tables/benches and a dominant hearth corner
- Layer props: dice, tankards, lutes/fiddles, rush baskets, wall pegs

- Add curtained doorways/upper-room stairs for brothel sub-spaces







Notre-Dame — Prayer Stalls (Stalles) & Rood/Choir Screen

Clergy stalls (stalles) formed the seated choir of canons. At Notre-Dame, the surviving wooden stalls are largely an early-18th-century installation under Robert de Cotte (1710–1714), with carved oak backs and narrative panels above—later than the 15th-century setting. In the late Middle Ages, however, Notre-Dame’s liturgical choir was enclosed by a tall sculpted screen (clôture / jubé) dating to the 14th century, creating a strong boundary between the sanctuary and the ambulatory and providing quiet for the canons during office.

For an authentic 15th-century look on stage, foreground the sculpted choir enclosure and treat stalls as simpler, earlier seats within the enclosed choir, rather than the rich 18th-century Baroque ensemble now known. Pair this with metal grilles, candle stands, and reliquary pedestals to express a dense, sacred precinct just beyond the public nave.

Suggested Plates (click to view):

- **Notre-Dame: Les stalles (official object page, 18th-c.)** — <https://www.notredamedeparis.fr/oeuvre/les-stalles/>
- **The Choir Enclosure (14th-c., official site)** — <https://www.notredamedeparis.fr/en/understand/sculptures/the-choir-enclosure/>





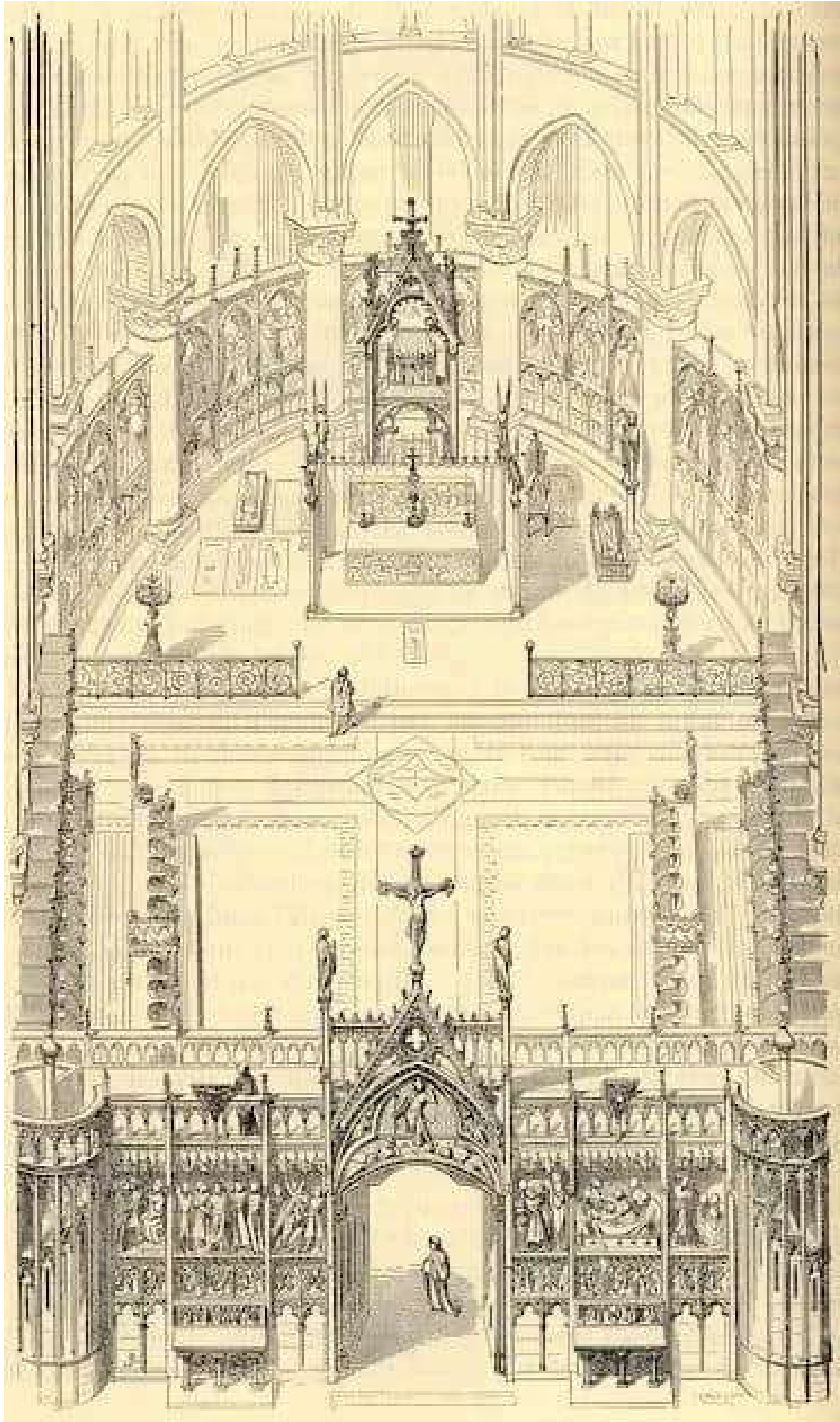


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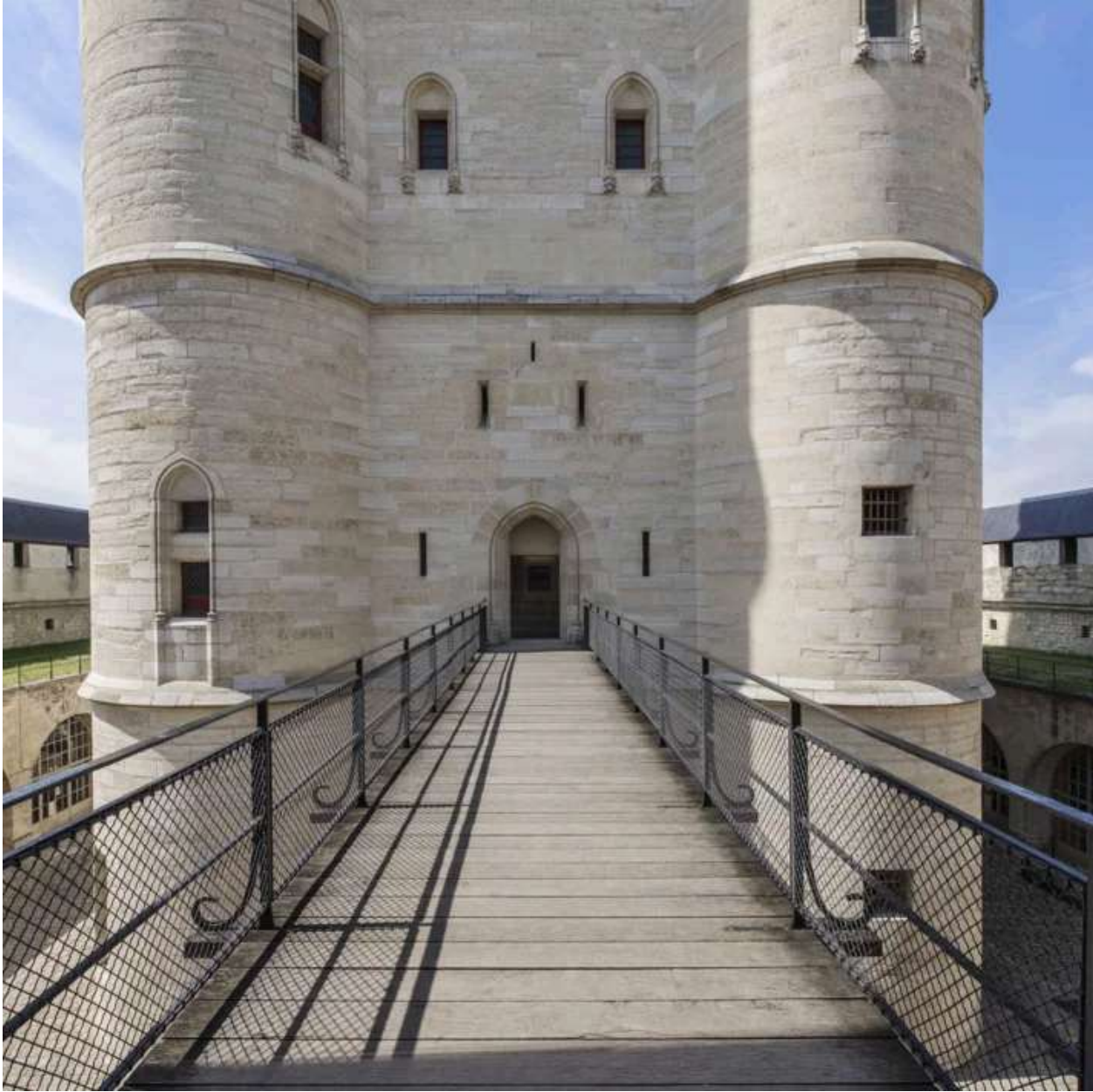
Château de Vincennes — Royal Fortress & Donjon

East of Paris, the royal stronghold at Vincennes presents a classic late-medieval fortified ensemble dominated by its massive stone donjon (keep), c. mid-14th century, standing over 50 meters tall. By the 15th century, Vincennes served as both a defensive anchor and a symbol of royal authority. The complex comprises a rectangular enceinte flanked by towers, with gatehouses, inner courts, and the iconic isolated donjon within its own low enclosure and bridge. Interiors of the keep include vaulted great chambers, narrow mural stairs, and defensive roof walks with crenellations and machicolations.

Design cues: tall, sheer limestone walls; rectilinear curtain with angular flanking towers; timber hoardings implied at parapets; and, in the keep, tall windows in state rooms contrasted with tight service passages. As a scenic backdrop, Vincennes can read as a power center or a prison-court—its plan geometry and monumental verticals contrast strongly with the organic fabric of Île-de-la-Cité.

Suggested Plates (click to view):

- **Ground-floor plan of the Donjon (BnF/Commons)** — [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plan_du_Rez-de-chauss%C3%A9e_du_donjon_de_Vincennes - btv1b8444464q.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plan_du_Rez-de-chauss%C3%A9e_du_donjon_de_Vincennes_-_btv1b8444464q.jpg)
- **Plan of gardens & donjon environs (1712, Musée Carnavalet)** — https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plan_d%27une_partie_des_jardins._Donjon_et_environs_de_Vincennes%2C_D.7122.jpg
- **Overall plan of Château de Vincennes (SVG overview)** — [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plan_Ch%C3%A2teau_de_Vincennes - 2021.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plan_Ch%C3%A2teau_de_Vincennes_-_2021.svg)



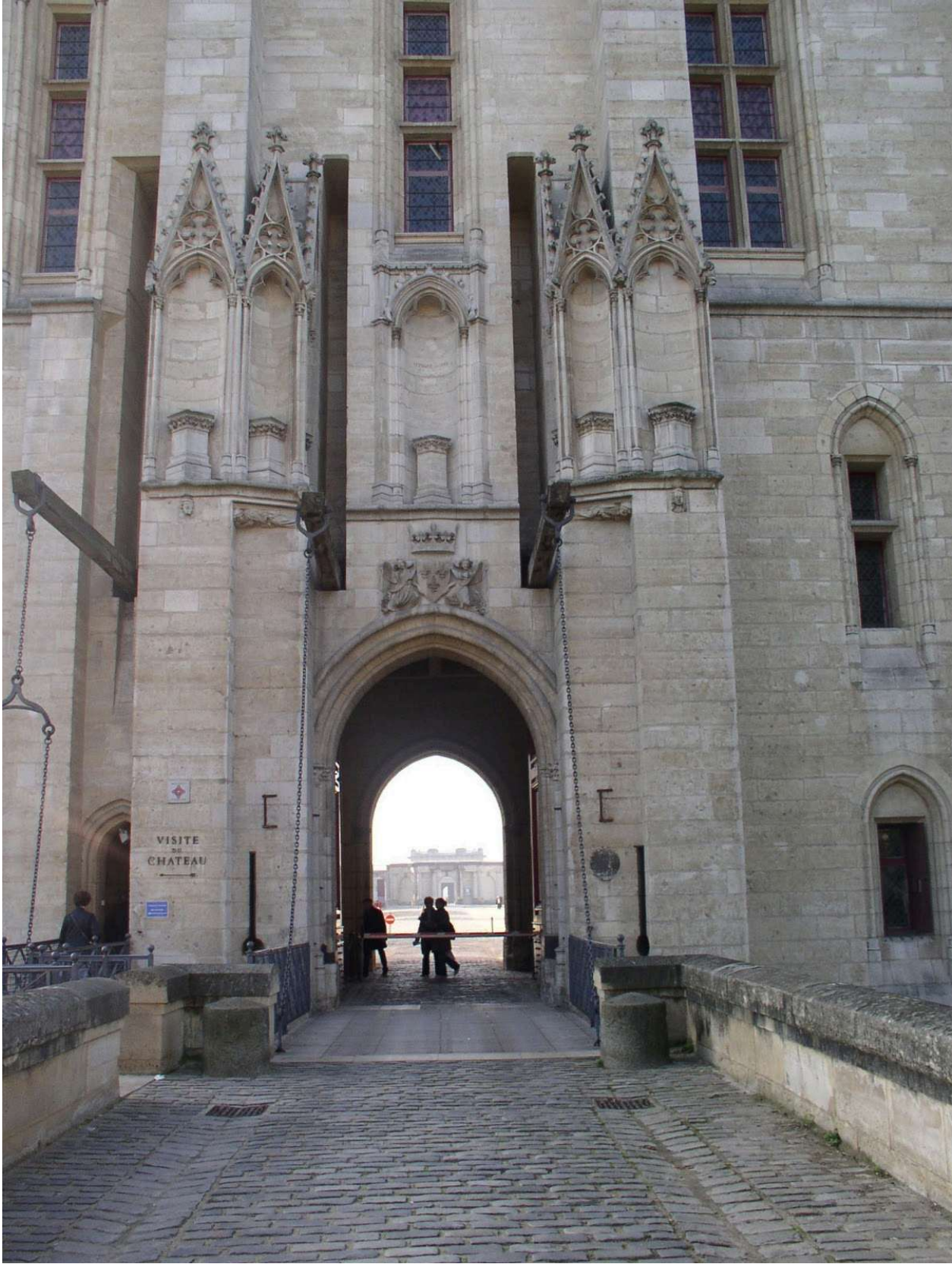




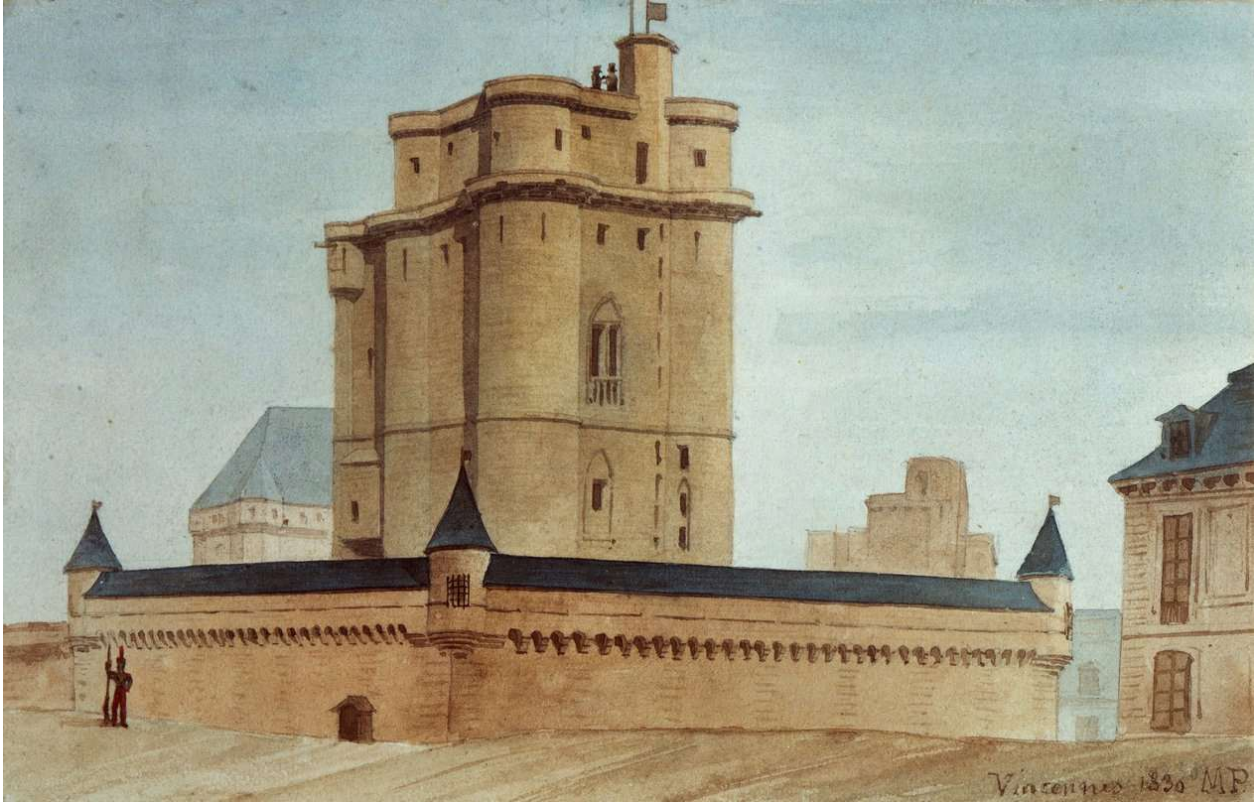


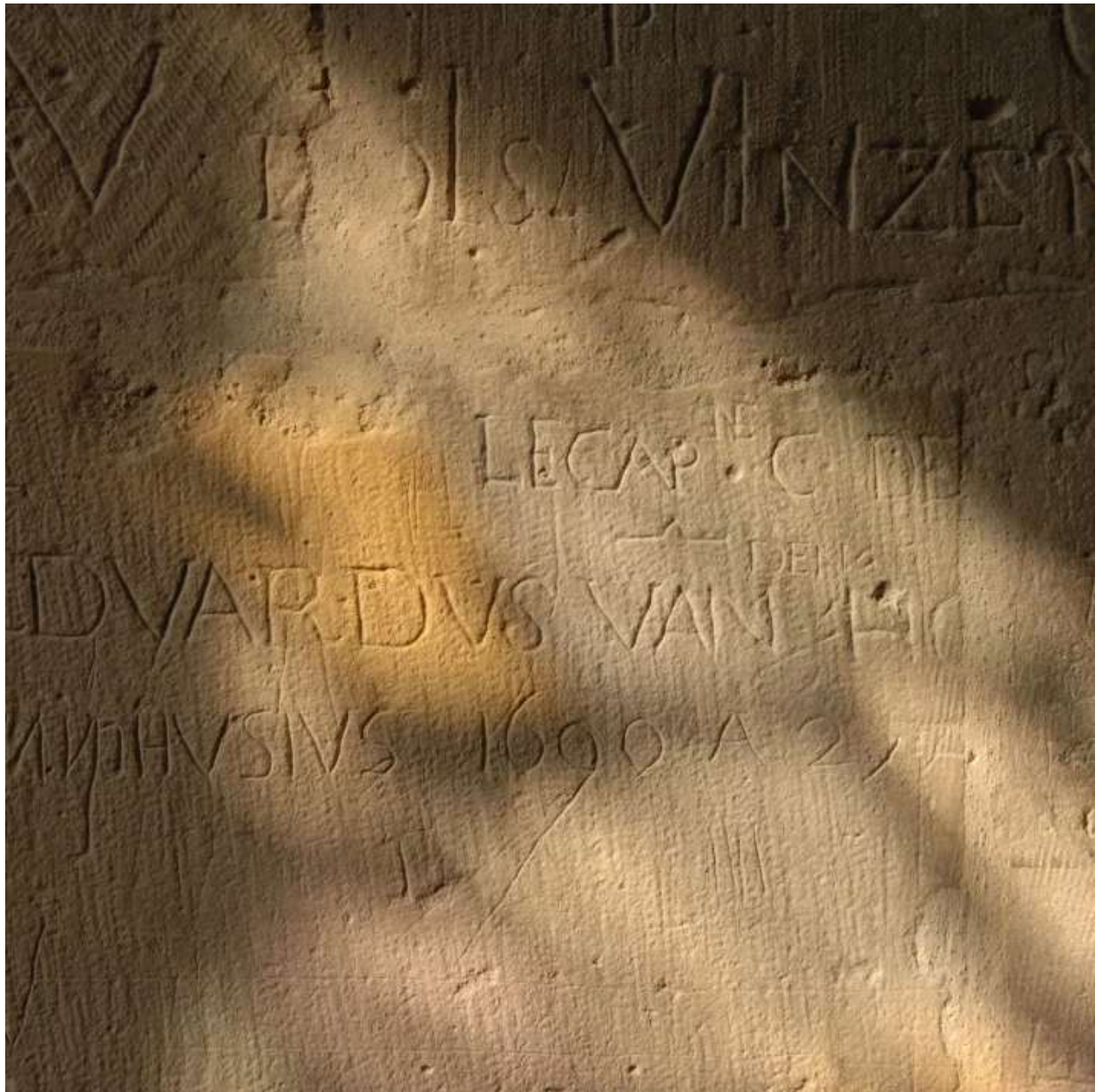












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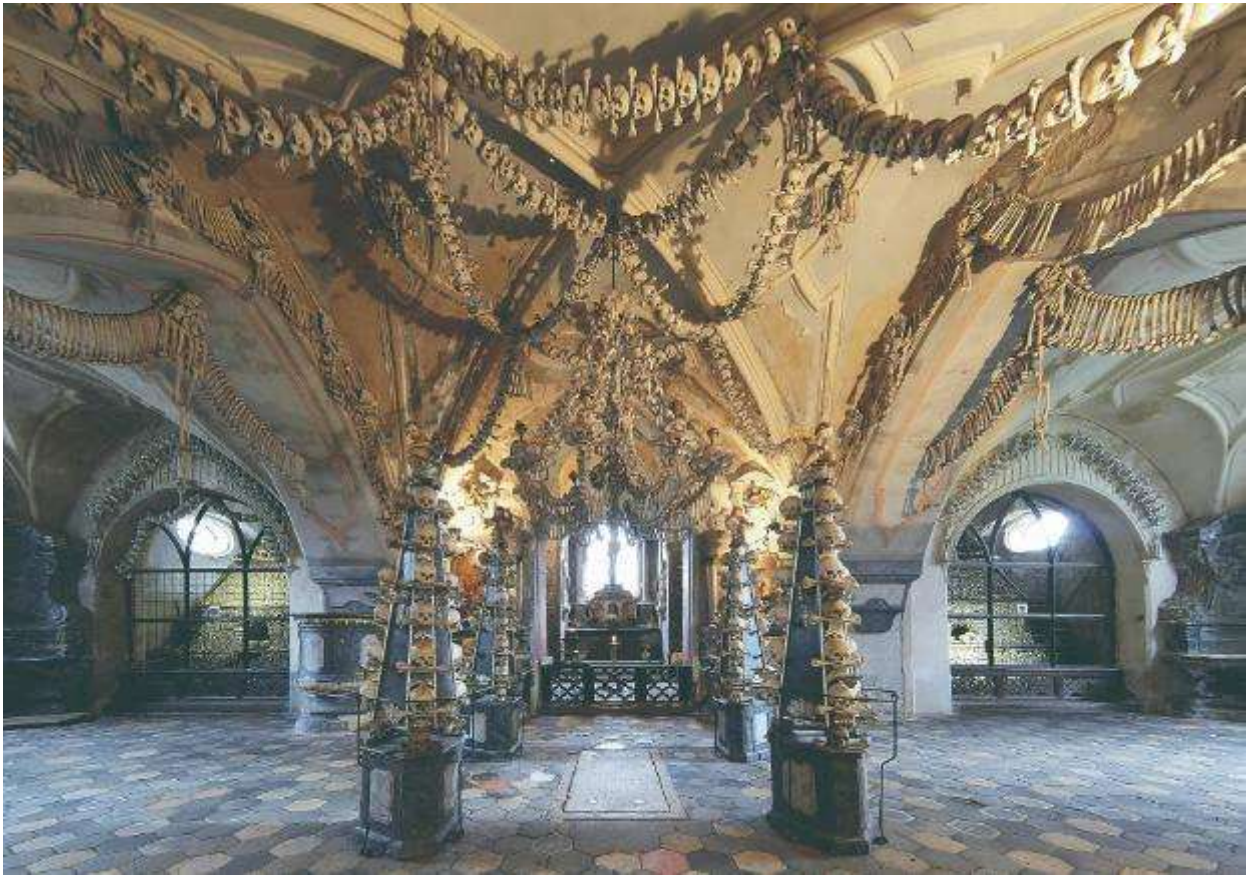


Parisian Catacombs & Medieval Ossuaries (Les Innocents → Ossuary Transfer)

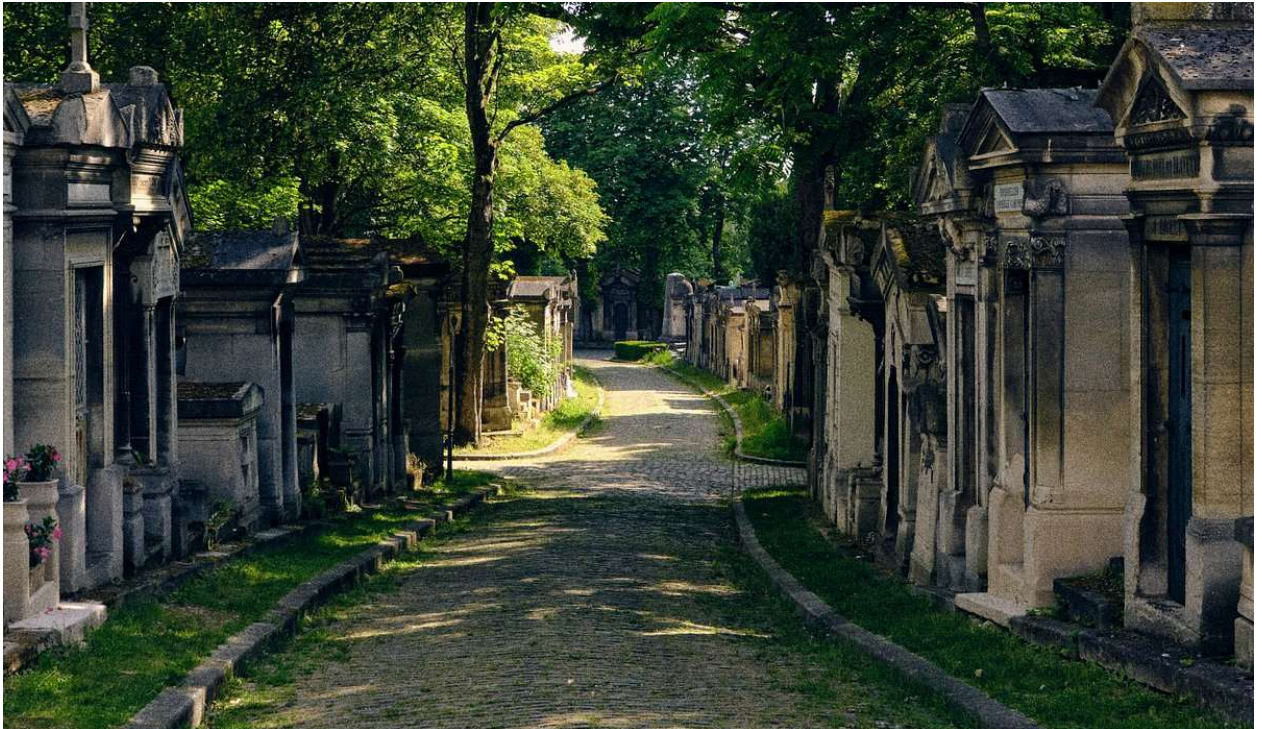
The tourist-famous Catacombs of Paris (official ossuary) are an 18th-century creation: starting in the 1780s, bones from overcrowded parish cemeteries—foremost the ancient Cimetière des Innocents—were transferred into abandoned quarry galleries beneath the Left Bank. For a 15th-century setting, the relevant imagery is the charnel-house architecture of medieval Paris itself: arcaded bone-houses flanking the cemetery, preaching crosses, and a dense urban burial ground in the city's commercial heart. Visualizing that world explains the later ossuary: stacked skulls and femurs, plaques with moralizing inscriptions, and narrow, low-ceilinged galleries adapted from stone-quarry voids.

Suggested Plates (click to view):

- **Cimetière des Innocents: view with arcaded charnel houses (Carnavalet, CC0)** — <https://www.parismuseescollections.paris.fr/fr/musee-carnavalet/oeuvres/le-cimetiere-et-l-eglise-des-innocents>
- **Exhumation at Les Innocents c.1787 (Carnavalet, CC0)** — <https://www.parismuseescollections.paris.fr/zh-hans/node/736668>
- **Overview of the Catacombs (Paris tourist office)** — <https://en.parisinfo.com/what-to-see-in-paris/info/guides/plunge-into-the-heart-of-the-catacombes-de-paris>











The Conciergerie (Palais de la Cité) — Great Halls & Royal Precinct

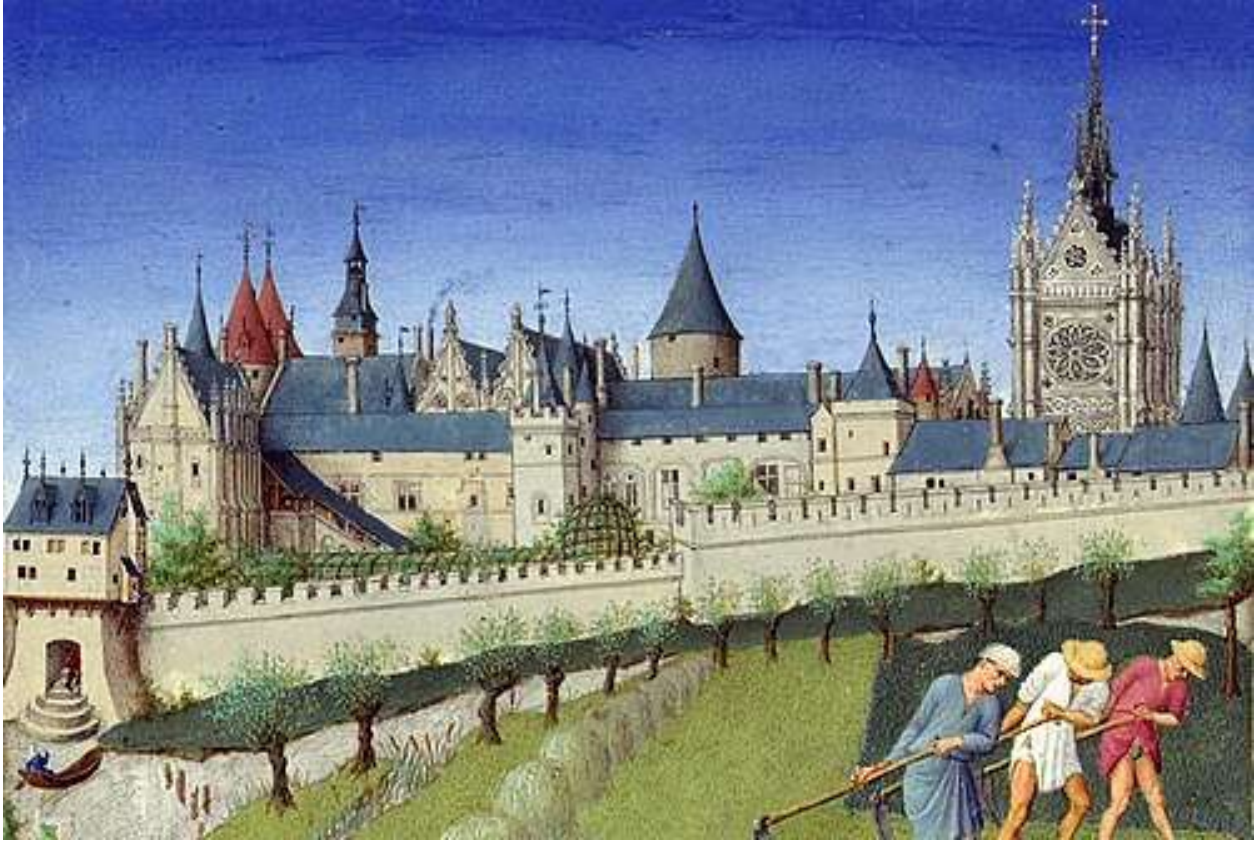
On the western half of the Île-de-la-Cité, the medieval royal palace culminated in vast vaulted halls that survive as the Conciergerie. The Salle des Gens d'Armes (c. 1300–1313) is one of the largest extant Gothic secular interiors in Paris, originally the refectory for royal staff: four aisles of ribbed vaulting carried on stout columns, lit by narrow windows and warmed by large hearths. By the 15th century, the palace complex had shifted functions as the royal court favored other residences, but these immense spaces continued to serve administrative and later judicial roles.

Design cues: a forest of columns, groin and rib vaults at human-scale height (ca. 8–9 m), long sightlines punctuated by hearths, and heavy timber doors set in thick masonry. As a scenic set, the hall can convert from royal service space to prison-adjacent administrative interior with small dressing: benches, trestles, candlesticks, and guards' furniture.

Suggested Plates (click to view):

- **Salle des Gens d'Armes — high-res photographs (Commons)** — https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:La_salle_des_gens_d%27armes_de_la_Conciergerie,_Paris_2018.jpg
- **Conciergerie hall (additional views)** — https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Conciergerie_Salle_des_gens_d%27armes_11.JPG
- **Palais de la Cité (context & history)** — https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palais_de_la_Cit%C3%A9







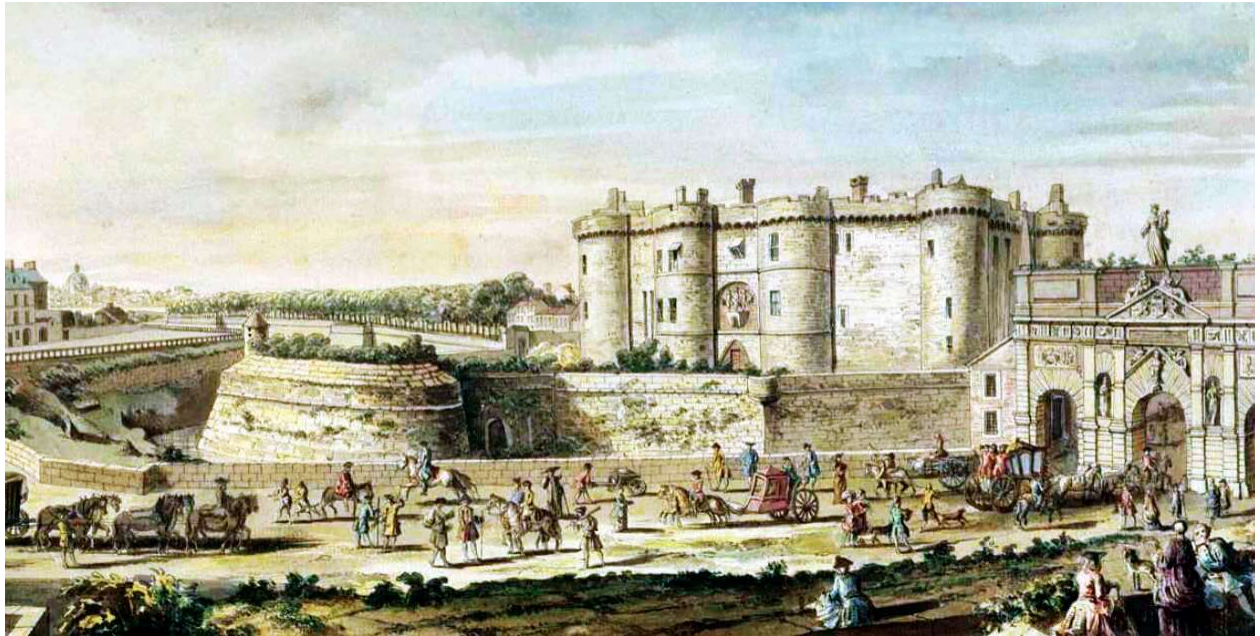
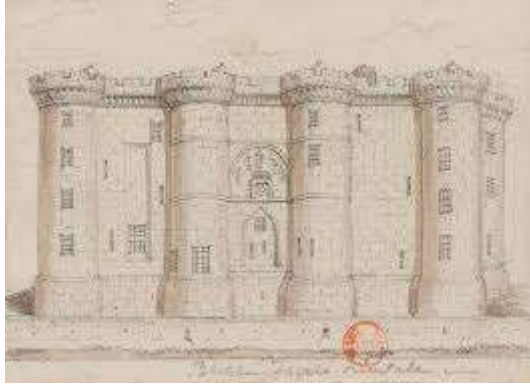


The Bastille (Bastille Saint-Antoine) — Late-Medieval Fortress

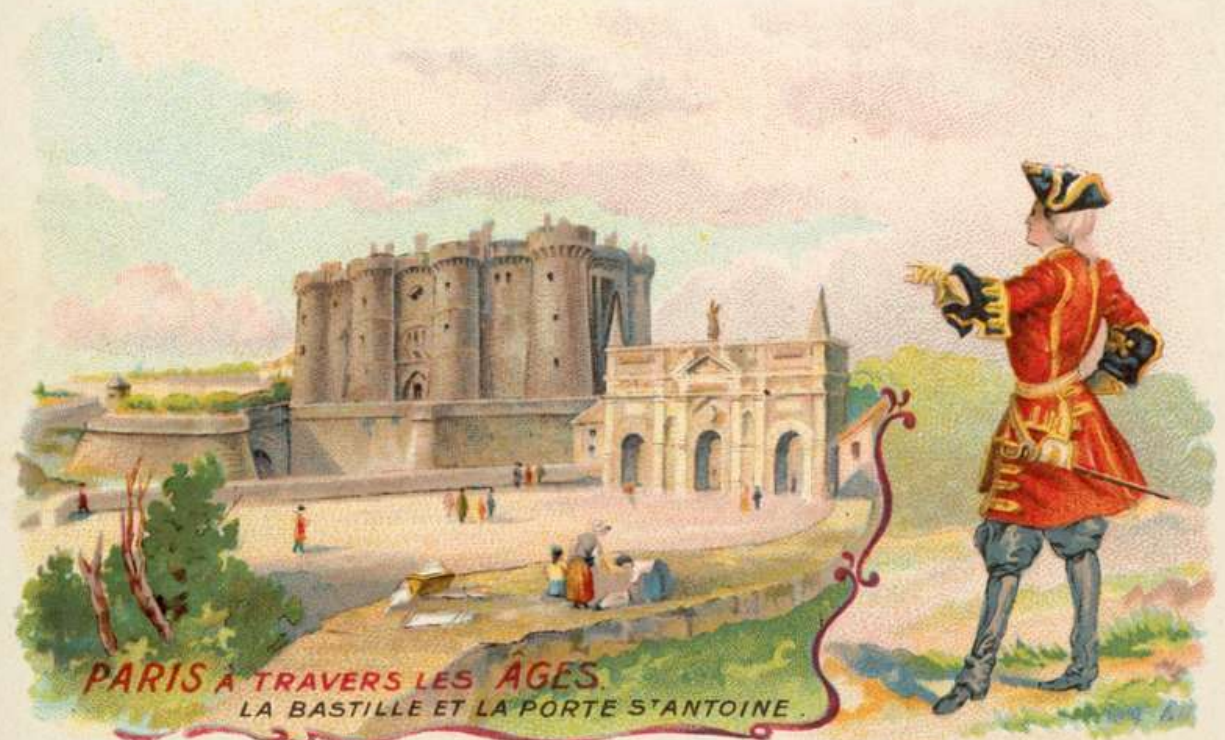
Built under Charles V beginning in 1370 by the provost Hugues Aubriot, the Bastille guarded the eastern approach to Paris at the Porte Saint-Antoine. Its innovative plan comprised eight tall towers joined by thick curtain walls with a city-gate passage and water-filled ditch. Through the 15th century it played a role in factional strife (Armagnacs/Burgundians) and city defense; later it became notorious as a state prison and, famously, the flashpoint of July 14, 1789. For 15th-century staging, treat it as a formidable stone mass with crenellations, machicolations, arrow slits, drawbridges, and flanking towers dominating a busy suburban gate road.

Suggested Plates (click to view):

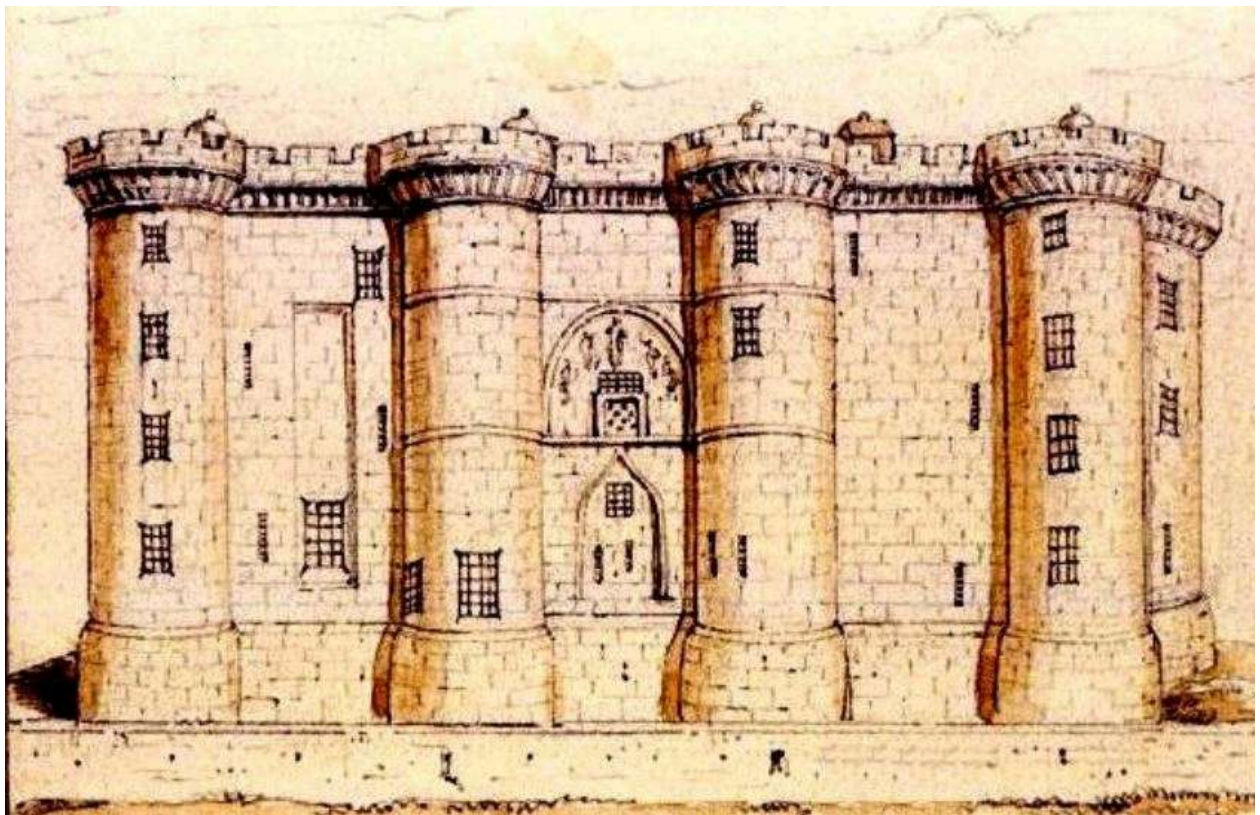
- **Engravings & elevations of the Bastille (Commons category)** — https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Engravings_of_Bastille_Saint-Antoine
- **Plan/elevation engravings** — https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Veduta_Bastiglia_Di_Parigi_O_Insigne_Carcere_dello_Stato.jpg
- **General Bastille article (timeline & specs)** — <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bastille>

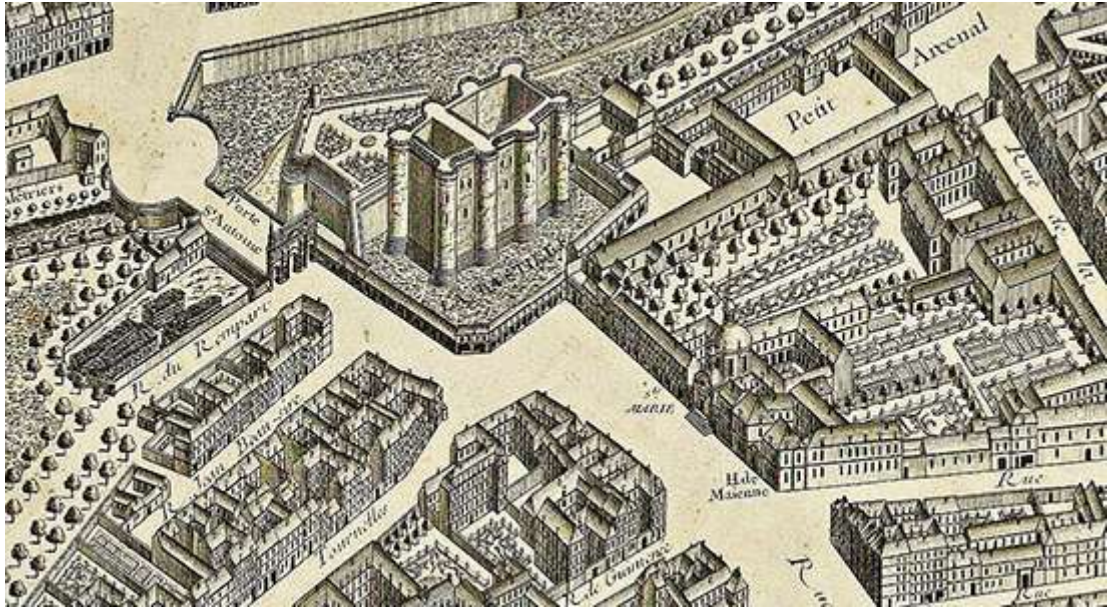


Exigez le CHOCOLAT POULAIN ORANGE c'est le meilleur



PARIS A TRAVERS LES ÂGES.
LA BASTILLE ET LA PORTE S'ANTOINE.







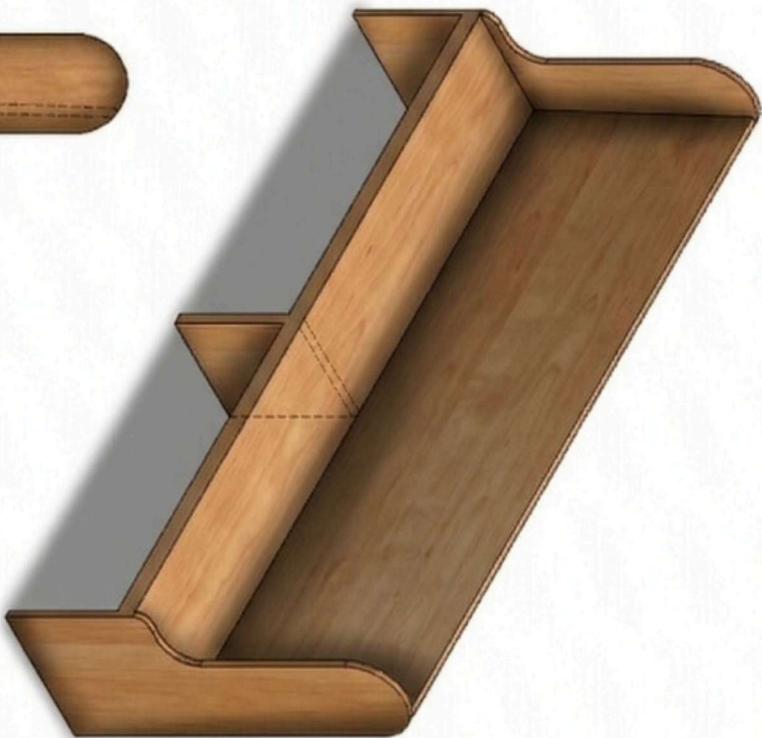
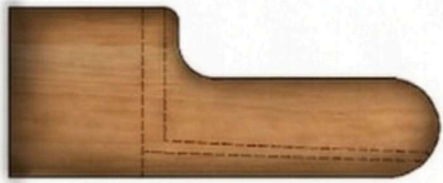
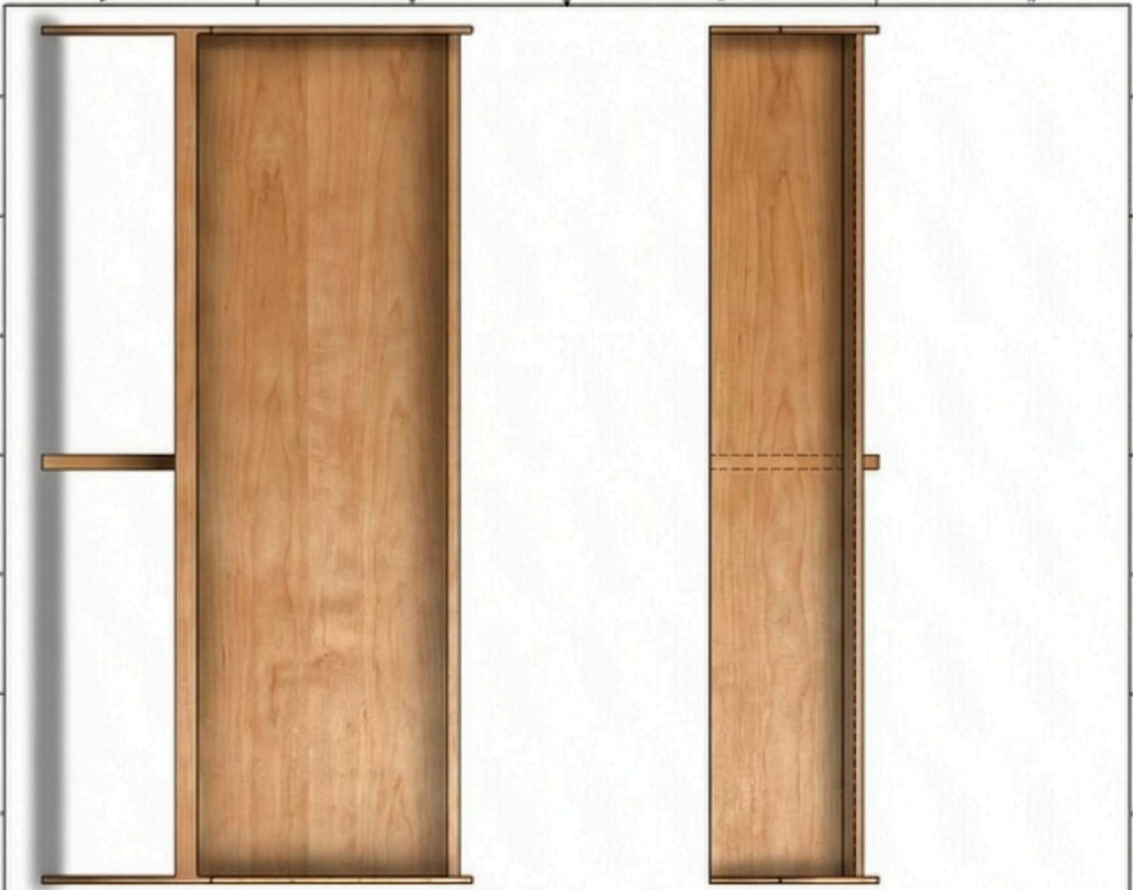
Selected Sources & Further Reading

1. **Notre-Dame architecture (official)** — <https://www.notredamedeparis.fr/en/understand/architecture/>
2. **The Choir Enclosure (official)** — <https://www.notredamedeparis.fr/en/understand/sculptures/the-choir-enclosure/>
3. **Les stalles (official object page)** — <https://www.notredamedeparis.fr/oeuvre/les-stalles/>
4. **Organ history — early 15th-c. instrument** — <https://www.notredamedeparis.fr/comprendre/musique/lorgue-renaissance/>
5. **Schlicht, M. — La clôture du chœur (Persée)** — https://www.persee.fr/doc/bulmo_0007-473x_2001_num_159_3_1032
6. **Pews & seating history overview** — <https://aleteia.org/2019/02/16/a-short-history-of-the-humble-pew/>
7. **National Churches Trust — interiors overview** — <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/explore/why/intriguing-insides>
8. **Building Conservation — nave use & benches** — <https://www.buildingconservation.com/articles/sacred-secular/sacred-secular.html>
9. **Britannica — Pew** — <https://www.britannica.com/topic/pew>
10. **Conciergerie hall — Commons image** — https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:La_salle_des_gens_d%27armes_de_la_Conciergerie,_Paris_2018.jpg
11. **Conciergerie hall — Commons image 2** — https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Conciergerie_Salle_des_gens_d%27armes_11.JPG
12. **Palais de la Cité** — https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palais_de_la_Cit%C3%A9
13. **Bastille — general history** — <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bastille>
14. **Vincennes Donjon plan (Commons)** — https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plan_du_Rez-de-chauss%C3%A9e_du_donjon_de_Vincennes_-_btv1b8444464q.jpg
15. **Vincennes environs plan, 1712 (Commons)** — https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plan_d%27une_partie_des_jardins_Donjon_et_environs_de_Vincennes%2C_D.7122.jpg
16. **Plan of Château de Vincennes (SVG)** — https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plan_Ch%C3%A2teau_de_Vincennes_-_2021.svg
17. **Cimetière des Innocents — view (Carnavalet)** — <https://www.parismuseescollections.paris.fr/fr/musee-carnavalet/oeuvres/le-cimetiere-et-l-eglise-des-innocents>

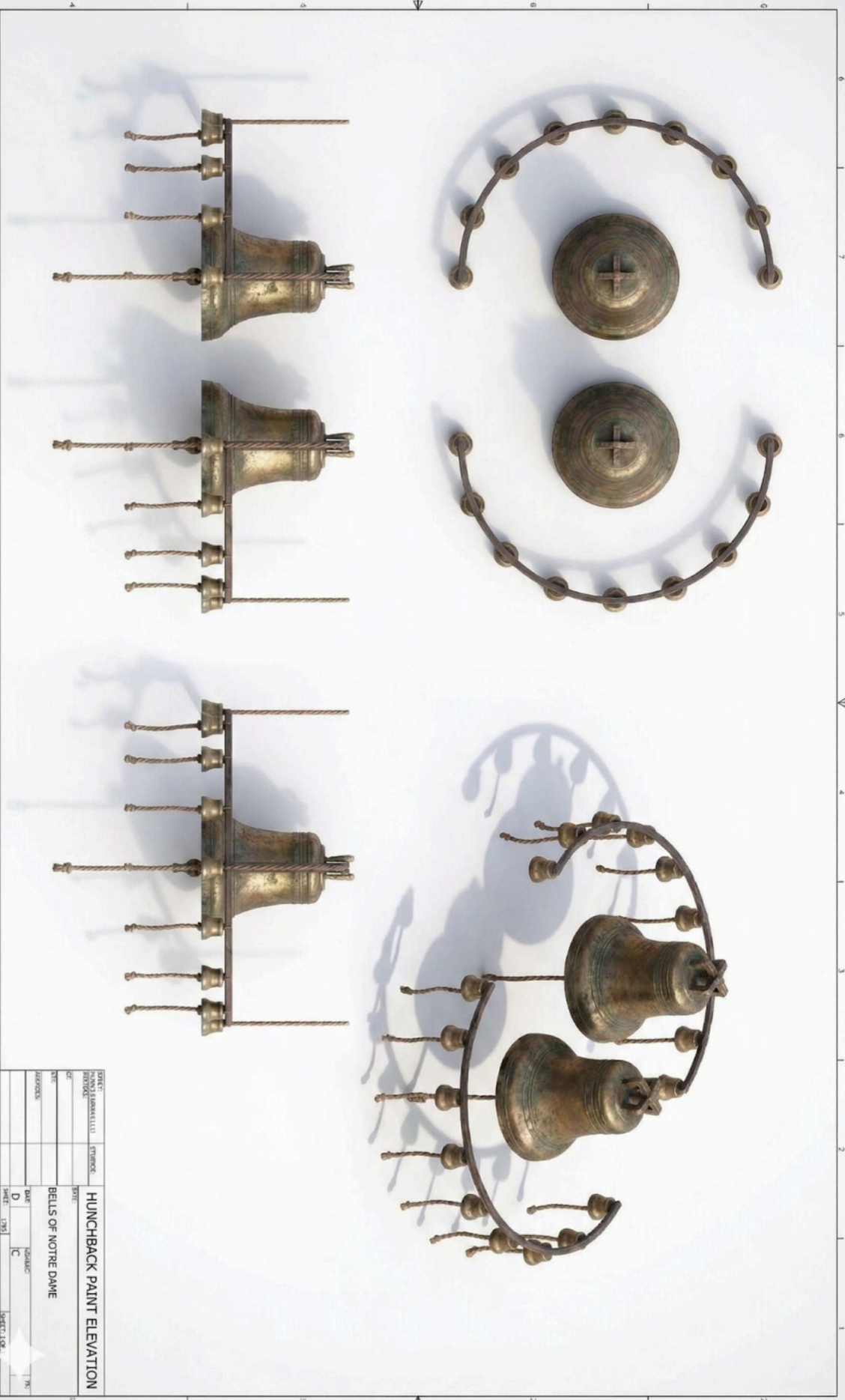
18. **Exhumation at Les Innocents (Carnavalet) —**
<https://www.parismuseescollections.paris.fr/zh-hans/node/736668>
19. **Paris Catacombs overview —**
<https://en.parisinfo.com/what-to-see-in-paris/info/guides/plunge-into-the-heart-of-the-catacombes-de-paris>
20. **Notre-Dame engravings (Commons category) —**
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Engravings_of_Notre-Dame_de_Paris
21. **Notre-Dame belfry — Auguste Herbet drawing —**
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Auguste_Herbet,_grand_sonneur.jpg

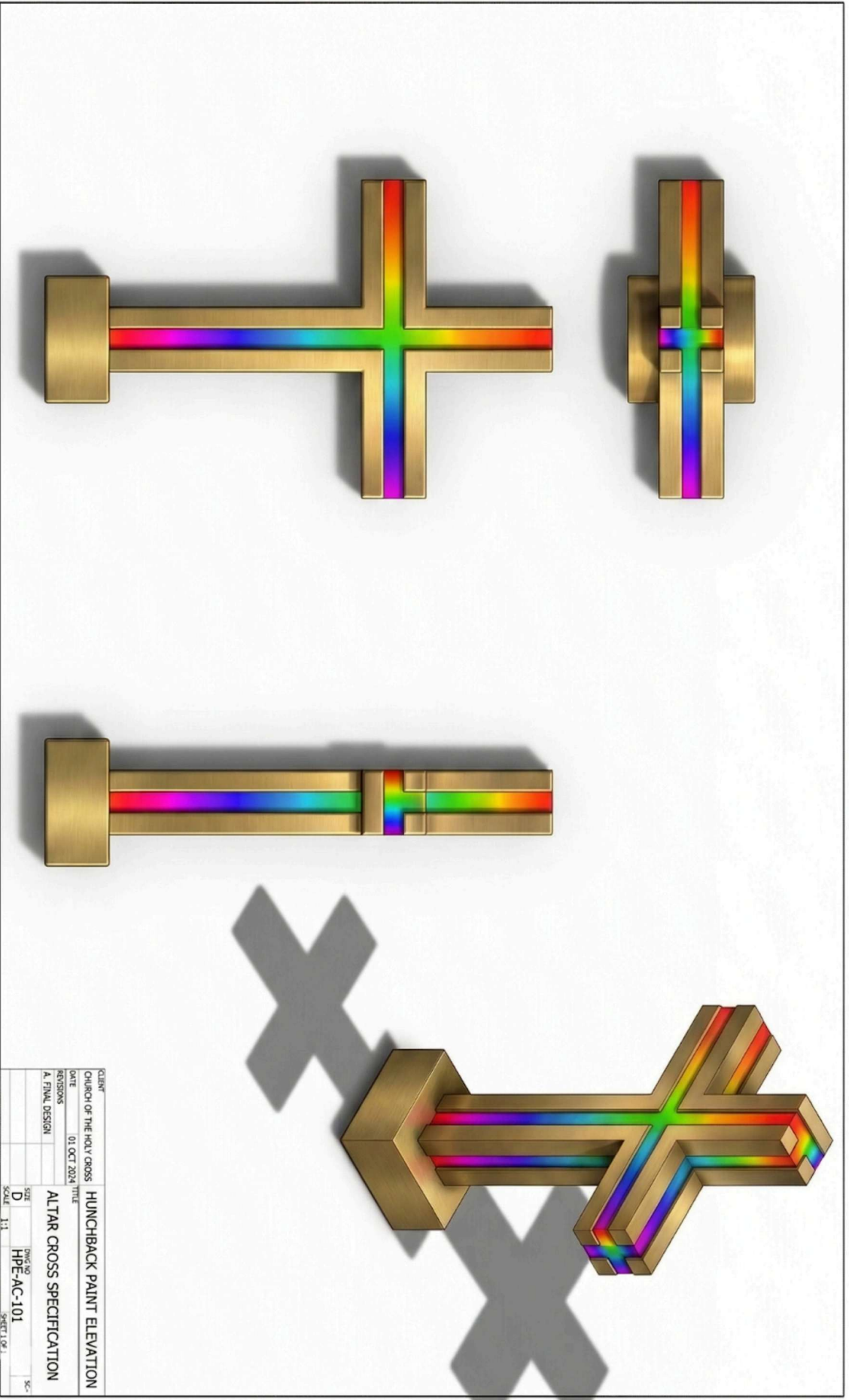
Scenic Design Independant study — Paint Elevations
(Hunchback of Notre Dame)

Jacob Wallach

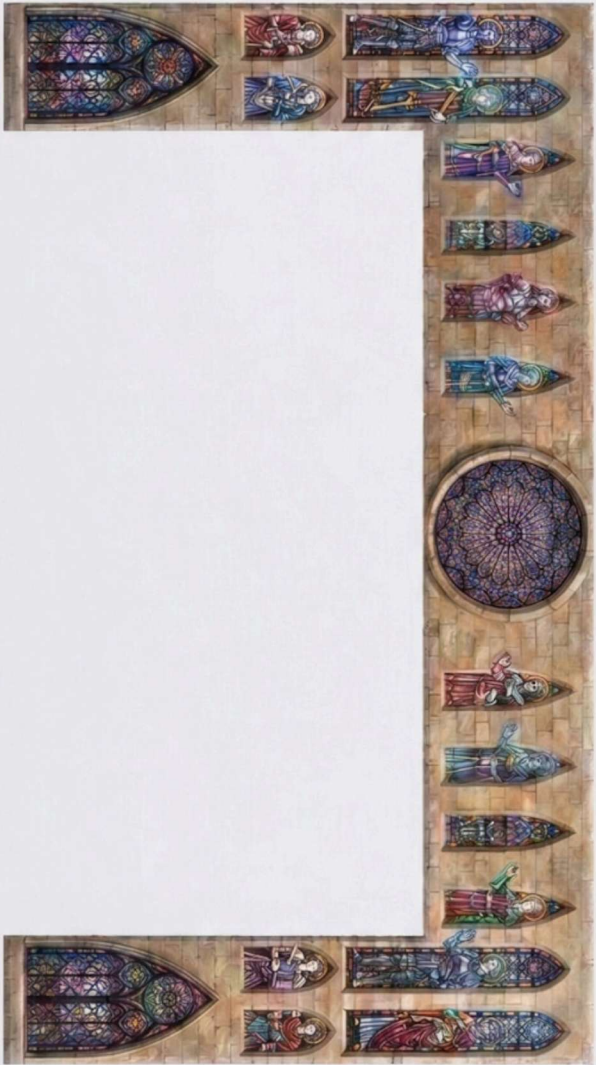


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HUNG-BAK PAINT ELEVATION			

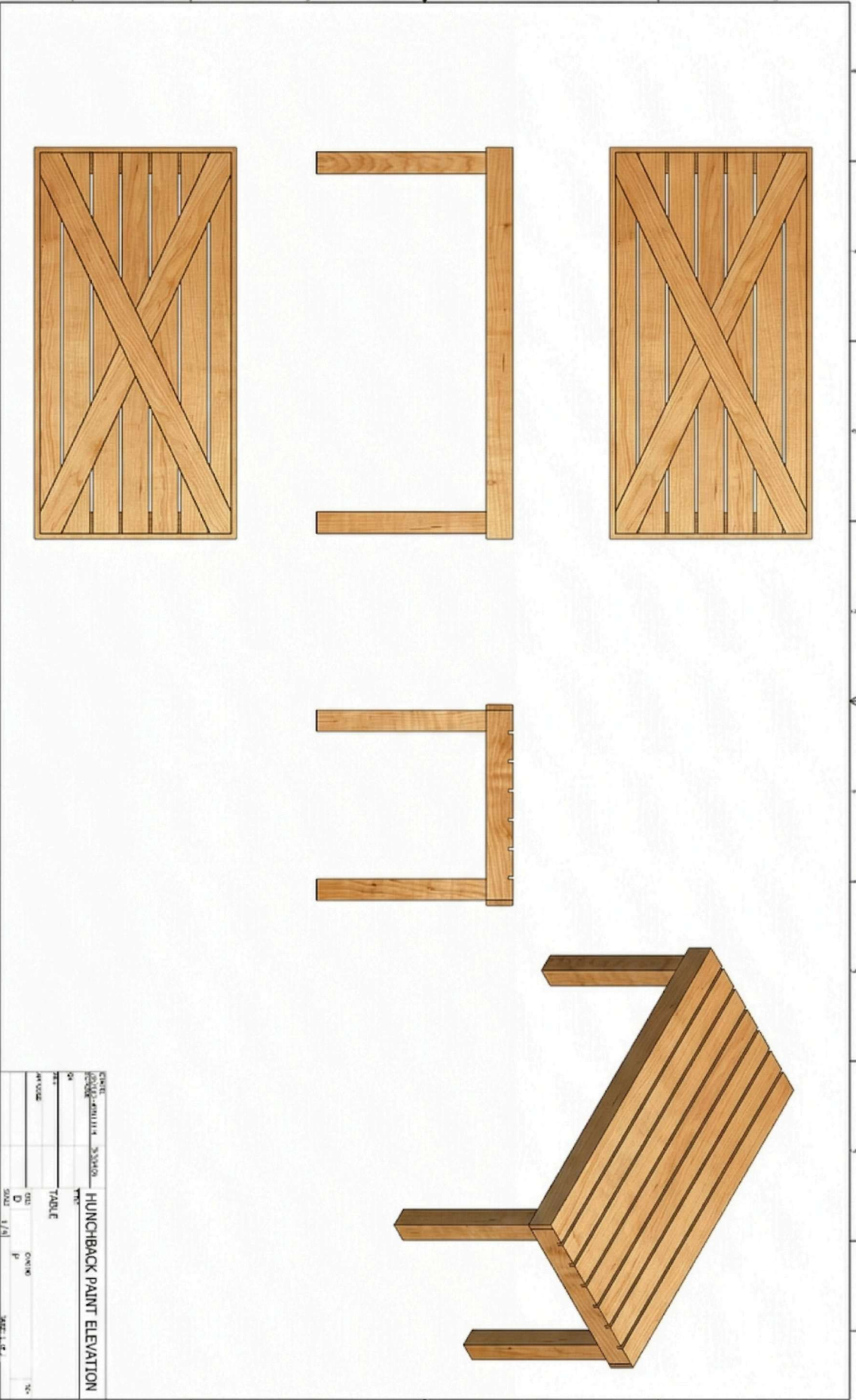




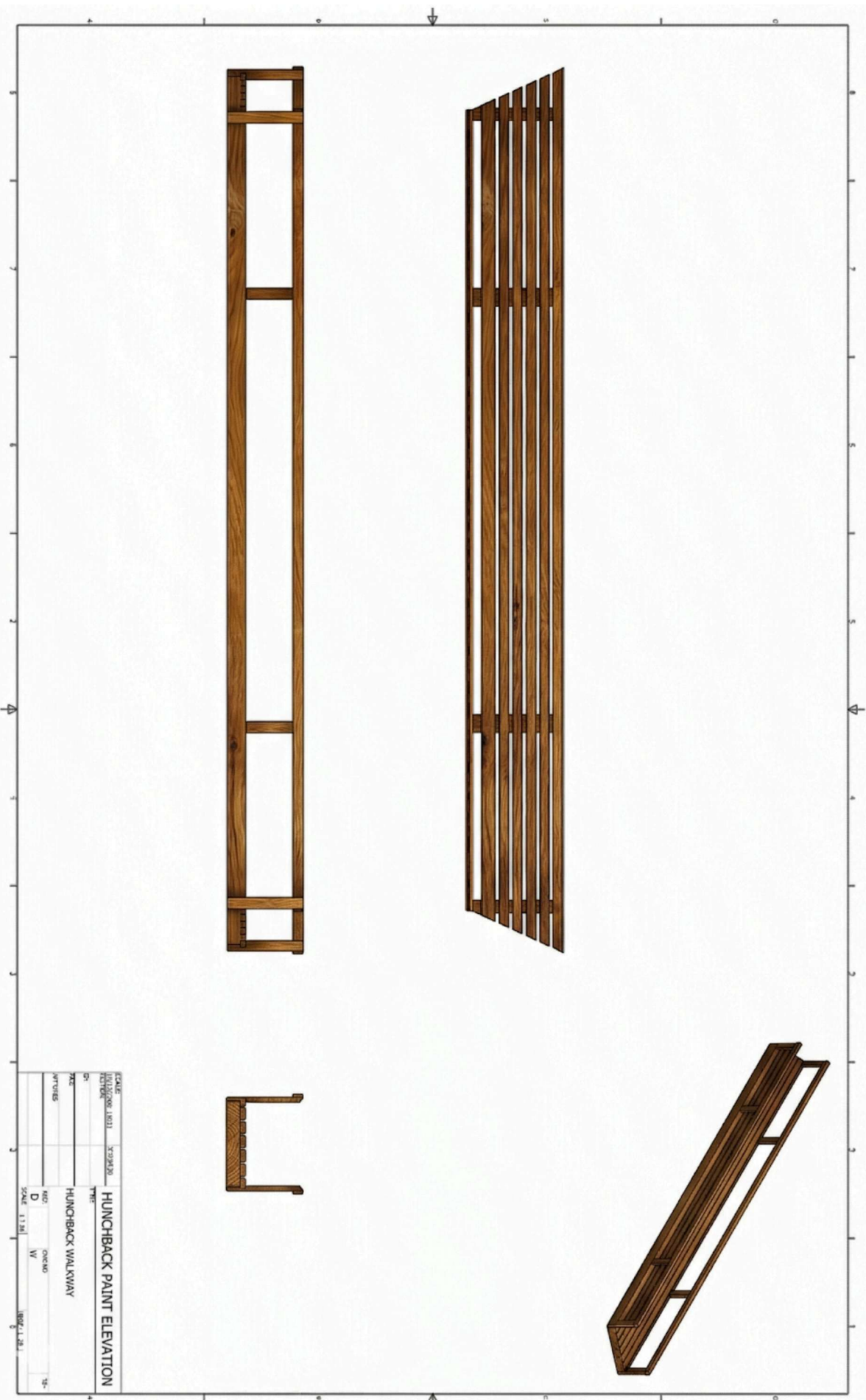
CLIENT	HUNCHBACK PAINT ELEVATION
OBJECT OF THE HOLY CROSS	
DATE	01 OCT 2024
REVISIONS	
A FINAL DESIGN	
SCALE	1:1
DRAWN BY: J. DOE	
PROJECT NUMBER: 24001	
SHEET NO	HPF-AC-101
SHEET TOTAL	1
TITLE	ALTAR CROSS SPECIFICATION



SHOW	HUNCHBACK PAINT ELEVATION	
DATE	1/21/2010	SCALE: 1/32"
PROJECT	HUNCHBACK PROSCENIUM	SCALE: 1/32"
DATE	0	SCALE: 1/32"
DATE	1	SCALE: 1/32"
DATE	2	SCALE: 1/32"
DATE	3	SCALE: 1/32"
DATE	4	SCALE: 1/32"
DATE	5	SCALE: 1/32"
DATE	6	SCALE: 1/32"
DATE	7	SCALE: 1/32"
DATE	8	SCALE: 1/32"
DATE	9	SCALE: 1/32"
DATE	10	SCALE: 1/32"



PROJ. NO.	DATE	SCALE	1/4" = 1'-0"
DESIGNER	DATE	SCALE	1/4" = 1'-0"
CHECKED	DATE	SCALE	1/4" = 1'-0"
PROJECT NAME		TABLE	
PROJECT NO.		0000	
PROJECT LOCATION		P	
PROJECT CLIENT		MARTIN	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION		HUNCHBACK PAINT ELEVATION	



SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

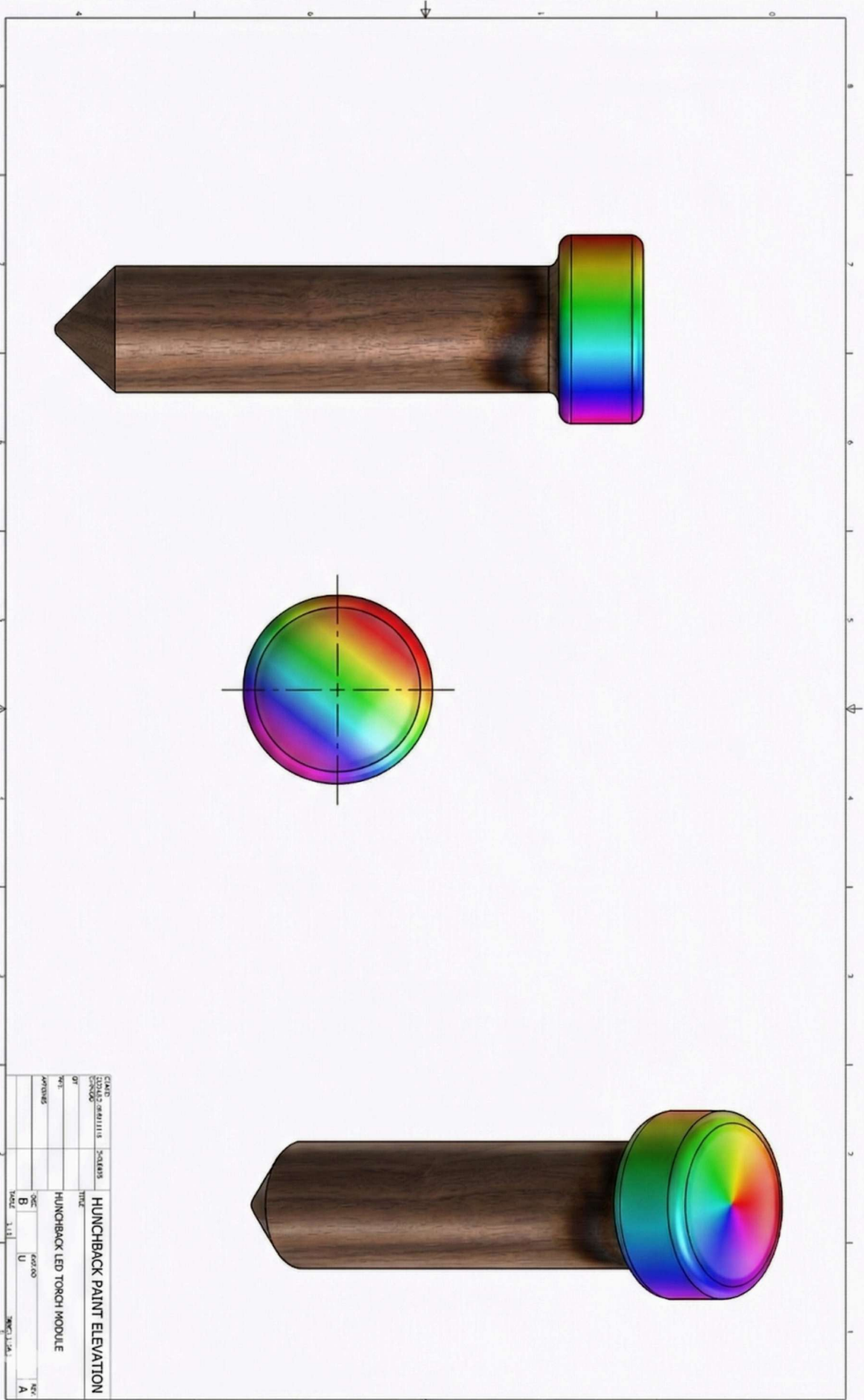
DATE: 10/11/2011

PROJECT: HUNCHBACK PAINT ELEVATION

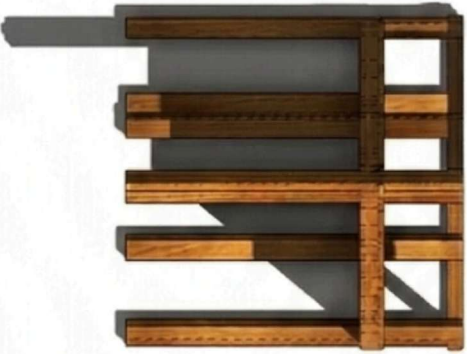
DESIGNER: HUNCHBACK WALKWAY

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

DATE: 10/11/2011



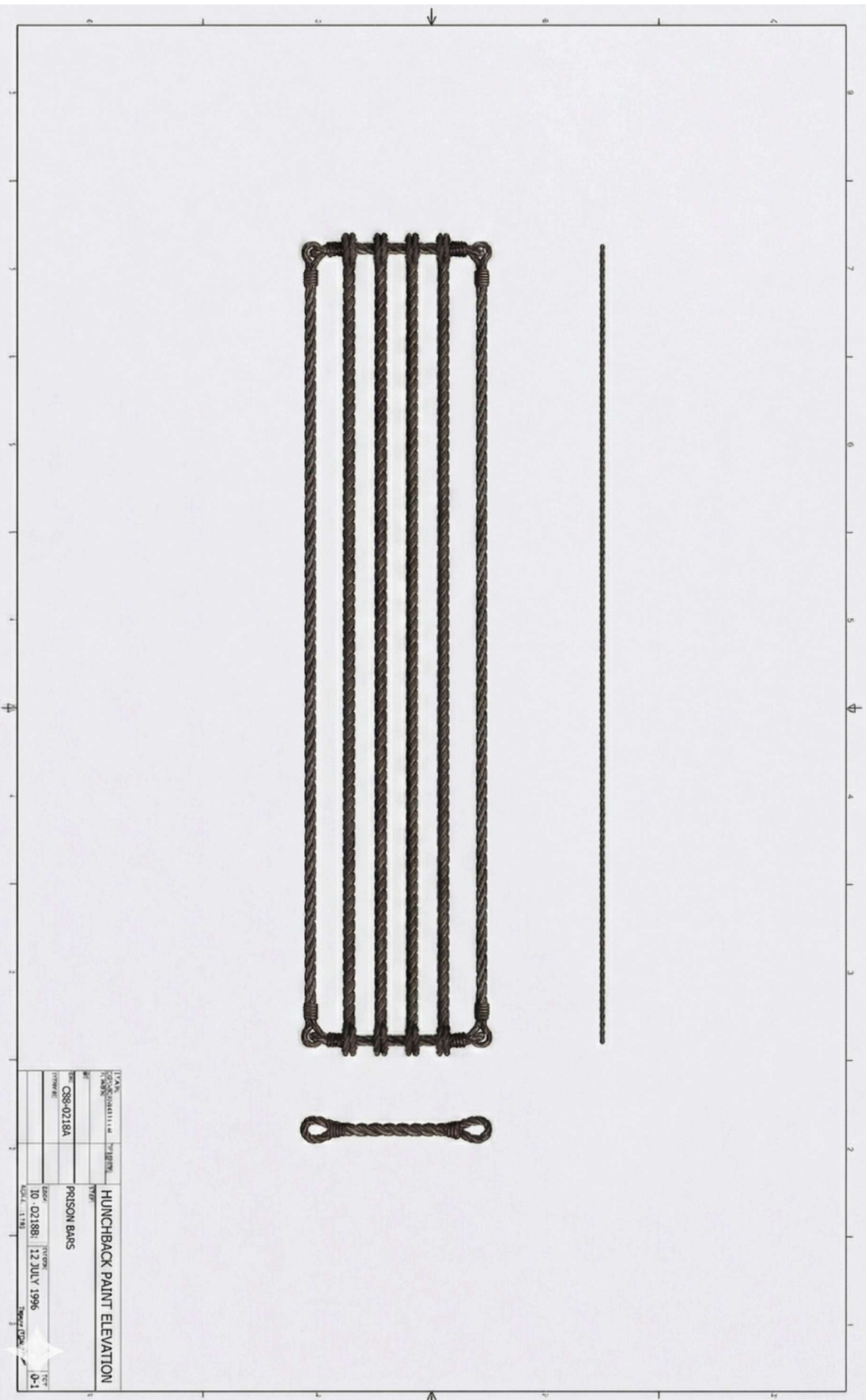
GRADE	UNIVERSITY	PROGRAM	PROJECT
DATE	NAME	NUMBER	
HUNCHBACK PAINT ELEVATION			
HUNCHBACK LED TORCH MODULE			
SCALE	DATE	BY	APP'D
B	11/11	U	A



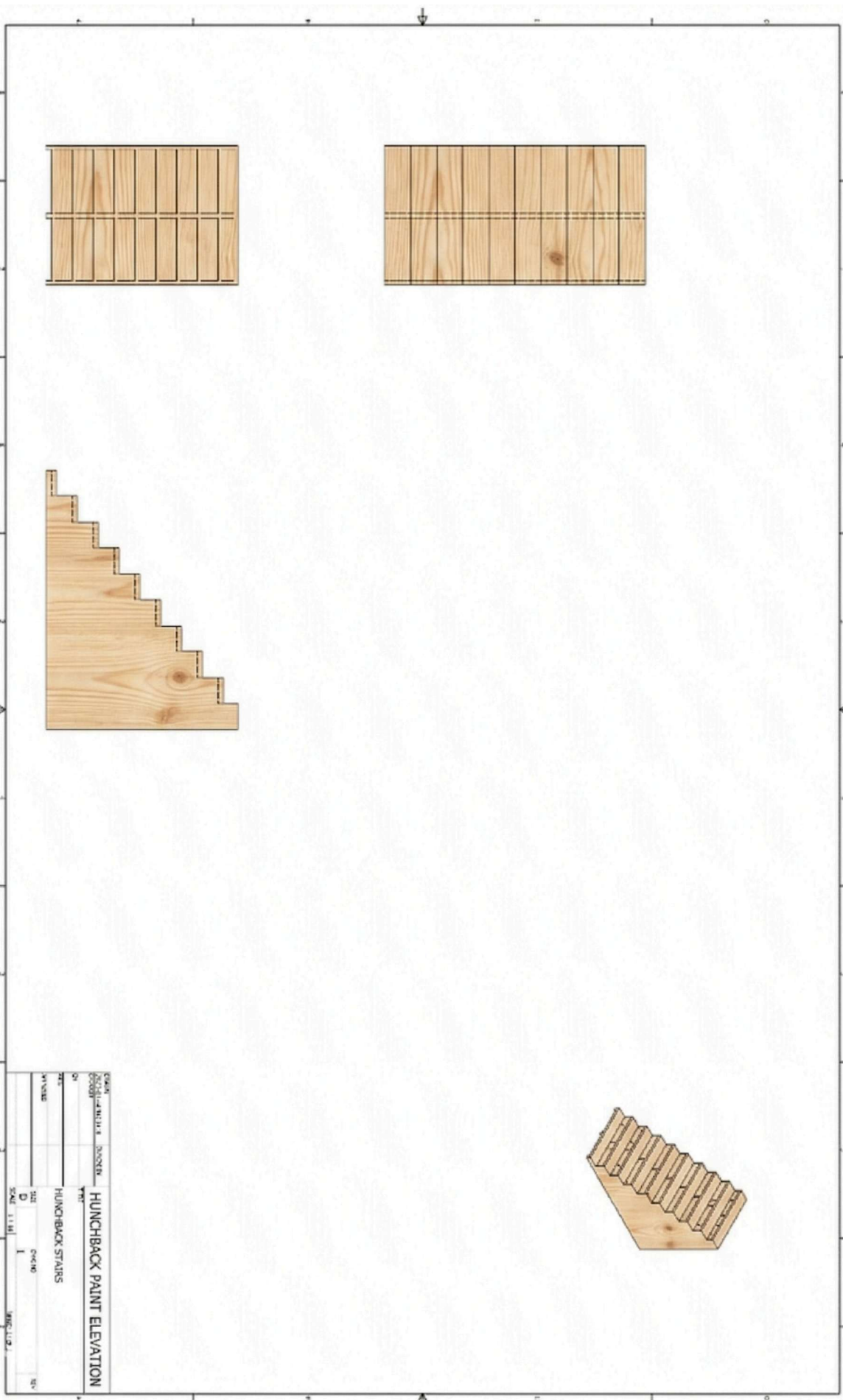
REVISED COLOR: HONEY OAK STAIN

HUNCHBACK PAINT ELEVATION

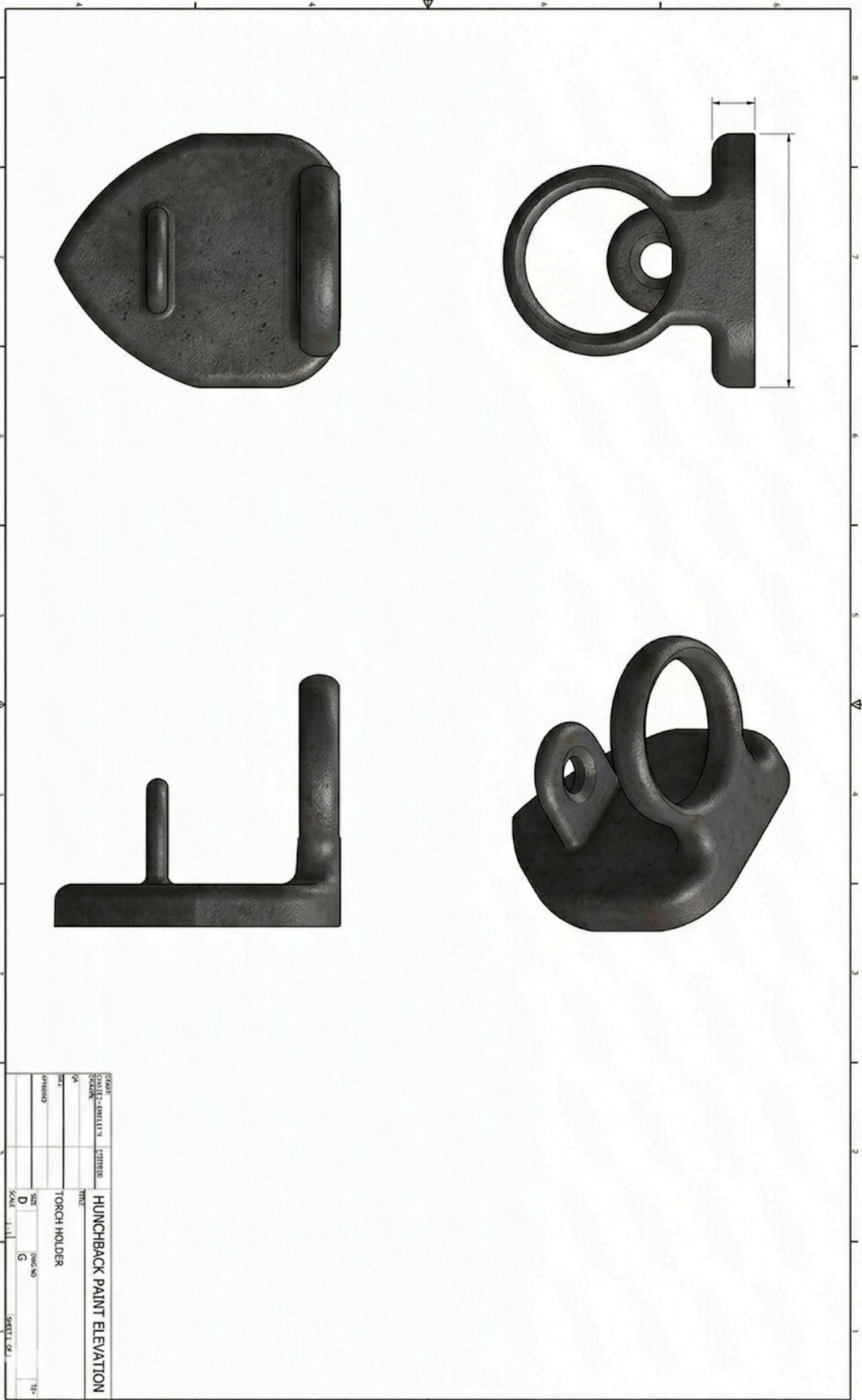
REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	CHK
0		HUNCHBACK PAINT BACK		
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				



ITEM	DESCRIPTION	QTY	UNIT
001	HUNCHBACK PAINT ELEVATION		
002	PRISON BARS		
003	10-02188	12 JULY 1996	
004	0-1		



SCALE	1/4" = 1'-0"
DATE	11/11/11
PROJECT	HUNCHBACK PAINT ELEVATION
DESCRIPTION	HUNCHBACK STAIRS
SCALE	1/4" = 1'-0"
DATE	11/11/11
PROJECT	HUNCHBACK PAINT ELEVATION
DESCRIPTION	HUNCHBACK STAIRS
SCALE	1/4" = 1'-0"
DATE	11/11/11
PROJECT	HUNCHBACK PAINT ELEVATION
DESCRIPTION	HUNCHBACK STAIRS



DESIGNER	DATE	SCALE	PROJECT
CASTER			
CHECKED			
APPROVED			
PART NAME		HUNCHBACK PAINT ELEVATION	
PART NUMBER		TORCH HOLDER	
SIZE	DATE	SCALE	PROJECT
D	06/16	C	
SHEET NO.			

Scenic Design Independant study — Rendering:
Hellfire

(Hunchback of Notre Dame)

Jacob Wallach

