

Town Hall - formerly Hacquenouville Priory Rouxmesnil-Bouteilles



View of the principal facade © Département de la Seine-Maritime

Bouteilles was known from the Early Middle Ages onwards for its saltworks, the much-prized possessions of the great Norman abbeys at Fécamp, Jumièges, Saint-Wandrille and Beaubec-en-Rosière. The Cistercians possessed a salt store and later a priory in the hamlet of Bernesault, although no trace of these is found after 1750.

The manor house was built nearby by the d'Hacquenouville family between the late 15th and early 16th centuries. Although little-known today, one of the most illustrious members of the family was Roger d'Hacquenouville, Chamberlain to King Charles VI of France, in the early 15th century.

In 1692, the manor passed into the hands of the Jesuits' Dieppe community. They remained until the order was banned throughout France in 1762. The manor and estate, however, are still referred to as 'the Priory'.

When sold off after the Revolution as a national asset, the deeds described the estate as a: "...presbyteral manor consisting of a kitchen, hall, bedroom, storeroom, stables, barns and with a garden, the all comprising of a rood and a half".

Edmond Delvincourt, the grandfather of the composer Claude, bought the manor in 1869 and the family entertained many personalities from the arts' world here. Claude Delvincourt composed several works at the house, including his Trio for Piano, Violin and Cello. He built a small pavilion in the garden in 1907, so he could work in peace and quiet.



View of the manor house and outbuildings, circa 1908 © Friends of Claude Delvincourt



At the back of the manor, Claude Delvincourt's sisters Marianne and Sabine standing next to their grandmother, Marie Fourès, 1910s © Les Amis de Claude Delvincourt

The Delvincourt family managed to preserve the essential character of the building while making modern improvements, most notably the elegant interior decor.

The *commune* acquired the manor in 1980 and built a polygonal tower on the south-west corner in 2001 to house the town hall. This extension is keeping with the original house, both by its use of materials and by adopting the same proportions.

The manor has, therefore, been altered and modified by its various occupants over the years. The successive renovations of this former 16th-century manor house have nevertheless preserved its imposing silhouette, its flint and sandstone marquetry, so typical of rural architecture in the Dieppe region, as well as a wonderful sense of harmony.



Aerial view showing the original building, the staircase turret, the flat-roofed extension and the hexagonal wing now housing the town hall, post-2001 © Municipalité de Rouxmesnil-Bouteilles

The whole is built in flint, sandstone and limestone on a rectangular ground plan. There's a square tower on the north-west corner containing a staircase, but the two quoin window bays are later additions.

The windows of the main façade feature sandstone lintels, sills and quoins, and include several bull's-eye windows. The eaves are adorned with an alternating diamond and oval geometrical design. The north façade was remodelled, and three window bays added, which interrupted the frieze.

There are basement windows in the sandstone footings to the north and a low door with a moulded sandstone arch leading to the vaulted cellar to the south. Like other local 16th-century manor houses, a fireplace indicates the location of former kitchens. Steps leading up to the east suggest the kitchens accessed the ground floor from inside. Evidence of this remains despite later alterations, most likely when the new south-eastern entrance was added. The round-arched doorway's frieze is of a sandstone rope motif. Behind the entrance

door with its Neo-Gothic fittings is a 17th century-inspired balustrade staircase and a cement-tile floor, most likely added by the Delvincourt family.



General view of the 17th-century style balustrade staircase and cement-tile floor © Département de la Seine-Maritime

The Delvincourt family certainly made many alterations to the building, both inside and out. The slate gable roof, for example, with its Anglo-Norman-style dormers of varying sizes. The window mullions were flattened, and other openings created. The staircase tower was integrated into the flat-roofed extension. Its original walls were nonetheless preserved and are visible inside. The extension was built around 1935 by an architect named Féret.



View of the front façade. The alterations are clearly not in keeping with the original structure: for instance, the east wall was rebuilt in brick and the flat-roofed extension has alternating bands of limestone and flint. ca 1950 © Municipalité de Rouxmesnil-Bouteilles

Inside, the large drawing-room, the room that housed Delvincourt's piano, has a fireplace with carved sandstone pedestals recalling those in the small drawing-room, now the mayor's office. The latter has Neo-Gothic painted wooden décor, reminiscent of the Anglo-Norman manor house at Clères. On the opposite wall is a built-in bookcase.



Fireplace with wooden panels in the small drawing-room, fireplace in the large drawing room © Département de la Seine-Maritime



Bookcase in the small drawing-room, now the mayor's office © Département de la Seine-Maritime

Upstairs the floors have tiled and parquet floors and period cupboards are still found in every room.