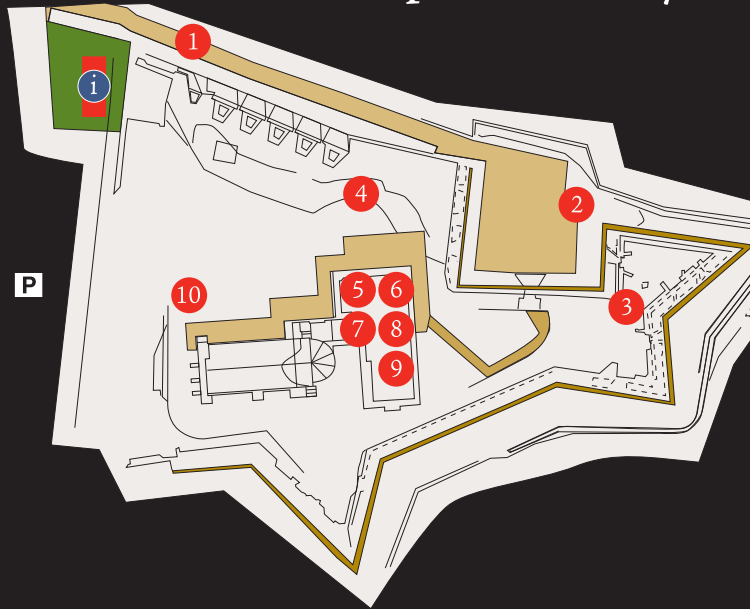




Gardeny

A walk through Templar history



1

The north-facing side of the ensemble still preserves a stretch of wall and a quadrangular tower made with bonded stone. These elements are part of the outer wall that bounded the convent site in the Templar period (between the 12th and 13th centuries) and the subsequent Hospitaller period (between the 14th and 16th centuries).

2

In this area the construction of the walls featured large salient bastions, crowned with embrasures. These new elements came to form part of the fortifications that were built during the modern wars of the 17th and 18th centuries and which would continue to serve as the first line of defence of the city until well into the 20th century.

3

The major importance of modern artillery to new notions of war brought about a transformation in the nature of military buildings in the 17th and 18th centuries. Salient walls and the building materials used (rammed earth and adobe) reduced the impact of enemy fire. Moreover, the arrangement of the embrasures made it possible to cover the firing angle of the cannons at the fort.

4

The perimeter of the mediaeval walls bounded an extensive complex that encompassed the main buildings of the convent or the house built by the Templars. These include the Church of Santa Maria de Gardeny and the House of Gardeny, which had various rooms, such as the storehouse (cellar), the dormitory and the tribute tower. The nature of construction was in fitting with the architectural models of Occitania in the 12th and 13th centuries.

5

An underground mine that was opened in the 18th century to link the tower storehouse to the former mediaeval tank.

6

The underground floor comprised the former storehouse or cellar. It can be reached from the tiny area adjacent to the aisle, which until the 18th century was linked to the outside. At some point this small area was probably a silo (for storing grain) or a prison.

7

The tribute tower constituted the noble area in the ensemble. In other places it was also known as the preceptor's tower or tower of treasure, as it may have included, among other things, the preceptor's chamber and the archive or deposit. The outside was reached via a door, which led onto the terrace in front of the courtyard. On account of the arrangement of the original windows, this area spread over two floors.

8

The dormitory for the community is now a large room, which, on account of its size, could be associated with the refectory area in other preceptories. In actual fact, this area was divided into several areas, including the dining hall/refectory, the kitchens and the friars' chambers. The outside was reached via a door that led onto the terrace in front of the courtyard.

9

Although the terrace may originally have borne similar external features to those it possesses today, in other words, an extensive open area crowned by a perimeter of defensive merlons, at least in the 16th century, it remains covered by a roof that forms a multi-purpose attic area.

From this privileged position, people could cast their eyes over the main estates of the House of Gardeny in the city grounds of Lleida and, more specifically, in the grounds surrounding Rufeia, which came to form the Corda de Gardeny or Gardeny belt, as it is called.

10

The Church of Santa Maria de Gardeny, which according to records dates back to 1156, was built according to Occitan architecture patterns (with unique elements such as the polygonal apse). It was extended in the 13th century, transforming it into a major centre of devoutness.

The murals from the mid-13th century are particularly prominent due to their exceptional nature. They are one of the few mural representations of Templar ensembles in Europe. This building was the most severely affected by both, the wars, and the fact that it housed a large military garrison until the 20th century. For instance, the construction of a bakery, the division of the temple into two floors, etc. also had a bearing on the building