



# Secrets of the Templars

**Susie Hollands** uncovers the colourful past of a 17th-century apartment steeped in Templar history and shrouded in mystery...

Ever since the Middle Ages, there has been an ongoing fascination with the Knights Templar – perhaps because so much mystery continues to surround the enigmatic religious order to this day. However, there can be few places where their presence is still felt more strongly than at Square du Temple in Paris, one-time home of their European headquarters.

While there may be little sign now of the spectacular medieval castle that once dominated the landscape here, the legacy lives on in everything, from the street names and echoes of the pinnacled turrets in the local architecture to the subtle markers in the street that outline where the towers once stood.

## VIVE LA REVOLUTION

As time went on, the Templars gradually fell out of favour – and by the 1300s the order had effectively died out. However, perhaps their impressive citadel might have survived had it not been for another twist in the capital's colourful history.

"During the French Revolution, the building was used as a prison to hold members of the royal family – including King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette – before they were guillotined," explains the flat's owner Iris Brosch, an acclaimed



photographer and filmmaker. "So, by the early 1800s, the site had become a place of pilgrimage for royalists, and Napoleon ordered its demolition."

## PEACEFUL SCENE

Today, while the rich history still resonates across the area, we find a far more peaceful scene – the square is now the setting for an elegant park complete with an enchanting waterfall, mature trees and many exotic species of plants.

Dating back to the early 1600s, this charming residence has been lovingly restored by Iris to make the most of the stunning period features – such as the huge windows, decorative open fireplace and original parquet de Versailles. On a practical level, the open-plan kitchen is perfect to prepare for dinner parties, while a small office nook is handy to catch

The 17th-century flat stands on the site of a medieval Knights Templar fortress

## NEED TO KNOW

**Price:** €1,250,000

**Size:** 65m<sup>2</sup>

**Bedrooms:** One

**Neighbourhood:**

Located in the buzzy district of the Marais in the 3rd arrondissement, highlights on the doorstep include the Musée Picasso and Centre Pompidou.

**More information:**

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up on correspondence. Elsewhere, an antique bath takes pride of place in the cosy bedroom, providing an opportunity to bathe in the moonlight with a view over the historic courtyard. Throughout the property, the romantic and decadent style of the décor, almost reminiscent of Madame de Pompadour's boudoir, is entirely in harmony with the building's special heritage.

## HIDDEN SECRETS

It's not only the echoes of those people that live on here, however, but tangible reminders too. When the renovations were being done, under the ancient parquet flooring were found not one, but two, long-forgotten treasures.

"As well as a coin from the time of the French Revolution, we also discovered three playing cards hidden under the floor – two kings and a queen – perhaps because whoever lived here then didn't want to be associated with the royals imprisoned opposite," says Iris. "All in all, this beautiful building really is like a little piece of French history." ■

Susie Hollands is one of the FrenchTree Property Services' real estate partners in Paris. For more information on buying in the French capital, email [propertiesales@frenchentree.com](mailto:propertiesales@frenchentree.com), call +44 (0)1225 463752, or visit [www.frenchentree.com](http://www.frenchentree.com)

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€1,764,000 / £1,494,920

**8TH ARRONDISSEMENT:** This 116m<sup>2</sup> penthouse is located on the top floor of a historic building, a short stroll from the Champs-Élysées. **Ref: PSU743**



€588,000 / £498,300

**14TH ARRONDISSEMENT:** Found in the swanky Montparnasse area, this stylish one-bedroom apartment of 53m<sup>2</sup> comes complete with a terrace. **Ref: PSU731**



€1,350,000 / £1,144,070

**11TH ARRONDISSEMENT:** Tucked away in a private passage in Bastille, this light-filled loft of 110m<sup>2</sup> offers a large living area and three bedrooms. **Ref: PSU749**