

# 4

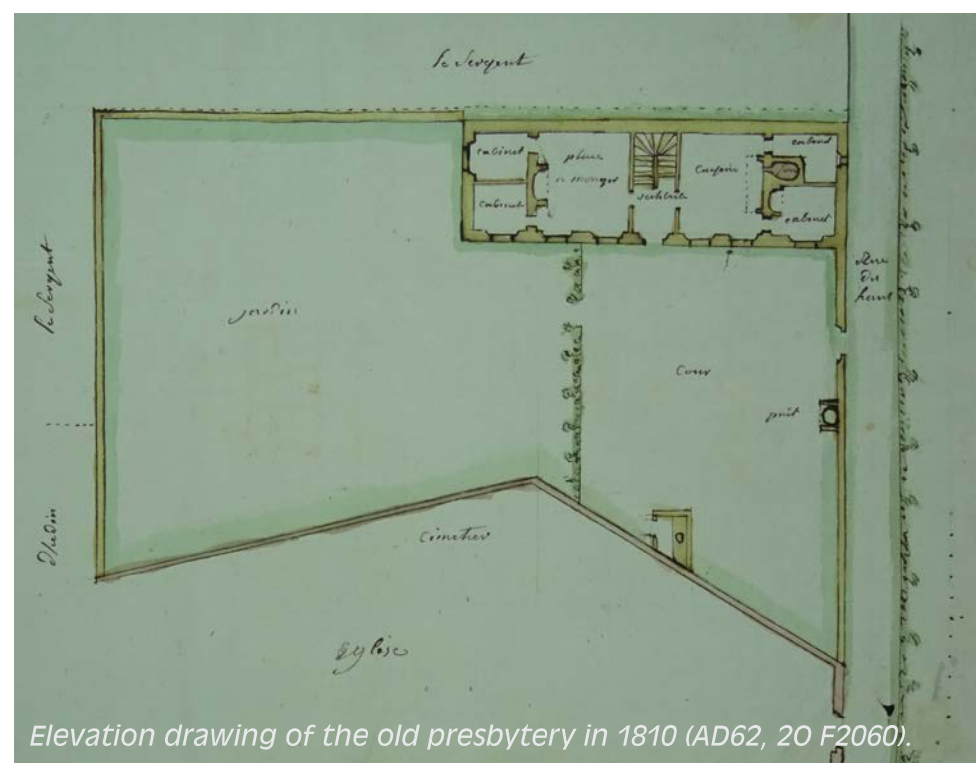
# The Presbytery

## The priest's house

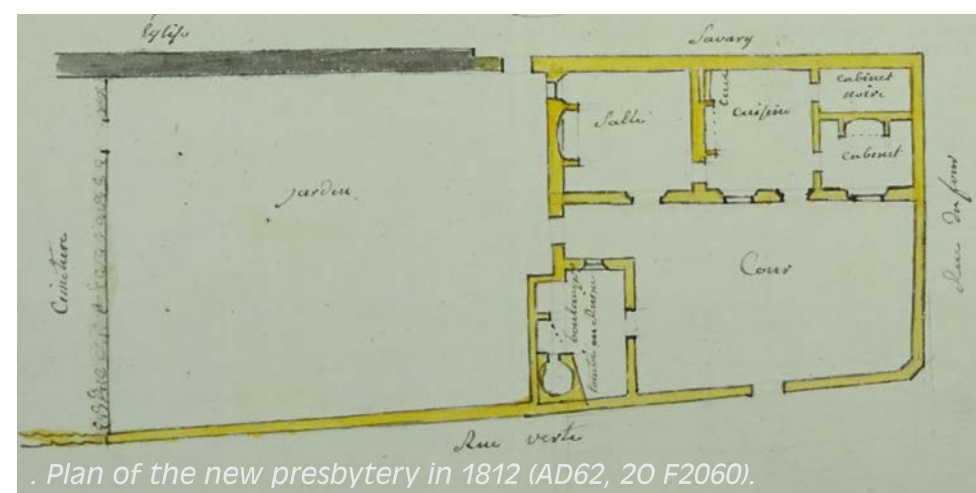
Accommodation was provided to the priests appointed by the bishop to each village in order **to ensure widespread representation of the Catholic church**. They were always situated **close to the church**, where the priest would go each day to sing mass. When we enter the cemetery, we can still see traces of the brick pathway the priest would use to reach the vestry. On the ground floor would be **the parish hall and administrative offices**.

## Two presbyteries in succession

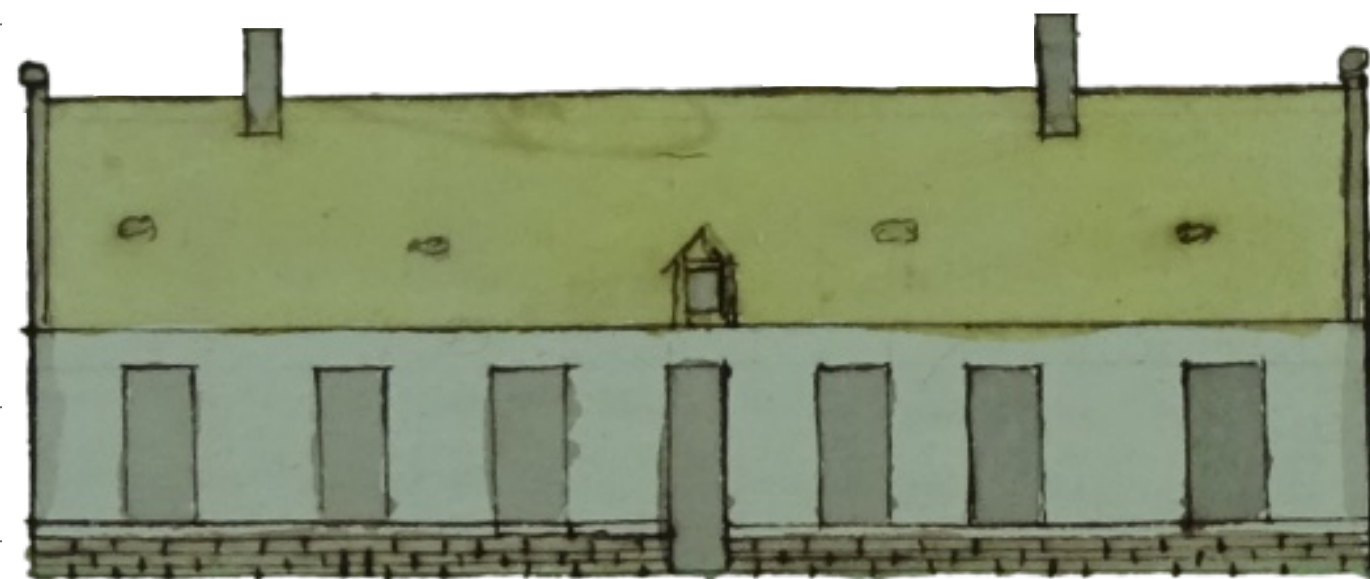
**In the 18th century**, Acquin's presbytery was a **longhouse** with a timber structure and cob walls. Maître Joseph Vercoutre, Acquin's priest in 1759, had his own cottage garden there. This old building **was in need of some refurbishment** and was too small for the priest. The work was conducted in several stages between 1807 and 1810. By then there was a plan to fully reconstruct the building, as there were no suitable properties available in the village. With **the help of the local farmers and people**, who transported the building materials free of charge, and in spite of delays due to financing issues, the new presbytery was completed in **July 1818**.



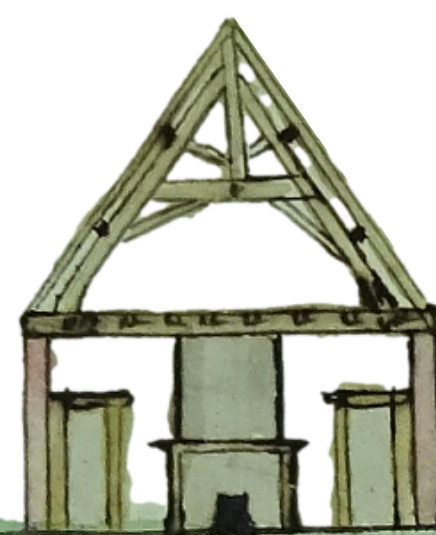
Elevation drawing of the old presbytery in 1810 (AD62, 20 F2060).



Plan of the new presbytery in 1812 (AD62, 20 F2060).



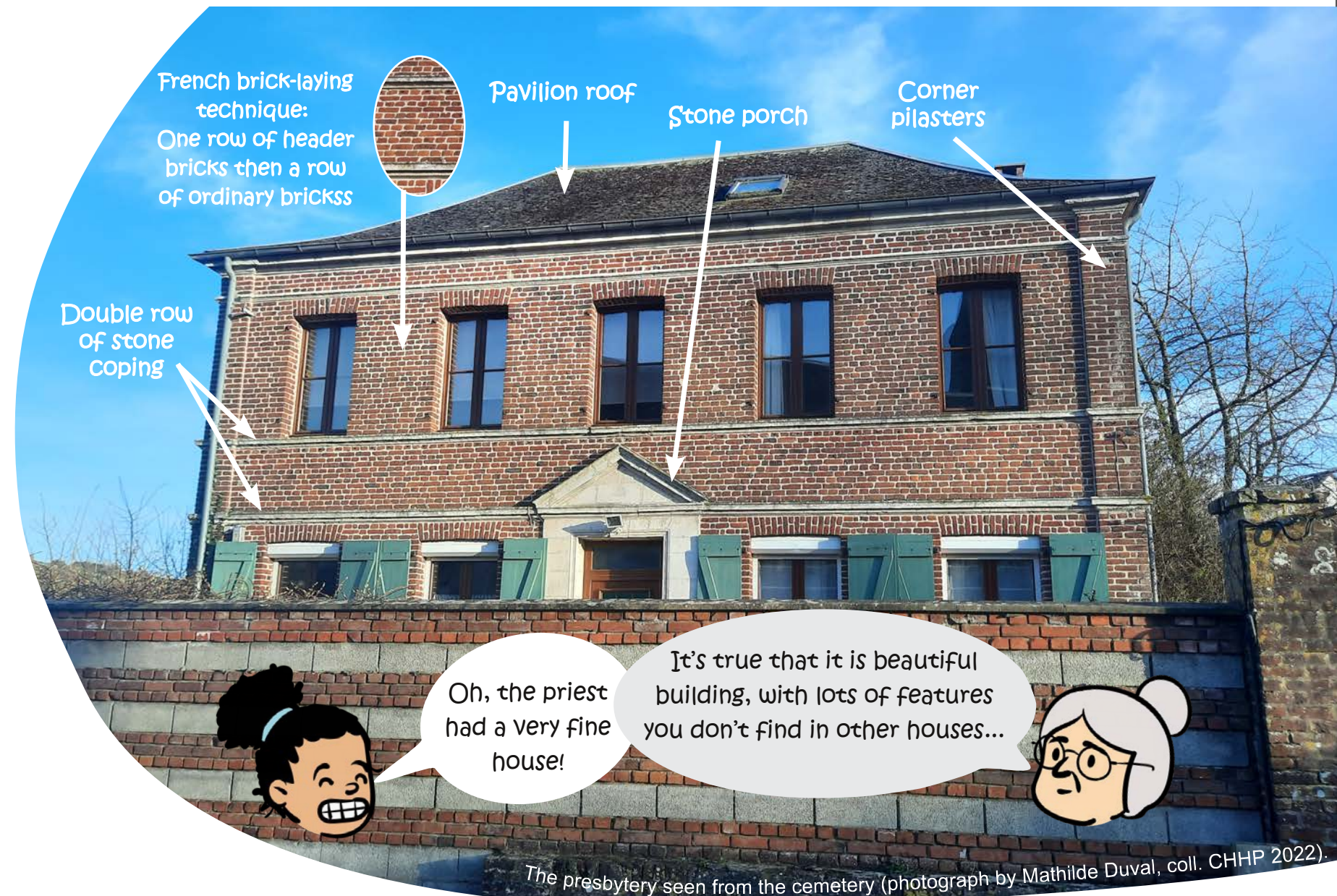
Elevation of the old presbytery in 1810 (AD62, 20 F2060).



*Copie du Bâtiement*



Coin dated 1854 found in one of the walls: stonemasons would often leave their trace wherever they worked (photograph by Mathilde Duval, coll. Mme Sombret).



Oh, the priest had a very fine house!

It's true that it is beautiful building, with lots of features you don't find in other houses...

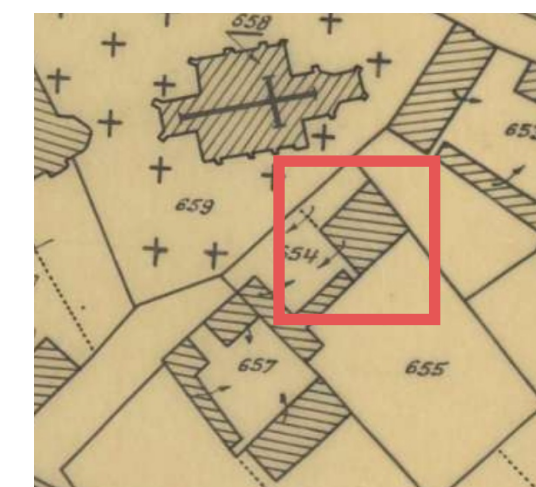


The presbytery seen from the cemetery (photograph by Mathilde Duval, coll. CHHP 2022).

In **1854**, more work was undertaken as part of a wider **reconstruction project** initiated by the bishop from 1855 onwards. The presbytery of Acquin thus has **the same classic architectural style of other presbyteries built in the second half of the 19th century**. Completed in 1860, it shows how rural building techniques have changed over the years, with cob gradually being replaced by bricks. Now extended and square in shape, it also had an upper floor added to it.



Land registry plan of Acquin showing the plot occupied by the presbytery in 1824: we can see its rectangular footprint (AD62, 3P 008/32).



Plot occupied by the presbytery in 1935: the building now has a square footprint (AD62, 3P 008/6).

From then on, and throughout the 20th century, **the priest had to pay rent to the village**. After the death of abbot Michel Dewalle, who was the last priest in Acquin, the presbytery **was put up for sale in January 1990** as a secular building.