

Engineers' Villas

Three villas stand side by side at nos. 16 and 14 and at the corner of the avenue Gorgeu. Two others are located on the avenue Bethmont. Built or purchased in order to attract a desirable clientele, which had graduated from prestigious engineering colleges, these comfortable and spacious homes contrasted with the workers' lodgings. They were connected to the historic village by the bridge over the canal (now the boulevard Maurice-Thorez).

In 1940, the factory had 12 engineers' houses and 27 foremen's houses for 649 workers' lodgings. We can detect a sign of how important the factory was in the fact that the five streets in the neighbourhood where the engineers lived were dubbed "avenues" and bore the names of the company's directors: Eugène Secrétan, the founder of the factory; his son-in-law and successor, Daniel Bethmont (1858-1924); Eugène Renevey (1847-1923), a shareholder in mining, banking and industrial companies; Maurice Gorgeu (1862-1935), a banker, and Armand Baudouin, director of the society magazine *La Vie parisienne*, both members of the Société's board of directors.

Legend

Photograph of factory management, 1896. Album of the Société française d'Électro-métallurgie, Médiathèque de Dives-sur-Mer collection, digitised by Fabrique de Patrimoines en Normandie.

Legend

Five engineers were housed, together with their families, on the avenue Secrétan, in two semi-detached houses and in the villa on the corner of the rue Gorgeu (on the left of the postcard). The sender writes: "As you can see, the young household will have nothing to complain about. If it doesn't end up being this villa, the other ones are just as pleasant." Sylvie Quenderf collection – Un fleuve pour la liberté, la Dives.

Legend

Engineers' villa at no. 7 avenue Bethmont. Another engineers' house was located at no. 11, photograph by P. Corbierre, Inventaire général de Normandie.