



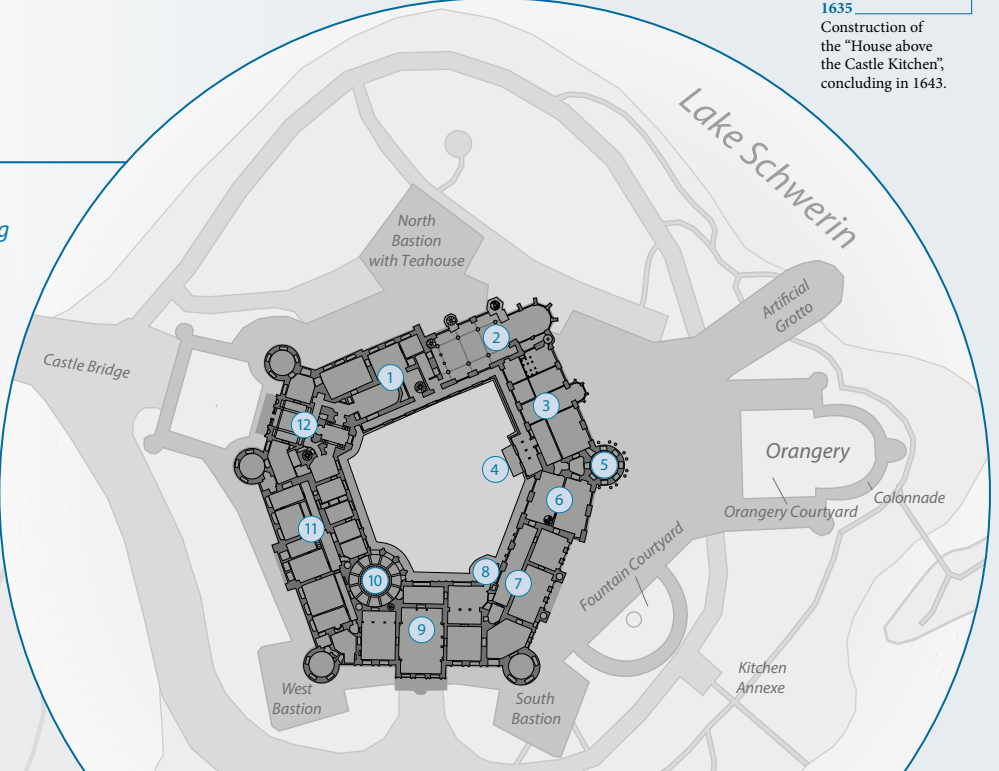
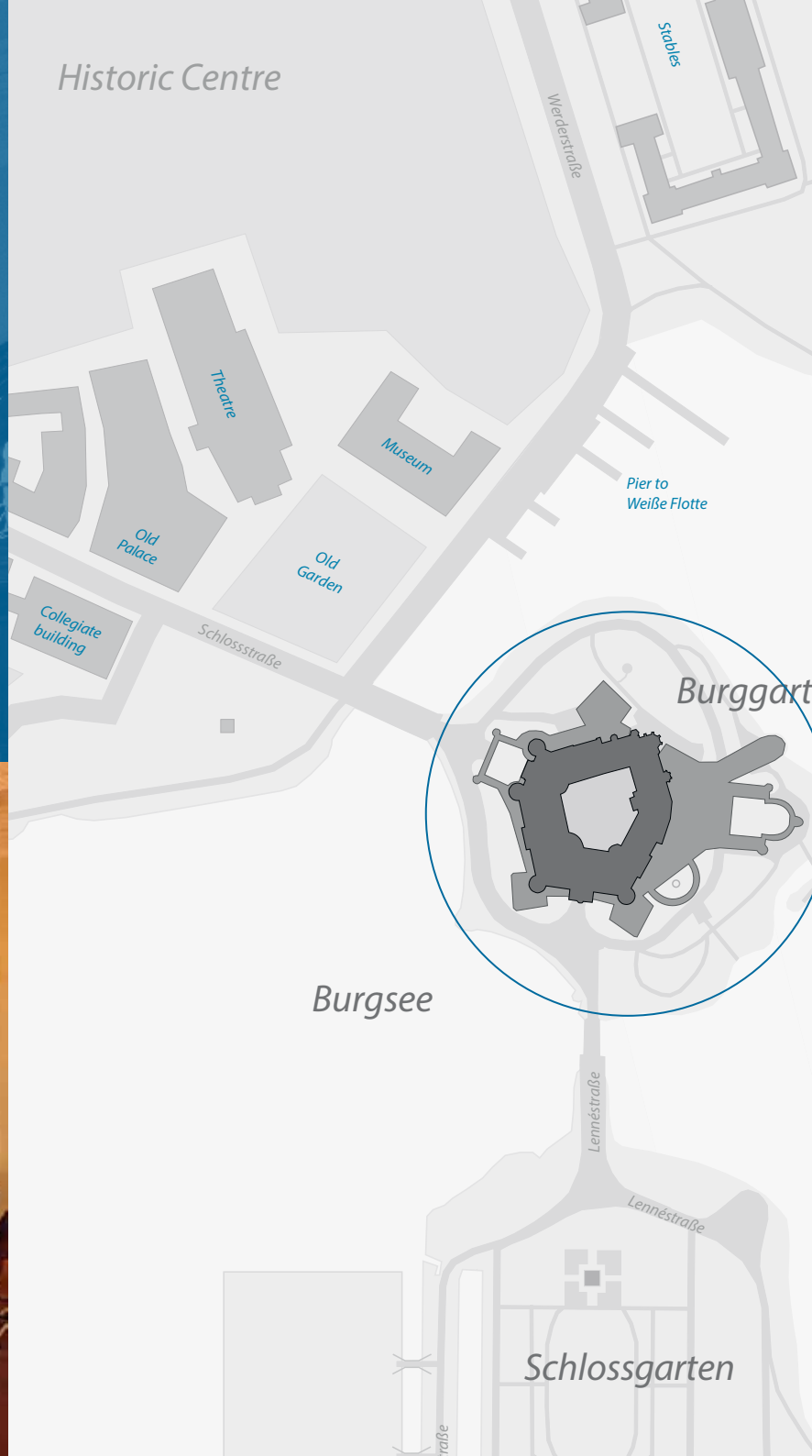
Photo: Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania State Parliament

# SCHWERIN CASTLE

Seat of the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania State Parliament and meeting place



Photo: Jens Büttner



Overview of key parts of the building

- 1 Burggarten Wing
- 2 "House above the Castle Chapel"
- 3 "New Long House"
- 4 "Obotrite Steps"
- 5 Main Tower
- 6 "Bishop's House"
- 7 "House above the Castle Kitchen"
- 8 Clock Tower
- 9 Schlossgarten Wing
- 10 Main Staircase Tower
- 11 Burgsee Wing
- 12 Entrance Wing

**942** Construction of a Slavic ring wall fortress on the island.

**973** Mention of an island fortress in a freshwater lake.

**1018** Mention of an Obotrite border fortress.

**1160** Faced with the superior attacking forces of Henry the Lion, the Obotrite chief Niklot destroys the border fortress on the island. Henry the Lion rebuilds the fortress and founds the town of Schwerin. Around 1167, the fortified island becomes the residence of the German Count Gunzelin.

**1358** Duke Albrecht of Mecklenburg acquires the countship of Schwerin and the island fortress. He transfers his main residence from Wismar to Schwerin.

**1557** Master builder Johann Baptista Parr joins the ducal service.

**1560** Construction of the Castle Chapel, continuing until 1563.

**1620** King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden stays at Schwerin Castle.

**1629** The Castle is occupied by imperial troops.

**1631** The Castle is occupied by Swedish troops.

**1635** Construction of the "House above the Castle Kitchen", concluding in 1643.

**1716** Czar Peter I stays at Schwerin Castle.

**1756** Relocation of the Court to Ludwigslust.

**1837** The Court moves back to Ludwigslust in Schwerin. The old Castle is comprehensively restored.

**1843** Planning for the reconstruction of Schwerin Castle begins. Dresden master builder Gottfried Semper submits his own design for Schwerin Castle.

**1845** Demmler's third and final design is approved. Construction begins on the new Schwerin Castle.

**1850** Busiest year of work on the new Castle. Demmler tenders his resignation.

**1857** Inauguration of the new Castle on 26 May.

**1913** Major fire in the Castle.

**1918** Abdication of the Grand Duke. The Castle passes into state ownership.

**1921** A museum is opened in the Castle's historic rooms.

**1942** A military hospital is set up in the Castle.

**1948** Addition of a Plenary Hall for the Mecklenburg State Parliament.

**1952** A boarding school for kindergarten teachers opens in the Castle.

**1974** The throne hall becomes the first of the restored state rooms to be opened to the public.

**1981** The boarding school leaves the Castle.

**1990** The newly-elected State Parliament of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania designates the Castle as its seat.

**2001** Reopening of the restored Orangery after almost six years of construction work.

**2007** Celebrations to mark the 150th anniversary of Schwerin Castle.

**2009** Bundesgartenschau (a national horticulture show) held in Schwerin around the Castle.

**2010** Celebrations to mark the 850th anniversary of the city Schwerin.

**2013** Handover of the fully renovated Castle Chapel to the castle parish.

**2017** Ceremonial inauguration of the new Plenary Hall.

**2018** Conversion of the Burgsee Wing into modern offices, rooms for the parliamentary groups and meeting rooms begins.

## Guided tours of the State Parliament, Castle and Gardens

Fancy a peek behind the scenes? Take a picturesque guided tour to experience the Castle in all of its historical and modern splendour, or enjoy the surrounding greenery in a tour of the Burggarten. To book paid tours of the Castle and its gardens, please contact [schlossfuehrung@landtag-mv.de](mailto:schlossfuehrung@landtag-mv.de) or 0385 525 2163.

Interested in attending a session of the State Parliament, an information event or a public tour of the plenary hall? Please contact our visitor services at [besucherdienst@landtag-mv.de](mailto:besucherdienst@landtag-mv.de).

Find out more at [www.landtag-mv.de/mitmachen](http://www.landtag-mv.de/mitmachen)

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Photo: Jörn Lehmann

## A fairytale castle with many faces

Hardly any building throughout Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania is as lavishly praised as Schwerin Castle. Charmingly situated amid a picturesque landscape of lakes and parks, Schwerin's fairytale castle is one of the most significant works of Romantic Historicism in Europe. In 2014 it was included in Germany's list of nominations for UNESCO World Heritage status. The structure as it stands today took shape from 1845 to 1857 as the residence of the Grand Dukes of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, incorporating several buildings from the 16th and 17th-century castle that preceded it. Its foundations are much older than that, however: the earliest mentions of a castle on the site date back to 973 and 1018.

During construction work in 2014, the remains of a Slavic hill fort from 965 were found in the castle courtyard. Six distinct façades give the Castle many faces, and its multifaceted exterior is reflected in the wide variety of functions it serves. Since 1990, it has been the seat of the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania State Parliament. The Castle is much more than just a political centre, however: above all, it is the central attraction for visitors of the capital of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and for Schwerin's citizens.



## The Church in the Castle

The construction of the Church dates back to Duke Johann Albrecht I of Mecklenburg (1525 – 1576). In 1563 it was consecrated as the first Protestant church in Mecklenburg. During the reconstruction and renovation of the Castle in the 19th century, renowned master builder Ernst Friedrich Zwirner added the distinctive Neo-Gothic choir, which is clearly visible from the outside. In accordance with the prevailing fashion at that time, the blue vaulted ceiling was decorated with thousands of golden stars.

Extensive restoration work concluded in 2013 – the 450th anniversary of the Church's consecration – gave the house of worship a new shine. For over 100 years, the congregation of the Castle Church has held its services here, besides hosting concerts and events. The State Parliament also uses the Church for ecumenical services before the plenary sessions. The Church's restoration was not financed solely with taxpayer funds: under the slogan "Buy Your Own Star in the Sky", over 7000 donors symbolically purchased stars on the vaulted ceiling to support the preservation of the Castle and its Church.

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## Dining and Beverages in the Castle

Tours of the Burggarten, weddings in the Castle Chapel or the Historical Library, events in the former King's Hall, open-air concerts and picnics on the lawn, the Castle festival and the State Parliament's open day – there is always plenty going on in and around the Castle.

A popular meeting point is the Orangery. Following extensive restoration work, from spring to autumn the Orangery in the Burggarten invites visitors to linger a while. During the winter months, they can climb the 64 steps to the former King's Hall to enjoy the culinary delights offered by Café Niklot. The castle kitchen is devoted to refined, fresh cuisine with loving attention to detail. Guests can choose from a small but exquisite menu complemented by daily specials and seasonal specialties, as well as cakes from the castle bakery and ice creams. A wedding, a special birthday, an office party – with the Orangery, Café Niklot and the Bischofskeller, you have the perfect venue for any occasion, which you can make even more unforgettable for your guests by including a guided tour of the Castle!

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## The Parliament in the Castle

The State Parliament is the political centre of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. It is where the state's laws are made, and consequently where the political will is formed. The State Parliament elects the premier of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, and controls the State Government and Administration. In 1990, the first freely elected State Parliament of the newly-formed Federal State of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania designated Schwerin Castle as its seat. As the former seat of the Dukes and Grand Dukes of Mecklenburg, the Castle had always been a political centre. Following the abdication of the Dukes of Mecklenburg in 1918, the Castle was used for various purposes. As early as 1948, a plenary hall was appointed in the Burgsee Wing, in which the State Parliament convened until the dissolution of the Federal States by the GDR in 1952.

The State Parliament is responsible for the preservation of the castle. The most important construction measures in recent years include renovation work on the façades of the inner courtyard, the Schlossgarten Wing and the Burgsee Wing. Which in the days of the Dukes was the Beletage with the most magnificent room of the entire Castle: the Golden Hall, which was completely destroyed in the fire of 1913. Since 2017, the hall has been home to a new, modern plenary hall in which the plenary sessions of the State Parliament take place.

If you are interested in attending a plenary session, please contact [sucherdienst@landtag-mv.de](mailto:sucherdienst@landtag-mv.de)



## The Museum in the Castle

In 1918, Grand Duke Friedrich Franz IV was forced to abdicate, and the Castle passed into state ownership. Soon after, in 1921, the first rooms were opened to the public as the Mecklenburg State Museum. During World War II, the Castle served as a military hospital and refugee shelter, and subsequently as a boarding school for future kindergarten teachers until 1981. The reappraisal of Historicist architecture and art in the early 1970s prompted the restoration of valuable interior spaces, beginning in 1974 with the throne room.

Today, over 30 living quarters, function rooms and state rooms are open to the public, including the Flower Room, Dining Hall and Parlour. The magnificent rooms, which enchant visitors with their rich carved and painted decorations and intricately inlaid floors, are home to the Mecklenburg State Castle, Garden and Art Collections: priceless paintings, sculptures and handcrafted items, mostly from the 19th century, arranged over three floors. Particular highlights include the lavishly appointed throne room and the ancestral gallery with its impressive trove of portraits.

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## The Castle and its Gardens

The current shape of the Burggarten dates back to the overhaul in the mid-19th century according to designs by court gardener Theodor Klett, incorporating suggestions by Gottfried Semper, Georg Adolf Demmler and Peter Joseph Lenné, the most prominent German Landscape architect at that time. The result is a masterpiece of stairs, terraces, water features, garden rooms, sculptures and a walk-in grotto, in the tradition of the Roman villa and terrace gardens of the Italian Renaissance. The original design concept, embodying a harmonic transition between Castle, gardens, Lake Schwerin and the surrounding landscape can once again be experienced following the painstaking restoration of the entire Castle gardens.

The larger Schlossgarten was created as a baroque park complex on the basis of an existing kitchen garden by the famous French garden designer Jean Legeay in the mid-18th century. In the 19th century, the Schlossgarten too was subjected to modifications and additions including the two pergolas, the Schlossgarten Pavilion and the Green Garden.

