

Schwerin was the seat of government, as well as fortress and living quarters for the dukedom of the Obotrites – the only reigning dynasty of Slavic heritage up to 1918 in Germany. The cradle of Mecklenburg history is located on the castle island. The Slavic fortress Zuarin was already situated here in the 10th century. After the founding of the city by Henry the Lion, it was the seat of the Counts of Schwerin and since 1358, became seat of the residence of the Dukes of Mecklenburg – who were themselves descendants of the Obotrites. The style of Historicism with its various references towards the Obotrites and their last ruler Niklot deliberately points out this tradition of sovereignty to legitimize their right of lordship. Thus, the Schwerin castle reflects its era in a characteristic way, which was shaped by the crisis of monarchy versus the liberal forces of the so-called »Vormärz« period.



The manifestation of this iconographic programme can also be perceived in the interior of the castle, for example in the throne hall or the ancestor's gallery, which is part of the last fully preserved »throne apartment« in Europe. Older parts of the building from the 16th and 17th century were incorporated into the new construction. The newly created sections of the castle with their Renaissance Revival elements refer to the French royal castle of Chambord to emphasize the grand-duke's claim to a regal status among the sovereigns of Europe. The castle's chapel build under Johann Albrecht I. in the 16th century was preserved as well. It was one of the first reformed churches and was enlarged by a neo-gothic choir during the 19th century. Furthermore, the commissioner of the castle, Friedrich Franz II., also had the ducal tombs in the Schelfkirche and Dom renovated and St. Paul's church built in commemoration of his father.



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Heading for



World Cultural Heritage



Residence Ensemble Schwerin

Cultural Landscape of Romantic Historicism

The Residence Ensemble Schwerin ideally represents a typical Princely seat of the 19th century in the style of Romantic historicism. It was created in between 1825 and 1883 under the grand dukes Friedrich Franz I., Paul Friedrich and Friedrich Franz II. of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. With its buildings for court and public administration such as the Cabinet building, the court theatre and the museum for the grand-ducal art collections at the square known as "Alter Garten", the residence ensemble is expanded into the urban centre. Part of the ensemble are also the churches Dom and Schelfkirche with their ducal tombs, St. Paul's church, the defensive barracks for guarding the grand-ducal residence, the "New Town Palace" and functional buildings such as the complex of former grand-ducal stables or the court laundry.



Carl Malchin
 »View of castle and city of Schwerin from the Artilleriesberg« 1876,
 Staatliches Museum Schwerin (Foto: Elke Walford)

The heart of the ensemble is the residential castle which was restored under Friedrich Franz II. from 1843 to 1857. It represents the last large residential building in central Europe. The hitherto customary classicistic construction style for a castle of residence was replaced by Historicism. For this period, the Schwerin castle embodies a pinnacle of European fine architecture based on plans by Georg Adolph Demmler, Hermann Willebrand, Gottfried Semper, Friedrich August Stüler and Ernst Friedrich Zwirner.

The UNESCO World Heritage Convention

With the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage ratified in 1972, UNESCO has taken over the task to protect and preserve cultural or natural sites of outstanding importance to the common heritage of humanity. With the designation as World Heritage, the protection of the site becomes the responsibility not only of the singular state but of the whole of humanity. Therefore, the World Heritage Convention has developed ten criteria for the selection to become a site of World Heritage. The Residence Ensemble Schwerin complies with three of these criteria:

Criterion II – important interchange of human values

The architecture and landscape design of the Residence Ensemble Schwerin, exhibit the art and cultural landscape of Historicism in Europe in a unique way.

Criterion III – testimony to a cultural tradition

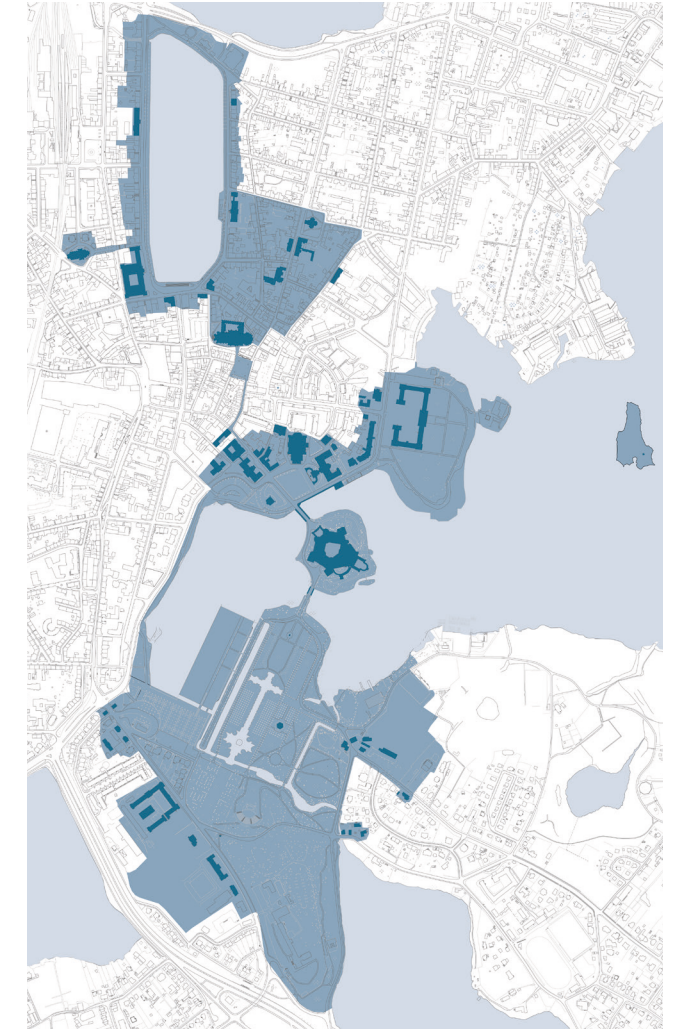
The Residence Ensemble Schwerin demonstrates the specific manifestation of the late period of Court culture in 19th century Europe. It is a site of continued governmental tradition from the Slavic period to modern day. Thus, it documents the development from a historic Princely court to modern day democracy.

Criterion IV – outstanding example which illustrates a significant stage in human history and heritage

The Residence Ensemble Schwerin is the first residential construction in the style of Historicism and one of the earliest creations of the Neo-Renaissance. Within a park and natural landscape, the Ensemble stands out for its exceptional state of preservation and integrity. Apart from authentically rendering courtly culture and aristocratic lifestyle of the 19th century, the slowly grown character of the residence and its continuity as a political and cultural centre of the state becomes evident as well. It illustrates the development of a German state from the historic Princely dukedom. The cultural institutions still existing within the Ensemble such as the State Theatre, the State Museum with its ducal art collections and the collections of the State Archives and Library are part of this continuity.

Residence Ensemble Schwerin

Cultural Landscape of Romantic Historicism



In the spirit of Romantic historicism, the castle became part of a picturesque landscape garden based on designs by Theodor Klett and Peter Joseph Lenné. The integration of the ensemble into glacially shaped lake scenery confers the Romantic ideal of landscape. The island Kaninchenwerder was incorporated into

these gardens as well as the lakeshore near the city with the "Alter Garten", the »Marstall« and the villas and esplanades reaching up to Zippendorf. This is largely preserved and since the 19th century hardly changed park landscape with the island Kaninchenwerder, is still used as a recreational area. It is part of the European Union Bird

reserve »Schweriner Seen«. The crowning structure of the ensemble is the castle, which is the center of all prospects. With its unique urban location on the island, it joins the city with its surrounding gardens and natural landscape. Manmade creations and nature merge harmoniously.

2000

The association »Pro Schwerin« suggests the application of the castle ensemble for UNESCO World Heritage

2001-4-28

Decision of the city council of Schwerin to support this idea

2007-10-17

Decision of the legislative assembly of the state, Landtag, to promote the city's endeavour

2010-9-7

Agreement of the city, state and Landtag to advertise the Residence Ensemble Schwerin

2011/2012

Development of the OUV-application by Dr. Christian Ottersbach

2012-6-13

Tendering of the OUV-application for the admission into the German tentative list to the Kultusministerkonferenz

June 2014

Inclusion on the German Tentativ list by the Kultusministerkonferenz