

# ...the Castle



## A magnificent castle, a diva, poised above the water

The castle in Schwerin is omnipresent. It attracts attention to itself from all directions. The monolithic, **polyaxial circular structure composed of eleven storeys and six wings** rises up majestically. The tremendous richness of detail makes the edifice with its 635 rooms appear graceful and light at the same time. Embellished with a myriad of towers and turrets stretching towards the sky, **crowned by golden cupolas and sparkling merlons**. The facades are gracefully and trenchantly broken up by numerous windows, alcoves, columns, bay windows, balustrades, ornaments and figures.

| Text modules on Schwerin Castle |                              |   |                      |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------------|
|                                 | Content                      | Text  | Number of characters |
| Mini summary                    | Exterior and surroundings    | Its myriad of towers and turrets crowned by golden cupolas and sparkling merlons, lends the former princely residence the appearance of a veritable fairytale castle.   | 165                  |
|                                 | Architecture, style          | When developing the old castle, Friedrich Franz II. deliberately chose the historicising style of neo-Renaissance, thus demonstrating the continual reign of his noble family since the Middle Ages.  | 196                  |
|                                 | Architecture, style          | With its essentially unmodified architecture until the present day, Schwerin Castle, both inside and out, epitomises the culture of royal seats and is Europe's last quintessential courtly structure of distinction.   | 214                  |
| Short summary                   | Exterior and surroundings    | Its myriad of towers and turrets crowned by golden cupolas and sparkling merlons, lends the former princely residence the appearance of a veritable fairytale castle, which is reflected in Lake Schwerin, sometimes in daylight, other times in crimson hues, always a sight of majestic beauty.                         | 289                  |
|                                 | Architecture, builder, style | When developing the old castle, Friedrich Franz II. deliberately chose the historicising style of neo-Renaissance with an abundance of gold and embellishments, and incorporated fortified relicts, such as the old bastions. In doing so, he demonstrated the continual reign of his noble family since the Middle Ages. | 313                  |

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|  | History of the castle up to the present day                                 | <p>Erected on the remains of a Slavic island castle, the former royal seat bears witness to a history stretching back almost one thousand years. Once home to the princely family from the Wends and the noble House of Welf, the structure has now been the seat of the state parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern since 1990.</p> <p><b>Optional follow-on text</b></p> <p>Like a history book for the development of Mecklenburg, Germany and Europe, the castle is a witness of the past for all political and cultural eras stretching from the Middle Ages right up to the modern age.</p>                          | 317 |
|  | <p>Interior rooms and museum</p> <p>Uniquely designed Throne Apartments</p> | <p>The interior boasts perfectly designed state rooms and lounges, the opulently appointed Throne Room, the gallery of palatial castles and ancestors, a unique collection of porcelain objects, the silver chamber as well as the collection of ducal hunting and ceremonial weapons.</p> <p><b>Optional follow-on text:</b></p> <p>A tour through the rooms is like an expedition through the history of the region, through the history of the Mecklenburg Dynasty and through the culture of the monarchies of Europe.</p> <p>The Schwerin Throne Apartments belong to the State Museum and are open to visitors.</p> | 208 |
|  |   |   | 275 |
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| Longer summary    | Appearance, surroundings, general                   | Schwerin Castle leaves a lasting impression on the viewer as the most significant architectural creation of romantic historicism – on the one hand due to its innumerable turrets, cupolas, bay windows, balustrades and ornaments, and, on the other, on account of its unique location and the exquisitely designed surroundings. It is resplendent among the museum, theatre, the prestigious buildings “Kollegiengebäude”, “Altes Palais” and “Neustädtisches Palais” and manicured parks, nestled in Lake Schwerin.   | 504            |
|                   | Architecture, builder, style<br><br>Master builders | <p>In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Grand Duke Paul Friedrich sought to replace the outdated complex with a new building within sight. However, the foundations had only just been completed when the Duke died. His son, Grand Duke Friedrich Franz II., halted the construction work and instead expanded the old castle. While his contemporaries were going down new paths in terms of architecture, he deliberately chose the historicising style of neo-Renaissance and, by doing so, demonstrated the continual reign of his noble family since the Middle Ages.</p> <p><b>Optional follow-on text:</b></p> <p>Several star architects of that time were involved in the construction project, including Georg Adolph Demmler and Gottfried Semper. The royal court moved into the complex in 1857. The building, which today houses the State Museum, was erected on the foundations of the planned new castle.</p> | 550<br><br>289 |
| More text modules | Appearance, surroundings                            | The castle in Schwerin is omnipresent. It attracts attention to itself from all directions. The massive, polyaxial circular structure composed of eleven storeys and six wings rises up majestically. The tremendous richness of detail makes the edifice with its 635 rooms appear graceful and light at the same time. Embellished with a myriad of towers and turrets stretching towards the sky, crowned by golden cupolas and sparkling merlons. The facades are gracefully and trenchantly broken up by numerous windows, alcoves, columns, bay windows, balustrades, ornaments and figures.   | 578            |

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|  | Architectural style, history                                   | The palatial castle had its heyday in the middle of the 19th century. And this was the era of the Romantic period, revolution and historicism.  | 142 |
|  | Appearance, builder, history, style                            | It is not without coincidence that the circular shape and the towers of the castle are evocative of a fortified castle. In doing so, the last great master builder – Grand Duke Friedrich Franz II. – expresses his power and his will to defend it. After all, his roots, like the foundations of the building, date back to the Slavic period. For 1,000 years, the complex has served as a political centre of the coastal region – from paganism to the period of the Grand Dukes through to today's seat of the regional government.   | 522 |
|  | Interiors  | Inside too, Schwerin Castle is deemed a prime example of the lordly display of splendour. With its perfectly designed state rooms and lounges, the palatial castle was geared towards etiquette from the cellars to its cupolas.  | 225 |
|  | Interiors, castle museum, effect on the visitor                | Guests are awestruck by the richly appointed rooms. They had already marvelled at the castle poised above the lake, its golden roofs and the colourful gardens on their arrival. Then they walked past a row of monarchs. Entering the Throne Room, they were then dazzled. The hall-like room is expansive and makes people appear small. The only person to sit here was the ruler, namely on the opposite side. The way there was long and was followed by many pairs of eyes. Even if the sovereign did not appear by the grace of God, he was still always present with his consort in the form of two official portraits. | 607 |
|  | Interiors, the last heyday of courtly life a lost era/ culture | The staging of state policy culminated in the opulently appointed Throne Room as the centre of the region. Artistically laid panel parquet and extravagant décor on the walls and ceilings, velvet and stucco – everything exudes grand ducal dignity. Allegorical sculptures and paintings celebrate the sovereign virtues and the region with its towns and lines of businesses. The sovereign palatial castles and the portraits of all of the dukes of Mecklenburg are displayed in the galleries in the anteroom.  | 911 |

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|  |   | The interconnected décor is well matched in a suggestive manner and geared entirely towards ceremonial aspects. In the 19th century, such throne apartments were part of any royal seat of distinction. However, it is only in Schwerin that they have been preserved in their entirety and in their original state. The palatial castle is thus home to a unique witness of the last heyday of courtly life in Europe.  |     |
|  | Surroundings, town, parade ground       | An important architectural space of the prestigious Schwerin ensemble is defined by the Old Garden. The central square of the town and the state remains fully preserved until today and is dominated by the buildings of the royal court and public administration. In contrast to similar squares in other towns, it has been perfectly preserved.   | 341 |
|  | Description, poetic, exterior, location | This prima donna stands on a small island in the enormous Lake Schwerin, amid a sea of flowers. As the ducal palace takes up virtually the whole of the island, one would like to imagine it is only supported by the waves. And so the diva is poised above the town, the lake and the rest of the region wearing a flowing cloak and a golden crown.   | 343 |
|  | Description, poetic, exterior, location | This beauty likes to see itself from all sides in the reflection of the sparkling water, with an exaggerated sense of self-importance and admiration. In the sunshine and equally in the moonlight. At times it is shrouded in thick wafts of mist up to its hips, making its towers appear to flow into the sky in ethereal fashion. Then it is bathed in the sunset glow of the lake. This reflection is, of course, a deliberately planned part of the eminently magnificent staging of the castle. | 486 |
|  | Builder, architectural history          | The complex, which had been continually added to, was no longer in keeping with the times and was to be replaced by a new, nearby building. However, just as the foundations had been completed, the duke died. His son, Grand Duke Friedrich Franz II., halted the construction work and instead expanded the old castle.   | 314 |

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|  | Builder, architectural history, master builders | The master builders Georg Adolph Demmler and Hermann Willebrand from Schwerin submitted several blueprints for the ambitious project. Ideas were also contributed by Friedrich August Stüler, the senior government building officer of the Kingdom of Prussia, the academy professor Gottfried Semper from Dresden and the master builder of cathedrals Ernst Friedrich Zwirner from Cologne. In doing so, the Grand Duke enlisted the services of the architectural elite of his time. The construction work took 14 years to complete. Even the 1848/49 Revolution could not put a stop to the work. The royal court took up residence there in 1857.  | 632 |
|  | History, contemporary witness                   | The castle is thus not just an ancient building of historic importance, full of animation and spirit. It also symbolises the pomp and circumstance of one of the oldest European dynasties. The breath of royal history drifts through its walls. It illustrates the political and cultural development of an entire continent in authentic fashion.  | 340 |
|  | Architectural style, stately homes              | The majority of the stately homes erected in the historicising style of architecture in the 19th century were hunting and pleasure lodges or private retreats. They did not play any leading part in the field of politics. The affairs of state took place in the royal palaces. One of the few royal palaces of that time was erected in Schwerin. Probably even its most magnificent and its most consistent.  | 400 |
|  | Art gallery "Alter Garten", State Museum        | The gallery building is reminiscent of a Greek temple. On one hand, an Ionic portico is indicative of the classical educational establishment for the acquisition and development of knowledge and, on the other, it distinguishes the house as a sovereign structure which is part of the castle ensemble. In 1882, the new museum building was opened, which was ground-breaking in terms of its engineering. In Germany it is among the best preserved museums from the 19th century. An almost unique feature is that the original purpose of the building remains virtually unchanged until this day. The international, top-class collections in an architectural monument are a synthesis of the arts and one of Germany's most notable museums. The plans and design were provided by Hermann Willebrand. (see Museum in the chapter "Culture") | 785 |

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|  | Entertainment of the Dukes, State Theatre            | The neighbouring State Theatre was inaugurated in 1886. The exterior of the prestigious building gives the appearance of a villa from the Italian High Renaissance period. The interior reveals numerous baroque shapes and décor. When it came to the stage and technology, the building boasted state-of-the-art equipment – for instance electric light from its own power system. The columns along the front of the building relate to the castle and the lake on the opposite side. After extensive restoration work, the interior furnishings are now once more fit for grand dukes. (see Theatre in the chapter “Culture”)   | 572 |
|  | History of the castle until far into the Middle Ages | In the year 965, the Arab merchant Ibrāhīm ibn Ya‘qūb travelled the region to the east of the Lower Elbe. In his notes he described a Slavic island castle being constructed in an enormous lake. In the following centuries reference was always made to this transmission and to this origin of the castle and the lord of the manor. It was not until the 1970s that conclusive evidence manifested itself. In the inner courtyard archaeologists actually came across a ring-shaped castle mound. Tests carried out provide incredibly accurate confirmation: the trees used had been cut down between 962 and 974. What a sensation. It is possible to trace back from further written documents and archaeological finds that the respective lords appreciated the outstanding strategic location and always operated a fortress here.<br>In doing so, they continually expanded the complex and added more and more prestigious elements. | 908 |