

Castle Lichtenwalde

The castle of "Lichtenwalde" was built in the period 1722 to 1726 on the foundations of an older castle; it comprises three wings, each of three stories. The owner was Count von Watzdorf, who had been a minister at the court of Augustus the Strong, the Elector of Saxony and King of Poland. Later it passed into the possession of the family of the Counts Vitzthum von Eckstädt. The architect is unknown, but was probably a master builder at the court of Dresden. The front of the castle did not have much sculptural ornamentation, but was decorated with illusionistic paintings.

In the night of 30 April 1905 a fire caused by a faulty chimney ravaged the castle. The entrance front and the southern wing were both almost completely destroyed while part of the northern wing, the link building to the chapel and the chapel itself survived. The chapel is much older than the rest of the castle having been built as part of a 13th century castle. In summer and autumn 2000 the remains of this earlier castle were investigated by means of archaeological excavations undertaken in the inner courtyard.

The castle was rebuilt in 1905 to 1908 by the court architect Gustav Frölich who followed closely the forms of the building destroyed by the fire. The outline of the new structure is generally very similar to that of the old, although the tower was heightened and the entrance façade was decorated in neo-baroque forms. A new entrance hall was created in a simple but monumental style. The total cost of the rebuilding came to one million "Reichsmark".

In July 1945 immediately following the Second World War, the Red Army arrived at the castle and gave the family an hour to vacate it. Most of the inventory, the objects of art and the archives were then removed. In 1948 the castle became a convalescent home for people suffering from diseases of the lungs and later it was used as a centre for public health services. In the seventies the historical rooms were restored and after 1991 the building was used as an educational institute by the Saxon Ministry of Social Affairs.

In 1998 the castle passed to the Castle Administration of the State of Saxony. Further renovation work had been completed by 2010. In the castle you can find the rooms of representation and a museum with silhouettes out of paper from Germany and China but also a museum with art exhibits from Asia and Africa.

Baroque Garden

The creation of the park was started in 1730. The baroque garden already became famous in the 18th century because of its water features said to total more than 400 fountains. The owner was Carl Friedrich Count von Watzdorf, the son of the builder of the castle. In the planning and design of the garden, the integration of the sloping terrain on the side of the Zschopau valley played an important role. A surviving plan from 1767 tells us how the garden looked originally and confirms that its baroque composition has largely survived unchanged. The garden covers an area of 10 hectares.

In 1954 a programme of renovation of the most important parts of the park commenced. In recent years the local community was sustained in its efforts by financial help from the EU, the German government and the Free State of Saxony. All in all some 12.8 million DM were made available. Since 1998 the baroque garden shines in renewed splendour.

In the second half of the 19th century the park was regularly opened to the public by the family of the counts. As has always been the case the water for the fountains is pumped up from the river into a reservoir. From this point one can see the greenhouses and the gardener's cottage. It is also interesting to view the cemetery of the family of the counts with its six metre high carved crucifixes, which can be found beneath the walls of the park.

The middle garden is located directly at the castle. It was modified in about the year 1800 and has been restored to this shape. Two stairs with fountain lead from the middle garden to the next terrace. From the "Bosket" stairs go down to an arcade where a watery surprise awaits the unsuspecting visitor, this is today equipped with a modern photoelectric barrier. The fountain called the "Dolphin Fountain". From the main avenue all parts of the garden can be reached. The 94 lime trees have all been newly replanted and they are cut back regularly.

The first concert in the garden, one for brass instruments took place in 1843, a tradition that is still continued. The coffee shop, the fountain and the music pavilion were built in 1906. The "Water Axis" is parallel to the "Main Avenue" and leads through separate parts of the garden. From time to time you have beautiful views into the Zschopau valley. The hedges, three metres in height, produce spaces of different size and shape, while the various water features are most attractive.

The "Crown Basin" got its name from two golden crowns, which danced on the top of jets of water – water lilies constitute the decorations of the basin now days. The so-called "Place of the Vase" was given its form during the period of the German Democratic Republic. At first it comprised a bowling green and then a vase three metres high decorated this space.

The "New Part" of the garden was created around 1800. There remain two wall fountains incorporating the heads of tritons. You can see many jets of water emerging from the grass. In the pool below the fountains rotate. Drainage is provided by a romantic stream crossed by a bridge. This part of the garden is arranged in the style of a landscape park.

The most important part of the whole garden is known as "Seven Arts". It comprises a pool in the shape of a shell with seven fountains and bodies of water. The principal jet can reach a height of 6.5 metres. The two pavilions are crowned with handmade copper vases. From the terrace you have a beautiful view into the Zschopau valley.

This is the end of our tour – other places in the park can be discovered by everyone for themselves.

