Dear Readers,

The Löwenburg is one of the most important architectural monuments in the Wilhelmshöhe Park in Kassel. It was built in the late 18th century by Landgrave William IX of Hesse-Kassel as a fictitious “ancestral seat” and pleasure palace in the style of a mock mediaeval castle and is one of the most significant buildings of this type in Europe.

While most of the valuable furnishings were transferred to storage in good time and saved, parts of the Löwenburg, including its dominant keep, were destroyed in the Second World War. The reconstruction of the tower, the refurbishment of the remaining buildings and the restoration of its valuable inventory will restore the Löwenburg largely to its original appearance, allowing visitors to experience the castle as it was first built.

The restoration of the Löwenburg is another major project in the restructuring of the Kassel museum landscape, in which the State Government is investing a total of 200 million euros. This is one of the largest cultural investment projects in Germany and also includes the fundamental restoration of the Hercules monument, the redesign of the Neue Galerie, the refurbishment of the State Museum and the reorganization of its exhibitions as well as the construction of the new Wallpaper Museum. The aim of the Hessen State Government in restructuring the museum landscape is to preserve the outstanding historic collections and the unique buildings and gardens for future generations as well as making them accessible to new groups of visitors.

Further information:
- Hans-Christoph Dittscheid, Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe und die Krise des Schloßbaues am Ende des Ancien Régime, Worms 1987

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Left: “Knights’ tapestry” by Andreas Ranps, 1800; right: Portrait of Landgrave William IX of Hesse-Kassel, Wilhelm Böttner, 1788
Reconstruction and restoration of the Löwenburg

The destruction of the keep together with the connecting and kitchen tracts in 1945 significantly impaired the appearance of the castle, transforming it from an artificial to a genuine ruin. It is no longer possible for visitors to experience the authentic sequences of rooms planned by the absolute monarch. Now, the restoration of the Löwenburg, which local residents have supported since the end of the Second World War, has been made possible by the investment programme of the Hessen State Government for the restructuring of the Kassel museum landscape, with a total volume of 200 million euros. A key element in the restoration programme is the reconstruction of the dominant keep, which is essential for the effect of the castle as a park decoration and for an understanding of the absolute ruler’s pleasure palace. Following the reconstruction of the tower, it will be possible to reconstruct the Landgrave’s living quarters and state apartments on the basis of their historic model and to allow visitors to experience these rooms.

Just as important as the reconstruction of the buildings which were destroyed is the restoration of those which survived. In the case of the castle as a park decoration and for an understanding of the historic rooms. Fortunately, some 80 percent of the castle inventory was saved because it was transferred to storage in good time before the damage sustained in the Second World War. The surviving furniture and wall decorations are to be conserved and restored with certain additions. Thanks to a donation campaign of the Museumsverein Kassel, work on the costly, time-consuming restoration of the furniture, including a bed of state of Landgrave Maurice the Learned from the early 17th century, was already started in 2010. With reorganization in accordance with the inventory of 1816, from the era when the castle was constructed, it will be possible to re-establish harmony between the building and its furniture.

Restoration work is also being carried out on the outdoor facilities, including the garden, tiltyard, orchard and the Wolfsschlucht ravine, which were created at the same time as the castle and are inseparable parts of the Löwenburg. When all the work has been completed, visitors will once again be able to experience the Löwenburg as an artistic whole.

A comparison of Johann Paravesi’s painting with the photo below shows that the loss of the keep has had severe negative impact on the aesthetic effect of the Löwenburg.