



Aerial photograph of the Löwenburg from the South-East

The State of Hessen is well aware of the international significance of the Kassel heritage and is applying for the recognition of the water features and Hercules monument in the Wilhelmshöhe Park as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A decision on the application will probably be taken in 2013.

On behalf of the State Government, I would like to thank the Museumsverein Kassel (the Kassel Museum Association). The Association launched a donation campaign for the restoration of the historic inventory of the Löwenburg which has already achieved its first successes. This confirms the joint commitment of the State Government and local residents to the conservation of this significant cultural heritage.

Eva Kühne-Hörmann

Eva Kühne-Hörmann
The Hessen State Minister of Higher Education,
Research and the Arts

Left: "Knights' tapestry" by Andreas Range, 1800; right: Portrait of Landgrave William IX of Hesse-Kassel, Wilhelm Böttner, 1788



Further information:

- Anja Dötsch, Die Löwenburg im Schlosspark Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe. Eine künstliche Ruine des späten 18. Jahrhunderts, 2 volumes, Regensburg 2006
- Hans-Christoph Dittscheid, Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe und die Krise des Schloßbaues am Ende des Ancien Régime, Worms 1987

Contact

Hessisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kunst
Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit
Rheinstraße 23-25, 65185 Wiesbaden
www.hmwk.hessen.de

Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel
Postfach 410 420, 34066 Kassel
www.museum-kassel.de

Museumsverein Kassel e. V. (campaign brochure)
Dr. Joachim Schröder
Schlosspark 4, 34131 Kassel
www.museumsverein-kassel.de



Title scene: View of the Löwenburg from the South, Johann Georg Primavesi, c. 1828

Photos:
MHK, U. Brunzel, A. Hensmanns and M. Wiedemann Fotografie, Kassel

This leaflet has been published as part of the public relations work of the Hessen State Government. It must not be used for electioneering purposes by parties or by party campaigners or activists during an election campaign. This applies to local, state and national elections. In particular, the distribution of this leaflet at party political events or party information booths and the insertion of party political material into this leaflet or the printing of party information or party political information on this leaflet will be considered to be an abuse. This leaflet must not be forwarded to third parties for election campaign purposes. Even at times when elections are not impending, this leaflet must not be used in any way which could imply that the State Government of Hessen supported any political grouping.

These restrictions apply irrespective of the time when and the manner in which this leaflet is received and irrespective of the number of copies received. However, parties are permitted to use this leaflet for informing their own members.

Hessen State Ministry
of Higher Education, Research
and the Arts



The Löwenburg

The artificial ruin as an architectural statement

Information on the Hessen Kassel museum landscape No 4.1



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.

Antechamber of the Ladies' Residence





Left: Crypt with sarcophagus of Elector William I; right: keep prior to its destruction in the Second World War

Park decoration and pleasure palace, fictitious ancestral seat and burial place

The Löwenburg, built between 1793 and 1801 in the Wilhelmshöhe Park in Kassel, was used by Landgrave William IX of Hesse-Kassel not only as a decoration for his park or as a private retreat for rendezvous with his mistress Caroline von Schlotheim. The construction of the castle was part of the Landgrave's efforts to become an Elector of the Holy Roman Empire – a dream which became reality in 1803. The artificially created ruins of a fictitious ancestral seat allegedly founded in 1495 and the contrasting display of precious items of furniture, portraits of ancestors and suits of armour from four centuries were designed to embody and symbolize the long tradition of the House of Hesse. In line with the typical rooms of a mediaeval castle, architect Heinrich Christoph Jussow equipped the Löwenburg with an armoury, a tiltyard, a keep with the state apartments and a neo-Gothic castle chapel with many mediaeval paintings and stained-glass windows. From the outset, William IX insisted on the design of the chapel as a burial place to reinforce the claims of the House of Hesse to legitimacy. A sarcophagus was already installed in the crypt under the chapel in 1804 and William IX (or Elector William I, as he then was) was buried there in 1821.

The castle, initially only planned as a decorative ruin and eye-catcher like the follies built in English landscape gardens since the early 18th century, later became one of the first mock mediaeval castles built on the European continent to cement the claims of absolutist monarchs. The Löwenburg is a major European cultural monument.

Löwenburg

Phone: +49 (0)561 3 16 80-244

Opening hours: January – February: Tue – Sun and public holidays 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., closed on Mondays; March – October: Tue – Sun and public holidays 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., closed on Mondays; November: Tue – Sun and public holidays 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., closed on Mondays; December: Sat and Sun 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., closed on 24, 25 and 31 December; 26 December: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.; 1 January: 12 noon – 4 p.m.

Guided tours on each full hour; last guided tour November – February 3 p.m., March – October 4 p.m.

An impressive armoury is an essential part of a neo-Gothic castle.



Left: Study, in "skeleton" condition for the past ten years; right: Bed of state of Maurice the Learned, currently under restoration

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 a building deliberately shaped as a ruin, using tuff – a stone strongly affected by erosion – this task is considerably more difficult than

with an „intact“ building. The tuff masonry of the Löwenburg needs structural support and restoration. Only historic building materials and traditional crafts are to be used in this work. The restoration of the shell and the careful stabilization of the indoor climate will be essential for the re-equipment 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.



The restoration of the Löwenburg is to be completed in several stages. The museum (or parts of the museum) will remain open during the work.