



Landtag Brandenburg
Alter Markt 1, 14467 Potsdam

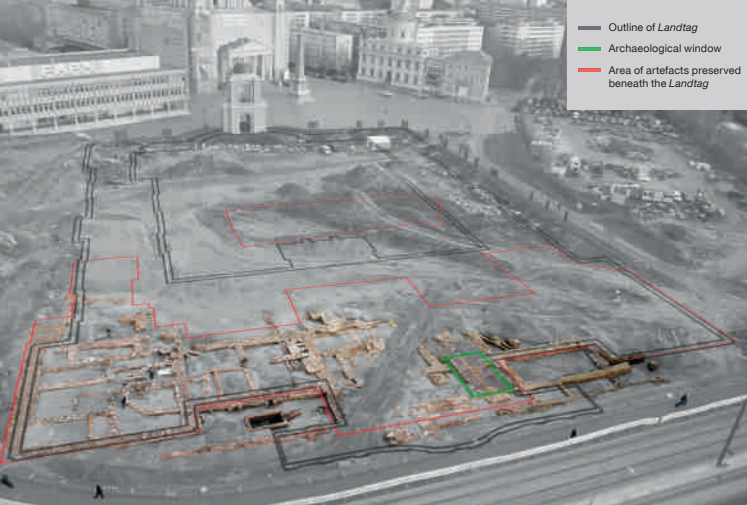
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Archaeological Window

A glimpse into the past





The new Brandenburg *Landtag* stands on ground that is steeped in history. Prior to its construction, archaeologists unearthed and scientifically documented evidence of the past on the *Landtag* plot. Traces of over five millennia of history have been discovered in the process.

Evidence of older fortifications and castles has also come to light in and under the walls, foundations and floors of the city palace, which occupied the site of the *Landtag* until 1959/60. To ensure that this is not destroyed, the south wing of the *Landtag* is supported by piles whilst the floor is suspended above the historic walls. Thus, together with a section of the inner courtyard that archaeologists have not yet investigated, archaeological findings over an area of approximately 3000 m² have remained in the ground ready to be studied by future generations.

An archaeological window in the lecture room of the *Landtag* foyer provides a direct glimpse into the past.

A section of a large vault from the city palace can be seen. It was built in the sixties of the 17th century to form part of the palace used by the ruling electors.

Frederick William of Brandenburg, the “Great Elector”, had restored the office of elector to Potsdam in 1660 and commissioned the architect Johann Gregor Memhardt to build a new palace based on the Dutch model over the following years.

At around 18x22 metres, the impressive vaulted room in the semi-basement of the south wing was nearly as big as the one below which it was situated, namely the Marble Room (Marmorsaal), the most prestigious room in the palace.

The floor is covered with limestone slabs (1), which originate from the Swedish Baltic Sea island of Öland. The contoured plinth made of bricks (2) supported one of the eight pillars on which the cellar’s vaulted ceiling rested. The narrow strips of brickwork (3) are the traces of partition walls that were inserted later.

The prestigious stucco-decorated room had a ground-level exit beneath the cart track leading into the Pleasure Garden (Lustgarten). The cool vault also served as a dining room during the summer months. Deceased members of the elector’s family were laid out in here before burial, including the Great Elector in 1688 and his wife Electress Dorothea a year later.

In 1726, during the reign of Frederick William I (the “Soldier King”), the room assumed a new function and became a wine cellar. Apart from a number of subsequently inserted partition walls, the structure retained its form until the city palace was pulled down. Despite the bombardment of Potsdam on 14. 4. 1945 in which the palace was destroyed, the room was still intact to the extent that schoolchildren came for lunch in the palace cellar in the early 1950s.

