LANDTAG BRANDENBURG

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External Area

With its location on the Alter Markt (Old Market Square), directly in the centre of Potsdam, the Landtag building, housing the state parliament of Brandenburg, is part of a very attractive and charming architectural ensemble. Designed by King Frederick II of Prussia in the Roman style, the square formed the centre of Potsdam until the middle of the 20th century. Large-scale construction work that has been underway since the turn of the millennium is gradually restoring this state of affairs.



Alter Markt (Old Market Square) with Fortunaportal (Fortuna Gate) (© Landtag Brandenburg)

In the immediate vicinity of the Landtag building are the St. Nikolaikirche (St. Nicholas Church), designed by Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781–1841), and in the Altes Rathaus (Old Town Hall), the Potsdam Museum – Forum for Art and History, as well as the Museum Barberini with the founder's collection of Impressionist paintings and international temporary exhibitions.

Since 1755, the centre of the Alter Markt has been marked by the Obelisk, made of marble originally decorated with the portraits of four Prussian kings based on designs by Georg Wenzeslaus von Knobelsdorff (1699–1753). Today, Potsdam's four most important architects are immortalised in their place. In addition to Knobelsdorff and Schinkel, Carl von Gontard (1731–1791) and Ludwig Persius (1803–1845) are also commemorated. Since 2013, the square on the southeast side of the Landtag has been named after Otto Braun (1872–1955), the last freely elected Social Democratic Prime Minister of the Free State of Prussia. He held office from 1920 to 1932/33. In the immediate vicinity stands the so-called Bittschriftenlinde (Petition Lime Tree), which was returned to its old location in 2015. According to legend, it served as a focal point for the population in Frederick II's time to address complaints or petitions to the monarch. The original tree was felled in 1949, and a new one was planted in 1993.



East side of the building with newly planted Bittschriftenlinde (Petition Lime Tree) (© Landtag Brandenburg)

On the west side of the building, the so-called Ringerkolonnade (Wrestler Colonnade), originally connected the City Palace with the Pleasure Garden Stables, the current home of the Potsdam Film Museum. Partially destroyed during World War II, the open colonnade was not rebuilt in its old location on the edge of the adjacent Steubenplatz until 2016. Not far from it, on the façade of the Landtag building – loosely based on René Magritte – is the gilded lettering "Ceci n'est pas un château." (English: This is not a palace). Potsdam artist Annette Paul won second place in the 2011 "Kunst am Bau" ("A Percent for Art") contest with this concept.



West façade with Ringerkolonnade (Wrestler Colonnade) with the inscription "Ceci n'est pas un château." (© Landtag Brandenburg)

Inner Courtyard

The Fortunaportal (Fortuna Gate) was the first part of the former City Palace to be reconstructed true to the original, and was completed in 2002. Among others who played a significant role in raising funds for the project was Potsdam- based television presenter Günther Jauch, who donated one million euros. The top of the deep blue dome of the gate supports a gilded copper statue of the Roman goddess Fortuna atop a gilded column. It is over two metres high, weighs about five hundredweight, and it rotates in the wind. The two upper keystone heads represent the ancient mythical figures of Hercules and Minerva. The Fortunaportal forms the main entrance to the Landtag, and behind this passage is the Landtag building's public courtyard. Lawns and paved areas are geometrically arranged here, and benches provide for quality of stay.



Inner courtyard with Fortunaportal (Fortuna Gate) and the St. Nikolaikirche (St. Nicholas Church) (© Landtag Brandenburg)

Two illusionist pavilions have been erected on the lawns by the artist Florian Dombois as part of the "Kunst am Bau" competition, constructs which are clearly modelled on the central oval of the Schloss Sanssouci (Sanssouci Palace). They clearly emphasise the Landtag's proximity to Potsdam's main tourist landmark, whose counterpart, the City Palace, was once the summer residence of the Prussian kings, while they retained the former as their winter residence.

The Knobelsdorff staircase forms the link between the historic façade design and the modern interior architecture of the Landtag



Main entrance with the two illusionist pavilions from the project "Kunst am Bau" (© Landtag Brandenburg)

Brandenburg. Visitors pass by the staircase on their way to the Landtag foyer. Originally built by the architect Knobelsdorff using the axis of the main wing as a façade portico, the room's exterior is original, while its interior has been reconstructed true to the original, including the staircase and some rudiments of the vivid artistic interior that still exist. Six original reliefs decorate the staircase.



Knobelsdorff staircase (© Landtag Brandenburg)

Exhibitions and Events

The Landtag is not only a place for political discussion about the state affairs of Brandenburg. It is also a place where the state presents and exchanges ideas regarding the diversity of its regions with their various cultural, social and economic characteristics. For this reason, the building regularly hosts exhibitions on topics of current social relevance.

Together with external cooperation partners, the Landtag administration organises temporary exhibitions in the Landtag foyer at regular intervals. The exhibitions are related to the state of Brandenburg and the topics of politics, parliamentarianism and social participation. As a rule, each exhibition is scheduled to run for two months.

In the corridor areas of the south wing, the Landtag also presents larger, freely accessible annual art exhibitions. These are usually organised in cooperation with one of the Brandenburg state museums, which contribute their extensive collections for this purpose. The selection of artworks focuses on contemporary works, primarily by Brandenburg artists. The exhibitions are opened with a celebratory vernissage. Access is free for all visitors during the opening hours of the Landtag building.

In addition to the permanent exhibitions, the Landtag offers an additional format with the event series "Kunst zur Zeit" (Art of Our Time), first introduced in 2020 to further open up the Landtag as a place of social dialogue for its citizens. To this end, various artistic forms of presentation and performance – from music and literature to dance and theatre – are embedded in the political and parliamentary concept.



Musical accompaniment of an exhibition opening in the foyer (© Landtag Brandenburg)



Exhibition in the foyer (© Landtag Brandenburg)

Individual visitors usually have the opportunity to visit the Landtag building from Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. individually, and twice a month, on Fridays from 3 to 4 p.m., as part of an open guided tour. It is also possible to attend plenary or committee meetings as a guest. Registration via the in-house visitor service (phone: 0331 966-1253, e-mail: besucherservice@landtag.brandenburg.de) is required. For further information on current opening hours and access regulations, please refer to our website.



Tour during a vernissage (© Landtag Brandenburg)

Historical Development

The site of the former City Palace is one of the oldest settlement areas in Potsdam. The site had been home to various fortresses, castles and palace buildings, as the Great Elector Frederick William ordered a new palace to be built in the Dutch style between 1664 and 1669. The initial architectural feature, the Fortunaportal, was constructed in 1701 and remained almost unchanged until the destruction of the City Palace in the mid-20th century. In 1740 Frederick II became king of Prussia. He developed Potsdam into a residential town, and in 1745 he entrusted the architect Georg Wenzeslaus von Knobelsdorff with the reconstruction of the Baroque palace in the Friderizian Rococo style.



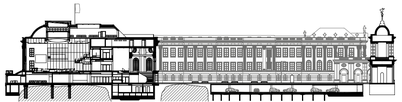
City Palace from southwest, painting by Johann Friedrich Meyer, 1773 (© Wikimedia Commons)

After the abdication of the Hohenzollerns in 1918, the palace was no longer used as a residence. In the course of extensive construction work, a meeting hall for the city councillors, as well as committee and parliamentary group rooms were built. At the end of the Second World War, the building burned down to the outer walls as a result of a major attack by the British Royal Air Force on April 14, 1945. In 1959/1960, the ruins were completely demolished following a decision by the GDR state leadership. After years of standing derelict, construction of a new theatre on the Alter Markt began in the late 1980's. Following the peaceful revolution in the autumn of 1989, the shell was demolished in 1991.



City Palace in ruins after 1945 (© Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz)

On May 20, 2005, the Landtag passed a resolution to build a new parliament building within the outline of the historic City Palace. A subsequent citizens' survey in the city of Potsdam resulted in clear approval for a new parliament building on the Alter Markt. A consortium of bidders led by the Royal BAM Group with architect Prof. Peter Kulka was awarded the contract for the building project. The foundation stone was laid on February 16, 2011, and the completed building was handed over to the Landtag on October 10, 2013. It was officially inaugurated in January 2014.



The Landtag building from the east in cross section (© Ministerium der Finanzen und für Europa des Landes Brandenburg)

A tour of the Landtag Brandenburg

A modern parliament in a historic building

LANDTAG BRANDENBURG



Ground Floor

On the ground floor of the Landtag building, directly behind the main entrance, is the Landtag foyer with its exhibition area, cafeteria, cloakroom and rooms for visitor groups and press conferences. Landtag publications are available free of charge at the information counter. In addition, an interactive model of the building invites visitors to explore the structure.



Information desk in the foyer (© Landtag Brandenburg)

In the left of the three lecture rooms accessible from the foyer, an archaeological window allows a direct view back into the building's past which can be visited during guided tours. On



Cafeteria
(© Landtag Brandenburg)

display is a section of a large vaulted cellar of the City Palace. It was built as part of the electoral palace in the 1660s. The impressive vaulted room in the basement of the south wing was approximately the same size (18 x 22 metres) as the most prestigious room of the palace immediately above: the Marmorsaal (Marble Hall). The floor is covered with slabs of limestone originating from the Swedish island of Öland in the Baltic Sea.

On both sides of the foyer, newly constructed staircases illuminated by generous light spaces guide visitors from the ground floor to the upper floors.



Archaeological window (© Landtag Brandenburg)

First Floor

On the first floor is the parliamentary centrepiece of the house, the light-flooded plenary chamber. Here, the 88 members of the Landtag Brandenburg gather in a chamber that was designed and built especially for this purpose. The semicircular arrangement of the seats symbolises the importance of the democratic process, making decisions which are agreed from in the midst of the assembled deputies, just as the constitution stipulates.



A group of visitors in the lobby (© Landtag Brandenburg)

The white and red colours which dominate the plenary chamber are derived from the Brandenburg state colours. Uniform daylight enters the plenary chamber through a rooflight dome in the historic central belvedere, which contains a transparent air cushion. The cushion serves to enhance the room acoustics. The ceiling appears visually etached from the walls of the room, an effect achieved using a light-gap. Elevated behind the lectern is where the presiding officer of the session sits.



Plenary chamber of the Landtag Brandenburg (© Landtag Brandenburg / Stefan Gloede)



Office of the President of the Landtag
(© Landtag Brandenburg)

The president of the Landtag and the vice-presidents take turns in chairing the plenary debate and the voting procedure. In and around the Landtag building, the eagle is a recurring motif – gilded on the south façade in the form of the Prussian heraldic eagle, on the state flag as a heraldic animal, and on the lectern as an artistic image in red. The large white eagle originally installed in the plenary chamber now hangs in the lobby, the reception area immediately outside the hall, as a result of a lively public debate.

The corridors of the SPD and BSW parliamentary groups are adjacent, as is the presidential area with the office of the president of the Landtag. In addition to the portrait gallery commemorating the former presidents of the Landtag Brandenburg, the presidential area also contains a model of the frigate "Brandenburg" from Wilhelmshaven. The Land of Brandenburg has a partnership with the German Navy frigate F215 since 1994.

Second Floor

The entrance to the plenary chamber visitors' gallery is located on the second floor. From here, a total of up to 160 interested visitors can follow the plenary sessions live, after completing their registration for the event. Upon presentation of a valid press pass, representatives of the media are granted separate access to the two smaller viewing areas on the west and east sides of the hall for the purposes of parliamentary reporting.



Visitors' gallery in the plenary chamber (© Landtag Brandenburg / Stefan Gloede)

The process for a plenary session is laid down in binding form in the Landtag's Rules of Procedure. Compliance with these rules is monitored by the Landtag President or their deputies. They are assisted by two secretaries.

As a rule, the elected deputies of a party congregate in parliamentary groups or groups. This enables the professional specialisation of the deputies, and facilitates the structuring of the work of the Landtag.

Opposite the deputies, to the left and right of the lectern, sit the Minister President and his ministers. The deputies elect the prime minister, decide on the state budget, and control the work of the state government.

In Germany, parliamentary responsibilities are divided between the Bundestag (federal level) and the Landtag (national level), as well as the municipalities (County councils, Municipal councils, Local councils) according to the Basic



rbb studios (© Landtag Brandenburg)

Law (Grundgesetz). The Brandenburg state parliament, for example, regularly deals with issues relating to schools and daycare centres, the police, the courts and the penal system, economic development, traffic routes or consumer protection.

Draft laws are discussed in principle in the first reading. After that, the specialist politicians discuss possible amendments in the committees, which also meet in public. Representatives of affected interests are also heard. Subsequently, the bills, and any possible amendments, are adopted or rejected by the entirety of the members of the Landtag in a plenary session.

The plenary debates and selected parliamentary events - as well as the meetings of the specialist committees - are broadcast live on the Landtag's website. The livestream recordings will be available online in the Brandenburg State Parliament's media library once the plenary sessions have ended. The videos, which are being produced by Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg (rbb) until the end of 2025, will be available in the rbb's online archive. The Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg also maintains its own broadcasting room on the second floor of the Landtag building. The building is also home to the Brandenburg State Press Conference (Landespressekonferenz Brandenburg e. V.), a working group of journalists who report on state politics.

The rooms of the AfD parliamentary group are located in the east wing on the second floor. On the same floor, the SPD parliamentary group and the WfB parliamentary group are housed in the opposite west wing.

Third floor

Outside the plenary chamber, the Landtag members, the parliamentary groups, and the Landtag administration are also able to work in rooms that have been specially designed to meet the needs of modern parliamentary operations. The usable floor space of the building, including the underground parking garage, is around 19,000 square metres, the gross volume is 150,632 cubic metres, and the total floor area is 34,525 square metres. The building is also



South wing staircase (© Landtag Brandenburg)

designed to accommodate 150 Landtag members in the future, following a possible merger of the two federal states of Brandenburg and Berlin. The building houses a total of 390 office workplaces. Energy-efficient building technology keeps operating costs low and conserves resources. Intelligent lighting adapts to the natural incidence of light. Cooling and heating modules are integrated into the ceilings and walls to keep the room temperature stable. The two seemingly sculptural staircases in the south wing are committed to the idea of transparency.

Central to the political work of the Landtag are the meetings of its committees. In a sense, the committee meetings are the engine rooms of the parliamentary process. At the beginning of the 5th legislative period, the Landtag Brandenburg decided to make the meetings of its specialist committees open to the public in addition to the plenary sessions, which are already public by virtue of the constitution. Here, experts are heard and important guidelines are



Corridor with offices (© Landtag Brandenburg)

agreed before the final vote. Within a few hours of the end of a session, recordings of the live streams from committee and panel meetings will be available in the Brandenburg State Parliament's media library.

Landtag members have three spacious meeting rooms at their disposal for these deliberations, enabling visitors and media representatives to attend the committee meetings and follow the discussions. In addition, there are a further eight meeting and conference rooms for the parliamentary groups and committees. The idea of accessibility was taken into account in all public areas, with wheelchair-accessible entrances, induction loops for hearing aids, and orientation aids for the visually impaired.

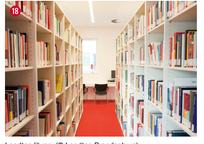
On the third floor, the rooms of the AfD parliamentary group are located in the east wing, while on the same floor, those of the CDU parliamentary group are located in the west wing. Additional window openings and skylights were integrated into the historic façade on this particular floor.



Conference room (© Landtag Brandenburg)

Fourth Floor

The in-house specialist library is located on the fourth floor of the Landtag building. It supports parliamentary activity and political discussion in the Landtag by procuring and providing literature and information services. A total of around 33,000 media units are available to users. More than 1,700 new acquisitions are added annually. The library offers literature and journals on all topics relevant to the Landtag.



Landtag library (© Landtag Brandenburg)

The media collection is listed in an electronic catalogue. In addition, the parliamentary documentation accessible via the Landtag website can be used to research the course



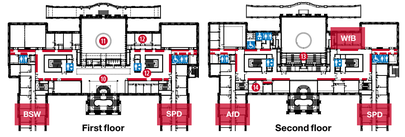
Landtag canteen dining room (© Landtag Brandenburg)

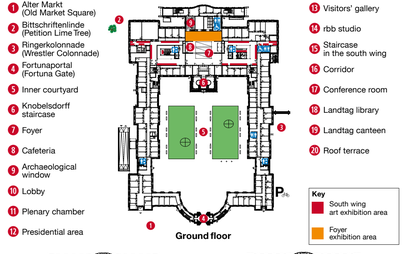
and discussions of parliamentary deliberations, initiatives, and the status of legislation, speakers and speeches. The Landtag canteen is also located on the fourth floor of the building. It is open to all visitors Monday to Friday from 11.30 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. On plenary days, it is open to outside guests from 1.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. Several main dishes are available for visitors from Monday to Friday, including one vegetarian dish. A separate dining room is available for registered visitor groups. Around 400 meals are served in the canteen every day. The weekly menu is available online. Seating on the roof terrace, accessible via the canteen, offers a beautiful panoramic view of downtown Potsdam.



Roof terrace with St. Nikolaikirche (St. Nicholas Church) in the background (© Landtag Brandenburg)

Floor plans of the building by level





1 Alter Markt (Old Market Square)
2 Bittschriftenlinde (Petition Lime Tree)
3 Ringerkolonnade (Wrestler Colonnade)
4 Fortunaportal (Fortuna Gate)
5 Inner courtyard
6 Knobelsdorff staircase
7 Foyer
8 Cafeteria
9 Archaeological window
10 Lobby
11 Plenary chamber
12 Presidential area
13 Visitors' gallery
14 rbb studio
15 Staircase in the south wing
16 Corridor
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18 Landtag library
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20 Roof terrace

