



HISTORY

For almost twelve centuries the history of Schlitz has been marked by peaceful coexistence but also conflict between its inhabitants and lords.

Schlitz was first mentioned in records on the 20th of September 812 when the archbishop of Mainz, RICHOLF, consecrated a church on the Slitese hill dedicated to Saint Margaret. The existence of a large church parish is mentioned for the first time in connection with the construction by the abbot of Fulda, RATGAR of a basilica with Romanesque columns. Many locations in the area are documented for the first time in the context of the parish.

Sheriffs are employed to protect the churches, administer the area and act as the judiciary. Around the year 1100 local unrest makes a fortification of the hill necessary. In 1116 and 1118 deeds of donation held by the convent in Fulda mention the names of ERMINOLDUS DE SLITese and his spouse GERBIGA as witnesses. There is an unbroken and direct lineage from this couple leading to the current local noble dynasty, the COUNTS OF SCHLITZ, who have the family name "von GÖRTZ". This family, who took their authority directly from the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, were the lords of Schlitz and the 16 surrounding villages from 1656 to 1806. In the middle of the 13th century the vassals of the Fulda area rose up against the abbot. They fall victim to a punitive expedition by the abbot BERTHO von LEIBOLZ to quash the rebellion. As part of his punitive measures the abbot destroys the Niederschlitz castle which was located in the Schlitz river valley in the year 1265. In the crest of both the town and the local lords the two castle compounds (NiederschlitZ and Oberschlitz) are depicted as two diagonal battlements lines.

As a result of these conflicts the inhabitants around the ring of the upper castle are granted more rights. In 1418, Schlitz is mentioned as a (castle) "hamlet" with its own judicial system. In 1439, it is mentioned as a "town". Therefore it follows that Schlitz must have been given its municipal status and privileges between 1418 and 1439. Records proving the municipal freedom have been lost. With the municipal freedom came trading and market rights and in the 15th century these changed the architectural shape of the town centre. The former fortifications are turned into residential castles during the course of the 16th century. As these castles were made residential, parts of the town wall, the moat, the barbican and the battlements were partially removed.

In 1546, Werner von Schlitz, named von Görtz, converts to the Lutheran faith. In 1563, the lords of Schlitz are given the right to patronise and control the churches situated in their dominion. With this development the Reformation arrives in Schlitz. They successfully defend their church patronage privileges during the Counter-Reformation starting in 1604 and throughout the Thirty Years' War.

The Peace Treaty of Münster and Osnabrück in 1648 not only legally establishes the independence of the ducal abbey of Fulda, it also puts an end to the ravages of war which have taken their toll on the civilian population. The population of the area is decimated to around a third of its original size because of plundering, famine and pestilence (1635). Towards the end of the 17th century a period of intensive construction begins that can still be seen in today's town centre and the outlying suburbs. The Seven Years' War (1756 – 1763) brings more misery, hunger and economic decline into the country.

The long-established linen weavers of Schlitz are given a boost in 1717 with a damask weaver hired by the imperial freeman, JOHANN von SCHLITZ. By 1754, there are already 35 damask weaving looms within the town. The weaving of damask

experiences a bonanza in the last third of the 18th century but the golden age is abruptly interrupted by the Napoleonic Wars.

In 1806 the imperial County of Schlitz is then handed over to the Grand Duchy of Hesse-Darmstadt with the founding of the Confederation of the Rhine by Napoleon Bonaparte. Linen weaving goes into decline, in part because of harsh tax laws of that historical period, causing the Schlitzerland to be declared a hunger zone in the 1830s and 1840s.

In 1832, the dominion of Schlitz is placed under the administrative control of the government district of Alsfeld and in 1852 is integrated in the new district of Lauterbach. This happened after Count KARL had voluntarily surrendered the judicial control of his dominion in 1838.

With its connection to the Lauterbach district Schlitz then automatically becomes part of the Vogelsberg district as part of the 1971 geo-administrative reform of the state of Hesse. The new district consists of the former districts of Alsfeld, Lauterbach und the municipal area of Schotten. As part of the geographic and administrative reform, the Schlitzerland communities voluntarily join together to form part of the Greater Schlitz community which is now inhabited by around 10,000 people.



1 Protestant Town Church

The protestant town church, formerly St Margaret's. The abbot of Fulda, RATGAR, constructed the Romanesque basilica with a nave and two transepts. It was then consecrated by the Archbishop of Mainz, Richolf, on the 20th of September 812. This church was given a large parish that stretches all the way into the Vogelsberg area and the Knüll region as well as to the gates of Alsfeld. The river Fulda is its eastern boundary. A number of important places today owe their first documentary evidence to the description the parish boundaries at that time.

The church in Schlitz is one of the oldest sacred buildings constructed outside the borders of the Fulda convent district. During its construction and the drawing of its parish boundaries, the territorial borders with the Hersfeld convent property played a role.

The construction history of the church has puzzled many experts in the past. During renovation works on the church between 1963 and 1966 conclusive evidence was collected based on intensive research into sources:

They proved that the original basilica stood at the highest point of the mountain which is now the western transept of the present church. The eastern end of the original church stood between the two tower pillars of the present construction. Around the second half of the 11th century an outbuilding was added to the eastern side of the basilica and the tower. The narrowest sides of the outbuilding are not totally aligned with the basilica. Inside the church there is a remarkable stone baptismal font at the south-eastern pillar of the tower.

Towards the end of the 13th century, the choir with its apse, the main burial crypt under the choir and the sacristy with its remarkable apses were built under the cultural influence of the "Stauffer" royal dynasty. In the 12th century, the height of the tower and transept were then increased. Then, in the first half of the 14th century, the

chapel of St. Barbara and the octagonal design of the tower were added. In the western segment of the church the four-tiered portal was completed. For the 1100th anniversary of the church it was equipped with a sand-stone tympanum. It was created by the sculptor and former director of the Weimar Art School, Emil Friedrich Graf von Schlitz, who also went by the surname von Görtz.

Georg Heinrich von Schlitz, named v. Görtz, who was a member of the Ottoburg-line of the family received a memorial stone in the chapel of St. Barbara. He served as a minister to the Swedish King Charles XII. After the King's death, he was subjected to a political show trial in 1718, beheaded in 1719, but later rehabilitated. His remains lie in the burial crypt beneath the chapel of Saint Barbara. His faithful servants had to transport his body under difficult circumstances all the way from Stockholm to Hamburg and later onwards to Schlitz.

Since the 13th Century, there had been repeated attempts to join the different construction components together into a unified church. In order to achieve this, the outer walls of the old basilica had to be raised and extended. In addition, the low tower arches had to be raised in both directions (1561) and the interior brick arches with their columns (arcades) of the former basilica (1713) had to be removed. This resulted in significant structural problems. Measuring almost 30 meters in height, the spire of the church tower is a remarkable feat of 17th century construction. The southern porch of the church which carries the local nickname "paradise" was given a Renaissance gable in 1557. Embossed in the gable is the credo of the protestant faith. The baroque stucco ceiling that dates back to 1639 includes three squares in the middle to express a religious and a political commitment. The two little side towers at the northern and southern side served as staircases to the galleries. They were erected towards the end of the 16th century, but were removed in the course of the last restoration work.

Inside the church there are several remarkable epitaphs: including one (for Agnes von Görtz, 1560) attributed to the sculptor Philip Soldan of Frankenberg and one dedicated to Georg Heinrich von Schlitz. Other monuments include a copy of the so-called "Simon Stone" of 1181 which shows one of the earliest example of the Schlitz coat of arms. Equally striking is the baptismal stone dating back to 1467.



2 Sand Church (Sandkirche)

The "Sand Church" (Sandkirche), located next to the municipal cemetery, was built in 1612 on the site of a previous church. The late Gothic window frames still in the eastern wall may date from that original church. The "Sand Church" is one of the oldest cross churches in Germany. The shorter transverse axis forms the main axis of the church. The pulpit is very striking as it can be used both internally and externally. It is adorned with beautiful ornaments. A sandstone plaque with a Latin inscription is fixed above the front entrance of the church. It says that the church was dedicated to God and was built in AD 1612. This is the time when Johann Reuber was mayor, Christoph Schellenberg was church minister, Stefan Frank was deacon, Hermann Hoffmann, Johann Camerarius and Nikolaus Lintz served as honorary judges.

Two beautifully crafted baroque epitaphs which date from between 1625 and 1627 hang on the outside wall near the pulpit. The citizens of the town had a particularly

close relationship to the "Sand Church". The name of the church comes from a piece of land called Sandberg. A widow called Agnesa Heil, nee Reuter, in 1731 donated her house and her all possessions to the church. Her donation is mentioned in a text on a church epitaph inside the building.

On the outside of the church one can see the so-called Schilling tomb which was added in 1705 by the grand bailiff Mercklein and later in 1775 was passed to the Schilling family. Their family coat of arms can be seen above the entrance. In the 1950s, the tomb was transformed into a memorial for the dead of both world wars. The mere fact that the family had a separate tomb is proof of their status in the town. The Schlitz cemetery was originally next to the church but was moved to the Sandberg hill in 1591. The cemetery has been jointly owned by the church and the town since the early 1970s. Prior to that it had been exclusively owned and run for centuries by the Protestant church.



Outer Castle (Vorderburg)

The Outer Castle now houses the Castle Museum and the festival hall of Schlitz. In its present form it dates back to the period between 1565 and 1600. It evolved from the medieval Romanesque residential tower, with the base of the tower preceding 1181. The core of the east wing is medieval, while the west wing was built around 1600. Different stages of construction are visible in the central, former residential, tower. Only a few traces can still be seen of the original balcony and stair tower which together formed part of an outbuilding and were demolished in 1812. The late gothic portal of the stair tower is now located just outside the entrance of the little turret belonging to the Outer Castle. The narrower and rear ends of the two wings of the vast building have renaissance gables. The spire dates back to the 16th century. A wooden, in part baroque, staircase leads to the various floors. The coat of arms embossed above the portal is from 1565 and could be the work of Philip Soldan from Frankenberg. In 1950, a set of 26 bells that chime both manually and electronically, was installed just below the cupola of the tower. The man who donated the bells, Count Otto Hartmann von Schlitz, wanted the carillon to further international understanding. Every day at 15.00 and at 17.00 hours the bells ring out across the town the tunes of folksongs from various nations.

The Outer Castle represented Schlitz's main castle. Until the early 18th century, the senior leader representing the lesser sidelines of the noble family lived there. The community consisted of the lines of the Vorderburg, Hinterburg, Schachtenburg, Ottoburg and Hallenburg lords. In 1720, the last male heir of the Vorderburg line died, so that the estate was incorporated into the Hallenburg line. The head of the Hallenburg line, Friedrich Wilhelm von Schlitz, named von Görtz, president of the Hanoverian Chamber and Minister of State, was in 1726 appointed by Emperor Charles VI. to the new position of an Imperial Count.



Outer Castle Well

The well of the Outer Castle was built in the 16th century. It is housed inside a wooden building and has a wooden set of wheels. The well was once more than 50 meters deep and supplied the inhabitants and their livestock with water. It is easy to trace the original agricultural use of the buildings situated on the perimeter of the courtyard. Having been renovated in the 1960s, the building is now used as a hotel. A copy of the well-house was made by Professor Bodo Eckhardt on the orders of Emperor Wilhelm II for his royal castle at Schlettstadt in the Alsace. The Kaiser was a friend of Count Emil von Schlitz. From 1891 on, the German emperor visited Schlitz on eleven occasions. As was usual in those days, he arrived with great fanfare every time and was greeted with great enthusiasm by the inhabitants. At the beginning of the 19th century, a wooden aqueduct provided the water supply to the town. The aqueduct was connected to a water tank ("Kumpf") at Kumpftreppchen and the old draw well in the marketplace.



Rear Castle (Hinterburg)

The Rear Castle, first mentioned back in 1493, forms part of the Schlitz town fortifications.

The present three-story building was built between 1561 and 1565, before being redesigned in 1647. The year of its last building work is inscribed above the main entrance. It has been built in renaissance style with beautifully decorated gables and a stair tower with an octagonal timber-frame. The truss structure is crowned with a typical baroque hood. The rear castle has had a multitude of uses in the course of its history. Since 1950 it has been home to a residential care home (Seniorenstift Burg Schlitz) that was originally a charity founded by the lords of Schlitz for the care and support of the elderly.

The Rear Castle has been renovated several times during the last decades but its original character has always been preserved. One addition has been a Catholic chapel containing an interesting mosaic wall built by Munich craftsmen.

6 Rear Tower (Hinterturm)

The Rear Tower, an old keep, was given its present shape in 1572. The 36 meter high tower was given a traditional stone hood in 1906. Since the 17th century the tower was crowned by a slate baroque dome underneath which the guards of the count were stationed. Nowadays the tower is a popular lookout point and can be easily accessed by lift. Originally, the tower interior could probably only be accessed via a wooden jetty that could be raised or lowered like a drawbridge. Below the wooden bridge there were several dungeons used as jails. The present tower was built over at least two construction phases. Together with the church tower and the tower of the Outer Castle front, it forms a trio that heralds the characteristic skyline of Schlitz from afar.

7 Rear Tower Office Building (Hinterburger Amtshaus)

This building which was part of the old keep was built in 1553 with a stair tower at the rear. The capstone of the entrance portal is most probably a left-over from the previous Rear Castle. A wooden bridge leads from its roof to the rear tower. The half-timbered floor was added in the year 1653. The house now belongs to the Schlitz Castle retirement home - an institution that goes back to a foundation for the care of the elderly set up by Count Otto Hartmann von Schlitz and his wife Martha Maria shortly after WW2.



8 Schachtenburg Castle

Schachtenburg Castle was built in 1557 by Elisabeth von Schachten, widow of William, the Hesse military adviser, and daughter of the squire Werner von Schlitz. Neither the southern house with its sandstone floor nor the northern house dating back to the first half of the 17th century belong to the old medieval town fortifications. The portal of Schachtenburg Castle combines late Gothic elements with the Renaissance style of architecture. Mysterious symbols are combined with decorative features. The apex of the door frame of the portal is shaped like a pretzel that has no end or beginning. The intertwined loops of the pretzel may symbolize the continuity of time or a sense of infinity. Indeed, the pretzel plays a key role in the folklore of Schlitz and its surrounding area. For example, on New Year's Day the godparents of Schlitz are obliged to present their godchildren with a pretzel. During the town fete in Schlitz a pretzel is carried at the head of the procession. At the base of the portal one can recognize symbols of love, marriage, birth and death.

A square sandstone relief to the right of the door depicts the coats the arms of the noble families von Schlitz and von Schachten. Above the shield, there is a satirical mask grimacing, locally known as a “Breilecker” (porridge licker). This feature may have originated from one of the old town wall gates. Schachtenburg Castle is now part of Schlitz’s castle retirement home. Originally used as a residence, it later included a small Catholic chapel, allowing the small Catholic community to celebrate mass.



9 The Ottoburg Palace

The Ottoburg Palace is an early baroque palais that from 1955 to 1990 served as a youth hostel. It was built in two phases and forms part of the medieval town walls. Of the two towers that flank the northeastern part, the smaller one is the oldest. The former town wall is easily recognizable in the basement of the building. There is also a stone plaque down there dating back to 1653, the year of its construction. The building patron is named as Otto Hartmann von Schlitz, a member of the famous “Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft” (Fruitful Society). The Ottoburg only took on its present shape of building in 1681 by Otto Hartmann’s son, Philipp Friedrich von Schlitz and his wife, Juliana Elisabetha von Minnigerode. Their joint baroque coat of arms is displayed over the main entrance to the palace.

During construction of the Ottoburg Palace old battlements were demolished and a part of the moat was filled in. In addition, several houses along the town wall had to be torn down. The controversial move caused tension with the town’s population due to the fact that the burghers of the town center enjoyed certain town rights and privileges.

The Ottoburg line of the noble family produced a military hero: Georg Ludwig Sittich von Schlitz who, in 1792, as Major General in the Hesse-Kassel army successfully defended the fortification Rheinfels against an overwhelming force of the French army. His victory at St Goar earned him the title “the hero of Rheinfels.” Another prominent figure in European history was also Georg Heinrich von Görtz (1675-1719) who also hails from the Ottoburg line. As a diplomat, he was accredited to many European courts. During his later years he was one of the closest aides to King Charles XII of Sweden and served as one of his ministers.

For decades, King Charles waged a long military campaign called the “Nordic War”, a conflict was with Poland, Russia, Brandenburg-Prussia and Denmark. After the monarch had been shot dead in the Norwegian town of Frederikshald, Georg Heinrich von Görtz was blamed for the awful decline of the country. On the 3rd of March 1719 he was beheaded in Stockholm following a political show trial. He was rehabilitated later but with his death his the Ottoburg line had died out. The French philosopher Voltaire knew Georg Heinrich personally and devoted part of his history of King Charles XII to the man from Schlitz.

After WW2 the Ottoburg Palace served as a temporary shelter for German refugees from eastern territories. Today it is privately owned.

9a Former Ottoburg Tavern

The former Ottoburg tavern and inn of the Ottoburg Palace. After the extinction of the Ottoburg line of the lords of Schlitz, the house was purchased by the town council in 1764. It was designated to be the new town inn. Its cellars are very deep and spacious. This space is urgently needed for the storage of the beer of the town's innkeepers. Originally, only the citizens who lived inside the castle ring had the right to brew beer, store it and serve it. Those who enjoyed these brewing privileges had to hang a bundle of straw from their building. This tradition still exists today in some of Germany's wine regions where vintners serve wine. In 1819, the new town inn was sold to a private owner. Since then, the town no longer had its own inn.



9b Market Well

The market well was once used as a bucket well to supply water to the town centre. In its present form the stone trough originates in the 16th century. At the top rim you can still see the traces of many years of use. A lead lining and iron bands were attached to the trough in 1749. Later, the water from sources in the fields flowed from wooden pipes into the stone water trough. The pipes were interconnected and held together by iron cuffs.

The statue at the well is that of Saint George and was erected in 1930. The Schmidt family, who run a dye works paid for the figure and have immortalized themselves in the town's history. There is no real connection between the statue and local history, and the locals refer to the figure as the "Bornsorsch" ("George of the spring") in their dialect.



10 Hallenburg Palais

The Hallenburg Palais was formerly the palace and residence of the Counts of Schlitz and used to be a fortified estate on the "Hall" grounds. It was then expanded in the 16th century. Between 1706 and 1712 it was turned into a new, late-baroque palace

with a mansard roof based on the plans of the French architect Louis Remy de la Fosse.

From 1720 the Hallenburg line in the aristocratic family tree were the only remaining heirs to the estate as all the males had been left childless. For much of the 18th century, the Hallenburg residence served as the seat of the baronial, later the count's family. In 1755, the Hallenburg Palais burned down partially and was later repaired. Its present shape dates from around 1800 when the then Count Karl Heinrich removed the mansard roof and added a new floor. In the ground floor hall facing the garden, a rare Chinese floral wallpaper from the 18th Century can still be admired today. In 1954, Count Otto Hartmann donated the castle to the town. The authorities opened a High School there but were forced to close it in 1977 when a new school system was introduced.

The town then invited the Hessian State Music Academy ("Academy for musical and cultural education") to move into the building which was ready for its new purpose by 2003. The old farm buildings and orangery opposite the palace were converted into a concert hall, a guest house and a restaurant which opened in 2006.

The palais grounds also belong to the town of Schlitz and were donated together with the Hallenburg palace. The gardens originally followed the French rationalist model but were re-designed in the spirit of an English landscape garden at the beginning of the 19th century. Many trees, even exotic ones, were planted during that time.



11 Town Hall (Rathaus)

In the older part of the building, the town hall in its present plastered state still displays late gothic traits. The stone building is from the 16th century. Three arched portals, a ridge turret from the year 1757 with a lantern and a double hood make the building stand out from the rest. Inside the town hall there is the mayor's office as well as the town's Tourist Information Centre. The historic conference hall is adorned with the heraldic emblems of the grand families of Schlitz. In the 1920s, Pastor Knodt, a senior vicar living in Schlitz, was a well-known authority of the heraldry of the state of Hesse. Over the entrance to the conference room, there is a banner that reads "Strive towards the welfare of the town". The town hall's basement was used as a temporary cell for people suspected of crimes. In addition to the pillory at the town hall, convicts were put on display in public in a cage made of wooden and iron bars, the so-called "Triller"



12 Bender House (Benderhaus)

Bender House, built in 1600, was originally a fruit and general storage facility used by the lords of Schlitz. This was probably the place where a part of the fruit and duties were stored from the 16 villages controlled by the noblemen of Schlitz. The tithe which was paid by the population until 1820 was a tax introduced by the Frankish king Charlemagne, initially only for the benefit of the monasteries. However, in the course of the centuries, the vassals from the Fulda region adopted more and more privileges from the country nobility and claimed tithe for themselves. The Reformation also changed the tax laws but it was not until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 that this change was cemented. After WW2, the basement of the Bender House was converted into a residential building. In previous centuries, it had been a cooperage which gave the building its name.



3 The Brewery (Brauereihaus)

Built in 1788, the brewery building consists of a half-timbered gateway with stone arcades. It is the historic gatehouse to the "Auerhahn" (wood grouse) brewery, founded in the Sandlofs district of Schlitz in 1585 (see no. 22). On the site of the building which is now used as a residence stood the Schachtenburg Inn, one of five gentlemen's inns belonging to the diverse branches of the lords family of Schlitz. After the conversion in 1788, the tavern was then also called the "New Inn". It was closed in 1876 and was subsequently used as the master brewer's home. The house has a beautiful door in the Empire style.



14 Former Guest House "Zum Schwarzen Adler" (Black Eagle)

Formerly the old town inn. Since the early 17th century this building had to be supplied with beer from the Schlitz burgher brewers who rotatory won their brewing rights by lottery. According to local legend, the German imperial field marshal Tilly spent a night at the guest house in 1631 when his troops occupied the Hessian Herzberg Castle near Breitenbach. In 1764, the house passed into private hands and, as the new "Zum Schwarzen Adler" (Black Eagle), was granted special privileges and served as a coaching inn from 1869 until 1882.



15 Protestant parsonage

The western side of the protestant parsonage, rebuilt in 1610, forms part of the town wall.

During the Counter-Reformation in Fulda, the then protestant pastor and builder, Christian Schellenberg, was forced to abandon his parish on three occasions. During the era of either Catholic or Protestant pre-dominance Schlitz had four parishes which were responsible for the pastoral services in the outlying communities. The inspectorate which oversaw the remaining communities was headquartered in this building. That is why it is also referred to as the "Main Parsonage".

The previous building at this site was occupied, from 1580 to 1590, by the eminent theologian and writer Cyriacus Spangenberg who was Schlitz's chief pastor. The old parsonage barn, dating back to 1647, was turned into a community centre in 1926/27; later, in 1977, it became the Protestant community centre. In the garden of the main parsonage there is a garden shelter made out of two columns which is reminiscent of the ecclesiastical court where alleged sexual offenses were tried. A bench around a lime tree in the square between the main parsonage and the church was installed in the year 1884 to mark the 400th anniversary of the birth of the protestant reformer, Martin Luther.



16 Official Mayor's Residence (Amtsschultheiß-Haus)

The house which belonged to the local mayor, Adam Weber, was built in 1786. Today it serves both as business and residence of the Kimpel cardboard factory. The house used to be the official seat of the mayor. Since the middle-ages the lords of Schlitz had the lower and the upper jurisdiction, given to them by the abbot of Fulda. They did not exercise these legal powers themselves but employed civil servants at the courts. In the case of Schlitz, the task was entrusted to the mayor. As early as 1714 the building was in private hands. It is noteworthy that towards the end of the 18th century several office buildings of the community were transferred to the outskirts of Schlitz.

The strange staircase that is in the middle of the pavement today and leads to the main entrance of the building was subject of a long trial around the year 1800.



17 Schlitzerland Hospital

The Hospital was donated in 1547 by the brothers Friedrich and Werner von Schlitz. In 1810, the dilapidated old buildings were rebuilt and a hospital was added. In addition to the charitable foundation of the lords of Schlitz, a soup kitchen, a knitting and a Sunday school were later added. An infant school that was founded in 1848 was finally incorporated into the Hospital in 1858. The fascia of the building towards the street is a left-over from the classicist open-timber period. Above the doorway there is a cross of St. John (since 1868, Count Karl who was well-known for his world tour of 1844-47 was a Commander of the order of St. John). The Schlitzerland Hospital had been under the supervision of the deaconesses of the Elizabeth Charity of Darmstadt since 1864. From 1972 to 2005 it was connected to the Eichhof Hospital in Lauterbach. Today it operates as a private centre for senior citizens including a nursing and assisted care home. Since WW2 the hospital has been modernized continuously and brought into line with the latest standards of medical technology. The last such big update happened in 2008.



18 Upper Gate (Obertor)

The Upper Gate is the main entrance to Schlitz's ring of castles. Only via the Upper Gate could a horse-drawn carriage enter the interior of the castle ring. The Upper Gate was originally equipped with a drawbridge. The former "Sonnenapotheke" pharmacy was built into the town wall near the Upper Gate. Its fascia still needs to be adapted to match its exterior surroundings. The robust bastion of the outer castle protected the Upper Gate. It was probably the weakest link in the town's defenses. Therefore it needed additional protection.

The protestant parish is divided in two church districts: the Upper Gate and the Lower Gate.

This division reflects the former communal division of the town. Schlitz was governed by two mayors who took it in turns annually to chair the town council.

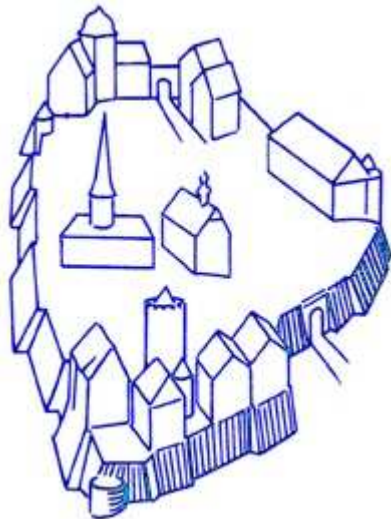


19 The Lower Gate (Niedertor)

The Lower Gate is the southern entrance to the castle ring. The present sandstone arch was erected in 1930. The little alleyway that leads from the market place to the Lower Gate used to be called the "Lower Gate Alleyway" (Torgässchen). Nobody knows what the Lower Gate really looked like prior to 1600. However, one can assume that there was a fortified outer bailey at this place that surrounded the southern segment of the castle ring. After the year 1600, the bailey was modified and partially built on.

The moat that once lay in front of the bailey used to be fed by the diverted Sengelbach stream. The residents who were allowed to brew beer inside the compound behind the bailey built a communal brewery around the year 1300. The beer was brewed in a cooperative system where the brewers had to wait their turn. After the Lower Gate fortification was demolished in the 17th century a new municipal brewery was built on the same site. In 1788 this brewery was abandoned in favour of a more modern building located in Brauhausstraße. This building already closed in

1852 after trade was liberalized. The water that was needed to brew the beer was piped to the brewery from the town well.



20 Town Wall (Stadtmauer)

Schlitz's castle ring had been fortified by a robust wall since circa 1265. Remains of the wall can still be seen to this day. It was equipped with battlements and bastions. The outer wall of the castle ring was surrounded by a moat. In some places the town wall was surrounded by an outer bailey where it was at its most vulnerable. This bailey is still intact in some places. Especially the Lower and Upper Gates needed to be defended by fortifications. The inhabitants were split into gangs in case the town was besieged. Each group had to defend a certain segment of the wall.

As warfare became more modern, the strategic significance of town walls was also lost. As the town was giving trading rights more space was needed in the town centre. A radical rethinking of urban planning is thought to have occurred in the course of the 16th century. The former castle buildings that were once exclusively intended for defence were transformed into residential buildings. This was also the case with many other towns in Germany during that era. The old battlements were almost completely demolished in the transformation process. The residential quarters were in some cases blended into the town walls. The rotunda near the Rear Castle (Hinterburg) and the little tower near the Vorderburger Hof, are remnants of the original fortifications.



21 Berleburg

The former Villa Wittgenstein was designed by the renowned architect Hugo von Ritgen, the restorer of the Wartburg near Eisenach. The building owner was Prince Franz von Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburg, brother-in-law of Count Karl von Schlitz. The property, with its magnificent half-timbered buildings, is entirely constructed in the Historism style and is still in private ownership. The decorative elements, St.

Andrew's crosses and other embellishments, imitating Gothic style, can be easily recognized. Berleburg Castle has been used as accommodation for the forester and as a retirement home for members of the noble family. In the 1930s, it was used as a National Socialist sports school and a Youth Hostel. During WW2 it also housed French POWs. For a long time the kitchen wing opposite the main building was at the disposal of the domestic science college.



22 The Auerhahn Brewery

The Auerhahn Brewery was founded in 1585 in the Sandlofs area of Schlitz. In the 17th century the various branches of the Schlitz family ran their own breweries. After 1720, when all family branches apart from the Hallenburg line had died out and the property was once again under single ownership, Friedrich Wilhelm von Schlitz, named von Görtz, had a new central brewery built in 1725, on ground behind the "Bachmühle" (Brook Mill) below the "Schachtenburg". His initials and the year of construction are visible on the lintel stone of the entrance to the so-called "Tenne" (barn). Amongst the various building conversions and new buildings the new construction of the "Brauereihaus" (Brewery) 1787 to 1788 (see no. 13) should be mentioned. In 1967, the Brewery was taken over by the „Sämtlichen Riedesel Freiherren zu Eisenbach“ company. In 1998, the Brewery ceased production. The name "Auerhahn" (Wood Grouse) Brewery is recent. Presumably, it was given the name just before WW1. The wood grouse was held in high esteem by hunters right up to the present century. The German Emperor William II often visited Schlitz in order to hunt the wood grouse with his friend Graf Emil von Schlitz. In the hunting lodge on the Eisenberg, the Emperor's writing can still be seen today. The "Schlitz" Brewery in Milwaukee, USA, has nothing to do with the town of Schlitz. It takes its name from one of its former owners.



23 Linsengäßchen (“Peeping Alley”)

A narrow alleyway whose border towards the road was formed by the redirected Sengelbach. Because of the extension of the “Ottoburg” garden its wall was moved close to the houses which had their entrances to the rear because of the stream. The difference in level towards the present “Brauhausstraße” made it possible for the residents to secretly look into the backrooms while walking along the alleyway. Peeping means “linsen” in the Schlitz dialect. Did the alleyway really get its name in this way? The claim that only Jewish people lived in the area in the 19th century is incorrect.

24 Jewish Cemetery (Judenfriedhof)

The Jewish Cemetery is the burial ground of the former Jewish community of Schlitz who used to live in „Auf der Quecker Lieté“. It was opened in 1899 and the first burial took place in 1901. The last person to be buried here in 1938 was Aron Stern who had been murdered in the Buchenwald concentration camp.

The Jewish cemetery in Schlitz is slightly different from the many other historic Jewish cemeteries in the state of Hesse. The Jewish community in Schlitz was not established until the end of the 19th century. The cemetery is looked after in a way which does not entirely reflect Jewish tradition. Jewish cemeteries are a symbol of the fugacity of life. That is why the mostly simple single graves are usually not tended and the sunken graves are not filled in. According to Jewish faith there is no time limit on the right of occupation of a grave. This right for peaceful rest remains forever. The Comprehensive School which is attended by all children of the wider community of Schlitz has made a pledge to look after the Jewish cemetery. This task serves to remind pupils and teachers of a period of German history when racial blindness and arrogance afflicted the Jewish community in Schlitz. ‘A memorial plaque at the town hall serves as a reminder of this.

25 Rot-Schilling-Haus

Around 1772, Rot-Schilling-Haus was built by the Schilling family who as linen weavers and merchants were amongst the wealthiest citizens of the town. Sadly, the building opposite and the blacksmith’s forge - built during the same period - were demolished due to road development. The wealthy Schilling family consisted of three branches in the 18th and 19th century: the Red- (Rot), Blue- (Blau) and the White (Weiß)-Schillings (see also no. 2 and no. 28). The house is of a half-timbered oak construction but was probably plastered and tiled with shingle early on. For some time the town treasury was housed in this building.

26 The Jewish School

Jewish school and synagogue. The laws for Jews in the former region under the rule of the imperial knights in Upper Hesse differed a lot. Up until the end of independence in the region, no members of the Jewish faith were allowed to settle in the domain of Schlitz. However, they had the right to trade on Tuesdays and Thursdays (trade rules for Jews in Schlitz from 1799). As the records show, the first Jews residing in Schlitz from 1730 on were two butchers in the Hallenburg. After that, it was not until 1869 that members of the Jewish faith settled legally in Schlitz. This became possible after the northern territories of the Grand Dukedom of Hesse-Darmstadt were forced to join the North German Federation. Within this historical context the complete equality between Jews and other citizens was guaranteed by law. By the turn of the century, the number of Jews in Schlitz, especially because of migration from Langenschwarz and Grebenau, had increased to 15 families. After Samuel Cahn had bought the Spa building ("Ludwigsbad") in 1899, the Jewish community was founded in 1900 and this building, erected in 1830, was converted into a modest synagogue.

27 "The Rose" Inn

„The Rose" Inn, formerly the gentlemen's tavern in the Rear Castle, is today owned by the Bernstein and Möver families. Towards the end of the 17th century, various distant relatives of the Lords of the Schlitz set up taverns for men, by ignoring civil brewing regulations. These taverns were leased for 250 guilders and, in contrast to earlier traditions, run on a permanent basis. The villages of the domain were allocated one tavern each. In that way, they were bound to hold their special festivities, such as wedding and christening parties as well as the "purchase of wine" (Weinkauf, ancient custom of Schlitz), in their respective taverns.

The gentlemen's tavern in the Rear Castle represents a peculiarity in so far as it was built far outside the town wall in the "Upper Gate" part of the town. The building possesses an extensive vaulted cellar which was absolutely necessary for storing the beer.

28 Blau-Schilling-Haus

Blau-Schilling-Haus, present home of a Schlitz bank ("Volksbank"), forms an architectural unity with the Rot-Schilling-Haus opposite (see no. 25) together with a forge and a barn which were unfortunately demolished because of road development. The house which was erected and reconstructed in various stages probably acquired its present façade around the year 1772. Around 1700 it belonged to Merklein, bursar to the local aristocrat. In 1774, it was purchased by Johann Philipp Schilling. He was born in 1733, and - as the founder of the "blue line" of the Schilling family - was one of the wealthiest people of his time in Schlitz. He was a master linen weaver, town councillor and also mayor of Schlitz. His great-granddaughter Dorothea, born in 1827, was the ancestor of the Koch family from whom the Volksbank bought their building. The Schlitz post-office occupied the Blau-Schilling-

Haus from 1877 to 1898. It is not clear if the Art Nouveau decorations over the door and on the gable have any meaning.

29 Hohes Haus (“Tall House”)

Hohes Haus („Tall House“) was built in 1660. It was the first gentlemen’s tavern and formed part of the outer bailey. A nearby brewery was connected to the gentlemen’s tavern. Originally, the lords of Schlitz lost their licence to brew beer when, in 1265, they took part in the uprising of the Fulda vassals and were defeated in that conflict by the quarrelsome abbot Bertho von Leibolz. This abbot, a clever and politically astute man, had transferred the brewing rights within the ring of castles to the citizens of Schlitz. The lords of Schlitz were allowed to take their turn in the allocation of the right to brew in the community brewery but they did not have any special privileges. This legal state of affairs changed when the lords of Schlitz, favoured by the Reformation, gained more independence from their lieges, the lord abbots of Fulda. They founded their own brewery in the village of Sandlofs in 1585, and regarded the citizen brewers as unwanted competition. With the setting up of gentlemen’s taverns inside the castle ring at the beginning of the 17th century they demonstratively violated the documented rights of the citizen brewers. This constituted a climax in the almost 200 year old feud between the lieges and the citizens.

30 Lower Gate Bakery

The Lower Gate bakery was erected on this site between 1816 and 1817 and is now owned by the Horst Sitzmann company. Originally, baking as well as slaughtering and brewing was considered a female household duty. Presumably, every bigger house in Schlitz had its own oven. Later on, commercial bakeries sprang up which partially took it in turns to bake.

The farmers formed a baking cooperative. Following the administrative town structures baking cooperatives were formed at the “Lower Gate” and “Upper Gate”. They had their own bake houses which they leased out. The self-produced flour was delivered to the respective baker who in turn charged a fee for baking. The price for baking was set by the baking cooperative, a process that often led to quarrels in the past. It was discontinued in the 1960s because it was considered outdated.

31 Upper Gate Bakery

Until the 1960s, it was the community bakery of the baking cooperative „Upper Gate“. The bakery was leased out. The members of the cooperative were allowed to bake their bread there for a baking fee whilst also providing the flour. For reasons of competition the commercial bakeries in the town also introduced this system. The members of the baking cooperatives were made up of small landowners and arable farmers

32 The Schlitz Schnaps Distillery

The present day „Schlitz Schnaps and Fruit Spirit Distillery Ltd” is on the site of a former sheep farm which was built by Dietrich von Schachten in 1620. His initials and the date of erection can be seen above the door of the beautiful half-timbered building which, for a long time, used to be the home of the Master Distiller. Dietrich

von Schachten was the grandson of the builder of Schachtenburg Castle (see no. 8). Amongst other offices, he held the position of mayor in Schlitz. From him also stems the southern church tower which bears his coat of arms and name.

After the property of the Schachten family had passed on to the von Görtz family in 1637 the Vorderburg sheep farm remained on that site until 1912 when it was replaced by a dairy. In 1969, the state of Hesse purchased the property together with the outlying estate "Karlshof" and amalgamated both establishments under the name of "Schlitzer Kornbrennerei" (Schlitz Schnaps Distillery). In 2006, ownership passed from the state of Hesse to the town of Schlitz which has been operating the establishments in the form of a limited company. Their products enjoy an excellent reputation and continue to obtain the highest awards.

33 Steinborn

The oldest settlement of the town of Schlitz is situated in the area of the "Siebertshof" (Siebert's farm) south-east of the mountain spur on which the medieval town stands. The oldest well in Schlitz, the "Steinborn" (Stone Well), is here. Its name - presumably derived from a former castle-like stone building nearby - has been documented since 1562. It was restored in 1998 providing water today just as in days gone by.

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LEGEND HISTORICAL TOUR OF THE TOWN

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Evangelische Stadtkirche | - Protestant town church |
| 2 Sandkirche | - Sand church |
| 3 Vorderburg | - Outer castle |
| 4 Vorderburger Brunnen | - Well in outer castle |
| 5 Hinterburg | - Rear castle |
| 6 Hinterturm | - Rear tower |
| 7 Hinterburger Amtshaus | - Rear castle office building |
| 8 Schachtenburg | - Schachtenburg Castle |
| 9 Ottoburg | - Ottoburg Palace |
| 9a ehemalige Ottoburger Herrenschenke | - Former Ottoburg tavern |
| 9b Marktbrunnen | - Market well |
| 10 Schloss Hallenburg | - Hallenburg Palace |
| 11 Rathaus | - Town hall |

12	Benderhaus	- Bender house
13	Brauereihaus	- Brewery building
14	Ehemaliges Gasthaus „Zum Schwarzen Adler“	- Former „Black Eagle“ inn
15	Evangelisches Pfarrhaus	- Protestant parsonage
16	Amtsschultheiß-Haus	- Mayor's residence
17	Hospital Schlitzerland	- Schlitzerland Hospital
18	Obertor	- Upper gate
19	Niedertor	- Lower gate
20	Stadtmauer	- Town wall
21	Berleburg	- Berleburg
22	Auerhahn- Brauerei	- „Wood Grouse“ brewery
23	Linsengässchen	- „Peeping“ alley
24	Judenfriedhof	- Jewish cemetery
25	Rot-Schilling-Haus	- Red-Schilling house
26	Judenschule	- Jewish school
27	Gasthaus „Zur Rose“	- „The Rose“ inn
28	Blau-Schilling-Haus	- Blue-Schilling house
29	Hohes Haus	- Tall house
30	Backhaus Niedertor	- Lower gate bakery
31	Backhaus Obertor	- Upper gate bakery
32	Schlitzer Kornbrennerei	- Schlitz distillery
33	Steinborn	- Steinborn

i) Tourist Information Centre, Town Hall