

ENGLISH VERSION
OF THE TEXT BOARDS



THE RED WALL
■ EVENT MUSEUM



The Event Museum “Rote Mauer“ (The Red Wall)

The event museum “The Red Wall” is located in the Saint Veit Bastion, which was built under the reign of bishop Weigand von Redwitz in 1553 and is the oldest part of the fortress Forchheim.

The name “Red Wall” presumably goes back to the red colouration, which is due to the sandstone used for building.

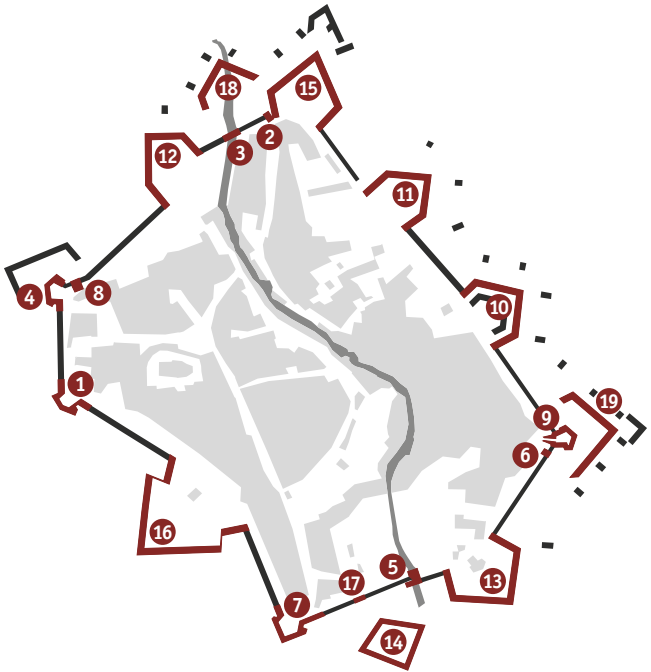
In the inside of the bastion there are two barrel-vaulted casemates, which are reachable by a 19-meter-long declining corridor. The casemates were used for storing artillery and supplies, as well as giving protection to the defending team of the fortress against enemy fire. Serious fighting did not take place inside them.

The internal walls of the casemates on two levels show deep niches with small openings. These were used as barbicans, but also for observing possible enemies.

A well in the inside of the bastion's apex supplied the bastion team with sufficient drinking water.

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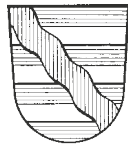
An Overview of the Fortress Construction in Forchheim



Buildings of the prince bishops of Bamberg in Forchheim

■ Weigand von Redwitz

- 1 1553: 1. Old Italian Bastion
- 2 1556: The Bamberg Gate



■ Fuchs von Rügheim

- 3 1558: Northern Water House



■ **Veit II. von Würzburg**

- ④ 1561: 2. Old Italian Bastion
- ⑤ 1567: Southern Water House
- ⑥ 1567: The Gate of Reuth
- ⑦ 1569: The Nuremberg Gate-Bastion



■ **Zobel von Giebelstadt**

- ⑧ 1578: The Saddler's Gate



■ **Johann Philipp von Gebattel**

- ⑨ 1608: The Reuth Gate-Bastion



■ **Voit von Rieneck**

- ⑩ 1655: 1. Valentini-Bastion
- ⑪ 1656: 2. Valentini-Bastion
- ⑫ 1657: Outer Ward Bastion
- ⑬ 1660: Three Churches' Bastion
- ⑭ 1672: The Nuremberg Gate Barbican



■ **Peter Philipp von Dernbach**

- ⑮ 1675: Dernbach-Bastion
- ⑯ 1683: Neuwerk's Bastion



■ **Lothar Franz von Schönborn**

- ⑰ 1698: New Nuremberg Gate



■ **Friedrich Karl von Schönborn**

- ⑱ 1745: Bamberg Gate Barbican
- ⑲ 1746: Reuth Gate Barbican

Rampart of the Bishops The Fortress Forchheim

The fortress of Forchheim with its bastionary defense system is viewed as one of the oldest and most significant fortresses in Southern Germany. Over 200 years it was continuously reconstructed and renewed. In military terms the fortress had a significant position. It formed the southern rampart for the bishopric of Bamberg and played a crucial role in the defense of the bishopric territory. Moreover, the fortress with its richly decorated buildings played an important role for representational purposes. Although many parts of the fortress were demolished in the 19th and 20th century, the remaining parts are still impressive. They show the changeover from the medieval to the modern fortress system.

What Tales Heraldic Stones tell

The fortress of Forchheim is not a building of one casting. Many bishops kept giving the facility a new face. As a sign of their building activities they left their heraldic signs on the walls of the fortress – like a seal on a document. Some of these heraldic stones are still in place where they were once placed, others were removed later, or fell victim to reconstruction or demolishing activities, some are exhibited in the Event Museum Red Wall. The heraldic stones tell the story of the Forchheim fortress, but also of the people, who ordered the building of this enormous facility.

Walls, Gates, Archers – Fortifications in medieval Times

In the middle ages the Forchheim city area was smaller than the later fortress town and was surrounded by a high wall. This had been built in 1300 and since 1430/31 had been widened and enforced. The entrance into the city was made possible through four gates, and on the inner side of the wall ran a guard's walkway. From here attacking troops could be shot at by archers and bowmans. Towards the end of the 15th century the crossbow was replaced by new kinds of weapons, the harquebuses. The medieval fortress of Forchheim had little to counter these weapons. The old city wall kept disappearing, only the Saltor gate in the Northwest was saved from the old wall ring.

Why was the new Fortress built?

In the second margrave war of 1552 Forchheim was conquered by the troops of margrave Albrecht Alcibiades von Brandenburg-Kulmbach and in part destroyed. The destruction showed that the medieval defense system could not withstand the modern firearms of the 16th century. Town commander Claus von Egloffstein, therefore, insisted on expanding the Forchheim fortifications into a modern country fortress. Here, the fortifications in Italy and France served him as models, which with their new way of building made conquering extremely difficult. Soon after the reconquering of Forchheim in August of 1552 prince bishop Weigand von Redwitz ordered the construction of new fortifications. In total four old Italian as well as six French bastions with the corresponding fortress buildings were built.

Race between Fire and Stone: Better protection in the Bastion

The origins of the early modern times fortress constructions lie in Italy. There the so-called old Italian bastionary system was developed. Their inventors had realized that the medieval city walls could not withstand these new kinds of weapons. The fortifications had to be protected through shorter pieces of wall and bevelled bastions. These bastions flanked the wall pieces and were to give the defenders a better protection. The old Italian bastionary system was refined in the 17th century by Sébastien le Prestre Marquis de Vauban. He developed the French bastionary system, in which he enlarged the now acute-angled running-towards-each-other bastions and making the wall sections in between even shorter. This improved the flank protection and enabled a gapless crossfire.

Citizen Protest and growing Depts

In 1561 Veit II. von Würzburg was elected bishop of Bamberg. In his 16-year-rule he continued to pursue the expansion of the Forchheim fortress, furthermore, the city area was enlarged by including several suburbs. The expansion of the city was, however, accompanied by massive protests from the Forchheim citizens, because many homes, fields and gardens had to make place for the fortifications. In the end, however, not the resistance of the citizens but the enormously high building costs of 5000 to 6000 guilders a year lead to a temporary standstill of the building activities.

Forchheim – an impregnable fortress

After a several-year building stop, the successor of bishop Veit von Würzburg continued the expansion of Forchheim as of 1577 and finished the fortress with the bastion at the Faulturm in 1582. However, at this point the fortress was no longer up to date in terms of the newest military standard. Therefore, a further expansion was begun by bishop Johann Philipp von Gebsattel at the beginning of the 17th century. When the Thirty Years' War broke out in 1618, Forchheim, besides the Rosenberg of Kronach, was the strongest fortress of the bishopric. While Bamberg was conquered in February of 1632 by Swedish troops, Forchheim withstood the siege of the year 1634 mostly unharmed.

Bastion, Ravelin, Glacis – which makes fortifications into a fortress?

The most important part of a fortress was the bastion. These were mostly five-cornered ramparts, from which an attacker could be shot at. The defenders of the fortress were stationed in nearby casemates. These are massive vaults, which could withstand even strong bombardments. The wall and rampart pieces between the individual bastions of a fortress were called curtain walls. These were additionally protected by triangular entrenchments in ditches before the wall, the so-called ravelins. Beyond the ditch was the glacis, an undeveloped area. There were further buildings inside of the fortress, such as for example the arsenal, in which the weapons for the fortress defence were stored. The extent of the Forchheim fortress was enormous: its walls were 3,5 kilometres long and on an average 14 meters high.

The Fortress is modernised

After the end of the Thirty Years' War a fundamental renewal and expansion of the fortress Forchheim was begun in 1648. Its initiator was bishop Philipp Valentin Voit von Rieneck, who is regarded as the “moderniser” of the fortress of Forchheim. Under his reign the change of Forchheim into a baroque fortress city was started in 1655. To reduce the enormous building costs, Rieneck introduced the so-called “Schanzfron” (defence voluntary work). This forced the peasants of the surrounding area to take part in building the fortress by either delivering food or working as labourers on the fortress.

Building Art and involuntary Labour – Who built the fortress?

A multitude of master builders, engineers, carpenters, and masons worked on the fortifications. Some of them were famous artists, others are in the meantime mostly forgotten. As master builders Jobst Remlein, Erasmus Braun, David Hantsch, Paulus Behaim, Jörg Stern, Paulus Keit, Hans Hantsch, Matthias Kager, Johann Christein, Maximilian von Welsch, Balthasar Neumann, Johann Jakob Michael Küchel and Lorenz Fink took part in planning the fortress. As masons among others Hans Polster, Kilian Sorg, Hans von Wemding and Jakob Mailik have been proven. In 1560 the painter Jakob Ziegler framed some of the heraldic stones created by him in colour. The actual building process was performed by Forchheim's citizens and peasants from the surrounding areas as involuntary labour and by prisoners.

Good and expensive – Financing the Fortress

Rienecks successor, Peter Philipp von Dernbach, continued the construction work. Among others he ordered the building of the Neuwerk or Saint Martini Bastion, the largest bastion of the entire fortress. Dernbach financed the expensive building solely through so-called "Obereinnahmen" (above income), whereby the necessary money was administered by tax collectors. The building activities were managed by the fortress building engineers, who received payments of 100 guilders per year for their work. This was the same payment as a chamberlain working at the bishop's court received. As compared to the fortress commander, who received 300 guilders per year and several payments in kind.

The Fortress – a Symbol of Sovereignty and Power

Baroque fortresses such as the Rosenberg above Kronach did not only serve military purposes but also representation purposes. Beside the fighting ability, great emphasis was put on ambitious artistic representation. The elaborately decorated heraldic stones, numerous architectural details, the meticulous finishing of the stones used for building – all this shows that the bishops wanted to express their claim to power. Not unintentionally famous master builders of the times like Balthasar Neumann were involved in the construction of the fortress. So, the facility served an important purpose even in times for peace. She was a visible sign of the importance of the bishopric and its bishops and at the same time demonstrated their worldly claim to power.

Finally finished! The Fortress is completed

Prince bishop Lothar Franz von Schönborn said of himself that he had fallen prey to the building worm. The passionate art lover ordered the construction of splendid buildings such as the palace Schloss Weißenstein near Pommersfelden and often took part in the planning himself. But not only castles and churches were built under his reign, but he also left his traces in the fortress of Forchheim. With the finishing of the new Nuremberg gate in 1698, the building activities of more than 40 years were finally completed.

Speaking Stones – The Art of the Heraldic

The heraldic stone of bishop Lothar Franz von Schönborn is conspicuous through its elaborate design. Since the high middle ages, worldly and religious leaders had started to combine some colour and symbols on shields and heraldic signs. The heraldic signs of church dignitaries, who also exercised worldly powers – such as the Schönborns as Bamberg's prince bishops, seem to be especially rich in detail. Worldly insignia, such as for example the sword were added to religious insignia such as the crozier and the cross. In combination with the baroque lust for exuberant design, some heraldic stones of amazing size and elaboration emerged.

The End – in 1838 came the End for the Fortress Forchheim

Still in the 18th century the fortress Forchheim was continuously enlarged. The Seven-Year-War (1756 – 1763) left Forchheim, therefore, undamaged. Towards the end of the 18th century, however, the fortress was obsolete in terms of its military function. In 1796 French troops occupied the fortress. With the end of the old empire in 1806 the bishopric Bamberg and therefore also Forchheim fell to the kingdom of Bavaria. On the 25th of June 1838 Forchheim lost its status as fortress. In 1875 the city of Forchheim bought the fortifications for 34,440 guilders. Some years earlier the demolition of the buildings, viewed as ugly, dark and enclosing, had already begun.

What was left?

The Fortress Forchheim today

As of 1875 the powerful fortifications disappeared, some parts of the broken down material was used in building the Johanniskirche (John's church) for instance. As recently as 1919 the historical value of the fortress buildings was finally recognized, and the demolition work was stopped. Still the arsenal and the new barracks fell victim to the pickaxe as late as the 1960s. Despite these losses there are still significant remains to this day. West of the Pfalz rise the Saint Veit bastion as well as the bastion at the Saltor. Also present are the medieval Saltorturm (Saltor tower), which since the late 18th century had been used as a prison and was therefore not demolished. From the baroque . . .

... fortress of the 17th and 18th century the armoury bastion, the Dernbach bastion and parts of the Dreikirchen (three church) bastion survived over the centuries, further also the Nuremberg gate. Within the fortress walls the artillery barracks, the dragoon barracks as well as the Parade Platz (the parade square) with the commandant's office and the Hauptwache (main guard house) among others bear witness to the former military significance of Forchheim.

The Swedes besiege Forchheim – The Fortress withstands

In 1618 the so-called “Prager Fenstersturz” (defenestration of Prague) triggered the Thirty-Year War. Uncounted cities and villages were demolished, whole towns disappeared from the map forever. The Thirty-Year War was mainly a war of beliefs between Catholics and Protestants, but also a foreign-policy conflict, in which Austria and Spain on one side confronted France and Sweden on the other.

In 1631 the war arrived in the bishopric of Bamberg, which since 1610 belonged to the Catholic league. Bishop Johann Georg Fuchs von Dornheim fled to Forchheim; in February of 1632 Bamberg was conquered by the Swedish troops. Forchheim on the other hand was a comparatively safe town, for some time the fortress offered protection even to prince-electors Maximilian I. von Bayern, the head of the Catholic league. Indeed, the Swedes with 2400 men besieged the fortress in June of 1634, but finally gave up and left on the 13th of August 1634. The large attack never took place, Forchheim had survived the war unharmed, the fortress had mastered the largest performance test successfully.

From the Crossbow to the Machine Gun – Weapons Technology in the Course of Time

While besieging a medieval town, firearms did not yet play a role. The attackers tried to conquer the town with crossbows, battering rams and catapults.

The first firearms were known in Europe since 1326, but these were still primitive and difficult to handle. They consisted of a rod, to which a metal tube with a powder chamber and touch hole were attached. Larger firearms such as the arquebus had to be propped up and the recoil had to be intercepted by a hook on the bottom of the barrel.

But the weapons technology was continuously improved. In the 15th Century the matchlock musket was developed, in the 16th century the wheel-lock and in the 17th century finally the flintlock musket.

But still the soldiers did not fight with firearms only, but also with pikes, which were comprised of a long shaft with an attached spike at the top. Not until the 18th century the firearms finally became prevalent, but they were still continuously improved until the 19th century.

Wars, Art, and Witch Mania: The Age of Humanism and Renaissance

The 16th century was an age of profound changes. The invention of printing around 1450, the discovery of America in 1492 as well as the reformation as of 1517, which in the end led to the schism of the church, changed the world view of humans and marked the beginning of modern times. It was the age of humanism and the Renaissance, which placed man and his creative powers at the centre.

Leonardo da Vinci is an example of the more and more powerful scientific curiosity, which led to numerous new inventions also in warfare. At the same time, the early modern time was an age of large uncertainty. The church schism led to bloody conflicts, such as the Thirty-Year War. At the same time the witch mania claimed an uncounted number of victims all over Europe. Not a small number of people turned their backs to their homeland and emigrated to the "New World" – hence the settling of America by the Europeans began.