



## LOWER ROYAL SUITE IN POTSDAM'S NEW PALACE RESTORED

### MULTI-YEAR PROJECT MADE POSSIBLE BY EAST GERMAN SAVINGS BANK FOUNDATION AND NEW YORK-BASED WORLD MONUMENTS FUND

Since 2007, thanks to an American-German collaboration, the Berlin-Brandenburg Prussian Palaces and Garden Foundation (SPSG) has been able to undertake the restoration of the Lower Royal Suite in Sanssouci's New Palace. The restoration of these splendid guest apartments was made possible by support from the East German Savings Bank Foundation and the Central Brandenburg Savings Bank in partnership with World Monuments Fund (WMF), an American organization based in New York. For this project, WMF, through its Robert W. Wilson Challenge to Conserve Our Heritage, and the East German Savings Bank Foundation were partners in supporting the restoration of the Lower Royal Suite.

“I am very pleased that, together, we have succeeded in preserving this “Frederician” jewel and making it publically accessible. The Lower Royal Suite is sure to become one of the biggest draws in our exhibition, ‘Friederisiko’,” on Frederick the Great, said **Harmut Dorgerloh**, general manager of the SPSG.

**Bertrand du Vignand**, President of World Monuments Fund Europe (Paris), added, “I am quite happy that we are solemnly presenting a new project in Germany today, and that it coincides with the beginning of Berlin and Potsdam's memorial year for Frederick the Great. The WMF partnership with the East German Savings Bank has saved another landmark and unsurpassably proved its worth in the pre-eminent restorations in Ziesar and Torgau. Performed under the excellent leadership of the SPSG over the last several years, the restoration of the Lower Royal Suite has made it possible for the public to

rediscover these fine guest apartments. I hope that visitors will take just as much pleasure in them as I do.”

“It is a matter of particular interest to the East German Savings Bank Foundation and the Central Brandenburg Savings Bank, to save and preserve pre-eminent cultural treasures for future generations and to draw visitors as tourists. In this regard, we count the Lower Royal Suite and its restoration amongst our highlights of 2012. The cooperative efforts of the East German Savings Bank Foundation and the Central Brandenburg Savings Bank, with our partner organization, WMF, underscore the quality and international caliber of the project we have completed today,” said **Claus Friedrich Holtmann**, chairman of the board of the East German Savings Bank Foundation and acting president of the East German Savings Bank Federation.

**Ernst Dienst**, board member of the Central Brandenburg Savings Bank, said, “Potsdam is living proof of the formative power and cultural sensibility of Frederick the Great. On the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, people in our city will only become more interested in Frederick II. It is especially important to us at the Central Brandenburg Savings Bank that this interest be revived and fostered at this site, which is so important to Brandenburg and German history.”

The demanding restoration work in the New Palace is being completed in time for Frederick the Great’s 300<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. The restored rooms will be open to the public as part of the SPSG exhibit “Friederisiko—Frederick the Great,” beginning April 28, 2012.

The New Palace is the largest palace in the region. Retaining its original building material and furnishings, it is numbered among the Europe’s most celebrated historic architectural treasures. Built between 1763 and 69, following the end of the Seven Years’ War, the palace represented the political prosperity of the Prussian king, who, with this building, announced Prussia’s role as a great power. The New Palace was conceived as a summer residence, in which Frederick provided apartments for visitors and guests as well as a residence for himself.

The Lower Royal Suite is made up of the Braided Room, the Concert Room, the Oval Cabinet, and an antechamber.

### **The Braided Room [Tressenzimmer]**

The Braided Room takes its name from the silk wallpaper, with its embroidery of gold braids and crepe. Some rooms in Frederick II’s other palaces are adorned in this manner, but the Braided Room belonging to the Lower Royal Suite is the only such room within the Prussian Palaces that has been maintained in its original condition. Of the New Palace’s silk wallpaperings, only one other original example, in Frederick II’s reading room, has survived to the present day.

The crepe and gold braid trimmed damask silk had, by the 1980s, become so faded and worn that the room had to be closed to public view. A traditional restoration was out of the question because each stitch in the fabric caused a new tear. The Orangerie’s 1930s glued tapestry, however, offered an idea for another method. Based on a positive evaluation of the tapestry, which had been well-maintained for over 70 years with strong glue, the SPSG settled upon this method.

The embroidered, braided ornaments could not be removed, but were cleaned and restored in place. The crepe, a filigreed, plastic piece of haberdashery made of gold strips and lustrous foil with braces of parchment, cardboard, and wire, was affixed with nails. It was removed and restored separately. The cleaned and prepared silk gauze was then glued on, using a specialized design developed in collaboration with the SPSG carpenter. Fourteen Damask sheets were thus conserved. These were then, with their gauze support, affixed as they had been to the wall and completed with the restored crepe. Golden braided and fringed trim as well as the curtain ties (ropes and gold tassels) are being reconstructed according to their inventoried descriptions.

### **The Concert Room [Konzertzimmer]**

In 1983, dry rot fungus was discovered in the northwest corner of the concert room. The room was closed after the Frederick exhibit of 1986, and the reconstruction and restoration was commissioned in 1987. The room was examined, and the necessary fungal control measures began, using then-available means and methods. Other work pushed the project into the background in 1989, but nonetheless the work continued as much as was possible in a reduced capacity..

In 2008 the walls were covered with protective foil while the parquet floor was removed. It was discovered that the wooden beams supporting the floor were crumbling, necessitating a complete survey of the boards and, accordingly, their replacement. The parquet panels' beam restoration followed in the winter of 2009–10. The restoration of three paintings (“Diana and Endymion,” “Acis and Galatea,” and “Zephyr and Flora”) were restored off-site in 2008. The last picture was reinstalled in October 2011

### **The Oval Cabinet [Ovales Kabinett]**

The Oval Cabinet, containing paintings by Sebastian Chevalier, required a complicated restoration. Workers cleaned and fortified the paintings, re-gilded frames, brought wiring up to code, and restored the intricate marquetry Spindler floor.

### **Antechamber [Vorzimmer]**

In the antechamber the conservation work was predominantly performed on the walls' surfaces. Both bottom layers of the 1950s paintings (recreated following a 1955 fire), as well as the walls, which originally were covered in precious gold leaf, were restored. The revolving door, which had settled over many years, was reinstalled in the course of the work. Already present in the work is a mechanism which automatically opens one wing when the other is opened. Apart from the main part of the work on the panels, the oak wood floor's restoration was also performed *in situ*.

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### **East German Savings Bank Foundation**

The East German Savings Bank Foundation is an association of all the banks in Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Free State of Saxony, and Saxony-Anhalt. Since its establishment in 1995, the foundation has, in cooperation with local savings banks, supported more than 1,500 projects worth a total of about €54 million. Of this,

roughly €12.7 million have been appropriated for 394 projects in Brandenburg alone. The funds necessary for the projects are collected from profit on the foundation's assets, regional taxes on the Savings Bank lottery "PSLottery-savings," and the fund of project-specific contributions from the savings banks. The savings bank organization thus underscores its role as the largest non-state sponsor of culture in Germany.

## **World Monuments Fund**

World Monuments Fund is the leading independent organization devoted to saving the world's treasured places. For over 45 years, working in more than 90 countries, its highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to the preservation of important architectural and cultural heritage sites around the globe. Through partnerships with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF seeks to inspire an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York City, WMF has offices and affiliates worldwide. WMF Europe, which managed the New Palace project, is based in Paris. [wmf.org](http://wmf.org), [twitter.com/worldmonuments](https://twitter.com/worldmonuments), and [facebook.com/worldmonuments](https://facebook.com/worldmonuments).

Since 2002, the East German Savings Bank Foundation and World Monuments Fund (WMF) have been committed to a partnership that has already benefited Schloss Hartenfels in Torgau (Schöner Erker), the Moritzburger Pheasant Castle, and the castle chapel of the old bishop's residence in Ziesar, Brandenburg.

## **The Central Brandenburg Savings Bank**

The Central Brandenburg Savings Bank (MBS), with total assets of €9.1 billion, is Brandenburg's largest savings bank and has one of the most extensive business territories of any German Savings Bank. It covers the states of Havelland, Oberhavel, Potsdam-Mittelmark, Teltow-Fläming and Dahme-Spreewald, as well as the free city of Brandenburg an der Havel and the state capital of Potsdam.

MBS serves over 700,000 customers and is a partner with individuals, tradespeople, artisans, and mid-sized businesses in its region. Its high standards are evident in the quality of its advice and its winning of the 2011 Bank Test award in Potsdam and Brandenburg. The MBS has a tradition of strong engagement with the arts, culture, sports, and society in its business area.

*This is an adaptation of a press release translated from German. The German original is available at [wmf.org/news/press-releases](http://wmf.org/news/press-releases).*

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