

General Press Release

Lindenstrasse Memorial Foundation

The Lindenstrasse Memorial is one of the central places of remembrance and education in the federal state of Brandenburg. Located in the city center of Potsdam, it commemorates political persecution and imprisonment in the National Socialist dictatorship, the Soviet occupation zone and the GDR in a former prison and courthouse, but also the overcoming of the East German communist dictatorship through the Peaceful Revolution of 1989/90.



Lindenstrasse Memorial, exterior view & courtyard © Lindenstrasse Memorial Foundation, photo Günter Schneider

About the history of the building complex

The front house of Lindenstrasse 54 was built from 1734 to 1737 by order of King Frederick William I as a baroque city palace in the Dutch Baroque Style. Along with the city palace, the "Great Dutch House" was considered one of the most magnificent residential buildings in Potsdam. After the end of the Napoleonic occupation, the Prussian town ordinance came into force on November 19, 1808, as part of the Prussian reforms. Potsdam also elected a city council for the first time, which met at Lindenstrasse 54 from 1809. In 1820, Potsdam's municipal court and prison moved into the building, and from 1879 the district court was based here. Between 1907 and 1910, the prison complex that still exists today was built in the backyard. During the National Socialist dictatorship of 1933-1945, the building served as a prison for political and racial persecutees and, from 1934, as the seat of a so-called Hereditary Health Court. After the Second World War, the Soviet secret police NKVD used the site as a central prison in the state of Brandenburg and as a venue for Soviet military tribunals. From 1952, the regional remand prison of the Ministry of State Security of the GDR was located at this site. As a result of the Peaceful Revolution in 1989/90, the prison became a place of democracy.

The Lindenstrasse Memorial Foundation

The historic site has been a memorial since 1995. In 2015, the state capital of Potsdam changed the memorial's operational structure into that of a foundation. The foundation is funded by the state capital of Potsdam and the state of Brandenburg. In June 2016, the Lindenstrasse Memorial Foundation began its business.

According to its statutes, the foundation "primarily pursues the goal of researching and documenting the history of the National Socialist dictatorship, the Soviet occupation and the East German communist dictatorship and their victims, biographically illustrating and honoring the commitment to freedom and human rights and the overcoming of the East German communist dictatorship and keeping alive the memory of the human suffering of those persecuted."

At the historic site, a permanent exhibition highlights the eventful history of the former court and prison complex. Commemorative events, educational programs, special exhibitions on in-depth topics with additional supporting programs as well as publications of research results complete the offer. As an open place of learning about history, the memorial site invites visitors, individually or as part of guided tours, to discussions with eyewitnesses, workshops, further educational seminars, and thematic project days.

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