



"Restover" restoration glass, which is made to resemble historic window glass, sets aesthetic accents in the orangery.

A museum in the castle

The Schwerin Castle, set in a romantic location on an island in Lake Schwerin, is one of the most important buildings of the Historism period in Europe. The castle was given the design as we know it today during the last major renovation in the 19th century, which included the four buildings dating from the 15th to 17th centuries. The castle museum has been established on three floors of these older buildings located on the lakeside. Today, art dating from the 18th and 19th centuries is presented in the rooms on the second floor, which once housed the living quarters and reception rooms of the grand duchess.

This exhibition offers examples of interior decorating as well as artwork and craftsmanship during the age of Historism. The living quarters and rooms for representative purposes of the grand duke were on the banquet floor. Among other things found here are the throne room, as the most important banquet hall of the castle, and the gallery of ancestral portraits containing a complete collection of paintings of all the grand dukes that governed in the Mecklenburg dynasty from the 14th to the 18th centuries. In the former rooms for the royal children, the State Museum of Schwerin exhibits a selection of the castle's extraordinarily beautiful porcelain collection,

featuring particularly fine, high-quality pieces. The Renaissance chapel, built in the 16th century as the first Protestant church in Mecklenburg, is an architectural jewel of the castle complex.

The castle garden was designed in the style of an English landscape garden. With its rare woody plants and the terrace-shaped arrangement ranging from the orangery and grotto to the lawn and view of the largest lake in Mecklenburg, Lake Schwerin, the garden entices visitors to take a walk. In the Baroque garden, designed by Legeay, 14 sculptures from Permoser's studio frame the two arms of the canal (source: www.schloss-schwerin.de).

Carefully Restored

Schott Desag was involved in the restoration of the Schwerin Castle – with “Restover” window glass for the orangery.

► Many informed experts call Schwerin Castle – with its golden cupolas visible for miles around – the “Neuschwanstein of the North.” The venerable structure situated picturesquely on the banks of Lake Schwerin is one of the most important examples of historical architecture in Germany. After the country's reunification, the famous trademark of Schwerin, a city rich in tradition, became the State Capital of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. Today, politicians are not the only people working in the former royal residence; a team of experts has been carefully restoring the Schwerin Castle since 1992.

The State building authorities in Schwerin commissioned the architects of BHL (Bassewitz, Hupertz, Limbrock GmbH) in Hamburg and the civil engineers of the Karlsruhe office for construction (Wenzel, Frese, Pförtner, Haller) for the work. Their first project was to restore the facades of the castle, and several rooms also had to be renovated for members of the State parliament.

Protection for plants and a café

Restoration work on the orangery began six years ago. The greenhouse originally served to protect sensitive plants from the harsh winters – a function that would have been an impossibility before renovation work commenced. Large areas of the orangery were in ruins and even in danger of collapsing. According to the plans for the restoration, the building was once again to be used to store plants in the winter, while it would house a café in the summer.

In structural design, an orangery represents an inventive cross between architecture as the human language of form and the free expression of nature. This idea has been realized in a limited space through the geometrically placed flowerbeds of the terrace and the orangery.

“Restover” meets all requirements

“The glasshouse of the orangery required a particularly careful renovation, restoration and preservation,” explains Anna Katharina Zülch, the Project Manager of the architects. The panes had to be put in the existing cast iron construction, which is why the glass could not be thicker than three millimeters. The temperature of the interior must be pleasant for café visitors, while at the same time serving the needs of the plants.

The architects chose “Restover” produced by Schott Desag because it meets the list of requirements. The panes are two and a half to three millimeters thick, have a slightly irregular surface and prevent annoying reflections. But most of all, the slight unevenness of the panes complies with the demands of the people who wish to preserve the authenticity of monuments: the new glass front creates the perfect historical appearance for the restored orangery. ◀

After several years of reconstruction work, the orangery on the lakeside of the Schwerin Castle is now open to the public again.

