

Public Buildings

Reichstag

The Reichstag was built around 1890 during the *Kaiserreich* (the imperial era) and the *Weimar Republic* and was the seat of Parliament. The inscription “*Dem Deutschen Volke*” (“To the German people”) was added during World War I. On November 9, 1918, the Social-Democratic deputy Philipp Scheidemann proclaimed the Republic from a corner window of the building. On February 27, 1933, the building was severely damaged by arson. The National Socialists blamed the communists for the fire and started a propaganda campaign against them. A wave of persecution and arrests of communists, socialists and trade unionists followed. In 1945, in the fighting during the last days of the war, the building was further damaged. The Reichstag was rebuilt by 1970. After the unification, the British architect Sir Norman Foster remodeled the inside of the Reichstag and constructed a new glass cupola. Now that Berlin is again the capital of Germany, the Reichstag is the permanent seat of the *Bundestag* (Federal Parliament).

Kanzleramt (Federal Chancellery)

As the old “*Reichskanzlei*” in Berlin was destroyed completely during World War II, it was not possible to perform the chancellor’s duties in a historical building.

From 1997 until 2001 the construction works for a new Federal Chancellery were realized by the architects Axel Schultes and Charlotte Frank. The building is part of the “*Band des Bundes*” (Federal Tie) along the Spree River, which also consists of the House of Representatives and the *Reichstag*.

The official opening of the chancellery on May 2nd 2001 symbolized the completion of the move of federal institutions from Bonn to Berlin.

Victory Column

The Victory Column was erected to commemorate the Prussian campaigns against Denmark in 1864, against Austria in 1866 and against France in 1870-1871. Above the platform is the gilded statue of Victory. In the interior, a spiral staircase leads to the viewing platform of the 69-meter-high monument.

Berlin Cathedral

Berlin’s main Lutheran Church was built around 1900 in the Italian renaissance style. The Dom (cathedral) was heavily damaged in 1945 and is now restored.

Philharmonie

Built 1960–1963 at the edge of the *Tiergarten-Park*, this concert hall with its 2,200 seats has a class of its own.

Museum Island

Surrounded by two tributary branches of the Spree River is Museum Island, with the *Bode Museum*, the *Pergamon Museum*, the *Altes Museum*, the *Alte Nationalgalerie*, and the *Neues Museum*. Together, the museums contain over 1.2 million works of art, of which only two percent can be displayed at any one time.

Zoologischer Garten

Opened in 1884, the Zoological Garden was the first open area zoo in Germany. Today the zoo has the world’s most comprehensive collection of animals – approximately 12,000 animals of nearly 1,600 species (including the Aquarium).

Brandenburg Gate

The only remaining city gate of Berlin’s original 14 gates, the Brandenburg Gate was built around 1790 in the classical style, using the Propylaea as a model. The Gate, the Quadriga (chariot and four horses) and the reliefs were restored in 1957. Today, the Brandenburg Gate serves as the most important symbol for Germany’s unification and is the most popular site for international visitors in Berlin.