



# The Red Town Hall

Information in Easy Language

**BERLIN**



**We welcome you to the Red Town Hall!**

**The Red Town Hall is an important place in politics.**

This is the official seat of the Governing Mayor  
and the seat of the Senate Chancellery.

The Berlin Senate meets here every week.

Senate is the name of the government of the state of Berlin.

**The Red Town Hall is a meeting place.**

Conferences, readings and exhibitions take place in the Red Town Hall.

People, who have done a lot for Berlin,  
receive their honours and awards in the Red Town Hall.

Important people sign the Golden Book.

**The Red Town Hall has a long history.**

Today it stands for democracy and for openness to the world.

**We are happy that you are here!**



**With warm regards**

**Yours, Kai Wegner**

Governing Mayor of Berlin

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# The Red Town Hall - facts and figures

You can see the Red Town Hall from far away:

The tower, with its flagpole, is a total of 94 metres high.

The Town Hall got its name because of the brick-red colour on the outside.

## The building

- The Town Hall was built over 150 years ago: from the year 1861 until 1869.
- The architect was Hermann Friedrich Waesemann.
- The building style is Neo-Renaissance.

This means: The building style is similar to about 500 years ago.

- The building was badly damaged in the Second World War. It was rebuilt later.
- The building is now a protected landmark and has modern technology inside.

## Rooms and number of visitors

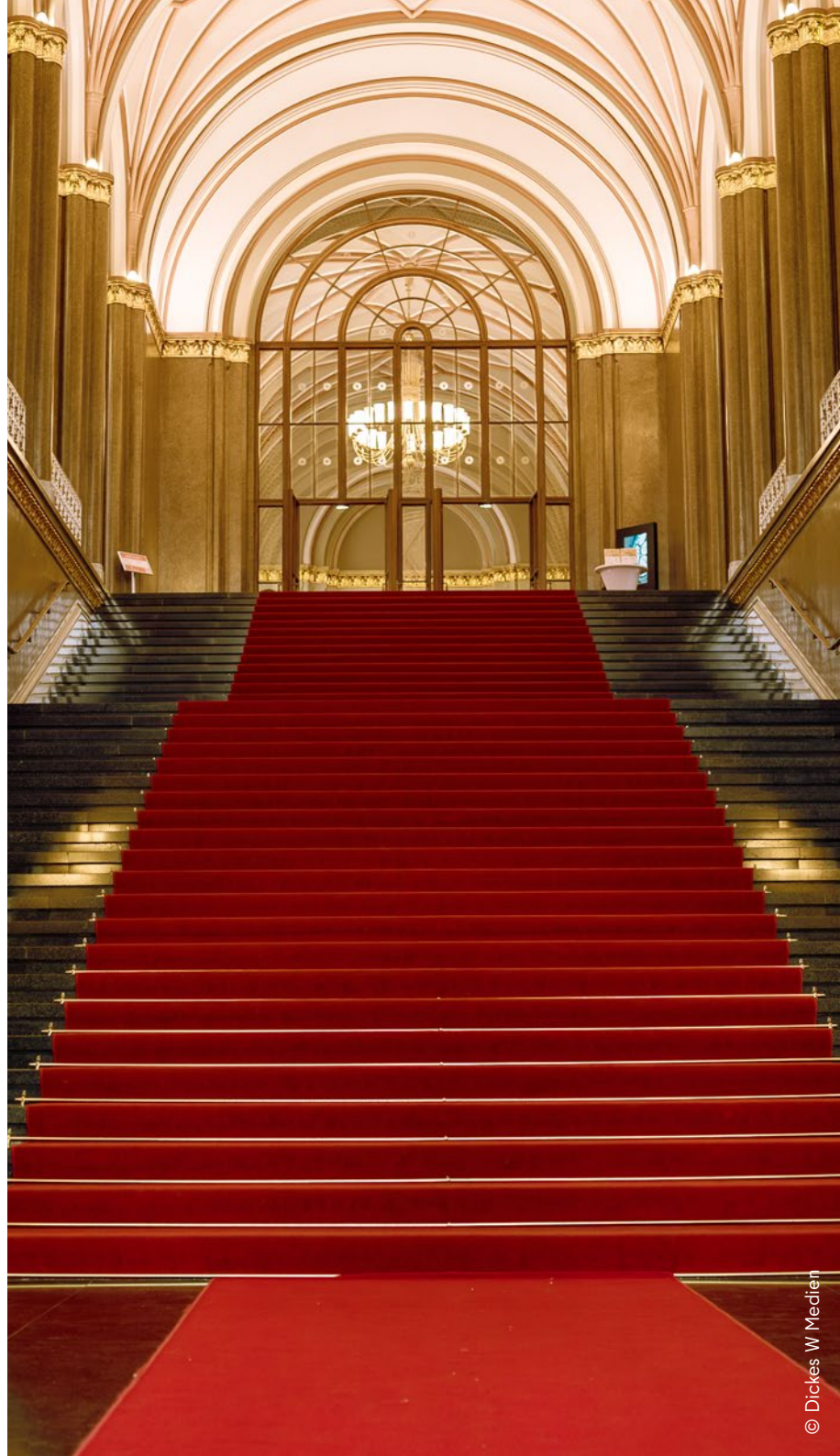
- 252 offices
- 14 rooms for meetings and events
- more than 80,000 visitors in one year



# The tour

The tour begins at the large main staircase on the ground floor.

The main staircase leads up 39 steps into the foyer. Foyer means: entrance hall.





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## The Red Carpet in the Staircase

Many honored guests have already walked the red carpet, including King Philippe and Queen Mathilde of Belgium.

Film stars such as Helen Mirren and Lupita Nyong'o, jury president of the Berlinale 2024, were also here, as were Berlin teams with German championship titles in basketball, handball, ice hockey, and volleyball.

## The Golden Book

In the gallery, there is a display case with the Golden Book of Berlin.

State guests sign it when they visit the Town Hall.

There is also a guest book for other important personalities.

## Guest Book for visitors

All visitors can sign the open guest book.

It is in the foyer, across from the lounge.

## Ernst Reuter

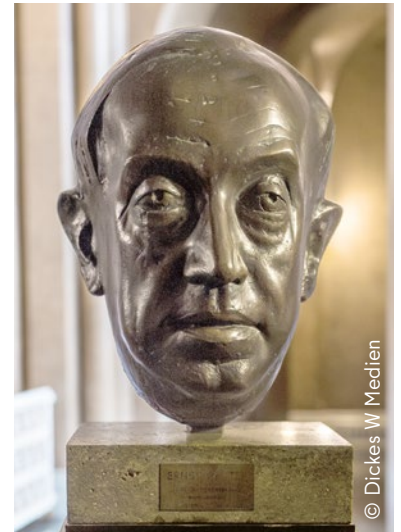
Ernst Reuter was an SPD politician.

He was Lord Mayor from 1948 to 1950

and then the first Governing Mayor in West Berlin  
until his death in 1953.

His bust stands at the end of the right-hand flight of stairs.

A bust is a metal statue of someone's head.





## The Hall of Pillars

For many people, the Hall of Pillars is the most beautiful room in the Red Town Hall. The Hall of Pillars is a 9-metre high hall. The type of construction is called a ribbed vault.

In the past, the Hall of Pillars was a large library. Today, events and exhibitions take place here. For example, the permanent exhibition “Berlin in Plaster 1790 - 1850”. It shows old figures made from plaster.

The model for the Hall of Pillars is in Siena in Italy: The city of Siena is home to the famous Palazzo Pubblico. This means “public palace” and was once the town hall of Siena. The Column Hall in the Red Town Hall is painted in a similar way to a hall in the Palazzo Pubblico.





## The Hall of Arms

In the past, the city councillors of Berlin had their meetings here.

City councillors were the elected speakers for the citizens.

The hall got its name from the large coloured glass windows.

The windows show 24 coats of arms:

the Berlin city coat of arms with the bear

and the 23 coats of arms of the former Berlin districts.

The 23 districts were put together into 12 new districts in 2001.

The coats of arms tell of the formation of “Greater Berlin” in 1920.

Many places that had not belonged to Berlin first

now became new parts of the city.

When state guests arrive, they usually meet in the Hall of Arms.

The hall is also for smaller ceremonies.

For example for signing the Golden Book.





The Hall of Arms is just under 300 square metres in size.  
The floor and the doorframes are made of  
red Thuringian marble.



## The Main Hall

The largest room in the Red Town Hall is for celebrations and festive events. When Berlin was a divided city, the East Berlin city council used to meet here.

Important for football fans: The “Cup-Handover” also takes place here. Before DFB finals, the DFB Cup is displayed in the Red Town Hall for a few days. Fans can look at it in a showcase.





On the wall of the Main Hall there is a large painting. The painting is called “The Berlin Congress of 1878”. The painter Anton von Werner painted it in the year 1881. The Congress of Berlin was an important peace meeting of political leaders from Germany, France, Italy and other major powers in Europe and Asia Minor.



## The Senate Meeting Room

On Tuesdays, the Senate of Berlin meets in the Senate Meeting Room.

The Senate of Berlin is the state government.

After the meeting, people from the press and the media can find out about the results of the meeting.

Every Monday, the Conference of State Secretaries takes place here.





## The Office Room

This is the office of the Governing Mayor of Berlin.

He receives guests in this office room.

He also holds political talks here.



## The Louise Schroeder Conference Room

This room is named after Louise Schroeder.

Louise Schroeder was a politician of the SPD.

From 1947 to 1948 she was Deputy Mayor of Berlin.

From 1948 to 1951 she was Mayor of West Berlin.





The Minister Presidents' Conferences (MPK) of the German federal states take place in the Louise Schroeder Conference Room.

Other politicians and organisations also use the room for meetings.

Sometimes people use the room to sign contracts.

# The Chronicle in Stone

The Red Town Hall has a special outer wall.

The wall is made of red-brown bricks and large ceramic panels.

The ceramic panels show the Chronicle in Stone.

Chronicle means: a record of events in history.





The Chronicle in Stone tells the history of Berlin in pictures.  
It also shows people that were important in the history of Berlin.  
The story begins over 800 years ago in the 12th century.  
The Chronicle in Stone ends about 150 years ago: in 1871.  
In 1871, the German Empire was founded.





# The Red Town Hall - history

Text in red writing: data on the Red Town Hall

Text in black writing: data on the history of Berlin

- 1237            The city of Berlin is founded.
- 1861            Construction of the Red Town Hall begins:  
The foundation stone is laid.
- 1865            The first phase of construction is completed.  
The Magistrate meets in the Red Town Hall for the first time.  
Magistrate is the old name of the Berlin government.  
The Town Hall becomes the official seat of the Lord Mayor.  
The Lord Mayor is the leader of the Magistrate.
- 1867            Topping-out ceremony: This is an event to celebrate  
that the basic structure of the roof is finished.
- 1869            Construction is finished and everyone can move into the Town Hall
- 1870            The first meeting of the city council can take place  
in the Red Town Hall
- 1871            The German Empire is founded. Berlin is the capital city.
- 1877-1879     4 sculptors create the Chronicle in Stone.



- 1920 Berlin is expanded to become “Greater Berlin”.  
The meeting room for the city council is enlarged.
- 1933 The Nazis take over power in Germany.  
The Nazis take the power from the Berlin Magistrate and rule over the city administration.  
The inside of the Town Hall and the staircase are redesigned.
- 1945 On 8 May, Nazi rule and the Second World War come to an end.  
4 countries occupy Berlin and take over power.  
One of them is the Soviet Union.  
They establish a new Magistrate in Berlin.  
The Red Town Hall is badly destroyed.
- 1948/49 Berlin is divided into East Berlin and West Berlin.  
The Red Town Hall is located in East Berlin.  
The city council of the West part of the city moves to the Town Hall Schöneberg in West Berlin.
- 1950 In West Berlin, the Lord Mayor is now called the Governing Mayor of Berlin.

- 1951 In East Berlin, the Red Town Hall is rebuilt.
- 1961 The Berlin Wall is built to separate East Berlin from West Berlin.
- 1987 Berlin's 750th anniversary celebrated in both halves of the city.  
The front of the Red Town Hall is renovated.
- 1989 On 9 November, the Berlin Wall falls.  
Now people can again cross over to the other part of the city.
- 1990 East and West Berlin are reunified.  
Berlin gets a combined administration for both parts of the city.  
Berlin becomes the capital city of the Federal Republic of Germany.
- 1991 The Red Town Hall is modernised and rebuilt. From 1 October it is once again the official seat of the Governing Mayor of Berlin.
- 2011 Archaeologists find remains of a town hall from the Middle Ages next to the Red Town Hall.
- 2012 Berlin celebrates the city's 775th anniversary.
- 2019 Berlin celebrates the 30th anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall.
- 2020 The Red Town Hall has its 150th anniversary.  
The new underground station "Red Town Hall" of the U5 line is opened.  
Another anniversary: 100 years ago Berlin became "Greater Berlin".
- 2024 Berlin celebrates the 35th anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall.





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## **The Red Town Hall online**

[berlin.de/rotes-rathaus](http://berlin.de/rotes-rathaus)

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