

Service

Local politics live

Would you like to experience a council meeting live? You can take part in all public sessions as a spectator. To attend a council meeting you require a ticket. For tickets and reservations please contact the „Referat für Politik und Verwaltung“, Tel. (0203) 283 - 2521.

City Hall in detail

Do you wish to know more? Are you interested in a guided tour of City Hall? We can offer guests and anyone interested an insight into the architecture and history of the building. For further information and guided tours please contact the „Duisburg Marketing Gesellschaft - Tourist Information -“ Tel. (0203) 285-440, or by email, service@duisburg-marketing.de

The Oberbürgermeister's Advice Sessions

Principal Mayor Adolf Sauerland holds regular sessions at City Hall, at which citizens can talk to him in person. Outside the Oberbürgermeister's advice sessions you can contact the Oberbürgermeister at any time for questions, suggestions, or complaints at „Referat für Bürgerengagement und Bürgerangelegenheiten“, (0203) 283 - 6111, or by email, buergerreferat@stadt-duisburg.de

Active Citizen Project

Do you wish to do good work for Duisburg on an honorary base? Do you wish to make things happen by joining in activities for the benefit of our city? Your commitment will be most welcome and will add to the quality of life in our city. The „Referat für Bürgerengagement und Bürgerangelegenheiten“, located at City hall, will be glad to inform you and give you advice on (0203) 283-2830 or by email aktiv@stadt-duisburg.de

94000 - Call Duisburg - the City Helpdesk

Call Duisburg was the first telephone and information service centre in Germany to be set up by a town or city for its citizens. Whether you seek information or have questions, ideas or complaints in connection with Duisburg, this is where to call. At Call Duisburg (0203) 94000, Monday to Friday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m., to 4 p.m. you will encounter professionals who listen and deal with your questions - at high speed, with minimum red tape and close to citizens' needs.

Imprint:

published by City of Duisburg
The Principal Mayor
<http://www.duisburg.de>

What happens at City Hall?

The political heart of the city beats at City Hall. In its central chamber, the large Council Chamber on the first floor, the Council of the City of Duisburg, plus numerous committees, advisory committees and other bodies meet regularly to discuss important and fundamental issues of municipal self-government. The Principal Mayor, three Deputy Mayors and members of the municipal board of executives and their closest staff have their offices at City Hall.



The Mercator chamber opposite, facing altmarkt (Old Market Square), is the City's representative "parlour". This lovingly designed room offers the ideal ambience for official receptions and functions requiring protocol. It is here that prominent guests sign the „Golden Book" of the city of Duisburg



Oberbürgermeister Adolf Sauerland together with his colleagues, Bürgermeister Benno Lensdorf, Bürgermeisterin Doris Janicki, Bürgermeister Manfred Osenger (from left to right).



The days when people could go to City Hall to extend their passports, or pick up permits and pay fees for local services on the one hand, or apply for social benefits on the other have long gone. Nowadays, such services are provided by staff in offices spread around the city which are more accessible to citizens.

Did you know...

that even Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II entered her name in Duisburg's "Golden Book", thus marking her visit to Duisburg on 25 May 1965?

Duisburg City Hall



DUISBURG
am Rhein

A millenium ago...

Duisburg's City Hall stands on historic ground. A thousand years ago this site boasted the proud buildings of an imperial palace.

The first time a "domus consulum" (town hall) was noted in a document was in 1361, whereas the "consules" (councillors) were first documented in 1274. Having the "domus iudicialis" (law court) alongside and the convicts tower only a few yards away, the building formed the centre of civic power in town.

Traces of mediaeval Duisburg can be found at various spots around City Hall, for instance at the Museum of Culture and Local History at Johannes Corputius Square or at Alter Markt (Old Market Square) in the archaeological zone behind City Hall.

In his map of Duisburg published in 1566 Johannes Corputius depicted City Hall as a comparatively modest building. Though it might not have been much larger than a residential building it did the job it was supposed to do right up to the 19th Century.

However, neither a new building completed in 1843 nor numerous conversions to it carried out over the subsequent decades could keep pace with Duisburg's dynamic development. Eventually, the task of constructing a new representative City Hall in its present form was embarked upon in 1895.



City Hall in 1902

As industrialization gathered momentum in Germany, Duisburg like many other towns began to grow and Duisburg's population doubled to more than 70,000 inhabitants from 1871 to 1895. Accordingly, the municipal administration needed a sizeable City Hall.

Constructing a larger City Hall on its existing site meant buying up and demolishing neighbouring buildings. To design the new building a contest was held among architects and – most likely due to the considerable prize-money at stake – a total of 83 of them entered their plans. Friedrich Ratzel from Karlsruhe won the first prize and took charge of the construction work that lasted from 1897 to 1902.

The new City Hall had the capacity to accommodate not only the municipal archives and museum, but also fire service and even the police station. However, by the 1920s the new structure had already become too small to meet requirements and a second administration building was constructed at Friedrich Albert Lange Square. Today, the Duisburg municipal administration has its offices at various places spread around the city.



Did you know...

that the overall cost of building Duisburg's City Hall, including land acquisition, redevelopment and finishing the interior, amounted to 2.6 million gold marks? To give an idea of what this meant, the overall municipal budget for 1902, the year in which City Hall was inaugurated, amounted to 7.1 million gold marks.

The Kaiser figures above the main entrance portal

Above the main entrance two larger-than-life sculptured figures can be seen; the one on the left is Karl the Great, who assumed the title Emperor of the Roman Empire in the year 800 and the one on the right is William I, Emperor of Germany 1871-1888.

The way the latter was depicted is not typical of the period in which he lived. This was done deliberately for stylistic reasons. Usually, he would have worn a uniform when portrayed or appearing in public. However, such a portrayal would have meant a considerable departure from the mediaeval style of the impressive imperial attire worn by Karl the Great.



Ancient river god

In the tower passage on the left of City Hall a doorway catches the eye that is framed by columns. It used to be the entrance to the fire service.

Above this doorway a relief depicts the Rhine and an ancient river god blowing a conch. This evidently underlines the significance the river has always had for Duisburg but why it can be seen above the entrance to the fire service remains a matter of speculation to this day.



Did you know...

that the Mercator Fountain once served as the Burgplatz (Castle Square) font? In a ritual act to join the circle of the "Jongens vom Burgplatz" (the Castle Square Boys), the fully clothed person had to be completely submerged three times in the font.

The Mercator Fountain

The Mercator Fountain was erected at Burgplatz, (Castle Square) the square in front of City Hall, in 1878 to mark the 300th anniversary of Gerhard Mercator's map of the seas being published. At the foot of the fountain you can see four dolphins spouting water and at the top, supported by four pillars, a larger-than-life statue of the famous cartographer. At each of the four corners the figure of a child symbolizes science, shipping, trade and industry respectively.



Old Market Square

Behind City Hall a market used to take place every week in the Middle Ages starting on Tuesday afternoon and finishing on Sunday afternoon. Not only did this used to be the location of the cloth hall, the meat hall and the public weighing scales but also the pillory could be found here. The growth in trading plus the annual flooding of the low-lying market square led to the market being relocated to Burgplatz in front of City Hall. In the archaeological zone, excavations reveal the foundations of the market hall dating back to the 16th Century.



Salvator Church

Salvator Church is located to the right of City Hall. It was first mentioned in a document in the year 893. The existing late-Gothic basilica originated to a large extent in the 14th Century, as did the three-tiered tower which was almost completely destroyed by fire in 1467. At that time the 106 metre-high tower was the tallest in Northern Germany. The shape of the tower has changed through the centuries and has had its present-day form since the end of World War II.



Did you know...

that Gerhard Mercator received three fattened piglets and three "Taler" (silver coins) for teaching at the Latin School "Schola Duisburgensis"?