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Rudolf I (1274–1319), as progenitor of the older Wittelsbach line, inherited the Rhineland in 1294. All at once, the political influence of the counts palatine became evident: In the same year, Rudolf married the daughter of the German king Adolf von Nassau (1248–1298), a connection which then positioned his brother, Ludwig the Bavarian (1282–1347), to win the election to emperor in 1328. In 1329, Rudolf's son, Rudolf II (1306–1353), became the first elector palatine.

Understandably, an important German imperial prince required a widely visible, representative seat above the town. This became increasingly important to Ruprecht I (1309–1390), the founder of Heidelberg University, and finally resulted in the first grand expansion of the castle. A simple fortification would no longer suffice; rather, the size and form of the structure should portray the builder's rank. Thus, a nearly square interior was constructed with two surrounding ring walls and deep trenches, or bailey, in between to the north, east, south, and west. Retaining walls were constructed to the north-west because the terrain falls off steeply there. The east side, vulnerable because of the gentle valley terrain, was secured with three fortified towers. The walls and towers were supposedly of a simple and functional architectural design and were plastered and painted.

Several additional buildings were grouped around the central courtyard, which rose slightly to the south, following the slope of the hill. The structures encircling the courtyard today—the Ruprecht Building, the Ludwig Building, the Hall of Glass, and the Ladies' Building—still contain elements of this electoral castle. The buildings served both residential and economic functions. It is uncertain whether there was a clear usage hierarchy, since public representation took place not just within the castle but in town as well.

### King Ruprecht as builder

In 1400, through Ruprecht III (1352–1410), the prince-electors of the Palatinate attained royal dignity



*Ruprecht Building and gate tower, courtyard view*

for the first time, thus placing them in the highest position in the Holy Roman Empire. At the time, however, the Empire was weak, as the sovereigns had been largely involved in territorial disputes. Even as king, Ruprecht was unable to resolve the schism within the church created by the election of two popes in 1378 or to implement a church reform, and in 1409, a third pope was even elected. Furthermore, King Wenzel of Bohemia (1361–1419) was challenging the crown, so that no stable rule could be established within the Empire. He was only successful in his territorial expansion politics within the Palatinate and in securing the interests of his own house. As the Ruprecht Building demonstrates, King Ruprecht was very ambitious about expanding the castle into a residence. The high architectural aspirations with which the Ruprecht Building was constructed as a palas are obvious. The building, however, was actually completed by Ruprecht's successor, Ludwig V (rule: 1508–1544).

### Conversion of the fortress under Ludwig V

At the start of a tumultuous 16th century, the Electoral Palatinate was embroiled in military conflicts that had serious consequences. During the War of the Succession

*King Ruprecht's and Queen Elizabeth's tomb in the Heidelberg Church of the Holy Spirit, 15th century*







*Library, Ruprecht Building and gate tower from the west*



of Landshut (1504–1505), under Philipp the Upright (1448–1508), the Palatinate lost important territories in the Upper Palatinate and Alsace. In response to failed campaigns and in an effort to prevent further military attacks, Prince-Elector Ludwig V (1478–1544), who had come to power in 1508, converted Heidelberg Castle into a fortress.

A wide defensive curtain was drawn around the existing buildings. Ensuring that the west side of the castle complex was impregnable was the first order of business. A



*Prince-Elector Ludwig V, sandstone sculpture by Sebastian Götz, circa 1604*



broad rampart was built along the front and covered with a high wall. On the side facing the Neckar, the rampart was outfitted with a strong defensive tower, the Fat Tower. The turret at the center of the rampart serves as a further strategic point to the west. The wide, deep trench between this advanced rampart and the castle was closed off with a connecting wall on the open side facing the Neckar. A new entrance to the castle was built on the side facing the hill. It was secured with a tall gate tower and drawbridge as well as a bridge gate house at the front. Another defensive tower was placed in the southwest corner of the outer-most wall, dubbed the “Seltenleer” (rarely empty), and simultaneously used as a prison tower. The south shield wall and the bell tower to the northeast were also significantly reinforced. The armory was built at the valley-side entrance.

*Part of Ludwig V's fortifications: destroyed keep in the southwest corner, used as a prison and dubbed “Seltenleer” (rarely empty)*

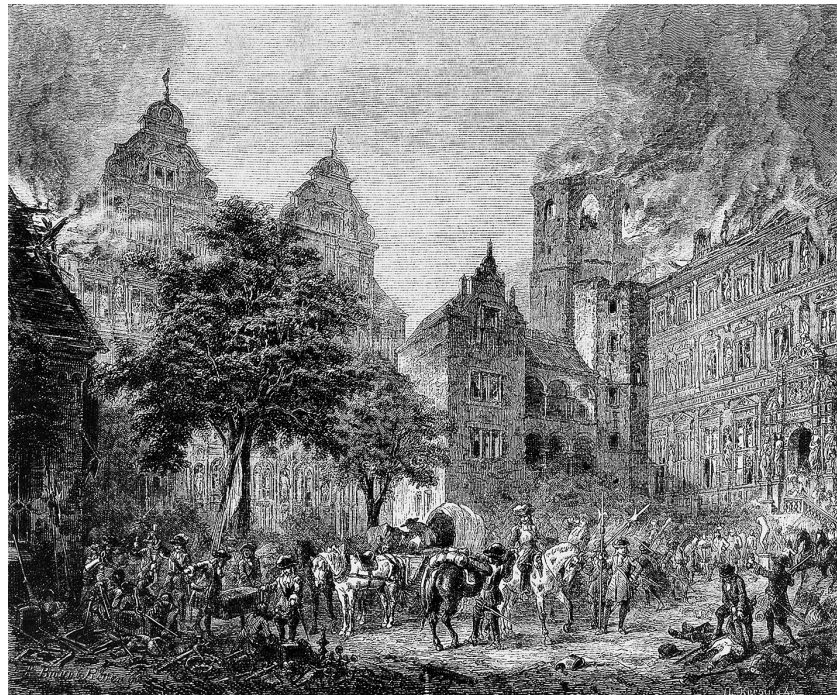
While the princes were motivated by security concerns, contemporary representational desires also played a role in the transformation of the Heidelberg residence. Ludwig V began by rebuilding the inner ring wall, since the new outward defense system provided sufficient security and expanded the castle's footprint. In this new





*"Heidelberg deleta" medal,  
Jérôme Roussel, 1693*

*Destruction of Heidelberg  
Palace by French troops lead by  
Mélac, copper engraving based  
on a painting by Louis Braun,  
circa 1880*



## THE END OF THE RESIDENCE

With the end of their central family line and after the destruction of Heidelberg Palace, their reign was effectively "extinct." The Neuburg branch of the palatine Wittelsbachs assumed rule in the Electoral Palatinate in 1685 with Catholic Count Palatine Philipp Wilhelm (1615–1690). Court could not be held in Heidelberg, so the territory was ruled from the hereditary lands of Jülich-Berg, with residence in Düsseldorf. The elderly prince died soon after and left the electorate to his son Johann Wilhelm (1658–1716). Since the Peace of Ryswick in 1697, which had ended the Nine Years' War, interest in the Electoral Palatinate had begun to grow once again. Renovations began on the palace, but lacking funds made rebuilding impossible. The Ottheinrich Building and the Friedrich Building were again re-roofed and the Apothecary's Tower and kitchens were converted for staff.



Given the contemporary advances in architecture, Prince-Elector Johann Wilhelm was unimpressed with the residence on the hill. Detailed, irregular architecture was unpopular in the Baroque period. Thus, he decided to forgo the archetypal palace in favor of a more period-appropriate, expansive new structure at the gates of Heidelberg. In 1699, Matteo Alberti (1647–1735), an architect from Venice, delivered plans for a new residence based on Versailles. The massive palace complex was going to be built on the bank of the Neckar west of Heidelberg. For finan-

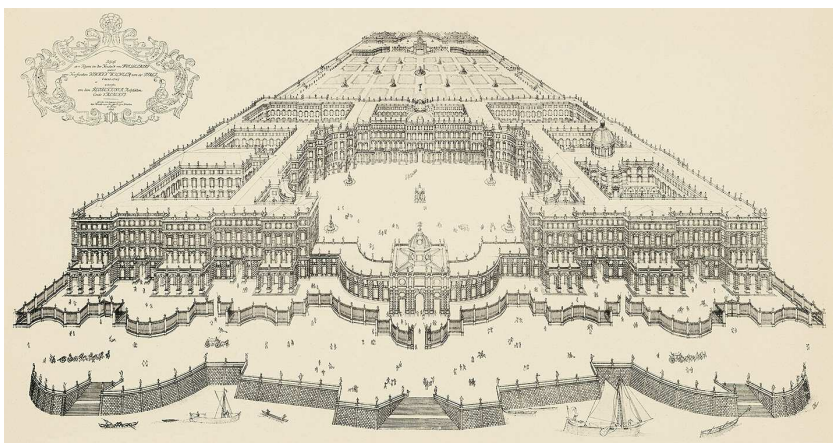
*Johann Philipp van der  
Schlichten(?): Prince-Elector  
Johann Wilhelm von der Pfalz,  
circa 1720*



cial reasons, the option of rebuilding the destroyed old palace was still discussed as an alternative. Plans were then drawn up that would have combined the numerous individual buildings into one unified structure. However, none of the projects, neither new structure nor the reconstruction of the palace ruins, were carried out.

Following the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714), Johann Wilhelm's brother and successor, Carl Philipp von der Pfalz (1661–1742), decided to move his residence from Düsseldorf to Heidelberg; he too had ideas of rebuilding the palace. Again, the plan was to lend the complex a contemporary appearance. The western structures (Ruprecht Building, Library, and Ladies' Building) would be dismantled, the palace moat would be filled, and the Artillery Garden lowered. A representative entrance to the palace was planned consisting of an arcade along a two-kilometer eastward ascending ramp. These plans were presented by architect Domenico Martinelli (1650–1718), who was engaged at the Düsseldorf court at the time. These construction plans, and in particular his efforts to reintroduce Catholicism, made the prince-electoral quite unpopular among Heidelberg's citizens. Carl Philipp made an abrupt decision: On April 12, 1720, he decreed that Mannheim would be the new residence of the Electoral Palatinate. He downgraded Heidelberg to a common territorial city.

*Matteo Alberti: Plan for a new residential palace near Heidelberg, circa 1700*



*Johann Philipp van der Schlichten: Prince-Elector Carl Philipp von der Pfalz, 1729*

Heidelberg Palace remained a ruin under Prince-Elector Carl Theodor von Pfalz-Sulzbach (rule: 1742–1799). He, at least, undertook measures to secure the structures and prevent further collapse. The structures seemed secure in their current state—until 1764, when lightning struck the provisionally constructed buildings. The Ottheinrich Building, Friedrich Building, and bell tower were entirely burned out. This and Carl Theodor's relocation to Munich—he assumed his inherited rule there as a member of the Bavarian House of Wittelsbach in 1778—put an end to all thoughts of rebuilding Heidelberg Palace as a residence. After Napoleon's restructuring of southwestern Germany, Heidelberg was transferred to the Margrave of Baden, later Grand Duke, Carl Friedrich (1728–1811) in 1803.

*Johann Wilhelm Hoffnas: Prince-Elector Carl Theodor von der Pfalz, 1792*



## EXPLODED TOWER

The Exploded Tower, or Powder Tower for the gunpowder stored there, is reached via the Economic Building. It was built around 1490 by Philipp the Upright and is indicative of the castle keep of the first castle complex. Ludwig V had it reinforced with stone vaults to serve as a gun turret and Friedrich IV placed an dome-roofed octagonal story on top of it around 1600. The tower was demolished in 1693 during the Nine Years' War at the command of French General Mélac. One third of the wall broke off and fell into the neck ditch. The burst tower and its fallen wall have long enchanted visitors and inspired authors and artists to create philosophical descriptions and picturesque depictions. It even arrested Goethe, who was also an avid illustrator.

## LUDWIG BUILDING

The Ludwig Building neighbors the Economic Building to the north. In 1524, Prince-Elector Ludwig V had a simple, massive, three-story residential building



*Powder Tower or Exploded Tower from the east*



*Ottheinrich Building with adjacent Ludwig Building*

constructed on the foundation wall of an older building still within the bailey wall, but it was later destroyed by war (1693) and fire (1764). It appears that it had been divided into two sections, accessible via a central stair tower, which has survived to this day. Pieces of the wall from the late 13th or early 14th century predecessor building are still visible in the south wall. The building's interior architecture has been completely lost. The electoral coat of arms with the year 1524 is situated on the stair tower. It shows the palatine lion, the Wittelsbach rhombus, as well as the vicariate shield, referencing the prince-electors' governorship within the Empire. Two playful monkeys are depicted below the coat of arms.

## APOTHECARY'S TOWER

The Apothecary's Tower is located behind the Ludwig Building, part of the east bastion, and takes its name from the palace apothecary and laboratory located here in the 17th century. Originally from the 15th century, the top three floors were converted into living quarters at the same time the Ottheinrich Building was built.





*Apothecary's Tower with  
Ottheinrich Building and  
bell tower from the east*

## OTTHEINRICH BUILDING

The Ottheinrich Building is probably the most well-known part of Heidelberg Palace. Commissioned by Prince-Elector Ottheinrich (1502–1559, rule: 1556–1559) and built between 1556 and 1559 but not completed until 1566, it is one of the earliest palaces of Renaissance Germany. The architect is unknown. The north wing of the Ludwig Building was torn down for the construction of this palace. The palace contained living quarters, an audience chamber, as well as a large ceremonial hall, the imperial hall, apparently named after a visit from Emperor Maximilian II; it is now available for events. Its interior also boasts magnificently trimmed doors from the Renaissance period, in addition to traces of its medieval foundation. The formerly double-gabled roof was damaged in 1693 and has been lost completely since 1764 when the palace burned down from a lightning strike. The German Apothecary Museum has resided in the basement of the Ottheinrich Building since 1958.