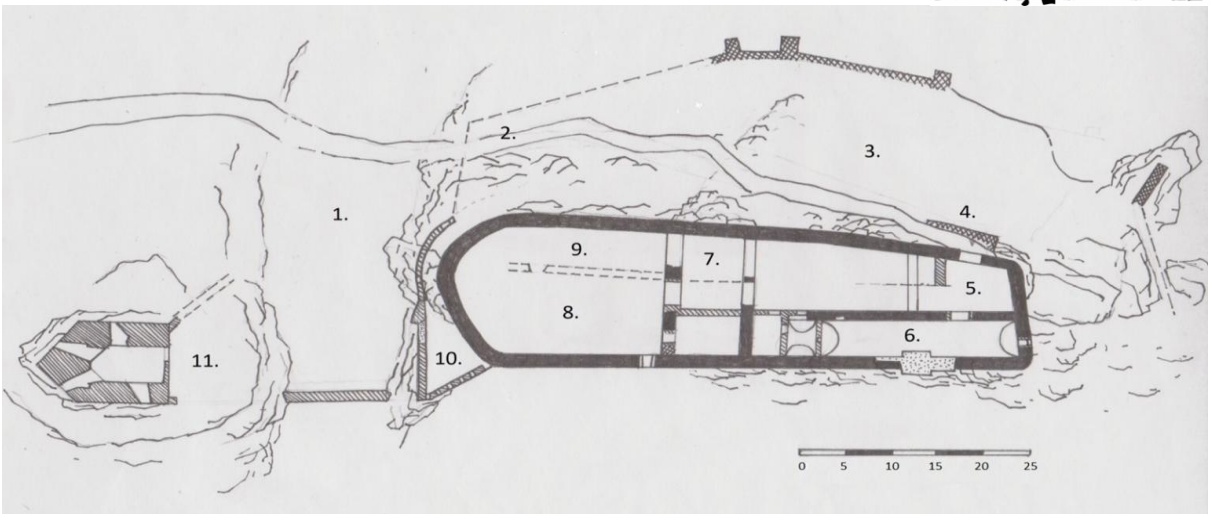
CASTLE TOUR



1. Castle Moat

In front of the southwestern face of the castle, a defensive moat was carved into the rock. A massive wall was inserted into this moat. This wall extended from the western barbican and likely connected all the way to the structure of the bastion. Approximately 3 meters above the current level of the northern part of the moat, circular openings from scaffolding beams can be seen in the masonry. Some of these openings are still filled with cut and rotted wooden logs.

2. The First Castle Gate

Based on the remnants of the outer walls and modifications to the rock formations along the entrance path, we can assume that the first castle gate stood here. However, its exact appearance remains a matter of speculation. This entire area is covered with rubble from the northern perimeter wall of the castle. Further details could be uncovered through an archaeological survey, which might reveal the foundations of the gate.

3. Northern Outer Bailey

The outer bailey was a separate fortified section of the castle, housing various economic buildings such as stables, barns, and other facilities. Most of these structures were made of wood, which is why they have not been preserved. The outer bailey area is also covered with rubble, leaving behind only a few surviving fragments. Notable remnants include a section of the perimeter wall located beneath the northern corner of the castle's core. The masonry here is reinforced with several massive buttresses.

4. Gate to the Castle Core

In the eastern extension of the northern castle wall, we can see the remains of a carved path leading from the outer bailey into the castle complex. An older ramp was modernly adjusted at the left corner. The adjacent wall fragments can be confidently identified as the remains of the former castle gate. Once again, everything, including the access path, is buried under rubble.

5. Castle Core (Also Known as the Palace)

The castle palace primarily served as the residential part of the fortress. It likely consisted of two palace wings. A transverse wing divided the castle into two halves. This wing was single-aisled and had three rooms at the lowest level. It connected the old tower with the southern palace wing. In the center, there was a passage leading to the castle courtyard, which is now partially buried. The southern residential wing extended between the transverse wing and the eastern face of the castle. Beneath this wing, cellars were constructed. The wing was narrow and single-aisled. The ground floor housed utility rooms, storage chambers, and servants' quarters. The first floor contained the living quarters of the nobility, while the second floor was designated for guest accommodations.

6. Cellars and Chimney

Beneath the entire southeastern palace lies a network of cellars, which served as storage for food and wine. The large cellar is accessible from the courtyard. On its western side, there is a smaller cellar, partially buried under debris. Another presumed cellar likely adjoins the transverse wing. In the above-ground section, two fireplace flues are positioned one above the other, leading into a brick chimney. It remained a dominant feature of the castle until June 22, 1987, when it collapsed during a powerful storm.

7. Probable Location of the Tower

Historical records mention a castle tower, which was said to be square in shape, with at least three floors, battlements, and a walkway around the roof. The oldest known depiction of the castle from 1675 clearly shows this tower, as does an illustration from 1807. The tower was said to have collapsed in 1812 with a great roar during a powerful storm.

8. Great Castle Courtyard

The entrance to the great courtyard was through a passage in the basement of the transverse wing of the palace, which is partially buried. A second pedestrian entrance is still preserved today—a small gate in the southern defensive wall of the castle. The entire ground level of the courtyard is covered with rubble. It is believed that storage rooms and supply depots were built here. A cistern, famous for its depth, was also carved into the rock. It was ordered to be filled in by the authorities in 1797.

9. The Guard's Cottage

After the end of the Thirty Years' War, during which the castle was damaged and likely burned by the Swedes in 1645, it was abandoned and described as being on the verge of collapse. A modest dwelling for a guard was built in the courtyard, and his duty was to ring a bell to warn of danger, particularly fires and storms. The last resident of the castle was the bell-ringer Lorenc Kutzum, who passed away in 1797. The guard's cottage is buried under rubble.

10. Barbican

The barbican was an area in front of the castle walls, typically protected by an additional, smaller wall, allowing defenders to move freely. The western barbican is located approximately 2 meters from the rounded castle wall and extends southward into a sharp point, which was equipped with loopholes at the walkway level. To this day, only one loophole remains intact, while the rest have crumbled into ruins.

11. The Advanced Cannon Bastion

The cannon bastion was constructed between 1528 and 1532 in response to the threat of Turkish invasions. It has been preserved with two levels, originally separated by a wooden ceiling. The ground floor contains four cannon chambers, while the upper level has three. The side walls of the chambers were cut away on one side to provide a wider firing angle. The bastion's walls are up to 5 meters thick. Due to the destruction of the masonry in the southeastern wall, a recess for a reinforcing beam was revealed. This beam must have come from a massive tree, as its dimensions were 40 x 30 cm! A similar bastion exists not only at Děvičky but also at the so-called Kozí hrádek above Mikulov.

HRAD DĚVIČKY

HISTORY OF THE CASTLE

1222 – The first written mention of the castle. In this year, the burgrave Štěpán of Medlov, an ancestor of the Lords of Pernštejn, is mentioned.
1334 – King John of Luxembourg granted Děvičky as a fief to Hartneid of Liechtenstein.
1368 – An agreement was concluded between Jan I of Liechtenstein, his brothers, and cousins regarding the joint ownership of the castles Mikulov, Sirotčí Castle, and Děvičky. From this period, there is also a mention of a castle chapel, where a priest from Dolní Věstonice was supposed to serve mass three times a week.
1566 – Kryštof Kerečín purchases Děvičky from the indebted Jiří VI of Liechtenstein.
1572 – Kryštof Kerečín dies childless, and Emperor Maximilian II declares the Mikulov estate with Děvičky Castle a crown fief.
1574 – Děvičky is described in the urbarium as a chateau with a tower.
1575 – The estate is purchased by Adam of Dietrichstein.
1620 – A protestant garrison is stationed at the castle, with the village of Milovice supplying them with food and payments.
1620 – After the Battle of White Mountain, the castle is occupied by an imperial garrison.
1629 – The urbarium describes the castle as a strongly built chateau, equipped with a sufficient number of comfortable rooms and a cistern for rainwater.
1645 – The Swedes seize Mikulov and Děvičky; after their departure, the castle is partially demolished and likely set on fire.
1655 – The Mikulov castle governor compiles a description of Děvičky Castle. The castle is on the verge of collapse, and the estimated cost of repairs would be 2,000 gulden. Only a few rooms were repaired. The castle served for fire reporting and bell ringing to ward off storms. A watchman was assigned to this duty at the castle.
1683 - Watch posts were set up at the castle when the Turkish army was approaching Vienna.
1744 - Děvičky burned down in February.
1754 - The village of Pavlov requested Prince Karl Maximilian to repair the castle tower and the watchman's dwelling, but this did not happen.
1785 - Děvičky became a "quarry" for the construction of a church in Klentnice. The church bell from the castle tower was also transferred there.
1797 - By order of the authorities, all iron clamps were removed, and all wood was taken away, leading to the final destruction of the castle.
1812 - The main tower collapsed during a great storm.
1825 - Děvičky is recorded as an abandoned castle with the house number 162.
2021 - The rescue of the castle ruins begins, led by the association Památky Pálavy.

The Legend of the Petrified Maidens

One of the legends of this place tells of a Tatar princess who, on her journey through the Christian world, made her way to Děvičky, where she was warmly welcomed. However, her beautiful robes and wealth disturbed the lord of the castle, who, on a stormy night, broke into the princess's bedroom with his servants, murdered the girl, her two maids, and the dog that tried to defend them, and then had their dead bodies thrown off the cliff. However, he did not enjoy his ill-gotten wealth for long, as the next morning he saw the petrified bodies on the cliff, threateningly staring at the castle. Overcome with horror, he went mad and threw himself after them. In revenge for this murder, the Tatars ravaged Moravia.