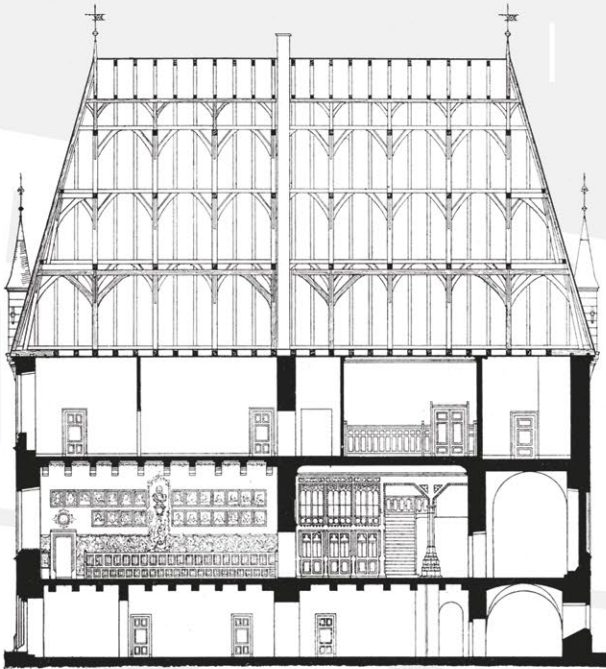


Tour of the Town Hall

A tour of Osnabrück's Town Hall offers insight into the history of the city as well as the activities of the current City of Peace.

Ground floor

- Chamber of Peace with gallery of paintings of European rulers and envoys
- Treasury with facsimile of the Osnabrück peace treaty, the Instrumentum Pacis Osnabrugensis, and medieval emperor's cup
- Corridor with adjoining rooms: exhibition of partner and twin towns, reception room with up-to-date information about Osnabrück – City of Peace



First floor

- Stairs with portrait gallery of Erich-Maria-Remarque peace prize winners
- Foyer with historic model of the town
- Corridor with portrait gallery of Osnabrück's mayors

Top floor

- Changing exhibitions on topics relating to the city's most recent history



The Town Hall – a European Cultural Heritage Site

The European Commission has confirmed that Osnabrück and Münster Town Halls play a key role in European history. They have been awarded the European Cultural Heritage seal as 'Sites of the Peace of Westphalia'.

The Peace of Westphalia, concluded at Osnabrück and Münster Town Halls, laid the initial foundations for a European community of states. The peace treaties and their provisions of international law developed to become a pillar of international relations, which is still very significant today. For the first time, conflicts were resolved through negotiation and a readiness to compromise. A special, Germany-wide achievement was also agreed in Osnabrück: an alternating succession of Protestant and Catholic prince bishops, which was in existence up until 1803 and regulated a peaceful coexistence of denominations.

For Osnabrück – City of Peace and the City of Münster, this historic heritage is an ongoing obligation to work towards a united and peaceful Europe.

Opening times

Town Hall opening times

Monday to Friday: 07:00 to 20:00

Opening times for Town Hall Information Office

Monday to Friday: 10:00 to 17:00

Weekend opening times

(Town Hall and Town Hall Information Office)

Saturdays from 09:00 to 16:00

Sundays from 10:00 to 16:00

Public holiday opening times

Latest information at www.osnabrueck.de

Disabled access

Disabled access is guaranteed during the opening times of the Town Hall Information Office. Access via the passageway to the Bierstraße on the left-hand side.

Contact

Town Hall Information Office
Bierstraße 28, 49074 Osnabrück
Tel.: +49 541 323 2152

Parking

Stadthaus-Garage
Nikolai-Garage
Vitihof-Garage

Bus routes

31 | 33 Heger Tor
41 | 42 Theater

Picture credits

Nadja Eilers, Angela von Brill, Sven-Christian Finke-Ennen/OMT,
Graphic of Town Hall: Heinrich Siebern/Dr. Erich Fink: Die Kunst-
denkmäler der Provinz Hannover, Band IV.
Regierungsbezirk Osnabrück, 1907



EUROPE
STARTS
HERE!

Osnabrück Town Hall
Site of the Peace of Westphalia



OSNABRÜCK

DIE | FRIEDENSTADT

Osnabrück Town Hall

The existence of a town hall in Osnabrück was first documented in 1244. This makes it one of Germany’s oldest town halls. The Town Hall formed the local point of the city. The council held its meetings here, court proceedings took place and judgements were passed here. It was also a central component of the market and the centre of economic life. The town scales were situated close to the Town Hall, parts of which were used for selling goods.

However, the needs of the fast-growing town and wide range of tasks undertaken by the civic self-government quickly outgrew the space on offer at the relatively small Town Hall. The construction of the historic Town Hall we see today took place over 25 years and was completed in 1512 in a Late Gothic style.

The Osnabrück Wheel

The wheel as Osnabrück’s municipal seal and coat of arms was first documented in 1217. Later, the Bishop also began to use the seal. The wheel was the unmistakable symbol of St. Catherine of Alexandria in whose honour the first Church of St. Catherine was built in Osnabrück around 1200. The builders chose the wheel as the seal and thereby placed the town under the protection of St. Catherine. The patrons of the town remained the saints of Osnabrück Cathedral: Peter, Crispin and Crispinian.
(Source: Karsten Igel: Osnabrück. Stadtführer, Halle 2015)

Site of the Peace of Westphalia



The Town Hall gained its key significance in European history as a result of the five-year European Peace Congress, which led to peace in Westphalia in 1648. The three peace treaties signed in Osnabrück and Münster between 15 May and 24 October 1648 are known as the Peace of Westphalia and brought an end to the Thirty Years’ War in Germany and the Dutch Eighty Years War of Independence.

Osnabrück was a place of negotiation for the Swedes, the envoys of the emperor and the Protestant estate while the envoys of France, the emperor and the Catholic estate met in Münster. Both Protestant Sweden and Catholic France demanded a place of negotiation where the envoys were able to practise their respective religions. The close proximity of the two towns enabled a fast exchange of information. They also had an intact urban infrastructure for housing all of the delegations from the estates and neighbouring European countries.

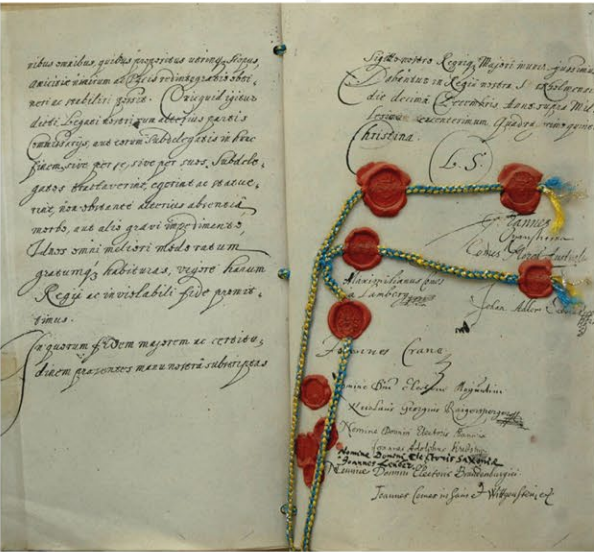
Osnabrück Chamber of Peace

The Chamber of Peace in Osnabrück’s Town Hall was an important location in these negotiations. Since 1650, the portrait gallery has born testament to the European rulers and envoys represented at the congress with its 42 paintings including portraits of King Louis XIV of France, the German Emperor Ferdinand III and Queen Christina of Sweden. The imposing ceiling light dates from the first half of the 16th century. The first level shows Adam and Eve, the middle level depicts the sun, moon and stars and below that is Mary and baby Jesus and three figures who represent wisdom, guild and defence followed by hunting scenes and the Osnabrück Wheel.



Signed – sealed – delivered

Conclusion of the peace treaty, the *Instrumentum Pacis Osnabrugensis* (IPO), between the Swedes, the estates and the emperor took place at the residence of the Swedish chief negotiator Axelsson Oxenstierna on 6 August 1648. Peace was ceremonially sealed here in the form of the so-called Osnabrück handshake. The treaty was signed on 24 October 1648 in Münster together with the Peace of Münster, the *Instrumentum Pacis Monasteriensis*, signed between the emperor and France. On 15 May 1648, a partial peace settlement was agreed in Münster between Spain and the Netherlands. The peace agreement and end of the Thirty Years’ War was finally proclaimed from the steps of Osnabrück Town Hall on 25 October 1648. This significant outcome is celebrated each year on the Osnabrück Day of Peace on 25 October.



The Town Hall – symbol of peace

The Town Hall was heavily damaged during the Second World War. The city had already relocated its exquisite interior furnishings. After the war, the council and city administration strove to rebuild the Town Hall as a ‘symbol of peace’ to mark the 300th anniversary of the proclamation of the Peace of Westphalia on 25 October 1948. This significant peace is both a mission and driving force for the current City of Peace of Osnabrück, encouraging the city to pursue a culture of peace shaped by numerous institutions and initiatives and by its citizens and European partners.