

HISTORY OF THE CASTLE

First a fortress, then a Baroque chateau, finally a Rococo residence

In around 1600, a late medieval fortress belonging to the Kaplířs of Sulevice stood on the site of today's castle. The Kaplíř family kept hold of Stekník until the beginning of the Thirty Years' War, when it was confiscated for religious reasons. In 1681, the ruins of the burnt-out fortress were purchased by Jan Jiří Kulhánek, a burgher from Žatec who was later ennobled and added "of Klaudenstein" to his name. He replaced the fortress with a castle in the High Baroque style. It was Jan Jiří Kulhánek of Klaudenstein who, after the Thirty Years' War, merged the local abandoned farmsteads and their land into one large estate, thus establishing the hop country here. In the second half of the 18th century, the estate experienced major development under the stewardship of his grandson, Jan František, Baron of Klaudenstein. Stekník Castle came into his possession in 1760. In 1761, he consolidated his standing when he married into the distinguished Hohenembs family by taking Maria Francisca, Countess of Hohenembs, as his wife. In 1772, he was made a count. He was responsible not only for the Rococo reconstruction of the castle, but also for the restoration of twenty houses and barns in the village following a devastating fire in 1784. In 1796, he sold Stekník to a knight from the north of Bohemia, Antonín Josef Korb of Weidenheim, whose family retained ownership of the castle until 1892.

It was then inherited by the Hennet family. In 1907, Leopold, Freiherr von Hennet, commissioned the Prague headquarters of Hiele & Dittrich to sell the estate to Hans Fridrich Gimbel. Stekník was then inherited by the Swiss consul Gérold Déteindre, who was the last private owner of the property. The descendants of Gérold Déteindre held the estate until December 1949, when Stekník was purchased by the Czechoslovak government as part of the compensation agreement concluded between the Swiss Confederation and the Czechoslovak Republic. The estate's lands were subsequently parcelled up, and the castle itself began to serve the Žatec Hop Research Institute. Later, it was used by the National Gallery Prague as a depository for its paintings. In 1997, the castle was transferred to the National Heritage Institute (known back then as the Ústí nad Labem Heritage Institute). Today, it is managed by the National Heritage Institute's Ústí nad Labem Regional Heritage Administration.



For further information, please visit the castle's website at www.zamek-steknik.cz

ŽATEC AND THE LANDSCAPE OF SAAZ HOPS AS A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Stekník Castle – amid a sea of hop gardens

Surrounded by an Italian-style terraced garden, Stekník Castle is as one of the most significant Rococo structures in Bohemia. It forms a unique and monumental complex within a landscape deeply intertwined with the tradition of cultivating Saaz hops, which, along with the town of Žatec, has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2023. The site has two parts. The first is Žatec, the hub of the hop-growing region and home to numerous facilities dedicated to hop processing. Institutions involved in the global hop trade and hop research can be found here. Žatec is recognised for its historical town centre, protected as a “heritage conservation reserve”, alongside the former industrial district of Pražské předměstí, which has been designated a “heritage conservation zone”. The second component is the Landscape of Saaz Hops, a “landscape heritage zone”, encompassing the hop fields around the villages of Trnovany and Stekník (the latter protected as a “rural heritage zone”) and the state castle here. Together, these two parts represent a tradition of hop growing and processing that spans over seven centuries, and are a focal point of trade in the world’s most famous hop variety.

Explore the newly inscribed site with the help of
<https://www.mapazatec.cz/>

