

Rákóczi Street connects Szabadság Square to the old marketplace of the town, today's Óváros Square. With its 18th and 19th century buildings this street also belongs to the old town.

To the left and right there are small streets and alleyways leading to the district below the Castle. Among the streets of Rákóczi Street we can find the house of Károly Francsics, the diarist barber and that of Lipót Auer, the world-known violin teacher at 4 Rákóczi Street with Fekete Sas (Black Eagle) Pharmacy next to it.

The present main square has a harmonious atmosphere, its architecture, however, is eclectic. To the left we can see 18th century Rococo buildings, including the **Pósa House** - named after its former owner, the bookseller and printer, Endre Pósa - built by the Cistercian Order of Zirc. The gentle facades of the Sezession houses to the right, are in sharp contrast with the sharp, strict architectural traditions of the previous centuries. The old marketplace is slowly regaining its agora-like features: in the afternoons more and more locals and visitors sit down to talk, look around or discuss the matches of the world-wide acknowledged man's handball team on the terraces of cafés and the benches surrounding the **Millennial Memorial** designed by Mária Lugossy. The **Town Hall**, originally built in 1896 to house the Foundation Office of the Diocese, dominates the northeastern corner of the square. The renovated Romantic building is one of the gems of the town. Lenke R. Kiss' work, titled "Girl with a Jug", which the locals call the Zsuzsi statue, stands at the top of the stairs of the romantic Ányos Street.

If the inhabitants were asked about the symbol of the town, they would surely name the **Fire Tower** at the entrance of the Castle. Originally built as a watchtower to protect the castle gate, the tower can already be seen in 16th century drawings. The tower survived the Turkish wars, the ravage by the Austrian General, Heister in 1704 as well as the edict of Emperor Lipót ordering the destruction of castles. However, the earthquake of 1810 damaged it to the extent that the local authorities were considering its demolition. Nevertheless, the noblemen of Veszprém intervened in order to save the battleworn building and commissioned Henrik Tumler, the famous hydraulic builder of the town to prepare the plans. Besides the reconstruction Tumler also designed a new **Fire-engine House** (fire station storehouse), which was to become the new Town Hall (until 1885). This is how the watchtower became a fire tower and this is the time when it became the town's symbol; a symbol that the inhabitants took care of and renovated it again in 1891. The nicely renovated tower functioned as a fire tower until the 1950s. Apart from being the most beautiful outlook point of the town it is also a clock-tower, which plays the recruiting music composed by Antal Csermák every hour. Within the walls of the adjoining bastion you can see the Pantheon of the illustrious citizens of Veszprém. It is noteworthy, too that the Fire Tower is the only part of the Medieval fortress that is open for

visitors.

On the gable of the former Town Hall we can see the coat of arms of Veszprém on the relief depicting a horseman with a drawn sword. At the side of the Fire-engine House, later home to the headquarters of the Trade Corporation, we can see the statues of St. John Nepomucene and St. Florian.

The eclectic house built on the remains of the medieval castle gate is the **Modern Gallery**, the László Vass Collection. The stairs of the century-old fortress are still visible in its walls.

Walking towards the Castle from Óváros Square we get to the **Heroes' Gate** of 1936 commemorating the victims of World War I. If we enter the gate we are already in the Castle: in Vár utca (Castle Street). The sight really recalls a street and those wishing to discover the medieval castle will be disappointed. During the 150 year long Turkish-Hungarian wars Veszprém was a border fortress and thus changed hands several times. In the course of the 18th century consolidation the town slowly regained its importance as a county seat being as an episcopal seat it became an important religious centre again. (In the 17th century the county assembly usually held its sessions in Pápa and the seat of the Bishop of Veszprém was in Sümeg.) The buildings of the Castle reflect the ecclesiastical nature of the town; there are hardly any citizens' houses. The huge, mostly 18th century buildings take up the inner space of the Castle, transforming it into a narrow street, and the only square (Szentháromság tér) is outside the **Archbishop's Palace**. (Although the castle is a monumental complex with its length of 360 m length and the largest width between its walls nearly 100 m, it is difficult to perceive in the castle due to the enormous buildings.)

Crossing the Castle Gate, there is a tiny square with Béla Raffy's photoelectric drinking well and a small bench outside it where you can sit down to have a look at the brochures and the map you have received in the **Tourinform Office** (at 2 Óváros Square). Next to the friendly, two-storey building of the office you can find the late Baroque house built by doctor Havrane. Opposite the building, at the entrance of Simoga House you will find **Csikász Gallery** whose exhibitions are open all the year round. This is also the entrance to the Fire Tower. The above-mentioned Veszprém Pantheon is in its inner yard, the Bastion Garden. As you walk up in the narrow street there are two memorial tablets on the right side, on the wall of the State Attorney's Office: one of them commemorates János Batsányi, the unsettled Hungarian poet, who learned here in the Piarist Secondary Grammar School, the other commemorates the teacher, Árpád Brusznai, the martyr of the revolution and war of independence of 1956. Adjoining the State Attorney's Office is the former 18th century Piarist Secondary Grammar School (now Veszprém Secondary Technical School for Economics), which is unfortunately in a bad state of repair. Opposite it is the County Court decorated with a lion head and the former castle prison.

Continuing our walk towards Szentháromság (Trinity) Square we can see the St Emeric **Piarist**

and **Garrison Church** and the house of episcopal and archiepiscopal employees to the right. The replica of the Vetési Stone, dating back to the period of Albert Vetési, the Renaissance Bishop of Veszprém with carvings including the Bishop's coat of arms can be seen in the tiny park next to **Dubniczay House** (originally a canon's house). We have not mentioned the cobblestone street of the castle but it should be mentioned now because when we reach Szentháromság Square, the black basaltic stones are varied with light paving stones, which mark the former inner walls of the castle. Like most castles Veszprém Castle also consisted of an inner and outer castle. The white stones mark the place of the three-gabled gate of the inner castle (also shown in the town's coat of arms) and the barbican bastion protecting the gate. Arriving at the square we find ourselves in the heart of the castle. To the left we can see the currently renovated Dubniczay House, next to it the Bíró-Giczey Canon's House and the **Franciscan Church and Friary**. (The canon's houses were named after their builders, who - as members of the church aristocracy - had their houses built in the heart of the episcopal centre.)

The two most important, monumental buildings of the square are the Archbishop's Palace and **St. Michael's Basilica**. The huge white block of the Archbishop's Palace bears witness to the wealth and power of the church and the builder, Bishop Ignác Koller. The palace was completed in 1776 based on Jakab Fellner's design. The foiled corners of the E-shaped building, the tympanum above the balcony with the coat of arms of Bishop Koller, the angels holding the garlands on the pediment and the bastion-like side wings make the building lively. The palace is a gorgeous sight from below the castle as well: the huge back balcony leaning on the castle walls seems to be supporting the whole building. Some relics from the Árpád period can also be found here. The 13th century **Gisella Chapel** is hidden between the Baroque **Provost Major's House** and the Archbishop's Palace.

Although the town associates it with Queen Gisella, in reality it has nothing to do with our first queen. The originally two-storey chapel was completely destroyed in the Turkish period. Later it was rebuilt several times and it was almost completely demolished when the new Archbishop's Palace was built. In spite of its condition, its medieval frescoes, cross-vaulted sanctuary and nice keystones offer a memorable sight even today.

Next to the Provost Major's House, behind the cathedral, in the place of the former small gate of the castle steep stairs wind down towards Benedict Hill but let us not yet leave! Before doing so we should admire the Trinity Statue prepared by Bishop Márton Padányi Bíró in 1750. Among the saints we can see St. Martin, the patron saint of the bishop, St. Stephen, St. Emeric, St. George and Mary Magdalene as well as the family coat of arms of the builder.

Outside the Provost Major's House we can peep down into the forty metre deep Castle Well, which was excavated and renovated in 2002. The cathedral of Veszprém is a perfect example for the town's fate and history.

According to the charters, the cathedral of the Veszprém Bishopric - founded first in the country by King Stephen in 996 - was already here, in the northern part of the castle in 1001. The church was founded by Gisella, the first Hungarian queen and since she was its patroness, she helped maintain it with her donations. Afterwards the current Hungarian queen became the patroness of St. Michael's Cathedral and, owing to this, the Bishop of Veszprém received the right to crown Hungarian queens. This is why Veszprém is called the town of queens.

The church, which was originally built in Romanesque style, was destroyed by the troops of Mátél Csák and burnt down in the 14th century. In the Turkish period it shared the fate of the town and was almost completely destroyed in several sieges. It was ravaged during the Rákóczi war of independence and in 1704 General Heister's soldiers set it on fire. After the stormy life of the cathedral, Bishop Imre Esterházy had it rebuilt. The church, rebuilt in 1723 in Baroque style, was restored almost from ruins and became the first and foremost church of the diocese again. It received its current Neo-Romanesque style during the complete reconstruction of 1910. The medieval remains of the church can be seen on the walls of the southern and northern naves. The three-naved Romanesque-Gothic undercroft, which is the final resting place of several bishops and home to the humerus relic of our first queen - a present from the town of Passau-is open to visitors.

**St. George's Chapel**, maybe the oldest medieval building of Veszprém, can be found by the northern side of the cathedral. Although the exact date of building is unknown it must have been built in the 10-11th century. According to St. Emeric's legend our first king's son vowed chastity in this originally round chapel. The building was reconstructed in an octagonal shape and gave home to the St. George relic for centuries.

The statue outside the chapel depicts Prince St. Emeric, standing on a dragon - the symbol of impurity defeated - and holding a sword in one hand and a lily in the other. The 18th century Franciscan Church and Friary - today's **St. Francis Old Priests' Home** - is opposite the cathedral. **Tejfalussy House**, home to Beatified Gisela Archdiocese Collection, was built in 1772. The museum is a treasure-trove of ecclesiastical art and possesses a rich collection of stones. The building of the Veszprém Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the former **Dravec House** is juts another 18th century building from the outside, however, it has a nice little garden with a southern atmosphere and an unrivalled view to Jeruzsálem Hill. The last house is the town's oldest Baroque building, the **Körmendy House**. The original Rococo/Copf style of the Seminary on the opposite side is only visible in the ornamental gate.

At the end of our long walk we have arrived at the northern end of the castle. It is again worth looking around here. Standing next to the 1938 **statues of St. Stephen and Blessed Gisella** (by József Ispánky) we can have a look at the houses and zigzag streets of the former old town, the double arch of the **Valley Bridge** to the left, the sometimes barren, sometimes ivied rocks

of Benedict Hill to the right and the dark range of the Bakony Hills in the far distance.

Veszprém is the town of winds and bells: legend says that if the wind is not blowing, the bells are ringing. At this point of the town, however, the wind from the Bakony Hills never stops blows. We are standing at the top of a one thousand-year-old castle with a stormy past - with the romantic past of the castle behind us and the 11th century old town in front of us: past and present intertwined.