

### The Most Notable Locations in Old Rīga

#### 1. The Melngalvju (Blackheads) House (Rātslaukums 7)

The origins of this structure date back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when a building was put up for the needs of city officials and tradesmen. The so-called Blackheads Society, whose patron was St. Mauritius, took over the building in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, although the name "Blackheads House" dates back only to 1687. In 1713, the society won full ownership rights to the building. It once contained one of the world's richest collections of silver objects. The building was destroyed during World War II, but on June 29, 1995, the foundations for the structure that is seen today were laid. A memorial capsule was inserted into the foundations. Work on the restoration was completed in 1999.

#### 2. St. Peter's Lutheran Church (Skārņu iela 19)

One of the most ancient examples of Medieval churches in the Baltic region, St. Peter's was first built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, although since then it has gone through a number of building periods. A Baroque wooden steeple was installed in 1690 - the highest in the world at the time. The church was burned down during World War II and restored only in 1973. The metal steep-

le is 123.25 metres high. The interior of the church contains ancient epitaphs and burial plaques.

#### 3. St. John's Lutheran Church (Skārņu iela 24)

The church began its life as a chapel for a Dominican cloister that was established in 1234. It became a church in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, and in 1582 it became the first Latvian church in Rīga. The architecture of the church features a step-type pediment and magnificent arches inside. Major works of sacral art can be seen inside the church.

#### 4. The Dome Cathedral (Doma laukums 1)

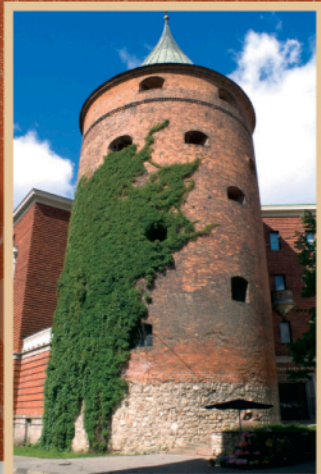
The cornerstone for the Dome Cathedral, which is the seat of the archbishop of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church, was laid on 1211. The architecture of the church includes elements of Early Gothic, Baroque and other styles, but the main building and the attached cloister form a harmonic ensemble nevertheless. This is the largest church building in Latvia, and inside one can find many art treasures.

#### 5. St. Jacob's Catholic Church (Klostera iela 2)

Work on this Early Gothic structure began around 1226, according to written documents. This period of construction is represented in the interior of the church by its arches. The Late Gothic period was the time when the attached St. Cross chapel was built. For a time it housed a lyceum - one of the first educational institutions of its kind in Rīga. The steeple was installed in 1756. There is a clock in its base, and a bell to ring alarms was installed in the upper portion of the structure.

#### 6. The Small Guild (Amatu iela 6)

The Small Guild was established in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, bringing together Rigenian craftsmen. It was during the same period that the building was put up. The guild issued regulations related to the work of artisans in Rīga. The patron saint of the guild is John the Baptist. The present-day building was built between 1864 and 1866 on the basis of a design from the distinguished architect Johan Daniel Felsko. It is an example of the British Neo-Gothic style. The beautiful interiors of the Small Guild building were restored in 2000.



#### 7. The Large Guild (Amatu iela 5)

The Large Guild, for its part, was established in 1354 by tradesmen in Rīga, and the guild monopolised trade in the city until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The patron saint of the guild is St. Mary. Fragments of the building's original, 14<sup>th</sup>-century interiors can still be seen in the form of an ancient column. The present-day structure was put up between 1854 and 1857. Today the building is the home of the Latvian Philharmonic Orchestra.

#### 8. The Gunpowder Tower (Smilšu iela 20)

This is one of the towers which helped to form the formerly walled city's fortifications. Initially known as the Sand Tower, it dates back to 1330. It was rebuilt several times and took on its present identity in the 17<sup>th</sup> century - logically enough because gunpowder was stored in the tower. A military museum was installed in the tower in 1919. A new museum structure was attached between 1937 and 1939, and today there is an interesting and extensive exhibition at the facility.

#### 9. The Three Brothers (Mazā Pils iela 17, 19, 21)

The "three brothers" are an example of Medieval residential structures in Rīga - three buildings that were put up on very narrow strips of land. The façades and interiors provide a text-

book example of the development of architecture over the course of time. Mazā Pils iela 17 is the oldest stone residential building in Rīga (late 15<sup>th</sup>, early 16<sup>th</sup> century), and its distinctive chimney has been preserved. The façade is accepted with a step-type pediment and a Gothic niche. Number 19 was put up in 1646, while Number 21 took on its appearance in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. One of the walls in the interior yard of the structure contains the oldest known city emblem of Rīga, along with some stone portals.

#### 10. The Rīga Castle (Pils laukums 3)

The castle was built in 1330 as a residence for the master of the Livonian Order. The building was sacked in 1448, and in subsequent decades it was rebuilt a number of times. Eventually it lost its Medieval appearance. The lead tower was put up in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, while the so-called three star tower was erected in 1938. A new three-story addition was attached between 1785 and 1787 for the needs of the provincial institutions in the city. The White Hall was installed in 1818. In 1938 the architect Eižens Laube redesigned the interiors so that they could be used by the government for ceremonial occasions. The Red Hall was one of the results. The president of Latvia has

offices and ceremonial facilities in the castle at this time but does not live there. The complex also contains several museums.

#### 11. The Freedom Monument (At the crossing of Brīvības bulvāris and Raiņa bulvāris)

The Freedom Monument is a symbol of Latvia's freedom and independence, erected by the architects Kārlis Zāle and Ernests Štālbergs. People donated money for the project, which was completed in 1935. On the front wall of the monument is the inscription "Tēvzemei un Brīvībai", or "For the Fatherland and Freedom" - an expression of the meaning of the monument.







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