

## **Classical Gdansk**

If it is your first visit to Gdańsk make sure you see a few flagship places, symbols of the city. If you have been living here for years you have probably passed them on your way home many times. Perhaps it is worthwhile to stop and see them afresh? Every reason is good to have a walk to the Main Town and the Old Town and rediscover the hidden gems of architecture; this is why we invite you for a journey through classical Gdańsk.

### **Upland Gate (Brama Wyzynna)**

There is no doubt that it is a visiting card of the city, inviting visitors to walk along the Royal Road (Droga Królewska). The Upland Gate is a Renaissance building constructed in 1574-1576 with ornaments and decorations chiselled by Flemish sculptor Willem van den Blocke. A perfect background for an Instagram photo ☺ Nowadays, it also has a representative function in Gdańsk. In the old days, with ramparts that no longer exist and a moat, it was a part of modern fortifications protecting the access to the city. As of 2012, the building houses the Pomeranian Tourist Information Centre, worth visiting if you are looking for new places to see.

### **Museum of Amber (Muzeum Bursztynu)**

One of the youngest branches of the Gdańsk History Museum and, at the same time, the most beautiful one. It is located in the Gothic and Renaissance Fore Gate Complex of the Długa Street consisting of the Prison Tower (Wieża Więzienna), a Neck (Szyja) with the Prison House (Dom Więzienny) and the Torture House (Katownia). The surroundings are picturesque and unique. You can find beautiful, unique exhibits in the Museum of Amber. Both jewellery and everyday objects are made of various types of amber and sometimes accompanied by other precious stones. We can also admire natural objects, both historical and artistic ones determining the diversity and timelessness of amber products.

### **Golden Gate (Złota Brama)**

It was through the Golden Gate that royal suites used to enter the representative Długa Street long ago. The arch was constructed in 1612-1614 in the style of the Renaissance with visible Dutch and Italian influences according to the design by Abraham van den Blocke. Phrases chiselled on both sides of the gate are its characteristic feature. The frieze on the front wall contains a fragment of the Psalm No. 122: "May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls and security within your towers". The Latin inscription on the gate facing the Długa Street says: "Consent builds little republics, dissent ruins great ones." Gate walls are decorated with stylized fruit, vegetables, cones and other Dutch motives. Additionally, the western side of the arch is decorated with the coat of arms of Gdańsk. The name of the gate comes from the gold plated carved details glittering in the sunlight.

### **Main City Town Hall (Ratusz Głównego Miasta)**

The Town Hall at the junction of the Długa and Długi Targ streets was the seat of the Gdańsk area authorities called the Main City since the 15th century. It is currently one of the most important historical buildings. The accurate construction date of the Town Hall is unknown; it is estimated that the first one-floor brick building was built there in the first half of the 14th century. With the development of the city, the town hall was expanded as well and mayors, the City Council as well as the Municipal Tribunal and the Veto Court were debating there. A gold-plated statue of Sigismund III

Vasa, the then king of Poland, was placed on a steeple of the building's tower in 1561. Town Hall rooms were being decorated and beautified to stress the rank of the developing Gdańsk; artists such as Isaak van den Block or Willem van der Meer had their contributions. Most representative rooms were located on the second floor: the Great Council Hall (Red and Summer Hall) and the Great Hall of Court (White Hall). The Town Hall used to be the seat of the city authorities until 1921; it currently houses a branch of the Gdańsk History Museum to which you are cordially invited.

### **Uphagen's House (Dom Uphagena)**

This 15th century brick house was purchased and subjected to modernization by a famous Gdańsk merchant and bibliophile Johann Uphagen in 1775. The tenement house in the Długa Street is the only merchant house in Poland and one of the few in Europe that are open to the public; this is why it is worth visiting to see how the Polish reality of that time looked like. The first museum was established there in 1911 and operated until 1944 when the German conservators evacuated its interior decor and equipment. The destruction of the house and the rest of the city happened in March of the following year. The museum tradition was reinstated at the end of the 1990s when a branch of the Gdańsk History Museum – the Museum of Burgher Interiors was opened there. Thanks to a visit to the Uphagen's house, we can learn about the burgher culture of former Gdańsk.

### **Fountain of Neptune (Fontanna Neptuna)**

The Fountain of Neptune that has been standing in the Długi Targ for 350 years and the Crane are the most widely recognized symbols of Gdańsk where people queue every day to take photos. Abraham van den Blocke was the author of the fountain's design and stonework while the Neptune was supposed to refer to Gdańsk links to the sea. The Fountain was cast in 1615 at the initiative of the then city mayor, Bartłomiej Schachmann. The fountain was saved from destruction during the WWII because its individual fragments were hidden out of Gdańsk. In 1954, the Fountain of Neptune returned to Długi Targ to the delight of tourists and inhabitants of Gdańsk. A Gdańsk legend about the famous Goldwasser tincture related to the fountain is worth mentioning here. According to that legend, Neptune was so outraged because of the coins thrown into the fountain that he hit the water with his trident breaking the coins into tiny gold flakes that, as of that time, adorned the herbal tincture with their glitter. Goldwasser has been one of the most popular liquors in the nearby restaurants to this day.

### **Artus Court (Dwór Artusa)**

The design and outlook of the Artus Court is full of cultural references, references to legends and myths of the antiquity and the Middle Ages. At present, the Artus Court consists of: the ground floors of two combined tenement houses called the Old House of the Court, the Artus Court proper and the New House of the Court while the entire complex is a branch of the Gdańsk History Museum. The Brotherhood of St. George whose members included knights from rich German families erected the Court in the Middle Ages through its own effort and with its own financial contribution. After a fire that burned the 14th century building, the current shape was originated in 1477 and the façade was rebuilt by Abraham van den Blocke. A 12 meters' high Renaissance tiled stove with portraits of European rulers of the time and their coats of arms is an interesting component of the design of Artus Court halls

### **Golden House (Złota Kamieniczka)**

The oldest references to the house in Długi Targ come from the 14th century. The former Gothic façade of the house was rebuilt by a famous Gdańsk architect Abraham van den Blocke while Hans

Vogt from Rostock was the author of numerous gold-plated ornaments that gave the house its name. The house was built for the mayor of Gdańsk, Jan Speymann; the legend has it that a shiny shape sometimes strolls along the corridors of the house: a ghost of the mayor's beautiful wife Judyta whispering: "Do what is just, fear no one".

### **Green Gate (Zielona Brama)**

The Renaissance Green Gate was constructed as a royal residence in 1564-1568. It replaced the modest Gothic structure of the Kogi Gate. In spite of its original purpose, the gate has never hosted the Polish royalty. A large hall on the upper floor of the building used to play the role of a place for meetings, feasts and events for the people of Gdańsk. Only the external walls survived the WWII. The building was reconstructed and it currently is a branch of the National Museum presenting exhibitions of modern and ancient arts..

### **The Crane (Żuraw)**

Along with the Fountain of Neptune, the Crane has become the greatest symbol of Gdańsk, frequently shown on postcards or souvenirs. Located on the Motława River, it was the largest medieval harbour crane of Europe. Back then, it was used for the reloading of commercial goods and the raising of sails on the mast while, at the same time, it was also a city gate. Today, the Crane is a branch of the National Maritime Museum and houses a reconstructed and operational wooden wheel drive, traditionally operated with the power of the human feet. The wooden structure is almost 30 metres high. Historical granaries located on the nearby Ołowianka Island are also related to the Crane and the commercial function of Gdańsk.

### **Mariacka Street (ulica Mariacka)**

There is no doubt that Mariacka is one of the most picturesque streets of the Main Town; it is a centre of the amber craft and jewellery trade. The street begins with the Mariacka Gate and leads to the St. Mary's Church (Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary). Also called the Crown of Gdańsk, the Basilica is the largest Gothic brick shrine of Europe. Its interior contains many priceless works of medieval and Baroque art (a Stone Pieta from the early 15th century or an astronomic clock from 1464-1470). The Mariacka Street is an example of the historical development of Gdańsk, with its characteristic perrons with famous gargoyles and facades of ornate houses formerly belonging to merchants and goldsmiths.

### **Town Hall of the Old Town (Ratusz Starego Miasta)**

Gdańsk is an example of a city where as many as four town halls were functional until mid 15th century: in the Main Town and the Old Town, the Osiek and the Young Town. The first wooden Town Hall structure of the Old Town was built in 1380. The building was reinforced and a new building constructed according to the Dutch Mannerism style was finally built in 1587-1589. The Town Hall of the Old Town is one of the few buildings that survived the WWII and its interiors accessible to the public are the effect of the restoration works executed in the 20th century. Johannes Hevelius is the most renowned personage associated with the history of the Town Hall: a Gdańsk alderman honoured with a commemorative plaque hanging in the hallway of the building. Nowadays, the building houses the Baltic Sea Cultural Centre.