



The History of Klatovy

The development of the town continued even during the Hussite Revolution. Although in 1464 a widespread fire destroyed all the existing suburban areas, Klatovy still remained amongst the most important Hussite towns.

During the 16th century the town is improved and particularly the builder's art is visible on every corner. The imposing architecture of that period is represented by the Black and White Towers, the Town Hall and new town houses.

The flourishing of renaissance architecture is however forestalled by military conflicts and further outbreaks of fire. The Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) also represents for Klatovy a period of decline.

Salvation for Klatovy came with the arrival of the Jesuits halfway through the 17th century. The Jesuits contributed to the development of the town itself, e. g. the building of the Jesuit Church and the Jesuit College, the catacombs, and the interior of the Baroque Pharmacy, just as much as to the development of education. But not even these buildings were saved from the destructive force of a fire which was

the work of French arsonists in 1689. Nearly all late Gothic and Renaissance buildings were destroyed. Midway through the 18th century Klatovy became the County town, and a little later became the seat of the Criminal Court. During the Enlightenment many important figures were active in Klatovy, in particular Klatovy born V.M. Kramerius. 1812 was a crowning moment when the town was honoured with the visit of Emperor František II.

At the beginning of the 19th century Klatovy completely changed its architectural appearance when the local bureaucrats decided, in the full spirit of the Viennese court, to completely demolish parts of the fortifications and the gates and to fill in the surrounding ditches and moats. The second half of the 19th century looks more favourably on Klatovy. In 1882 the Museum is opened, the grammar school starts functioning again where they begin to teach in Czech, various associations are founded and the fame of the well known Klatovy carnation is beginning to spread. Also the building of new railway and highway corridors supports the development of international trade. Klatovy is flourishing. In the interwar period of the 20th century Klatovy was significantly affected by the economic crises and the imminent danger of fascism. The occupation by the German fascists during 1939–1945 was one of the most difficult periods in the history of the town.



After Klatovy was liberated by the American army under the leadership of General Patton on the 5th May 1945, its development reflected the general situation across Czechoslovakia. In 1948 the Communist Government was elected which lasted until 1989.

Despite the catastrophes of fire and wars, Klatovy has developed as a town with a long and deep cultural and historical tradition into a lively, modern and welcoming place. The period of the 50's, known in Czech as the building period 'budovatelství', has been a major contribution to its modern appearance.

The central area of Klatovy was declared in 1992 as a historical conservation area. Its core makes up the oldest part of the town defined by the remains of the town walls. Together with some adjacent historical areas they characterize the economic and social development of the town.

Even on your first walk through the centre the atmosphere of the past is tangible. This is where the life is between the shops and the pub gardens, this is where some significant events are remembered, and important occasions take place. In these places you can feel the tradition being alive and also the strength of the tradition, together with natural and warm hospitality which especially in the summer months radiates into the surroundings.

Vydalo MĚSTO KLATOVY
Odbor školství, kultury a cestovního ruchu, 2004

Foto: Martin Milfort, Jan Kavale, Martin Kutálek
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Vedutu města poskytlo Vlastivědné muzeum
Dr. Hostaše Klatovy



Klatovy

THE HISTORY AND CULTURAL SIGHTS OF THE TOWN



IN THE SOUTH WESTERN REGION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC IS THE TOWN OF KLATOVY, SURROUNDED BY WOODED HILLS, ON A GENTLE SLOPE JUST A FEW KILOMETRES FROM THE MAIN RIVER ÚHLAVA.

The rich history of this royal town has roots deep in the past. The mild climate and the rich local soil created favourable conditions for the settlement of this area a long time before the foundation of the actual town. Archaeological finds confirm the existence of prehistoric peoples from the Early Stone Age. Around the year 1260, the Czech monarch Přemysl Otakar II. established the royal town of Klatovy on a significant business path leading from Bavaria into the Czech Lands. At this time the town had a regular chessboard layout with a large square and substantial fortifications completed during the course of the 13th to the 16th century. From the early 1300's onwards (the so called period of the Luxembourg dynasty) Klatovy flourished economically, politically and culturally. The town was awarded the 'právo míle', which means the maintenance of the monopoly of certain trades – malting, brewing, taverns and others, for the benefit of Klatovy townspeople. It was also awarded a charter for holding markets, the right of execution and the right to mint the particular coin, the bracteate.



Sights of Klatovy



2 The still majestic appearance of the Baroque **JESUIT CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY AND SAINT IGNATIUS** with its richly wrought decorative façade and interior attracts us from the first glance.



The architect Carlo Lurago began the building in 1656, later sharing its design and completion with the architect Giovanni Domenico Orsi. During the ensuing centuries it has been reconstructed many times. The church is built in the form of a Latin cross with a cupola on the shoulder of the cross and maintains in such a way the classic concept of a Jesuit Cathedral. The Baroque portals are the most marked external feature, coming from the work of the recognized architect Kilian Ignatius Dienzenhofer.

Concurrent with the church in this period of Jesuit activity in Klatovy must be included the building of the Jesuit College, which served their objectives of raising the standard of education of the local people. After the dissolution of the Jesuit order the building was turned into a barracks and a school of brewing. From 1990 it has been used as a shopping center, but is also the seat of the Town library.

3 A tour of the town is invigorated with a visit to the **BAROQUE PHARMACY, 'U BÍLÉHO JEDNOROŽCE'** (At the White Unicorn).



century, is a recognised monument of cultural history placed in the register of UNESCO.

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NOVEMBER–APRIL: BY ARRANGEMENT
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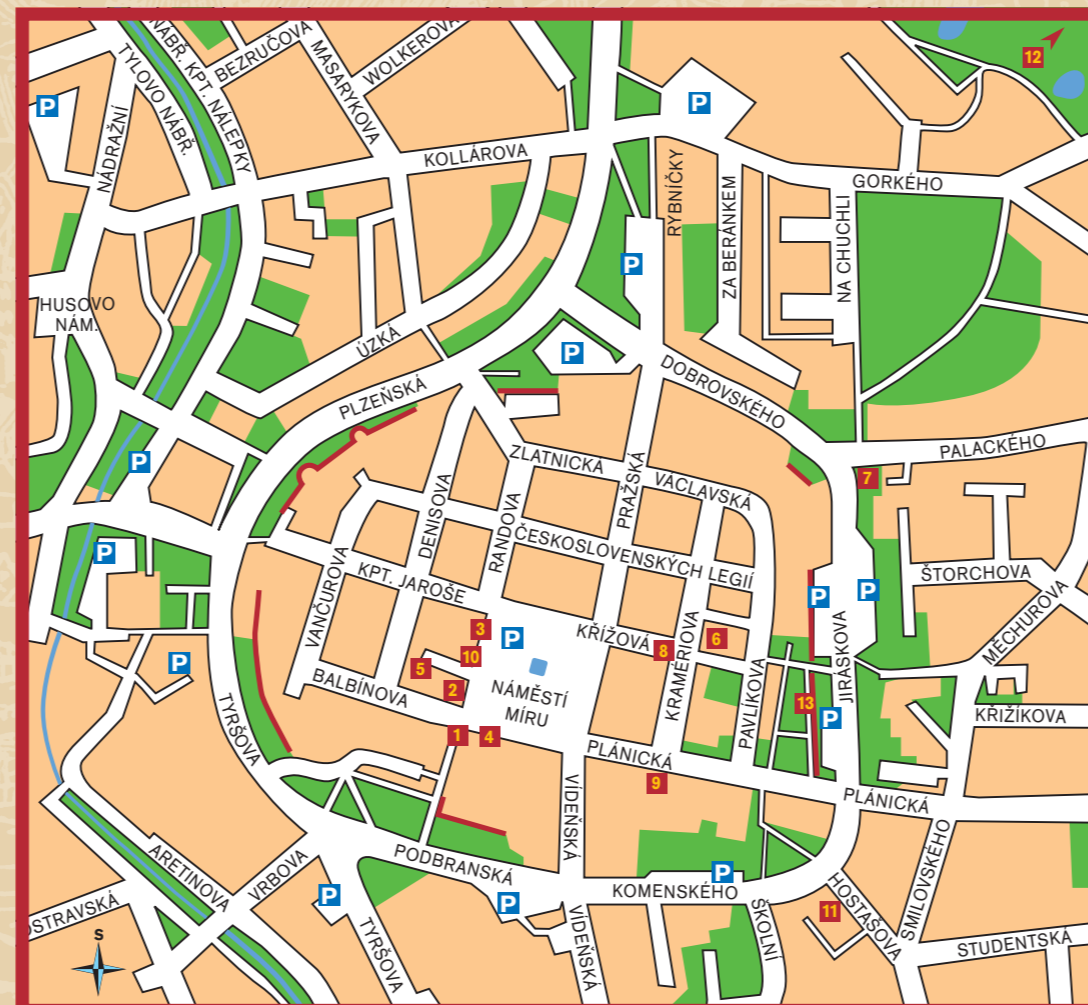
4 Almost every town has its **TOWN HALL**. From here have sprung the decisions and impulses which have influenced the development of the town and the surrounding area. The building of the Town Hall was begun in 1557, but various repairs and alterations over the centuries have completely changed its appearance. The last big transformation was in the pseudo-Renaissance style, based on the plans of the architect Josef Fanta and completed in the period 1923–1925. The sculptures are the work of C. Vosmik and F. Rouse, the painting are by L. Novak and J. Cejka. This building still houses the Town Hall administration.

5 THE CATACOMBS – the mysterious underground rooms under the Jesuit Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary and Saint Ignatius



evoked a feeling of religious reverence. In this church crypt were buried members of the Jesuit order and important people of the town. Even before the completion of the building at the beginning of the 1670's the first dead were laid to rest here. The Emperor Josef II forbade by decree burial in the catacombs, which also forbade burial in churches. Because of the ingenious system of ventilation it was possible to maintain the optimum temperatures necessary for the conservation of the mummified bodies. 30 mummies are preserved at present.

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6 THE GOTHIC ARCHDEACON'S CHURCH OF THE VIRGIN MARY offers a moment of peace and spiritual reflection, situated on one of the little streets off of the square. This 13th century building is

the oldest in Klatovy although it has been many times altered and enlarged. Alterations in the 15th century completely changed its original appearance. Largely as a result of this intervention a unique atrial space was created, which now just as then impresses with its particular church atmosphere. Within its confines is the miraculous picture of the Virgin Mary of Klatovy holding in her arms the child Jesus, and to which is related not only the centuries old legend of miraculous healing, but also the authenticity of human blood on her injured brow. Also preserved is the Chapel of the Revelation to the Virgin Mary. **7 'CHALOUPKA'**, (the Little Cottage) built in 1696 at the place where the original house stood in which the miraculous picture was for some time stored. Ever year at the time of the Klatovy Fair an important church procession takes place through the streets of the town honouring the memory of this painting.

8 A little apart from the cathedral stands the **WHITE TOWER**, originally a belfry built in 1581. After the fire of 1758 it was raised and altered into its present form. The portal of the tower was originally sited in the façade of the Archdeacon's church.



9 Worth mentioning is the nearby **DOMINICAN CHURCH OF ST VAVŘINEC** built between 1694–1709 and like all the other monuments significantly altered over time. The Klatovy builder, Marco Antonio Gilmetti, of Italian origin, directed the

construction of the church. With its plain, unadorned style it suggests how the Dominicans were not as wealthy as their counterpart Jesuit brethren. The church is not open to the public.

Other conspicuous sights that catch the eye of the visitor are some **TOWN HOUSES** with well-preserved facades eg. No.'s 63, 64 65, 66, 150, 151, 154, 155, 169, 170, 171 and the important Listed Buildings eg. No.'s.1, 70, 90, 118, 163, 167.

10 In the historical house on the square, No.149 is the **GALLERY 'U BÍLÉHO JEDNOROŽCE'** (At the White Unicorn) with impressive exhibition space for the display of modern art.

OPENING TIMES: ALL YEAR ROUND
TUESDAY–SUNDAY: 10.00–12.00 13.00–17.00
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11 Amongst more modern examples of impressive architecture are the fin-de-siècle **DR. HOSTAŠ MUSEUM OF LOCAL HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY**, rebuilt in the years 1905–1907. The museum details in an interesting way the development of the region in individual stages from prehistory to the present day.

OPENING TIMES:
JANUARY–APRIL & OCTOBER & NOVEMBER:
TUESDAY–FRIDAY 09.00–12.00 13.00–17.00
MAY–SEPTEMBER & DECEMBER: DAILY EXCEPT MONDAY
09.00–12.00 13.00–17.00
THE FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH OPEN TILL
20.00. OPEN OUTSIDE OF NORMAL HOURS
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12 North from the centre of town is the **JEWISH CEMETERY** from the second half of the 19th century. There is also a Synagogue, restored in the years between 1966–67 but at the moment used for other purposes.

13 DOUBLE STONE WALLS defended mediaeval Klatovy, built at the foundation of the town. They were 10–12 metres high integrated with bastions and ditches. The best preserved part of the walls is on the eastern side of the town, where two circular bastions still stand.

AND NOW WE HAVE FINISHED THIS LITTLE GUIDE TO THE HISTORY OF KLATOVY. WHOEVER FANCIES STEPPING BACK IN TIME AND IMMERSING THEMSELVES IN THE DEPTHS OF HISTORY SHOULD DELVE INTO THE OLD CHRONICLES AND WISE BOOKS... OR SIMPLY TAKE A WALK AROUND KLATOVY.



1 THE BLACK TOWER, the work of Antonio de Salla, reaches the height of 81 metres. The tower was built in the period 1547 to 1557 of unplastered ashlar blocks. This unmistakable feature was meant as the place to overlook and control the center of the town and to serve as a lookout against fire and enemies. It was an ostentatious symbol of wealth. To reach the gallery on the fifth floor there are 226 steps. The beautiful view of the surrounding area, and in clear weather the distant peaks of the Šumava National Park, is your reward.

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