



REGIONAL COUNCIL OF
North Karelia

PIELISJOKI CASTLE

Originally designed by architect Ernst B. Lohrmann, Pielisjoki Castle is a protected historical building in the centre of Joensuu. It is a landmark of the city's cultural and architectural heritage whose interior is also partly protected.

The Castle has three storeys with a total interior area of 1 500 m².

The building's name is derived from its stately location on Niskasaari Island in the middle of the Pielisjoki River.

The plot on which it stands has an area of about 3 400 m².

Pielisjoki Castle was acquired by the City of Joensuu in 2003 after being previously state-owned.

Regional Council of North Karelia

Pielisjoen linna, Siltakatu 2,

FI-80100 Joensuu, FINLAND

Tel. +358 13 337 4700, Fax +358 13 267 4730

kirjaamo@pohjois-karjala.fi

www.pohjois-karjala.fi/en



REGIONAL COUNCIL OF
North Karelia



Jarkko Kipiläinen and Raimo Aursiö (photos), Sirkka-Liisa Salminen (text), archive photographs - Museum of North Karelia.

PIELISJOKI CASTLE
A Gem in the Heart of Joensuu

PIELISJOKI CASTLE

Completed in 1852, Pielisjoki Castle is the oldest stone building in Joensuu. The town itself had been founded only four years before the castle was built.

Pielisjoki Castle was originally built as a Crown granary in the days when Finland was part of the Swedish Empire. The Crown levied taxes in kind, and grain became the most important currency to pay taxes in the 17th century. The building, administered by the cameral government, served as a granary until the 1910s.

From the year 1919 on, Pielisjoki Castle served as a depot for the North Karelian White Guard district. (The White Guard, or Civil Guard, was a voluntary militia formed after the Finnish Civil War of 1918 to protect the country against the threat of communism). The ground floor was used to store, among other things, the Joensuu Field Battery's guns. When the Guard later needed office and residential premises for its staff, architect Ole Gripenberg was commissioned to plan the renovation work. In accordance with the architect's plan, the interior of the building underwent extensive alterations. A massive stairway was placed in the centre of the building with light flooding in through the windows of a pyramid-shaped lantern structure built in the centre of the ceiling.

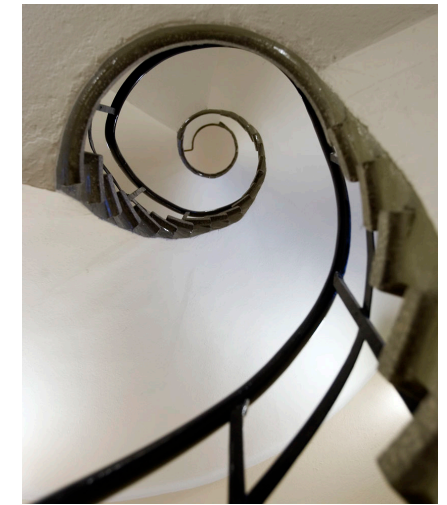
The external appearance of the Castle also changed when the brick walls were rendered. At the same time, two plaster medallions were placed on the upper part of the western wall. One of the medallions bore the chevron of the Civil Guard while the other depicts an armour-clad arm holding a straight sword as it appears in the North Karelian Coat of Arms. The building was inaugurated as Pielisjoki Castle in 1929 after the renovation was completed.

In the 1930s, the far-right Lapua Movement enjoyed a certain popularity in Joensuu even though the abductions of political opponents to the Soviet border and the increasing violence of the most fanatical of the Civil Guards was criticised.

One milestone in the decline of the Lapua Movement was the episode in which Finland's first president K.J. Ståhlberg and his wife were forced into a car and taken to Joensuu in October 1930. Ståhlberg was victimised because, as a staunch advocate of legality, he had criticised the Lapua Movement.

The car stopped outside the Joensuu City Hall and the abductors themselves disappeared into the night. After their eventful day the presidential couple were accommodated for the night in Pielisjoki Castle when the military instructor of the Civil Guard district, Lieutenant Lang, recognised his former Supreme Commander Ståhlberg.

The Ståhlbergs returned to Helsinki the next day escorted by numerous well-wishers. From Joensuu on, the couple were honoured at almost every station with a Civil Guard parade and bouquets of flowers presented by the local municipalities.



During the war, Pielisjoki Castle was used by the military, a fact that left its mark on the west wall of the Castle where the medallion with the chevron of the Civil Guard was removed. After the war, Pielisjoki Castle served as the Staff Headquarters of the military district until 1967.

In 1971 the Karelian Institute of the University of Joensuu moved into the building. It remained a stronghold of research and science until 2006 when the staff of the research institute moved from the Castle to the University's main campus.

From 1992 to 1993, Pielisjoki Castle underwent another major renovation. Under architect Esa Piirainen, the Castle regained something of the atmosphere of the 1920s. One of the areas restored was the western wall, where the chevron of the Civil Guard took its former place. Simultaneously, the technical services of the Castle were modernised.

In November 2006, the building, one of the most important sites representing the region's architectural heritage, once again changed hands when the Regional Council of North Karelia moved into Pielisjoki Castle.

