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PANORAMA FROM THE PALAIS GARAGES 23

With the dome of the Marble Church within reach

Dronningens Tværgade 4, 1302 K. Metro: Kongens Nytorv



Unknown to many Copenhageners, the garage in Dronningens Tværgade 4 offers a wonderful panoramic view of the city. To see it, go to the back of the building, walk past the petrol pump to the elevator which leads to the roof and have a look out over the city laid out before you. Up here, you'll be so close to the dome of the Marble Church that you could almost reach out and touch it.

On the way down, take the ramp and enjoy the experience of seeing Copenhagen's first multi-storey garage. Called the Palais Garages, they were built in two stages in 1932 and 1937 by the engineers Højgaard & Schultz, based on a design by the architect Oscar Gundlach-Pedersen (1886–1960).

The growth of car traffic in the 1930s resulted in increasingly heated debates about what to do with all these cars. Architects at the time were strongly influenced by the approach adopted in the US, where the multi-storey car park seemed to be the solution. But, at the same time, there was a certain nervousness in Copenhagen at the idea of allowing so many cars so close to one of the city's oldest and most distinguished buildings, Moltke's Palais.

In the passionate debate that followed, modern architects did all they could to convince the public that a car posed no threat to anyone or anything when it was standing in a garage.

In order to meet the concerns of the authorities – and also the neighbours – a vast range of security measures was installed, such as a modern sprinkler system and remote-controlled fire doors. The profitability of the garage was also dependent on the income from a service station located in the basement. Here, cars could be washed in ten to fifteen minutes in a semi-automatic plant, which could service sixty vehicles an hour. As the price of a wash also included chassis lubrication and air-drying, as well as a wipe-down, polish and vacuuming, the cars all benefited from a very thorough valet service.

While waiting, car owners could use the room on the ground floor, which was equipped with a telephone, a toilet and vending machines dispensing beer, soft drinks and sandwiches. They could then sit back and enjoy the view of the car wash through the plate-glass windows until loudspeakers informed them that their vehicle was ready. None of this remains today.

ICON OF MOTHER OF GOD OF JERUSALEM

26

A miracle right in the backyard

Aleksander Nevsky Church

Bredgade 53, 1260 K

Open during worship and on vigil nights (see www.ruskirke.dk)

Metro: Kongens Nytorv



The only Christian Orthodox church in Denmark, the Russian church in Bredgade has a number of icons on the first floor. The *Mother of God of Jerusalem* is the first icon that believers stop at when they enter the church.

On 10 March 1995, the first Friday of the Orthodox Church Great Fast, the icon began to weep tears. The following Sunday, and in the weeks that followed, this was repeated. The phenomenon only ceased with the coming of autumn. However, the following year, once again coinciding with the time of the Great Fast, the tears returned. The miracle inevitably attracted a lot of attention from the congregation of the Russian church, but, although it was so close to home, it aroused no interest in the wider Copenhagen public. Today, if you look closely, traces of the tears are still visible on the Madonna's cheeks.

The *Mother of God of Jerusalem* was supposedly painted in 1912 by a Russian monk. In 1928 it was given as a gift to the Danish-born Russian Empress Maria Feodorovna after her enforced return to Denmark following the Russian Revolution.

Church and Empress

Dedicated to Alexander Nevsky, the Russian national hero and patron saint, the Russian church in Copenhagen was inaugurated in September 1883. The building was designed by the Russian architect David Ivanovich Grimm. However, according to legend, the Russian Tsar, who was present, was so displeased by the location of the building and its size that the inauguration ceremonies could not be performed as planned.

When the Danish Princess Dagmar married Tsar Alexander III in 1866, she converted to the Russian Orthodox faith and changed her name to Maria Feodorovna. Their eldest son, Nicholas II, became Russia's last Tsar. In 1918, with the October Revolution and the Bolsheviks' seizure of power, he was executed, along with his wife and children, in a cellar in Ekaterinburg. However, Maria Feodorovna did not leave Russia until the spring of 1919: she refused to accept that her son and his family had been murdered and, for a long time, believed that he had been rescued by a miracle. She died in the autumn of 1928 shortly after receiving the icon of the Holy Mother of God of Jerusalem, given to her to comfort her in all her sorrows.

EXECUTION SHED AT CHRISTIANIA

⑩

The gloomy remains of the war

2nd Redan at Norddysen behind Christiania

Access: the execution shed is located behind the third house on the left after the Dyse Bridge

Metro: Christianshavn



If you cross the Dyse Bridge in Christiania heading in the direction of Norddysen and turn left, you will see some distinctive arrow-shaped buildings. They look like triangular farmhouses and have open courtyards which face on to the moat. Today the houses are cosy dwellings for Christianites, but most of them were originally erected as ammunition depots from 1779 to 1791 as part of Copenhagen's old system of fortifications.

Behind the third house (counting from the bridge) lies an almost invisible, but very gruesome piece of Danish history. Here, near the path, half-hidden in the grass, are some concrete foundations with a little drain: they are the last remnant of an execution shed where thirty people were shot dead between 1946 and 1950.

The many legal cases brought against collaborators and criminals in the wake of the Second World War led Denmark to reintroduce the death penalty for a few years. This meant that execution sheds were built in Viborg and on the Dyssen in Copenhagen. Here, people who had been convicted of killing members of the Resistance, assisting the Gestapo or carrying out acts of counter-sabotage were shot.

As all the executions took place at night, the shed was illuminated by temporary mounted spotlights. The shed consisted of a rear wall made of loose wooden boards that could easily be replaced when the bullets had ripped through them. In addition to the policemen who carried out this gruesome task, a doctor and a priest were always present. A truck carrying coffins waited in the courtyard of a nearby building from where the bodies were taken directly for cremation and buried in the cemetery the following morning.

The last man to be executed in the shed was a 40-year-old Gestapo member, Ib Birkedal Hansen. His execution took place at 1.00 am on 20th July 1950. Soon afterwards the shed was torn down, leaving behind only the concrete foundations with the drain where much blood had been spilled.

BALLOON HANGAR

15

From balloon hangar to indoor riding arena

Artillerivej 73, 2300 S

Metro: Islands Brygge

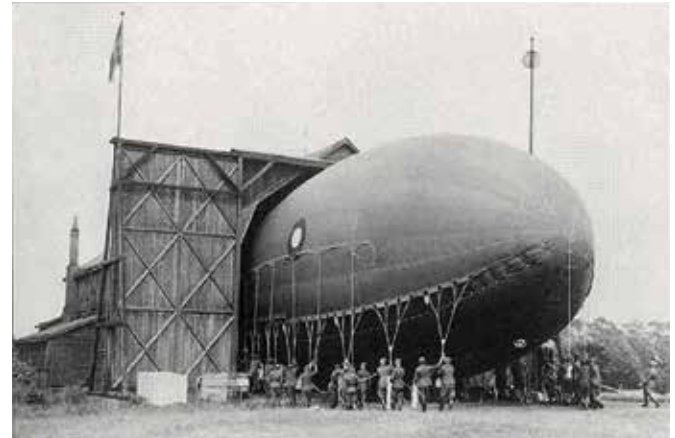


Hidden away behind some tall trees and shrubs on Artillerivej, a small riding school with around twenty-five horses has a very special atmosphere.

The riding school, which opened here in 1961, is installed in a former hot-air balloon hangar dating from 1917. In summer, swallows nest under the roof and swoop about high above the heads of the young riders and their watching parents.

With its oblong wooden structure and curved roof, the hangar is also an impressive remnant of Copenhagen's military history. From 1872, the area was named the Balloon Park and served as a training ground for military personnel, who used the large hot-air balloons to test the range of the cannon balls fired from them over Amager Common. The special elongated shape of this type of balloon – the so-called “dragon” – had been developed because, under windy conditions, it proved more stable than the normal round balloon. When not in use, the balloons were stored in the hangar. Today, its elongated shape makes an ideal small indoor riding arena.

The military personnel who worked in the Balloon Park also lived there, and their red wooden houses today provide a cosy alternative neighbourhood located next to the riding school.



THE CENTRE OF FREDERIKSBERG GARDEN

④

Beyond the paths, where gardens meet

Frederiksberg Garden

Frederiksberg Runddel 1A, 2000 Frederiksberg. Open all year from sunrise to sunset. Metro: Frederiksberg



Frederiksberg Garden is a "Romantic-style" garden, which was conceived and laid out in the early 19th century during the reign of King Frederik VI. Start your visit by following the paths which meander between shady trees, where you'll encounter groups of well-fed geese, then continue across the picturesque little bridges. These paths were, in fact, designed to lead visitors on through a fantasy landscape scattered with visual "surprises": a Chinese pagoda, a Greek temple, an artificial barrow and – the epitome of Romantic garden design – a mysterious grotto.

It is a garden to get wonderfully lost in. That is its purpose. There are no straight paths to guide you. Nothing is symmetrical here. There is no centre – or, at least, that is what you are led to believe, for there is a special spot in the garden with another agenda. But to find it, you have to move beyond the paths.

Looking at a map, you will discover that the garden hides a centre, which can only be reached by walking over the lawn next to the Chinese Pavilion. Here, all of a sudden you will find yourself exactly where the former Baroque garden had its centre and where today its two main axes are miraculously preserved. Here, at the very heart of the garden, the existing Romantic garden opens up in the strangest of ways, offering an amazing spatial experience and a look back in time. There are no blocked views, no visual obstacles, no "surprises" – on the contrary, everything is unobstructed in all four directions. It is as if the garden lies at your feet: it all makes sense.

If you'd visited the garden in the 18th century, you would have seen it in its Baroque heyday. It was then designed around two main symmetrical axes. At this point where the two axes met - the centre of the garden where you are now standing - there was an octagonal pavilion where the royal family liked to enjoy a cup of tea after a stroll in the garden. They would have looked out on a garden which was perfectly ordered and controlled in its design. Absolutely straight avenues of lime trees created a framework for the sixty-four symmetrical beds. Perhaps the royal family would also have admired the fine topiary work that had shaped the yew trees and juniper bushes into beautifully precise spherical and cone shapes. With this emphasis on order and geometric precision, this was a very different garden from the one we see today.

THE TOTAL WAR GRAFFITO

⑪

A disloyal soldier in the Meat-Packing District

*The Meat-Packing District, Tvillingehallen (today Billedskolen)
Staldgade 35, 1699 V. S-train: Copenhagen Central Station*

Today, on what was once a yellow brick wall, you can still see the remains of an old graffito, which is a peculiar, yet touching riposte to one of the most famous speeches of World War II. These clumsily carved letters are on the Tvillingehallen, a building which today houses the municipality of Copenhagen's art school (Billedskolen). On the side of the building which faces the central station, someone has written these words on a brick which you'll find on the far right-hand side of the wall: "Wollt ihr den totalen Krieg?" (Do you want total war?), followed by the reply: "Nein" (No). This question was posed by Dr. Joseph Goebbels, the German propaganda minister. The reply, scratched on the wall, is the work of an anonymous German soldier on patrol in the area, but someone with a mind of his own.

On 18 February 1943, Goebbels gave what was probably his most famous speech. It has since gone down in history as the Sportpalast

speech, named after the indoor sports arena in Berlin where it was delivered. The recent setbacks the troubled German army had sustained served as the impetus for the speech. In January, the Germans had lost to the Allies in North Africa, followed in early February by their defeat at the Battle of Stalingrad. Unless every effort was made to reverse the situation, Germany was facing defeat. Therefore, February 1943 was a crucial time. The first step was to inform the German people how vital their continuing support for the war effort was going to be and to prepare them for even more suffering. Goebbels' speech has also been called the "totaler Krieg" speech, or "total war" speech after one of the rhetorical questions he yelled at the thousands of spectators gathered in the Berlin Sportpalast: "I ask of you: Do you want total war? And if necessary, do you want a war more devastating and radical than anything we can imagine today?" And the answer came back promptly from the crowd – a massive and hysterical: "YES". During the Occupation, German soldiers were deployed to patrol areas of strategic importance, including places vital for the security of provisions. With its butchers' halls, the Meat-Packing District in Vesterbro was one such place. Several of the German soldiers who patrolled there have left behind little scratched graffiti, most of which are just names they carved as testimony to the endless, tedious nights they spent patrolling in Copenhagen.



MOSAIC NORTHERN CEMETERY

⑥

Copenhagen's most romantic necropolis

Møllegaede 12, 2200 N
Open Sun-Thurs 10am-6pm
S-train, Metro: Nørreport



Officially called the Mosaic Northern Cemetery, the Jewish cemetery in Nørrebro is probably the most romantic necropolis in Copenhagen. Here, broken, twisted and weathered tombstones still stand heroically fighting what may be a losing battle against time and decay. Every spring new vegetation springs up again, especially the tangle of wild strawberries which carpet the ground. But however attractive that might be, it does not stop the soil from piling up higher and higher around the tombs in a slow burial process of its own. Nothing can stop the action of the acid rain and the wind which eat away the surfaces of the limestone and granite, leaving only fragments of tumbled-down, crumbling headstones and fragments and stumps of masonry. There is a Jewish expression, *Beth Ha-Chaim*, meaning “the house of the living”. And that’s what has happened here: the cemetery has come alive.

Altogether some 6,000 people are buried in the 14,000-m² site. The oldest part, which dates from 1694, contains the graves of Jews who came to Denmark as part of the Diaspora. Here are found the graves of Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe, with stones placed upright at their head. In what is known as the “Portuguese section”, there are Sephardic Jews from Spain and Portugal, with the stones lying flat on the ground. The stones carry Hebrew inscriptions, sometimes accompanied by carvings of hands. These are known as the *Kobanim* hands, and they represent the rabbi’s gesture of blessing. Another symbol is that of a pitcher pouring water, the pitcher being associated with the Levites, who traditionally washed the hands of the rabbis as part of Jewish religious ritual. In addition, a large, but unknown number of Torah scrolls are buried here as this is the traditional way of disposing of them when they are too worn for further use. The cemetery was closed in 1967 as it was full. In 2011, however, it reopened as a place for local people in need of somewhere to come when they want to escape the noise and bustle of the city.

WHALE BASEMENT

15

An amazing final resting place for whales

Zoological Museum, Universitetsparken 15, 2100 Ø
 Access: tours can be arranged with the Zoological Museum
 (tel: 35 32 22 22). Bus 150S, 18



Under the Zoological Museum, a large garage door leads to an old basement car park. Go through a plastic curtain there and you will come to what is one of the finest and oldest collections of whales in the world. The first thing to strike you is an acrid smell of whale oil, something that will follow you throughout your entire visit.

The basement is packed with huge skeletons of whales (humpbacks, fin or finbacks and sperm whales) that have either been stranded in Danish waters or killed in the North Atlantic over the last 200 years. In the 19th century, whaling in the Northern hemisphere was big business and fortunes were made from extracting the oil, which was used to fuel the street lamps in Europe's growing cities. The bleached skeletons lie side by side: rib by rib and skull by skull. It is as if you are looking at an exposed cemetery. It is not at all gruesome, however; rather, it is eerily beautiful and somewhat overwhelming. The shape and texture of the bones give them the appearance of ceramic artworks or slices of smooth concrete. You might be in a modern art gallery. But the whale basement is not just the final resting place of these giants of the sea: it is also a learning experience for all those who want to know more about these amazing marine mammals. You'll be allowed to hold an ear bone, see the eyes of a blue whale – eyes which are big as saucers – floating in a glass container of formaldehyde, and get a close-up view of huge whale skulls which resemble creatures from outer space.

It's an amazing, rather surreal, experience. Even more mind-blowing is the size of these creatures. The skeleton of a blue whale, which was stranded in Årøsund in 1931, is 24 m long and stretches from the back of the basement right through the entire length of the building. It lies next to what is reckoned to be the oldest specimen of a fin whale in the world: it was stranded in Vejle Fjord in 2010 and is estimated to be between 120 and 130 years old.

The whale collection was founded by the zoologist and pioneer Daniel Frederik Eschricht (1798–1863), who started collecting whale skeletons in Copenhagen in the 19th century. At first he stored them in his own house in Badstuestræde. Then, in 1841, the university bought his collection and the skeletons were placed in the basement of its banqueting hall at Vor Frue Plads. In the 1970s, they were moved to the newly built Zoological Museum. For incomprehensible reasons, a separate exhibition hall was never built for the whales, so they have had to settle for a disused underground car park.

DANSK TENNIS CLUB

⑥

The response of a banned tennis champion

Rygårds Allé 73–75, 2900 Hellerup

Open from 1 Sep until 30 Apr

The court can be rented by contacting Eva Sehested

Tel: 39 61 00 84; sehested@hotmail.com

S-train: Hellerup



North of the city, where only a few Copenhageners ever go, is a building of unusual quality, an example of magnificent 1920s architecture. As soon as you enter you become aware of its unique character: Egyptian wall decorations continue throughout the building, which is home to a beautiful tennis court. The tops of the walls are lined with windows which have large white canvas screens shielding the court from too much sun. The atmosphere here is quiet, serene even; the brightest colour is the green baize of the court surfaces which is complemented by the dark ochre used on the end walls and the oxblood red woodwork. On the side of the court facing the garden there are double doors opening onto the outside, and, on the opposite side, other doors give access to the tearoom.

The person behind this great place was Leif Sadi Rovsing, who was one of Denmark's greatest tennis celebrities in the early 1900s. In 1910 he played at Wimbledon, and, in 1912, he represented Denmark at the Olympics in Sweden. He also had several Danish championship titles to his name. In 1917, however, his world collapsed. The Danish Ball Game Association – Dansk Boldspil Union – expelled him for his homosexuality, and, at the same time, he was banned from participation in all tournaments.

In response to this, he founded his own Dansk Tennis Club in 1919, and, in 1921, he built the arena, which he deliberately called a “World Sports Establishment”.

It was one of Copenhagen's first indoor tennis arenas, and, today, it stands as a testament to the fate of Leif Rovsing. On his death in 1977, he left behind not just the building, but also a large fortune, which helps to ensure the continued existence of the club.



THE SYDHAVNSTIPPEN

②

Archaeologist for a day

Copenhagen South Harbour (Sydhavnen)

*Access either via Valbyparken or the small gravel road at the bottom of Sydløbsvej
Bus 4A*



If you want to do a little excavating, start from the centre of Copenhagen, go by bike to Sluseholmen and continue on over the bridge along Fiskerihavnen until you reach the bottom of Bådehavnsgade, where a little dirt road, called Sydløbsvej, leads to Valbyparken. On your left-hand side, behind a fence, you'll see a large attractive-looking grassy area scattered with a few trees. Go through one of the little gates and you will suddenly find yourself in a totally different world, where sheep are grazing and winding paths take you through a landscape of blackberry bushes, apple trees and little mysterious grassy mounds.

This world is called Tippen (from the Danish word *tippe*, meaning to unload). It gets its name from the thousands of trucks that, from 1950 until well into the 1980s, tipped their loads of rubble and other Copenhagen waste onto this site.

Tippen is a paradise built on top of five-metre-high piles of rubbish, and the strange little grassy hills, some of which look like miniature barrows, are basically just piles of rubbish, hiding everything from construction waste to worn-out shoes. Here and there you may come across a rusty old bed, a discarded tombstone or the rusting pipes of old plumbing equipment sticking out of the ground.

Tippen has proved a huge asset to the locals, who have made great efforts to maintain and develop the land so that today it serves as a unique recreation area, which is abundant in wildlife. In 1990, the southernmost part of Tippen was protected and in 2009 the area got a nature school to the delight of the many children's institutions in Copenhagen.

However, many Copenhageners still do not know anything at all about the existence of Tippen, and the area contains many secrets even for the locals. For example, on the east-facing coast, the porcelain manufacturer Royal Copenhagen has disposed of huge quantities of old moulds and lots of broken cups, bowls and plates from their Alumina production line, which closed down in 1969. It is therefore possible to be an archaeologist for a day, scraping your finds out from the layers in the mounds, one potsherd after another.