

A Brief History of IIASA and Schloss Laxenburg



IIASA International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis

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Background Information on IIASA

After the Second World War, it became increasingly evident that a growing number of complex scientific and technological problems could no longer be examined on a purely national basis. A global approach through international cooperation was required. The idea of what was at first called an “East–West Institute” began to take shape in the 1960s through discussions between the United States and the Soviet Union. The key figures on the Soviet side were Premier Dr. Alexei Kosygin and Academician Jermen Gvishiani, while the US was represented by President Lyndon B. Johnson and his National Security Advisor, McGeorge Bundy.

The Austrian Ambassador to the Soviet Union at that time, Walter Wodak, informed of the talks, contacted his government, suggesting that Austria offer the 18th century Habsburg palace Schloss Laxenburg as a site for the new Institute. The palace is situated in a small town of the same name only 16 kilometers south of Vienna, Austria’s capital city. There were two reasons for this offer. Since 15 May 1955, when Austria regained its independence, it had been Austrian policy to attract international organizations to underscore the neutrality of the country. Furthermore, government officials had been searching for a suitable “tenant” to justify the restoration of the palace. One of the two main meeting rooms in the main building is now called “The Wodak Room.”

Two more sites—Fontainebleau, France, and Essex, England—were proposed for the Institute. Although all three offers were excellent, the Austrian conditions were particularly generous: income-tax-free status for the Institute and its non-Austrian staff (Austrians received the same privilege later), full restoration of the Schloss buildings, a nominal rent of one Austrian schilling per year, and half a million schillings in annual structural repairs.

On 4 October 1972, the Institute was officially constituted in London under the auspices of the Royal Society as the *International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis* (IIASA). The IIASA Charter signing ceremony was chaired by Lord Solly Zuckerman. Many individuals who were to play key roles in the early life of the Institute were present: Academician Jermen Gvishiani, Dr. Andrei Bykov, Professor Howard Raiffa, Dr. Phillip Handler, Dr. Harrison Brown, Dr. Friedrich Schneider, and Dr. Friedrich Bauer, Austria’s official representative. Twelve National Member Organizations (NMOs) from Canada, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, East Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Poland, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, and West Germany signed the Charter. Later, six more NMOs

signed: Austria (1973), Hungary (1974), Sweden (1976), Finland (1976), the Netherlands (1977), and Norway (1997). In 1991, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia established NMOs to succeed the previous organizations in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. For the current membership listing, please see IIASA's NMO Web page: www.iiasa.ac.at/Admin/DI/docs/IIASA_NMO.html.

Academician Gvishiani was appointed Chairman of the Council, IIASA's governing body, which convenes biannually. Professor Raiffa, an economist from Harvard University, was elected as the first Director of the Institute. Professor Raiffa arrived in Vienna in late 1972, and set up an office in a private apartment on Vienna's Ringstrasse while renovation of Schloss Laxenburg was being completed. Just before Christmas, the first IIASA staff members moved into an office near the Schwarzenbergplatz (in Vienna) that had been put at their disposal free of charge by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its then Director-General, Dr. Sigvard Eklund.

However, in light of IIASA's nongovernmental status, it was important to avoid giving the impression that another UN office was being established. So, in the early spring of 1973, the office was moved from Vienna to temporary quarters in a small hotel in Baden, a town west of Laxenburg.

The assignment of restoring Schloss Laxenburg was given to the Austrian architect Professor Kurt Stögerer, Dombaumeister (Cathedral Building Master), also in charge of restoring St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. The office for the preservation of national monuments (Bundesdenkmalamt) supervised the historical aspects; the federal government, the city of Vienna, and the province of Lower Austria covered the costs. The restoration bill totaled approximately two hundred million Austrian schillings.

On 1 June 1973, the Director, his immediate staff, and one scientist moved into the Schloss, but it took three years to complete the restoration. A temporary building, initially referred to as the "pre-fab" and later known as "The Lodge," provided extra office space until 1987, when it was finally removed. Nonetheless, it was already apparent by 1976 that the 5,000 m² Schloss would not be large enough, and an additional building, the "GP" (General Purpose) Building, was constructed in the fall of that year.

In the early years, it proved useful to have an office in Vienna, so a five-room apartment was rented in the Opernringhof, an office building opposite the Opera. Scientists were encouraged to use the city office for meetings and as a base for operations. Twice daily an IIASA shuttle bus

carried staff, mail, library books, and visitors to and from Laxenburg. In 1976, when the restoration of the Schloss was completed, the lease for the office was not renewed.

The architect Johannes Wickenburg was chosen to advise on the interior decoration of the Schloss. It was his idea, since IIASA could not afford antiques, to use plain white “non-competitive” furniture. However, five sets of Habsburg furniture were also lent to IIASA by the Bundesmobilienverwaltung, the office in charge of the former Imperial furnishings. (Other original pieces of furniture from the Schloss are on exhibit in the museum belonging to that office, at Mariahilferstrasse 88, 1060 Vienna.)

The large portrait of Maria Theresia pointing to the Austrian, Bohemian, and Hungarian crowns came to IIASA after Professor Wolf Häfele, then leader of the Energy Program, asked Austrian authorities for a portrait of the Empress to hang in his office. Their response overwhelmed him—the painting measured roughly 2.5×4 meters and dwarfed his office. It now hangs in the Director’s Meeting Room, currently known as the “Elisabeth Room.”

Historic Laxenburg

Laxenburg lay on the Roman road from Vienna to Sopron, Hungary. Settlement by Germanic people is believed to have taken place in the 11th century. The first recorded reference to the village was associated with the mention of a Wichard von Lachsendorf as part of the retinue of Duke Heinrich the Elder of Mödling. The roots of the name are not certain, but possibly derived from the Latin *lacus* (lake) or the Middle High German *lache* (swamp). In 1306, Laxenburg was signed over to Duke Rudolf III of Habsburg, and for centuries thereafter the village was connected with the rulers of Austria.

The **Old Castle** (Altes Schloss), the oldest known building in Laxenburg, is located in the park behind IIASA. It was originally a Wasserburg—a fortified castle surrounded by a moat and accessible by a drawbridge. Existence of the chapel within was recorded as early as 1306. It is the oldest church in Laxenburg, still occasionally used for ecclesiastical ceremonies. After 1306, the old castle was expanded by Duke Albrecht III, who preferred it to his residence in Vienna. In fact, it was in Laxenburg that he undertook his scientific work, and in 1388 he granted the village its market charter. He died in Laxenburg in 1395, and one of its main streets, Herzog Albrecht Strasse—where the IIASA-run Schloss Restaurant, the Director’s residence, and the Institute’s guestrooms are located—is named after him.

The Turks occupied Laxenburg in 1529 and again in 1683, when they used the village as a prison during their siege of Vienna. They did not damage the castle, but destroyed the town on both occasions. Over the centuries, the old castle was enlarged and altered. The building was recently modernized and now houses apartments and the Österreichisches Filmarchiv.

The **Schloss Park** covers 250 hectares, approximately 620 acres. Laxenburg was always a favorite residence of the Habsburgs, primarily because of its fine hunting grounds. Originally an oak landscape with marshy grounds, the park was transformed into a deer and pleasure park in the 14th century. Almost five centuries later, Franz I enlarged it and added fountains, pavilions, and paths, giving it a rococo character, all to surprise his wife, Maria Theresia. Her son, Josef II, changed the park into an English garden, a style that is still reflected in the layout of the park today.

In 1798, Franz II had the **Franzensburg** constructed and the lake around it excavated. A canal system was built to provide water from the Schwechat River to fill the lake. The lake is a favorite spot for the

Viennese and other tourists for boating in the summer and for ice skating in the winter. The Franzensburg, a major work of the Classic–Romantic period, has been built on a man-made island. The building incorporates parts representative of several old monasteries and castles, such as the early gothic *capella speciosa* from Klosterneuburg. It can be reached on one side by a ferry and on the other from an imitation Roman bridge. It currently houses a museum of national artifacts and a typical Austrian café.

The park is also home to several smaller structures. In 1753, the **Green Pleasure Pavilion** (Grünes Lusthaus, also known as the Diana Temple) was constructed. Its ceiling fresco was painted by Vinzenz Fischer and depicts the killing of Diana's favorite deer by Actaeon and his consequent punishment. The **Concordia Temple**, a small dome supported by eight Corinthian columns, was erected in 1805. The **Jousting Field** (Turnierplatz), located near the lake, is one of the few well-preserved jousting fields of the Romantic era. Its well-preserved form allows it to be used to stage special medieval events, concerts, or other outdoor activities during the summer. At the main entrance of the park, a beautiful fountain was installed in 1980.

It is an IIASA tradition for each departing Director to plant a tree in the park, near the Schloss. The contributions to date include a chestnut tree, a pink flowering chestnut tree, a sugar maple, an oriental cherry tree, a trumpet tree, a Hungarian ash, and a Whitebeam.

IIASA shares office space in the main palace with the **Schloss Laxenburg Betriebsgesellschaft**—the Austrian authority in charge of the castles, the park, and their recreation area. Its offices are located on the ground floor facing the square, to the right of the main entrance.

The **Palace Square** (Schlossplatz) is a protected national monument, as is much of Laxenburg. Many houses in the village were built during Maria Theresia's reign. She also had the first school constructed in the building diagonally across from IIASA, which now houses the town pharmacy and offices for the local doctor and dentist.

The **Parish Church** across from the Schloss dates to 1693, when Emperor Leopold laid the corner stone. It was probably designed by Carlo Antonio Carlone. The facade and tower, which were added in the years 1724 to 1739, were by Mathias Steindl. It is considered one of the most beautiful early baroque churches in Austria. The prayer stool used by Emperor Franz Josef and Empress Elisabeth is still in the church.

The **Convent**, belonging to a Swiss order of nuns, consists of two former palaces—the Schwarzenberg and the Kaunitz-Wittgenstein palaces—and

a home for the aged that was built in 1956 where the “Zum Stern” inn once stood. The Schwarzenberg palace was a Schwarzenberg family possession from at least the 17th century until it became part of the convent in 1913. Parts of the Kaunitz-Wittgenstein palace date from the 17th century, but the majority of the building was constructed in the 18th century for Maria Theresia’s Prime Minister, Kaunitz. It became convent property in 1935.

The **Imperial Railway Station** (Kaiserbahnhof), which connected Laxenburg with the Südbahn (south railway line, Vienna–Trieste) in Mödling, was built in 1845, during the reign of Ferdinand I. Emperor Ludwig III of Bavaria was the last royal visitor to come to Laxenburg by train in 1918. Train service was discontinued and the last ties removed in 1956. Today, the Kaiserbahnhof serves as a local restaurant.

The **Winged St. Marcus Lion**, the emblem of Venice, between the railway station and the Schloss Restaurant, is a memorial to the time when Venice belonged to Austria (1815–1866). It was originally located in front of the South Railway Station (Südbahnhof) in Vienna.

The **Schloss Restaurant** (formerly the Grüne Haus), a small estate, was built in 1689 by Prince Leopold Dietrichstein. In 1766 it was acquired by Maria Theresia and restored by her court architect, Nicolo Pacassi. The Empress first gave it to her Field Marshall, Count von Daun, but after his death she presented it to her favorite daughter, Archduchess Marie Christine, and her husband Duke Albert von Sachsen-Teschen. The couple is depicted on the ceiling fresco in the Oval Room. Marie Christine is seated to the right of the pergola and her husband, dressed in blue, is leaning towards her. Entering the pergola, accompanied by her dog, is Maria Theresia. The frescoes are believed to have been painted by Johann Bergel, a painter born in Northern Bohemia (1766), who did much work in Habsburg castles.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Grüne Haus served as an Imperial guesthouse. Many luminaries stayed here, among them Baron Joseph von Obenaus, the tutor of Napoleon’s only son, the Duke of Reichstadt. The last visitor, in May 1918, was King Ludwig III of Bavaria who, together with Emperor Karl, reviewed a parade in front of the building. After World War I, the estate was used for various receptions, including a ball held in 1937 under the patronage of Chancellor Dollfuss. The building survived the Second World War virtually unscathed but needed extensive renovation before it was turned over to IIASA in 1977. It currently houses the Institute’s cafeteria and restaurant, meeting rooms, guestrooms, and several apartments, including that of the Director.

Schloss Laxenburg

Schloss Laxenburg, originally known as the “Blauerhof” (Blue Court), was owned in the 18th century by Friedrich Carl Graf von Schönborn, who commissioned Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt to extend the building. Parts of the facade built at that time still exist (e.g., the park side of the northeast wing). The Blue Court was enlarged to its present size by Maria Theresia, who acquired the property from Field Marshall von Daun when the old palace became too small for her needs. Pacassi drew up plans for a new summer residence based on the von Daun estate and the result was one of the three main residences of the Habsburg rulers. The other two were the winter palace, the Hofburg on the Ringstrasse in downtown Vienna, and the summer palace, Schönbrunn, in the 13th district of Vienna.

One can hardly read a book on Austrian history without finding a reference to Schloss Laxenburg. Here the Habsburgs enjoyed relative freedom from the strict Spanish court etiquette at the Hofburg, but because only the Imperial rooms had heating facilities, the palace was used only in the warmer months. During the First World War, the Schloss was the seat of the Imperial Council. Emperor Wilhelm II and Ludwig III of Bavaria, as well as other allies, visited Laxenburg during this period. The last court celebration in the village was the wedding of the Emperor Karl’s brother, Archduke Maximilian, in 1917.

After the First World War, Austria became a republic and all Habsburg possessions became state property. Between the wars, the buildings were used for the War Victims’ Fund, and during the Second World War, a German tank regiment was headquartered in the Schloss until it was driven out by the Soviets in 1945. They, in turn, used the palace until the four-power occupation of Austria ended in 1955.

When Laxenburg was made part of greater Vienna in 1938, the Council of Vienna expressed interest in developing the area as a recreational center. However, the restoration of Imperial palaces and castles was a low priority after the war. The Schloss stood empty and fell into disrepair, as did the park. The first restoration project—repair of park paths and monuments—began in 1962. On 16 March 1963, the Schloss Laxenburg Contract was signed, providing for cooperation between the provinces of Vienna and Lower Austria, and in 1973, restoration of the Schloss began. The Franzensburg was also restored and an Erholungszentrum (recreation area)—comprising a restaurant, swimming pool, camping area, minigolf course, and children’s playground—was built in the southwestern corner of the park.

The Ground Floor

The **Main Entrance** features enormous gate-like doors, formerly used to allow carriages to be driven into the palace so that passengers could alight indoors between the two main staircases. The present glass partitions, as well as the stone pavement, date from the 1973–1976 restoration.

The **IIASA Reception Desk** (also known as Visitors Services) occupies the glass-walled office in the main hall opposite the entrance. To the left of this office is the Visitors' Lounge. Photographs of the members of IIASA's Governing Council (one from each of the NMOs) adorn the wall in the Lounge. On the table is a jasper conglomerate boulder formed from gravel deposited 2,200 million years ago, a gift from the former Canadian NMO.

The **Courtyard**, originally paved with wood, was occasionally used in the days of the monarchy for theater performances and concerts. Otherwise, the courtyard served as a turn-around area for carriages entering through the main entrance.

The **Hallways** give Schloss Laxenburg a more practical layout than Schönbrunn, for instance, where most rooms are interconnected without direct access to the outside. Metal wickets in some of the walls once gave servants access to the tiled stoves without requiring them to enter the imperial rooms.

The entire building complex is classified as a national monument, thus no permanent changes can be made without permission from the Bundesdenkmalamt. A few partitions have been erected, but the floor plan of the palace has not been changed and there have been no structural alterations. The window and door handles and other accessories are all executed in the same style period as the palace, and the floors are paved with Kehlheimer stone, a natural stone from Germany, the same type of flagstones that were originally used.

The **Paradise Garden**, located between the southwest part of the Schloss, the Kaisergang, and the Silberkammer, boasts neatly laid walkways and a well-groomed lawn. A photograph taken before the restoration, now hanging in the eastern hallway on the ground floor, provides a stark comparison—a view of collapsing buildings, gaping doorways, missing shutters, and a garden littered with debris, half submerged in mud.

The **Sixtus Stiege**, the spiral staircase leading from the hallway on the ground floor to the first floor in the east wing of the palace, has its place in Austrian history. During the First World War, Emperor Karl wanted to negotiate a separate peace. Two of his wife's brothers, the princes of the Bourbon-Parma family, acted as intermediaries. In 1917 they were smuggled

into the Schloss to meet the Emperor. However, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, informed by his spies of the secret visit and its purpose, squelched the negotiations. The Sixtus staircase was used to bring the princes up to meet the Emperor and takes its name from the elder, Sixtus von Bourbon-Parma.

The **Kaisergang** was the passageway constructed to connect the two parts of the palace so as to allow the Emperor and Empress to go back and forth under one roof. Today it serves the same purpose for IIASA staff.

The **Silberkammer** was originally one large room used to store the Imperial household silver and china. In the period between the two World Wars, it served as the village movie theater. It is now divided into several offices.

The **Park Wing**, between the Conference Center and the Silberkammer, was known as the Kitchen Wing until IIASA staff members requested that the name be changed.

Today, the **Laxenburg Conference Center** consists of the former Imperial Dining Room, the Marshall Rooms, the Kaminzimmer, the Imperial Theater, the grand hallway, and a number of smaller rooms. There is also one full kitchen, a smaller tea kitchen, a sick room, and a large entrance hall from the portico on the northwestern facade. The Conference Center houses the offices of the Conference Center staff and is rented out for conferences, exhibitions, and festive events.

The **Imperial Dining Room**, where the imperial court and its guests once dined under candle-lit crystal chandeliers, is where conference participants now gather for international meetings, receptions, and meals. The baroque ceiling, most likely painted by Vinzenz Fischer (1729–1810), depicts heron hunting, a favorite Habsburg sport. The chandeliers, made of Bohemian glass, are copies of the originals. (At least five chandeliers in the Schloss are originals.) The *trompe l'oeil* frescoes on the inner walls represent stairways behind genuine glass doors. Dampness has damaged some of the frescoes; where no historical information or engravings are available to guide restorers, spaces have been painted simply white. The terrace outside the dining area was added in 1980 and is used as an extended dancing area during parties and other occasions.

The **Marshall Rooms** are the two rooms that border the Imperial Dining Room and are used as additional dining or conference rooms.

The small rooms closest to the door that leads from the Institute to the Conference Center are known as the **Kaminzimmer**. It was the fashion in the 18th century to add Chinese rooms to palaces and castles and fill them with art and curios from “East India.” Unfortunately, so little remained of the original wall decorations and art collection that the notion of restoring the rooms was abandoned.

The **Theater**, built in 1753, drew traveling theater companies from as far as France and Italy in the 18th century. However, it was seldom used during Emperor Franz II's reign (1792–1835). Franz Josef I (1848–1916) showed even less interest. It is said that the well-known Lehar operetta "The Count of Luxembourg" was originally called "The Count of Laxenburg," but Franz Josef objected to the title since it could be connected to him.

Since its restoration in 1980, the Theater has served as the centerpiece of the modern, fully equipped Conference Center facility. An annual series of Schloss concerts takes place here along with other musical performances, trade shows, firm and product presentations, international conferences, and much more. The original stage faced the opposite direction from today's layout; it stood where the rows of seats, a modern balcony, and translation booths are now. IIASA was more interested in seating capacity than a deep stage. Nonetheless, the original setting can be recreated. A hydraulically operated stage in the middle of the room can be raised to about one meter above the floor. There are two sets of curtains, one in the original location and a second under the balcony, and the chairs can be turned around, so that the Theater can be adapted to the size of the audience and to the use. The present seating capacity is 350.

The chandeliers located here are modern and made by Lobmeyr, a firm whose chandeliers are found, among other places, in the Kremlin in Moscow, the palace of the Sheikh of Kuwait in Kuwait City, and the Kennedy Center in Washington. The crystals come from Tyrol and Czechoslovakia and are mounted by hand.

The Imperial balcony can be reached by a staircase from the northeast corner. It faces the former stage and has an exit to the original wrought-iron balcony outside, where the ruler could catch some fresh air during the intermission. The balcony is no longer used. A large screen has been integrated into the podium floor below the balcony and is hoisted to the high ceiling for projections of movies, slide shows, or scientific presentations.

The paved courtyard on the park side of the Theater has its own story. In the mid-1970s the main bridge across the Danube, the Reichsbrücke, collapsed early on a Sunday morning. The cause of the destruction was determined to be old age and weathering. The architect renovating the Schloss Theater area needed paving stones for the courtyard and thus portions of the stately old bridge came to rest in Laxenburg. Opposite the Theater, facing the park, is a building that resembles it – the barracks in the Habsburg days. This building and others west of the road that leads into the park are not part of IIASA. They were formerly stables and carriage houses, among other things, and are now used for storage and housing.

The Upper Floor

The **Historical Rooms**, as they are referred to today, are thirteen former Imperial rooms, facing the park to the southeast and east. They fared the best during the years of decay and were probably better protected because of their historical importance. The rooms have been restored in the original style with stuccoed ceilings and walls covered with silk fabric, each room in a different color. The blind doors were also covered with silk; except for the door handles, they are virtually invisible. Gold leaf covers the stucco as well as the wood framed fields on the walls and doors. In the Habsburg days only these rooms were heated. The glazed brick stoves still remain, but central heating has been inconspicuously installed below the windows. The stoves are unique and range from high rococo to neo-classical styles.

The chandeliers, several made of the original Bohemian glass, are identical to those hanging in the Imperial Dining Room. The rooms are connected by double doors. Etiquette demanded that both wings be opened when the Emperor passed through. For lesser mortals, one door was considered sufficient.

The **Director's Meeting Room (S-77)**—erroneously referred to as the “Elisabeth Room”—faces the southwest and was once the corner room of Emperor Franz Josef's apartment. This is one of the most imposing rooms in the Schloss, with red silk fabric covering the walls, a large white and gold ceramic stove, a giant portrait of Maria Theresia, and a set of original white and gold rococo furniture. During his stays in Laxenburg, Franz Josef left every morning from this room for his office in the Hofburg in downtown Vienna.

Room S-76 is a small but beautifully maintained historical room between what was once the audience room (now the Raiffa Room) and Emperor Franz Josef's apartment (now the Director's Meeting Room). Its walls are covered in pale blue fabric.

The **Raiffa Room (S-75)** was formerly an audience room and is currently used as a meeting room. Its grayish-green wool carpet was specially ordered from England to match the fabric on the walls. In the hallway outside the room hangs a portrait of Professor Raiffa, IIASA's first Director, in whose honor the room was named.

Room S-71 is the corner room of what was once Empress Elisabeth's apartment in Schloss Laxenburg. It is a beautiful historical room with light décor and an enormous mirror on one wall. This room, which faces the southeast, offers a particularly fine view of the park and,

on occasion, deer can be seen grazing in the meadow beyond the window. Elisabeth first used her apartment during her honeymoon. It is said not to have been undiluted pleasure. Her husband Franz Josef left her every morning for his office in the Hofburg, and as company for his 16-year-old bride he sent his severe mother Sophie, who was also Elisabeth's maternal aunt.

Room S-70 was used by Emperor Karl as his bedroom. Although his headquarters were in Baden, Karl spent at least half the time during his reign in Laxenburg.

Room S-65, a small but ornate room, can be reached by stepping out of the elevator from the ground floor to the Belvedere (where there was formerly a staircase) at the first floor and turning left. This was the first and only bathroom in the Schloss before IIASA's tenure. It was installed for Emperor Karl, the last ruler of Habsburg Austria (1916–1918), who inherited the crown after the death of Emperor Franz Josef. Franz Josef, for his conservative attitudes, resisted such innovations as the typewriter, the telephone, and the telegraph, among others. Karl, in contrast, immediately set about equipping the Schloss with these modern conveniences, much to the annoyance of the old courtiers, who dubbed him "Karl der Plötzliche," or "Charles the Sudden."

Room S-63 is known as the Pastel Room because of the paintings on the walls. They are copies of the originals, now housed in the Historical Museum of the City of Vienna.

Empress Elisabeth's Breakfast Pavilion, built on top of the **Kaisergang** (Emperor's Passageway), at the end of the terrace and accessible from the Elisabeth Room's anteroom, is probably one of the smallest public monuments in Austria. Elisabeth escaped here from the formal dining area. This wooden construction, originally open to the winds but currently fitted with windows, overlooks the Paradise Garden, the Schloss Park, and the Conference Center. It has been tastefully furnished with garden rattan furniture upholstered in flowery fabric and is a welcome getaway for guests and staff, a place where they can hold informal talks during the mild season.

The **IIASA Library** is housed in what was Crown Prince Rudolf's apartment (on the first floor to the right of the main entrance). The Crown Prince lived here with his wife Stephanie, and their only child, Elisabeth, was born here. After his death in Mayerling, his widow continued to live in Laxenburg. The library retains some of the stuccoed ceilings, but is otherwise completely modernized and now houses tens of thousands of volumes.

The **Wodak Room**, which seats up to 100 people for lectures, was dedicated to the Austrian Ambassador Walter Wodak, who died unexpectedly in 1974. Ambassador Wodak, then Austrian Ambassador to the Soviet Union, played a key role in securing Austria and Schloss Laxenburg as the home of IIASA.

The **Seminar Room**, once an audience room, has been renovated to serve as a conference room with all modern facilities included.

The Attic

Apart from six offices accessible from the landing by the library (north wing), this floor houses storage and technical facilities. In addition, the attic shelters a large clock, which is located over the main entrance. This Josefinischer-Klassizismus-style clock is surmounted by a crowned eagle and flanked by two stone urns. Its old striking mechanism was hand-wrought and operated with heavy stone weights and a hammer.

The **Belvedere** (“beautiful view”) is a small tower atop the east wing. It was built late in Maria Theresia’s reign and was the domain of her many children. *Trompe l’oeil* frescoes cover the walls on all three floors of the tower. The initial impression is of entering a path in a park. Soft greens, an earth-brown carpet and diffused light contribute to a picture hardly changed since its creation. On the middle floor, a fresco of a courtyard adds perspective to an area that is essentially a landing. An original dumbwaiter once carried meals to this floor of the Belvedere, but no longer operates today. The top floor gives the impression of an airy pergola with white colonnades supporting the open roof and tall arches overlooking distant landscapes. Unfortunately, only two of the arched frescoes in the Upper Belvedere could be restored. Little remained of the other two and there were no records of their original appearance. Similarly, all that survives on the ceiling, once a sky full of birds, is a pair of doves and an owl next to a flower basket. The Belvedere—the highest point in Laxenburg—offers a panoramic view of the world-famous Vienna Woods.

The last authentic piece is the wrought-iron railing. The architects believe that it was left in place when so much else vanished because of its unusual shape: it could not easily be used elsewhere. The space in the Belvedere is used as offices on the lower and middle levels, and as a meeting area on the upper level.

Schloss Laxenburg



