

LOWER GATE with BARBACAN

Kremnica became in the medieval ages **centre of architectonics and art** in the central Slovak mining area, which was closely related with its economical growth. As a main **royal mining city**, it was gaining its wealth from the gold and silver mining, so as from minting coins - Ducats known in the whole Europe.

In the middle of 14th century, a new city neighbourhood was created. Here, a 4.5 hectare **square** was built with a regular rectangular blueprint, containing the houses of patricians. Buildings arranged around the main square place were **fortified with walls**, which symbolized that a burgher became a head of Kremnica. Building of the city's fortification is dated back to second half of the 14th century. In the time of Turkish attacks were the walls raised, fortified and finished, which contributed to the fact that **Kremnica was never conquered**.

One could come into the city using either one of the **three gates**. In the North (from Turiec) using **Upper gate**, through **Lower gate** from the South (from Šášov) and in the East using **Little Gate** (from Bystrica). The gates were an important part of the city fortification. They were in the form of high, multi-storey towers. In the base was a passage protected with a strong gate, a falling grating and a drawbridge.

The defence was also provided with the walls of medieval fortification, primarily being 12m height, joining the fortification of the city castle. In these walls are sophisticatedly scattered various types of portholes. **Conditions of natural relief were appropriately used**, for example uphill landscape or both channels of Kremnica streams. These streams were artificially connected with a channel to fortify the most vulnerable entrance to the city. Nowadays, the intersection of both streams is hidden under the city pavement.

City council decided in the late 19th century to **destroy all three gates** and a part of the fortification. This decision was officially taken because of "enlarging the city mint in order to encourage **the industry and transport growth** in the area near Kremnica". Upper and Little gates were ruthlessly razed to ground and nowadays, they are known only from pictures or paintings. Luckily, the destruction was never finished. Thanks to the artist Béla Angyal, who was in those times a member of city council, **sanitation of the Lower gate with Barbacan had never happened**. The gate remained standing and stands to this time. In the place where originally The Upper Gate was built remains only a blueprint of it.

Building complex of the Lower gate is far too complicated. The older inner gate from the first half of the 15th century is built in a simpler building style. The outer gate - **Barbacan** - was built in 1539 during the ruling of King Ferdinand (his relief is placed on the North side of the building) as an integral part of the **anti-Turkish defence**.

Both buildings are stone towers with gangways. The **outer gate is built oblique to the inner gate**, so the defence is tighter. Barbacan has **two passings**, one bigger (terminated with gothic portal) for wagons, and a smaller one for ordinary people. Above the portal is on the four stone consoles secured half-cylindrical renaissance oriel.

In the year 1950 was Kremnica with its 116 sights, in where belongs also the Lower Gate with Barbacan, listed in the list of **historical town reserve**. The city walls were reconstructed few times and various additions were destroyed to emphasize the original character of the walls. Today is the building of Barbacan the residence of the Information centre and a little exhibition hall. The building of the Lower gate is closed for public.



1. Lower gate with falling grating
2. view on Barbacan through Lower gate
3. Barbacan from the South
4. Barbacan from the North