

Fire and desolation



The fortification work accomplished over the 15th century did not suffice to keep the Swedish artillery at bay during the Thirty Years War, and the Hohkoenigsbourg defences were overrun. Besieged, pillaged then finally burnt to the ground in 1633, the castle was left abandoned for two hundred years.

Its ruins were classified as a historical monument in 1862. Three years later, the castle ruins were purchased by the nearby town of Sélestat. A restoration project was decided on, starting with the consolidation of part of the ruins. In 1882, the architect Winkler drew up an ambitious reconstruction plan which would never be carried out, as the town did not have the means to fund it.

The Alsace region was annexed to Germany in 1871, and Sélestat offered the still majestic ruins of the castle to Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1899.