



UPPER GATE

Medieval City Gate / Museum



The **Upper Gate** (Obertor), erected at the beginning of the 13th century, is one of the City of Neuss' landmarks and the last remaining gate from the city's **medieval defences**. Due to its exposed location on the former Roman road from Cologne to Krefeld, the Upper Gate, from the beginning, was the mightiest and most representative of the city's total of six towers. This is also expressed in its architecture - since the 14th century, the mighty gatehouse has been flanked additionally by two magnificent **round towers**. The gate, through which not only the sovereign but also other high-ranking guests were led into the city, served to demonstrate the defensibility and the self confidence of the city. Many mills and a place of execution were located in the immediate vicinity, along the city moat and the Obererft.

In connection with the numerous armed conflicts, to which Neuss was repeatedly exposed over the course of the centuries, the Upper Gate was heavily damaged again and again. During the **siege** by Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, who made his camp in the Augustine monastery in front of the Upper Gate in 1474/75, processions of supplication to the Chapel of the Mother in Pain at the Upper Gate took place. Following successful survival of the siege, the Upper Gate was sometimes also referred to, in thanks, as the **Virgin's Gate**. After the area around the Upper Gate remained largely untouched by the destruction of the city's Great Fire, to which the majority of the medieval city fell victim in 1586, large parts of the development were, however, knocked down at the end of the 17th century in connection with the building of a citadel. Further mills sprang up here at the end of the 18th century.

When the medieval city fortifications were knocked down in the first half of the 19th century, even in Neuss, the Upper Gate was retained as the city's only gate. From 1828, the middle building served as a lending institution, then, from the 1880s until its move to the **museum at the Market**, the collection of the Antiquities Society was exhibited at the Upper Gate.



Siege of the City of Neuss by Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, in 1474/75, above right the damaged Upper Gate



The Upper Gate with barbican, excerpt from the bird's eye view by Braun and Hogenberg, around 1590



The Upper Gate from the north west, left Kallen Oil Mill, around 1955



The Upper Gate, drawing around 1853

From 1920, it was used as a young people's home. The Upper Gate was badly damaged in 1900, during a fire in one of the neighbouring mills. In the course of restoration (1900-1906), which even the German Emperor William II contributed to financially, the extensions on the west side were removed, so that the increasing amount of traffic could be diverted past the gate.

Next, following the Second World War, the museum and archive collections rescued from the destroyed city museum at the Market were secured in the Upper Gate and actually put on display again from 1950. Once the exhibition areas became too small, it was decided in 1963 that a new museum should be built in close proximity to the Upper Gate, which would be inaugurated in 1975. The Upper Gate was connected to the new building by a bridge and today houses the city history collection.

(Sources and texts: Neuss municipal archives)

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