



WINDMILL TOWER

The Windmill Tower as the oldest and **only municipal windmill** in Neuss is already documented for 1477.

It survived the great fire of 1586 as well as the razing of parts of the city walls and the levelling for the construction of the citadel in 1672. The lower part of the Windmill Tower, built from basalt and tuff on a trachyte plinth, was directly integrated into the 13th century town wall.



From the Middle Ages to the early 19th century, the tower also served as the **municipal prison**. In 1796, the robber Matthias Weber, known as the **'Fetzer'**, was incarcerated here, but managed to stage a spectacular escape. Earlier, he and his accomplices had managed to break into Neuss Town Hall and steal many of the municipal treasures from the archives.

The mill operation ended in the mid-19th century. The tower then served as a storage space, its vaults as a municipal ice cellar to store the natural ice harvested from the surrounding watercourses and then sold for cooling purposes.

In conjunction with the construction of the **municipal water supply system** in 1881, the Windmill Tower was converted to a **water tower** with an additional brick-built storey added. An elevated tank, an octagonal iron reservoir with a slate roof, ensured sufficient water pressure in the pipes.

(Sources and texts: Neuss municipal archives)



The City of Neuss with windmill and Upper Gate during the siege by the troops of Charles the Bold in 1474/75; woodcut, 1477



The Windmill Tower prior to its conversion to a water tower, to its right the municipal concert hall; lithograph, around 1875.



The Windmill Tower converted to a water tower, with the new elevated tank; picture postcard, around 1900



Windmill Tower from the Windmühlengasse with the 'Stahlhaus' steel reservoir, around 1950