# ZEUGHAUS
**Former monastic church**



The **Zeughaus** and the adjacent buildings on the northern side were built as a church and monastery for the **Franciscan Order** in the seventeenth century. In 1632, Archbishop Ferdinand of Cologne secured permission from the city for founding the monastery. This, however, came only after a long, persistent effort in the face of official resistance to any more monasteries due to the exemption of mendicant orders from payment of municipal taxes. The church, built of brick and located at the eastern end of the market, was finally consecrated in 1640. Work on the monastery building itself lasted until 1655.

Following the closure of the monastery in 1802, ownership of the order's buildings was transferred to the municipality. The monastery buildings were then used as a **high school** until 1889, and during this time the church was leased to the Prussian army. By 1864, a **Territorial Army regiment** had established its **Zeughaus**, or armoury, in these buildings, where it stored weapons and other military equipment.

The Zeughaus was subsequently put to use as a grain warehouse and sales hall before it was rebuilt as a banqueting hall. Until 1925, it served as the venue for performances of the **Rhineland Collective Municipal Theatre**. During the **Second World War**, the building suffered severe damage from bombing (1944-1945). Restoration of the wall pillar church was completed in 1950. The baroque trachyte portal with its gable was rebuilt with sandstone. The two round arch portals of the monastery building, made from sculptured stone, have been retained.

Since 1950, the historical church building has been used as a concert hall, among others for the town's **Zeughaus concerts**. In 1999, the "town's fine living room" underwent complete refurbishment and a new foyer was created with roofing from the former inner courtyard of the **cloister**.
*(Sources and texts: Neuss municipal archives)*

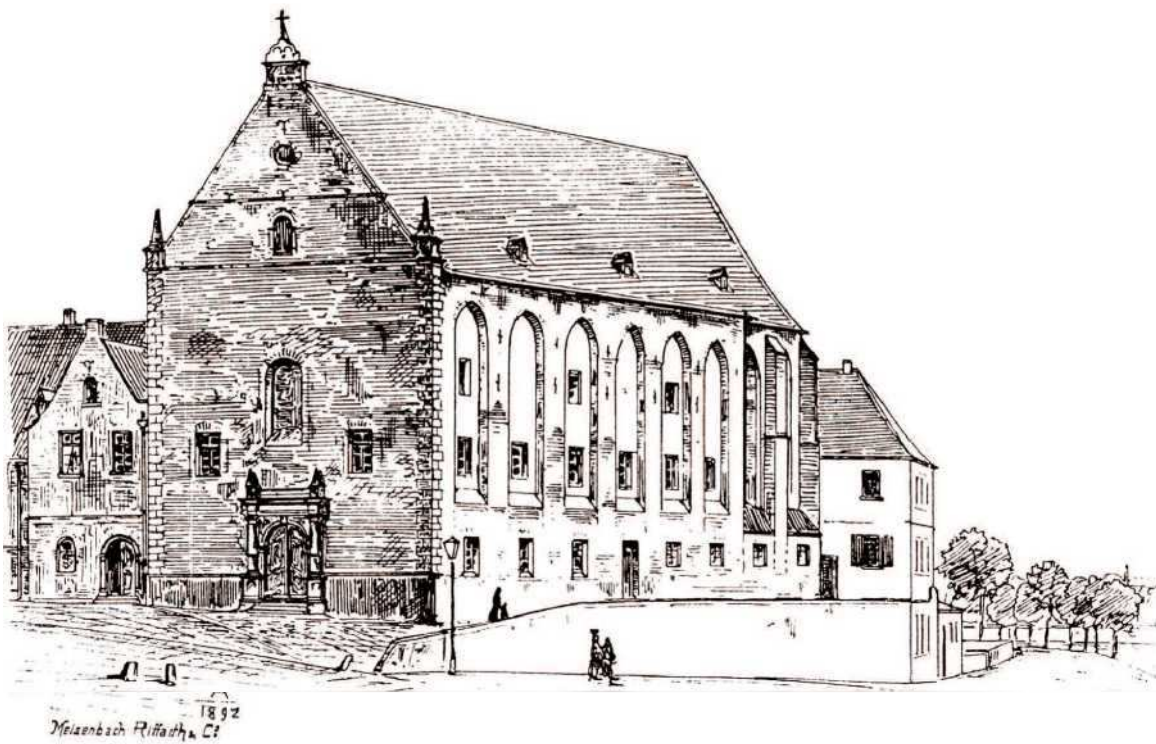**Audio guide and other information:**


Market with sales hall and Zeughaus, about 1910


Market with museum and Zeughaus, about 1912


View of the Zeughaus when used as a concert hall
with the organ installed in 1951

The former monastic church with the adjoining former harbour office (right), 1892 (courtesy of Art Monuments of Rhineland Province, 1895)

| – | 1624 | **Establishment of the Franciscan Order** |
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| – | 1637–39 | **Construction of the monastery church at the market** |
| – | 1655 | **Completion of the monastery buildings** |
| – | 1802 | **Monastery converted to secular property** |
| – | 1805 | **Monastery used for a high school** |
| – | 1825 | **Church becomes armoury for regiment of the Prussian Territorial Army** |
| – | 1865/98 | **Church used for grain storage and as sales hall** |
| – | 1925 | **Venue for the Rhineland Collective Municipal Theatre** |
| – | 1947 | **Zeughaus expanded to become concert and banqueting hall** |
| – | 1944 | **Extensive damage to the Zeughaus** |
| – | 1999 | **Renovation and rebuilding with roofing of the inner courtyard** |

**This plaque was donated by  Mr Hartmut Rohmer, City Councillor**
**Chairman of the Committee on Culture of the City of Neuss 2004-2017**


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