



NEUSS
HISTORISCH

MARIENBERG

Church and Marienberg Monastery



Marienberg Monastery dates back to an endowment by the good citizen of Neuss Adelheid von Stade, who had a small monastery established at the current site in 1439 for sisters following the order of Saint Augustine, this first attested as **mons beatae mariae** – Marienberg – in 1464. The reason for this is presumably the small chapel in honour of the Virgin Mary erected here in 1462. Damaged severely during the Cologne Seneschal's War in 1586, the rebuilt monastery buildings served as a **place of worship, school and rectory** for the Lutheran troops during the Hessen occupation in the Thirty Year's War (1641–1651). After the Hessen soldiers moved out, Augustinians from the destroyed hermitage near Holzheim moved into the Marienberg Monastery. The monastery flourished in the following decades – this reflected in extensive structural additions, amongst other developments. Today, only the **Baroque part of the building** at the Glockhammer, built around 1710, survives as a reminder of these.

During the French period, the monastery took on a secular role in 1802 with the monastery building passing into private ownership. The nuns had already left the town in 1794. The monastery building was given to the newly founded **Evangelical community** as a place of worship in 1805. After the Evangelical Church of Christ was built, the Community of **Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus** from Aachen, who had run an orphanage and high school for girls in the monastery building since 1857, purchased the monastery church. Under the management of the sisters, the school was continually extended, with state recognition as a **“Higher School for Girls”** following in 1909. The school leaving examination could also be taken here from 1912 onwards.

Although the building was severely damaged in the Second World War, lessons could be resumed in the autumn of 1945. In 1952 the school was affiliated to a Higher Commercial College. The continuous growth of the school in the following years made it necessary to extend the school building. Since 1978, modern, functional annexes have joined the Baroque old building, these replacing the extension building of 1909. In 1991, the Sisters relinquished management of the school, which has been in the **trusteeship of the Archbishop of Cologne** since then.

In contrast, rebuilding of the chapel – destroyed except for the outer walls – lasted until 1954. According to plans by the Neuss architect Käthe Gilges, the chapel was extended by a northern side nave with gallery and covered by a flat wooden ceiling. The outer appearance with the **ridge turrets** – shaping the urban landscape from its very inception – were retained. Between 1996 and 1998 the chapel was completely transformed. Following plans by the architect Heinz Döhmen, a light, bright room resulted – the gallery and wooden ceiling having been removed. Today, the Marienberg Church serves as a school chapel.

Owner of the chapel, school- and monastery buildings is the Orphanage Foundation St. Anna and the Marienberg School.

(Sources and texts: Neuss municipal archives)



The Marienberg Monastery and the Rhine Gate (Rheintor) on the bird's-eye view map by Braun and Hogenberg, 1590.



Marienberg Chapel at Glockhammer, about 1900



Assembly hall with drinking fountain, postcard around 1920



View of the old school building before demolition, 1965.

The Erft Channel with the Minster of Quirinus and Marienberg Chapel, view from northeast, postcard around 1905



This plaque was donated by four former pupils of the Marienberg School.

Graphic design: Cornelius Uerlichs