



Esslinger Weinerlebnisweg

Station 5a

Pfleghöfe of Esslingen



City map Esslingen, 1824 created by geometer Erfle (city archive Esslingen)

The texts on the following pages are taken from the booklet accompanying the exhibition "Between Heaven and Earth - Monasteries and Pfleghöfe in Esslingen".



The biggest Pfleghof (administrative buildings of the monasteries which were based outside Esslingen) is situated right next to the Church of our Lady (Frauenkirche). The course of the history brought him the most varied visitors: in 1548, emperor Charles V lived here – between 1803 and 1966 it was a prison for criminals.

Probably Frederick II or Henry VII gave the building as a present to the Cistercian Abbey Salem. Maybe it was the ducal city castle of the Hohenstaufen Dynasty and it seems to be one of the oldest buildings in Esslingen.

The Abbey of Salem was a huge producer of wine. So the property at the Middle Neckar region fitted its profile. In fact, part of the here pressed wine which was of much better quality in comparison to the wine from the Lake Constance was transported to the Monastery in Salem. This Pfleghof in Esslingen was so important for Salem that it was rebuilt and made more representative beginning with 1508.

In 1548 Emperor Charles V stopped over here with his royal entourage. After the Thirty Years' War there was a dispute between the monastery and the city: the tax office entered the Pfleghof building by force and confiscated the whole wine stock in order to exact payment of controversial tax debts. Because of these conflicts Salem decided to sell the building to Württemberg in 1682.

Beginning with 1803 there was a prison in this building, which got the nickname "the Kriminal".

Between 1979 and 1982 it was rebuilt as a catholic parish hall, since 1999 there is the museum of the J.F. Schreiber publishing house museum in the attic floor.



The Pfleghöfe are so different in Esslingen: Across the street there is the monumental stone building of the Pfleghof of the Monastery Salemer, here is the Pfleghof of the Monastery Blaubeuren, by the way of comparison a simple half-timbered house.

The administrative building of the Benedictine monastery Blaubeuren was located between the city walls, which separated the Beutau suburb from the Schoenenberg.

After the demolition of the city walls in the 19th century and the building of the circular road in the 1960s the surrounding has changed very much.

The monastery has had vineyards in Esslingen since the 12th century. The possess is mentioned for the first secured time in 1238, the building itself was mentioned only in 1384. The Pfleghof in Esslingen was the administrative center of the properties they had in the Middle Neckar region. In the beginning a monk was the person who together with servants was responsible for the cultivation of the properties who, with the help of farmhands, was responsible for the cultivation of the properties. End of the 13th century they stopped doing that job themselves and so secular authority was asked to manage the property of the monastery. The building was a storage and collection point for the income of the monastery.

After Protestant Reformation in 1535 there was a Wuertemberg administrator and the earnings went directly to the ducal exchequer.

Nowadays the building is in private possess. For a long time it has been a dancing school.



Until secularization in 1803 the Pfleghof of the Monastery Kaisheim at the foot of the Burg vineyard was a Catholic enclave in the Protestant imperial city. Since then it is privately owned.

In 1293, the Esslingen doctor Trutwein donated the house and the accompanying Marienchapel at the foot of the Schoenenberg to the Cistercian monastery Kaisheim near Donauwoerth.

In 1314 the monastery acquired the Burg vineyard and in 1322 two other houses. Since 1318 there they had a winepress of their own. This resulted in a large courtyard complex. After the siege of Esslingen by Wuerttemberg in 1519 the path called Burgsteige leads to the fortifications of the so-called "castle". The path had been set up to transport cannons although the administrative of the Pfleghof was against this action.

The monastery owned extensive property in Esslingen, including vineyards in Krummenacker, Hegensberg and Zell. After the Reformation, the Pfleghof was of particular importance, as it was still possible for the few remaining Catholics in the city to celebrate mess because the Pfleghof still continued to belong to the Monastery of Kaisheim.

After secularization of the mother monastery in 1803 the Pfleghof in Esslingen was closed. He has been privately owned since then. The chapel was demolished in 1817. The Pfleghof received its present form during a reconstruction in 1919/20. The former press on opposite side has been used by company Kessler as a sparkling wine cellar since 1826.



4 Konstanzer Pfleghof

The Pfleghof of the Chapter Konstanz has been used very differently. First it was branch of the cathedral chapter of Konstanz, in the 19th century it was the Kameralamt (the later tax office) and later on a furniture factory.

The Pfleghof of the cathedral chapter Konstanz on the backside bordered the city wall which was built during domination of the Staufer Dynasty. In the basement of the building were large basement rooms. The Pfleghof served for the administration of the numerous goods in the area of Cannstatt and the Remstal. The city of Esslingen was chosen because it was particularly defensive and therefore considered as safe.

The Constance orderlies filed a petition in 1578 for the acquisition of the adjoining building because the Pfleghof had only limited storage capacity. Because the application was rejected, the Pfleghof had to be extended beyond the city wall. A complete new building arised in 1594/95, another conversion in 1756. Since that time, the baroque front construction with the mansard roof exists. After the secularization in 1803, the Pfleghof went first to Baden, in 1807 to Wuerttemberg. Until 1889, the Kameralamt (the later tax office in Esslingen was located here.

The representative façade design in Louis XVI style and the shop with two arcades were designed by the architect Albert Benz in 1904. At the same time he "restored" the Pfleghof of the Monastery Speyer. At that time, the merchant Schaeufele acquired the estate and used it for his joinery and later furniture production. Today there is a chancellery office and a shop here.



5 Bebenhäuser Pfleghof

A huge stone building is in the middle of the historic city center of Esslingen. The coat of arms points to its former owner. Today's use as a municipal library marks the temporary end of a long line of uses of the giant building.

The possess of the Cistercian monastery Bebenhausen near Tuebingen is first mentioned in a papal letter of protection in 1229. The City Council granted also this monastery tax exemption, but soon there have been disputes about it.

In the following centuries, the monastery managed to acquire larger property in the city. In 1466 is is described in a document that the Pfleghof of the Monastery Bebenhausen extends up to street named Heugasse.

Around 1500 the stone building was erected as it can be found today. The monastery owned vineyards and a garden in the town. A chapel built in 1339 on this site existed until the 18th century. After the reformation, the Pfleghof was subordinated by Wuerttemberg administrators.

However, its importance decreased. As the buildings were no longer used economically, parts were also lent during this time. In the 19th century various businesses were based here: 1868 a sparkling wine factory, in 1894 the book printer Schreiber, in 1920 storage rooms of the company Nanz.

Since 1980 the building has been owned by the city. From 1981 to 1988 the adult education center was housed here, since then it is the public library.



A powerful complex of buildings dominates the district east of church St. Dionys. The place where today sparkling wine of Esslingen is manufactured and tasted, for a long time has been the branch of the Cathedral Chaptel of Speyer, which held the patronage of the parish church.

In 1213 the Cathedral Chapter Speyer received the tenth of the parish church of St. Dionys as a gift. In the huge estate on the southeastern side of the town church, the Cathedral Foundation managed its rich tenth income. At the same time it was also the rectory for the cleric of the church. The oldest parts are dated from 1220, in 1500 there was was a major renovation.

After the introduction of the Reformation in 1531, the cathedral chapter lent the rights of the Pfleghof and urban tithing to the city. As a result of the introduction of the new doctrine, the cathedral chapter left the imperial city definitively in 1556. The building continued to serve as a rectory of the parish church. Another reconstruction in the Renaissance style took place around 1600.

Georg Christian von Kessler acquired the building with its massive vaulted cellars in the 19th century and set up its sparkling wine cellar there, the first in Germany. Until today the headquarter is here. The exterior of the house received in 1904, when architect Albert Benz had applied a historicist decorative timbering to the originally simpler timbering.



The Pfleghof of the Monastery Fuerstenfeld falls out of line: as a Baroque building it is exceptional and striking in the medieval town center of Esslingen. Today, Mediterranean meals are served under magnificent stucco ceilings.

The Cistercian monastery Fuerstenfeld near Munich has had possession in Esslingen since the 14th century. The branch is to be seen in connection with the policy of the empire: Ludwig IV. from the house Wittelsbach wanted to have his house monastery Fürstenfeld present in the strategically and economically important place.

In 1320, the monastery was given a chapel. In the following year they were awarded more houses, a press, vineyards and various taxes and income. Between the monastery and the city there were repeated conflicts regarding privileges and taxes.

Nevertheless, the monastery was able to expand its possessions quickly. The monks were interested in wine. The Pfleghof chapel played a major role in city life: in addition to the chapels in the Pfleghöfe of the Monastery Salem and Kaisheim it was one of only three places where, after the Reformation, the Catholic Mass was celebrated.

The Pfleghof burned down during the city fire of 1701. It was rebuilt in baroque style. After secularization, the Pfleghof was sold to the city of Esslingen in 1804. In the course of the 19th century the building had changing owners, since 1894 it has been a restaurant.



The Pfleghof of the Denkendorf Monastery has not been long in use. For a long time it was in possess of Wuerttemberg and for almost 200 years it has had a tradition as a restaurant.

A first establishment the chancellery of the Holy grave in Denkendorf is mentioned in 1387 as a house and enclosed yard area near the city wall at the Beutator (gate). Later, the monastery sold the houses in the Beutau, but kept the local winepress, which was right next to the wine press of the Pfleghof of the Monastery Kaisheim. Denkendorf owned vineyards and unspecified real estate in Esslingen.

After 1400, the building Franziskanergasse 3 was built as Pfleghof of the monastery Denkendorf, with the inclusion of older components.

With the introduction of the Reformation in Wuerttemberg in 1535 the property of the monastery Denkendorf was managed together with those of the monasteries Adelberg and Blaubeuren by a ducal administrator.

Numerous buildings in the neighborhood were destroyed during the great city fire of 1701. Meanwhile, the Denkendorf Pfleghof remained untroubled.

In the 19th century the building underwent numerous changes of use and owners. In 1812, the Schwanen host Johann Georg Storz established a restaurant and brewery. Beginning with 1891 the Pfleghof was the headquarter of the oldest German film factory Langheck & Co.. In 1987 the restaurant tradition was followed up and the Brauhaus „Zum Schwanen“ (The Swan) reopened.



9 Roggenburg-Ursbergischer Pfleg Hof

Only the coat of arms at the small building at the end of the Webergasse still reveals the former use as a monastery Pfleg Hof.

The two Premonstraten monasteries Ursberg and Roggenburg, which are located in Bavarian Swabia, were only present in the city for a short time. The building is relatively small, due to the relative small possess in Esslingen.

A document of 25th June 1563 attests, how important the wine of Esslingen was for the two monasteries: The monastery Ursberg has lent a total of 1,350 Gulden to Esslingen citizens; the debtor should pay the annual interest rate in the form of wine.

Due to the financial difficulties after the Thirty Years' War the two monasteries were constrained to sell their property. An employee, the then-administrator of the possessions, acquired the building for 400 Gulden. Then the house changed hands several times due to purchase and inheritance.

Beginning with the middle of the 19th century until about 1905, the woodworking factory of Gustav Weber & Cie. was housed there, then for some years it has been the clubhouse of the Salvation Army. Today it is a residential building.