

HISTORICAL CENTRE

The Tiefburg is part of the historical centre of Handschuhsheim, along with the „Schlösschen“ („little castle“) and Carl Rottmann Hall, the old town hall, the Tiefburg school, the Protestant Friedenskirche (Peace Church) and the Roman Catholic St.Vitus church.

The Schlösschen opposite the Tiefburg was built as a country mansion in 1609. It changed hands many times. It was owned during part of the 19th century by a family of merchants called Uhde, and then by an English family called Graham. Carl Adolf Uhde had the adjoining park planted with indigenous and exotic trees and shrubs. John Benjamin Graham opened the garden to the public, which is why it is known to this day as „Graham Park“.

Ownership of the Schlösschen was transferred to the city of Heidelberg in 1916. The city first used it as a youth hostel (which moved to a different site in the fields of Handschuhsheim next to the zoo in 1956) and then as the municipal school for music and song. The former service buildings made way for the new Carl Rottmann Hall, built in 1985 as a

central event hall for the district. The Schlösschen itself now houses the municipal citizens' centre for Handschuhsheim. When the old town hall was built in 1877-78, just to the east of the Tiefburg, it was called the new town hall because it already had two predecessors in the centre

of the village. After Handschuhsheim was incorporated into Heidelberg in 1903, the town hall was used for several decades to accommodate offices of the city administration, and until 2006 it was also home to

the volunteer fire brigade. Today, the facilities of the old town hall, like those of the Tiefburg, are used by Handschuhsheim societies as event locations and practice rooms.

St.Vitus church stands opposite Graham Park. First mentioned in 774, this is the oldest church in Heidelberg. It was once a Romanesque style building, then Gothic, and was given its present appearance in 1933. After the end of the Thirty Years' War, St.Vitus was a simultaneum or shared church, used by both Protestants and Roman Catholics for public worship, until the Protestant Friedenskirche (Peace Church) was built in 1910. The 65 metre tower of the Friedenskirche now serves as a landmark for the district and can be seen from afar.

After the Grand Duchy of Baden disbanded denominational primary schools in 1876 and instead prescribed non-denominational „community“ schools by law, the municipality of Handschuhsheim built the first communal school house in 1897. For a long time, this school in Kriegsstraße (War Street) was the only primary school in the village, until the Heiligenberg school was opened as a primary and secondary school in 1957. Since then, the school next to the Tiefburg bears the official name „Tiefburg school“. In 1997, a sports hall was added to it, half submerged into the ground. The latest eye-catching addition is the break hall with its blue glass façade, disparagingly called the „Aquarium“ by some of the locals.



HANDSCHUHSHEIM- TIEFBURG AND HISTORICAL CENTRE

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THE TIEFBURG- MEDIEVAL GEM



The Tiefburg („low castle“) in the centre of the Heidelberg district of Handschuhsheim gets its name from its geographical location. In contrast to high castles built on the crown of a hill or on a hillside, it is in the valley or lowland, and as a moated castle once had a moat filled with water to protect it. The moat used to be much deeper than the present ditch, and the water came from a nearby mill stream (Mühlbach). It is not known exactly when the Tiefburg was built or by whom. It is assumed that it was built in the 12th century, possibly by the Abbey of Lorsch or the Count Palatines of the Rhine (later known as the Prince Electors of the Palatinate), who set up residence in nearby Heidelberg around this time. It is also possible that the castle had its origins in a fortified estate. The knights of Handschuhsheim who lived in the Tiefburg were initially unfree knights, known as ministeriales, in the service of the Abbey of Lorsch, and later on vassals of the Prince Electors of the Palatinate. They were not the rulers of the village, nor did they give it its name - they simply called themselves by the name of the place in which they lived. The dynasty died out when the last knight of Handschuhsheim, Johannes (Hans) V., died aged 16 on 31st December 1600 from injuries sustained in a duel. Through inheritance, the Tiefburg became the property of the barons of Helmstatt (who beca-

WITNESS TO ELECTORAL PALA- TINATE HISTORY

me counts of Helmstatt in the 18th century). The Tiefburg was badly damaged in the Thirty Years' War. In 1689 it fell victim to the War of the Palatine Succession and became uninhabitable, whereupon the Helmstatts built a new residence in the immediate vicinity. The original gate of this new residence can still be seen to the east of the square in front of the Tiefburg. Count Raban von Helmstatt had the Tiefburg restored in the years 1910 to 1913.



Top:
The Knights' Hall
in the castle resi-
dence

Middle:
The fountain in
the
courtyard

Bottom:
View of castle
residence from the
south-west.



Top:
Bridge and castle
gate

Middle:
The large vaulted
cellar below the
castle residence



Bottom left:
The covered
courtyard and the
Friedenskirche

Bottom right: The
entombed knight



In 1950, Count Bleickard sold the Tiefburg to the city of Heidelberg, who then passed on responsibility for its administration and use to the Stadtteilverein Handschuhsheim (district society). Since then, the Tiefburg has provided the romantic backdrop for a whole range of events organized by the different societies in Handschuhsheim, and it plays a central role during the annual three-day „Hendsemer Kerwe“ (fair). The partially galleried courtyard and the conversion of rooms in the cellar and castle residence have helped to make the Tiefburg an extremely popular event location. First mentioned in 765 in a record of the Abbey of Lorsch, Handschuhsheim has now existed for 1250 years. In 1903 it was incorporated into the city of Heidelberg. The Stadtteilverein Handschuhsheim has existed since then and has its office in the Tiefburg. Some archives of the district are housed in the upper floor of the castle.

In 1770, the remains of an entombed knight were found in what had been a sealed niche until then, next to the staircase leading to the castle dungeon. It is not known whether this entombment was a punishment or a special form of burial. The knight's suit of armour made its way into the antiques collection of the Prince Electors, and later on a different suit of armour was placed in the niche.

POPULAR EVENT LOCATION

