

KLOSTERZENTRUM BRÜCKSTRASSE

Bridge Street: Former centre of monastic life

First documented in 1308, Brückstrasse (“Bridge Street”) probably dates back originally to the time of Neuss’s oldest merchant settlement (Latin: portus) in the 11th century and is one of the oldest streets in the city. It stretched from Oberstrasse to the loading dock (“Brücke” in German) which, with the extension of the market eastwards, was situated near the “Judensteg” gate. The broad curve of the road made it easier for carts to negotiate the steep climb from the Rhine to the Oberstrasse. Merchants’ houses and warehouses overlooked the river. For centuries Brückstrasse was the centre of monastic life in Neuss.

Its construction was largely completed by the end of the 12th century, when Kamp Abbey purchased a large area of land here. In the centuries that followed, the monastery quarter continued to grow and a number of different religious orders were established: the Alexians (1451), Augustinian Canons (“Oberkloster” monastery, 1603) and the Canonesses Regular of the Holy Sepulchre (1654).

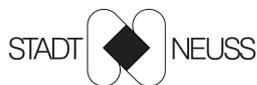
After the Napoleonic dissolution of the monasteries in 1802, the Oberkloster was used as an oil mill, while the Sepulchrine became a local hospital. During the Second World War, the buildings on Brückstrasse were almost completely destroyed. The land was later used for the building of the city’s central bus station, in use until 2001. Excavation work carried out subsequently uncovered a large number of architectural remains from earlier periods and these have been incorporated into the new “Romaneum” building, which today houses a music school, adult education centre and distance learning university.

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Brückstrasse looking north with the Alexian chapel (right) around 1930



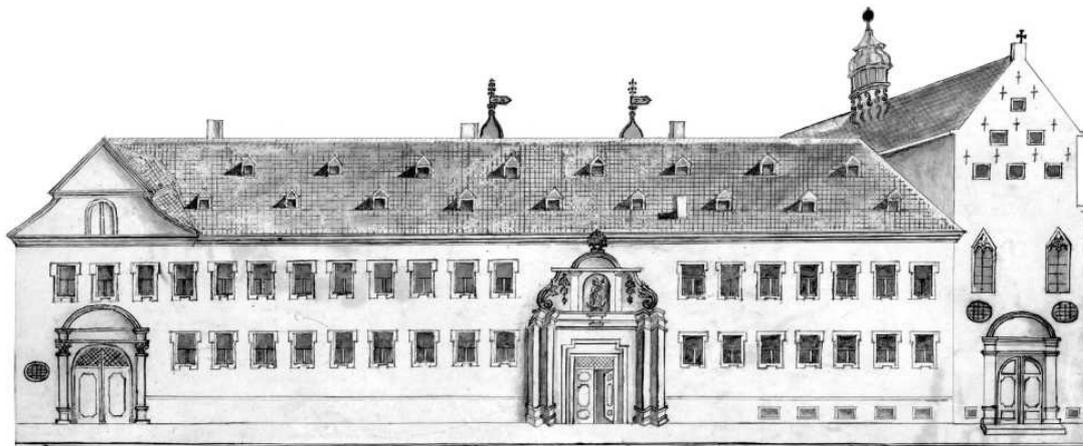
Chapel and abbey of the Alexian Brothers on the eastern side of Brückstrasse (now the Romaneum) around 1877



Hospital church on the west side of Brückstrasse around 1877



Central bus station around 1960



Rebuilt in 1721 on the east side of Brückstrasse, the 'new' Oberkloster replaced an earlier structure of 1603. Until 1583 the monastery had stood near the Obertor city gate.



"Kehlturm" bastion and Brückstrasse in the 17th century



Brückstrasse in the 18th century

Chronology:

- 1451 First documented evidence of the Alexian Order in Brückstrasse
- 1504 First Alexian chapel built
- 1583 Augustinian Canons move into Brückstrasse
- 1586 First Alexian chapel destroyed
- 1603 New Oberkloster monastery built by Augustinian Canons
- 1607 Church of the new Oberkloster consecrated
- 1608 Alexian chapel re-consecrated
- 1654 Canonesses Regular of the Holy Sepulchre establish an order
- 1721 Oberkloster rebuilt in Baroque style
- 1794 French Army bakery
- 1802 Monastic institutions secularised
- 1837 Thywissen takes over the Oberkloster for use as an oil mill
- 1913 St. Anna Hospital for female factory workers established
- 1944 Alexian monastery destroyed during Second World War
- 1949 Central bus station built
- 2012 Inauguration of the „Romaneum“