



Former Synagogue in Sulzbach-Rosenberg

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Opening times: Wednesday and Sunday 2pm to 5pm
Admission: Adults €3,00 concessionary €1,50
For group tours please book by telephone in advance. Reservation €30 plus admission.
Guided tours for the public take place at 2 pm on the last Sunday of the month. Admission: 5 euros (reduced rate 3 euros)
Admission includes the museum of local history (Stadtmuseum)

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Map of the old city centre



The Synagogue in Sulzbach

It was opened as a place of commemoration and meeting in 2013. After the fire in the town in 1822 the synagogue was rebuilt and rededicated on 31 August 1827. It was considered one of the most beautiful in Bavaria.

After the 1920s no more services could be held, as there was no longer the required minimum of at least 10 male members in the congregation. The leaders of the national-socialist town council were looking for suitable rooms for the local museum, founded in 1904, and in 1934 wanted to take over the "former Jewish synagogue". After the break-up of the Jewish community the town purchased the building in 1936 for 1,000 Reichsmarks (compensation). This prevented its destruction in the November program in 1938.

After 1945 the Jewish Restitution Successor Organisation took over the synagogue and sold it in 1950 to a private buyer. From 1954 there were successive building alterations to use the building as accommodation and storage facilities. However, many of the original features were preserved.

The town of Sulzbach-Rosenberg acquired the building in 2008 and by 2013 had substantially restored it. The historical interior with its impressive dome as well as the exterior front with its ornate winding frieze and cantered corners were recreated. The choice of colours is based on the version/ situation in 1827: white-washed walls and grey-marbled pillars. In the entrance hall the last version of the room from 1869 was restored exemplary. Here the outlines of the Bima and Tora shrine are depicted.



Tolerance and freedom of thought

The religious policy of the Sulzbach count Palatine, Christian August (1622 – 1708, illustration) is regarded as a “highlight of the Enlightenment.” After he had incorporated the equal status of the Catholic and Protestant faiths in the simultaneum or shared church, in 1666 he allowed Jews to settle in his residence in Sulzbach.

Up until 1687 both the synagogue and the school were situated in the private house of Moses Bloch. Then the Jewish community purchased the Gundermann'sche house on the present location. After the building had fallen into disrepair, the wealthy Jewish court administrator and head of the congregation, Jakob Josef had a new baroque building erected (1737 – 1740), which was damaged in the fire of 1822. After the reconstruction certain features from the newly erected synagogue of 1826/27 and findings from the archaeological excavations are now on prominent display for visitors.

The courtyard on the north side of the synagogue, which was used in the wedding ceremony in accordance with the traditional rite, is of particular significance (illustration). Here, set in the wall of the synagogue, you find the wedding stone against which the glass from which the bride and groom had drunk, was shattered.



The history of the building and the use for which it was intended is explained at two acoustic and computer stations and

is complemented by original exhibits. The historical documentation in three parts brings the great tradition of Jewish culture in Sulzbach back to life again.

Jews in Sulzbach, Hebrew printing shops and Sulzbach the Bible town. A total of twelve computer points and four acoustic points give further insight into the various topics.

Ground floor

Jews in Sulzbach

Here you can find a description of the development of the Jewish community, which in 1801 reached its highest point with 340 members. (Marked the 340 point) the office of Jewish representative was unique to Sulzbach. (1690– 1765) He was appointed by the duke to represent the Jewish community. He was the consultant for all Jewish affairs, as well as being their highest legal authority and fulfilled a protective function for this section of the population.

The Jewish Edict of 1813 and the wave of emigration after 1840 marked the decline of the Jewish community in Sulzbach. The last Rabbi was Dr. Wolf Schlessinger (1812 – 1854) who in the course of the 1848 revolution had to flee to America. Leopold Prager (1864 – 1930) was the last representative of the congregation. His death marked the end of the Jewish congregation.

Charlotte Stein-Pick, the daughter in law of the last teacher and cantor, Sigmund Stein, was able to save the oldest Torah roll and two Kiddush cups from the synagogue in Sulzbach during her emigration to America in August 1939. One of the cups has been returned and is on exhibition (illustration).



Next to this are some of the printed works from the academics of the Sulzbach court from the second half of the 17th century, including Knorr von Rosenroth's “Kabbala Denudata”, the most important work of the mystic Jewish teaching, as well as the Genizah collection from the Jewish school.

On the plan of the city from 1783 houses are marked which in the course of about a century were in Jewish possession. The experiences and the fate of four Sulzbach Jews can be followed at the four audio points, such as from 1848, the year of the revolution or about the descendants of the last Sulzbach Jews.

Upper floor, the former women's gallery

Hebrew printing house

The Hebrew printing houses in Sulzbach (1669 – 1851) were of significance for the whole of Europe. This tradition ended with the Arnstein family in 1851.

“No other Hebrew print-shop achieved such a well-founded reputation and renown among the people as the Sulzbach printing houses. Their popularity was unchallenged from 1730 to 1830; in continuous succession there followed similar works of secular literature, prayer books for all occasions and many rites, the Talmud, the Mishnah, the Pentateuch, Jewish– German literature for women, religious meditation, prophets and hagiographers some of which in were in numerous editions.” (Magnus Weinberg, Die Hebräischen Druckereien in Sulzbach, Frankfurt a.M. 1903)



(illustration).

The Talmud edition, “Sulzbach red” (1755 – 1762) by the print-shop Fränkel/ Arnstein became famous. Under the symbol of the printer is written in red in Hebrew “In Sulzbach”

Sulzbach, the Bible town

Christian August's tolerant attitude promoted printing in his seat of residence. Beginning in 1664 with the foundation of the Lichtentaler printing house (1664 – 1785, reformed church) there followed Holst (1683 – 1790, Lutheran) and Gallwitz (1708 – 1797, Catholic). Only in Sulzbach did Christians and Jews print their sacred works here at the same time.

With Johann Esias von Seidel (1758 – 1827) Sulzbach reached its peak as an inter-confessional Bible town. For Seidel printed the Bible for Christians of all faiths. The Sulzbacher, Josef Franz von Allioli (1793 – 1873) is regarded as the most renowned Catholic Bible translator. The Protestant pastor, Georg Wolfgang Franz Panzer (1729 – 1805) was the founder of bibliographic research in Germany.

