



1945



2003



today



Bürgerinitiative Historisches Rathaus Wesel e.V.
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The owner of the late Gothic façade is the civic foundation. The citizens' initiative collects donations for them and issues receipts.

Donations are kindly requested to:

„ BI Historisches Rathaus Wesel“
Volksbank Rhein Lippe eG
IBAN: DE 81 3566 0599 3000 5900 10
BIC: GENODE1RLW



Historisches Rathaus Wesel

PRESERVING ITS BEAUTY -
HISTORICAL TOWN HALL WESEL



gothic lace
1455 - 1698
(recreated drawing)



1806



1880



TOWN HALL & CITY



FAÇADE & FIGURES



CONSTRUCTION TIME & REALISATION

Citizens' Initiative & Foundation : promote advertising, planning, reconstruction and maintenance.

The Citizens' Initiative Historical Town Hall Wesel e. V. (BI, est. 1986) emerged from a local citizens' circle of friends after World War II. After a number of inadequate attempts of development in the fifties and eighties this circle of friends focused on the promotion of a development which considered the size and history of the oldest square in the Hanseatic town. Since 2003 the BI has collected 2 million Euros for the realization of the reconstruction plans and popularized the project nationwide. In 2006 the **Citizens' Foundation** was installed and took over the implementation of the reconstruction plans. The reconstructed façade was erected in front of the site of the Trapp-building on the same spot. Thus cathedral and town hall unite impressively at the historical site. Gothic remains of a cellar can be seen in the tourist information (Stadtinformation); the town hall bell and a torso of a statue are on exhibition in the Volksbank Rhein-Lippe eG-building. The figural frieze with gothic canopies was finished in 2017, the façade is illuminated.

Supporting a great achievement with little money – Completion is followed by maintenance.

We kindly ask for your donation supporting the needs of maintaining the facade. Become a supporting member for an annual donation starting from 50 € or donate a single sum.

1407: Wesel admitted to the Hanseatic League, the Council chamber on top of butchers' stall is located in the centre of the Great Market.

1455: Council moves to two civil houses on the southern front, both houses are connected with a splendid late gothic decorative façade in Flemish style (Baumberg sandstone): meat stall behind Gothic door, entrance to the house over market steps and baroque door, Mayor's room on the floor of statues, extended roof with timber vault used as Council Hall, Hansa Hall, Emperor's Hall.

Wesel became the third largest Hanseatic town in the "third of Cologne" and an important emporium between Amsterdam and Cologne. All Hansa days except one were held here.

1476: tower with gothic spire, medieval stone figures: St. Willibrord, Virgin Mary, St. Christopher, St. Anthony, the three Magi.

1540: first reformed service held in Willibrord church.

1698: Tower is altered with baroque cupola.

1858: Refurbishment of the façade, i. a.: replacement of the 6 Saints by secular dignitaries (from left to r.): **Frederick William of Brandenburg (the Great Elector), Adolf I., Duke of Cleve, Charlemagne, St. Willibrord (the only preserved medieval figure), King Rudolph I. of Habsburg, Dietrich III. Count of Cleve, Elector John Sigismund of Brandenburg.**

With emperors, kings, dukes, the 1918-soldiers' council and other dignitaries appearing on its stairs throughout the centuries, Wesel's town hall represents European history.

On February 16th, 18th and 19th 1945 Wesel was completely destroyed after three bomb raids, the town hall of 1455 was hit as one of the last buildings. It had stood on the site for almost 500 years.

2003 – 2011: Planning and reconstruction, carrying out in Udelfang sandstone.

2014 -2017: reconstruction of the figural frieze (stone casting) and canopies (Udelfang sandstone).

The town hall façade (h. 20m, b. 13 m) is an architecturally independent piece of work, serving as the connecting "face" of two existing residential buildings and a sign of its new municipal function in a prosperous Hanseatic town.

Relating to the history of art we see a use of forms from the transitional time between late Gothic and Renaissance style ("from the ecclesiastical to the profane"), following the artistic ideal of the Flemish late Gothic with numerous decorative elements and window forms. This is completed by the sum of stylistic peculiarities: the distribution of forms, clusters and intervals casting light and shadow effects. Examples: Mechelen, Brugge, Leuven, Antwerp, Aachen.

The strictly Gothic right hand side of the façade emphasizes the five vertical axes and a distinct side spicing represents the beginning Renaissance. Parts of the tower on the left hand side underwent changes in the baroque style before 1698. The façade pushes aloft from its massive ground-floor to the light of the gallery with its lilies and the pinnacles with its finials.

The seven statues under their gothic canopies highlight the first floor, the Mayor's chamber as a centre of civic power.

A brochure explaining the figures in German ("Das spätgotische Weseler Rathaus mit seinen Figuren") is available at the tourist information next to the town Hall. **The figural frieze and the seven canopies were restored between 2014 and 2017 owing to exclusively private donations.**

The first gothic reconstruction in Germany: The Wesel Town Hall Façade with its seven statues under the Gothic canopies.

As of 1950: Maintaining the idea of reconstructing the late-Gothic-Flemish Town Hall beyond several approaches of the post-war-development and design of the Great Market. **1986:** Foundation of the citizens' initiative by Siegfried Landers, Wesel, and many other concerned citizens.

2003: Beginning of specific fundraising for the reconstruction of the façade; lobbying the city of Wesel and the state of North Rhine Westphalia to contribute to the costs of 3.7 million Euros resulting in public share 50% of the costs, NRW providing support through an urban development promotion programme.

The remaining 50% were contributed by private donations. **2014 – 2017:** Planning, realisation and fitting the 7 statues of 1858 and their canopies, financed by citizens' donations exclusively (fundraising of about 600,000 €).

Since 2017: annual fundraising for structural maintenance (insurances, cleaning, reserve fund for repairs). The last known condition of the building before its destruction has been restored.