

THE NEW SYNAGOGUE OF NÖRDLINGEN

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For years the local Jewish community, which has now grown to almost one hundred families, had vividly felt the need for a new house of God. Due to the devotion of the parishioners and the eager desire of the Jewish administration, now a new constructed synagogue has been created, which was desired by the whole community and which always will redound to its glory. The inauguration ceremony took place today. The departure from the old synagogue, which for sixteen years had served the originally small community for their services, was carried out with prayer, a farewell sermon and the lifting of the Torah scrolls. In a procession formed by music making Jewish schoolchildren, the elders of the community with the Torah scrolls, the rabbis, the two heads of the community board, magistrates and municipal representatives, as well as the honored officials of the Royal authorities, the religious administration, the building committee and the construction architects and work masters, then the members of the Jewish community and other invited attendants set off to the new synagogue, where finally the divine service was held, started and closed with songs. Instead of the very aged regional rabbi district rabbi Kohn of Ichenhausen was invited to deliver the ceremonial sermon. And he has accomplished the task in a manner worthy of the highest praise. His excellent speech made the best impression on the audience. At the evening service of the Jewish community, which followed the inauguration ceremony, the synagogue glanced in its rich gas lighting.

Other reports tell us: The Jewish Community of Nördlingen has built itself a house of worship, as a similar community under same circumstances hardly could have been achieved. It is a monumental artwork, both in its appearance as well as regarding the interior. Although each showy splendor and every straining after effects was avoided with great skill, the simplest ways were chosen for the decoration and thus the overall effect of the whole is great. That the whole succeeded in such an excellent manner, first of all is the merit of our municipal engineer Mr. Gaab who created the plans and directed the construction. Our masters as well have rendered recognition by their partly artful, but however in general solid and pleasing work. The whole outer construction is in Romanesque style, the interior, painting and furnishing, with the exception of the Torah ark, is accomplished in Moorish style. The whole building has a length of 29 meters and a width of 16 meters and is 12 meters high.

The eastern side, the main view of the building, is headed towards Polizeistrasse, one of the main streets of our city, and offers a majestic sight. Built entirely of Niederalfinger sandstone, it gets flanked by two lovely turrets with Romanesque domed structure. The main building between those two towers upwards forms a terrace, which is framed by a stone gallery on which stand the carved words of the prophet Isaiah: "*My house is called a house of prayer for all nations.*" At the bottom of this middle block we perceive a portal, which was attached just because of the outer view, since it is an entry for nobody, because right behind there is the Ark of the Covenant, the Holy of Holies of the Israelites. The remaining curtain walls are made of Schorndorfer clinker. The window and portal embrasure, the belt cornice and entablature, the Southern and North West corner are made of

the above mentioned sand stone, so that the two lateral and posterior walls offer the eye pleasant relief in contemplation. On the east side in front of the synagogue there is a beautiful open square, on the west side a large courtyard enclosed by a brick wall, on the north side an iron lattice with a gate, a metalworking masterpiece. The whole building is carried out extremely solid and beautiful and, regarding the bricklayer and mason work, is it the working of the master bricklayer Haehnlein from Schopfloch (Franconia) and his highly capable foreman Fritz Hilpert from there. Stone mason Müller from Augsburg and Koppel from here (Nördlingen) contributed very nice workings for the portals and the three eastern side windows.

We now turn to visit the interior. Walking along the south side, we arrive at the court gate, enter and so we stand before the great stairway on which we ascend to the main entrance. It consists of three large magnificent portals, a workmanship as simple as impressive to the looker. The gates and doors are the brave works of master cabinet-maker Heinrich Unrein from here. In the vestibule again are three doors which lead into the nave of the synagogue. On both sides right and left are the doorways to the stairway for the women's gallery. The vestibule already prepares our eyes for the beauties that will follow. The stained glass in the skylights and door panels, the ceiling painting and the gas lights hanging from the ceiling form a very splendid ensemble. Have we entered through the middle door, we face involuntarily the front section, where is the Holy of Holies on an estrade. Five steps lead to it. Above the most holy place are three windows, artistically made stained glass with Moorish ornaments, to the best advantage in their appearance of the whole. In Hebrew letters there is written the quote from the Book of Genesis: *"How awesome is this place, here is nothing but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."* The stained glass windows are from the studio of the artist Burkhart & Son (Munich) and are donations by members of the local Jewish community. The Holy of Holies, the Ark of the Covenant itself, appears to be somewhat impractical in the making, but however is a very brilliant decoration piece. That also may have led astray the gentlemen who were travelling on the look-out for the best. The curtain in front of the Holiest, the altar and pulpit blankets, are a lovely donation of the local Israelite Women's Association and were made after a drawing of the teacher Mr. Heller from here and emerged from the gold and embroidery art of Kaspar Behr from Würzburg. The work is a gold worker embroidery masterpiece and in comparison (1,500 Marks) very reasonable in price. On either sides of the ark and the pulpit railing two lampstands are attached. They, as well as 24 triple-light wall brackets and the luster with 42 flames in the middle are richly gilded and stem from the gas appliance factory in Mainz. All illumination devices are donations.

As a gem also the hanging lamp for the "eternal light" in front of the ark of the covenant may be mentioned, which also is a donation. The trial of the illuminating had a brilliant result. As a specimen of special artistic performance also the pulpit made by Mr. August Unrein from here may be brought in. The same was carved from the most beautiful oak and is a true masterpiece, noble in drawing, accurate in style and perfectly shaped in the making. In one worked out heraldic shield on it the coat of arms of Nördlingen, the eagle, is engraved in the most glorious way. Narrow-minded critics like to find it a mistake or even an encroachment. However it is joyful to hear that even in the synagogue, the place of the assembly of the Jews, it becomes apparent that they want to be with their fellow citizens a united nation of brothers. Even though our religious concepts and accordingly also our religious acts are different, at one point we should all agree: in the love to our hometown and to our fatherland. By this the Jews of Nördlingen have proven that they are serious on that. In the same artistically way the railing of the pulpit, the carvings on the gallery railing and

the donation boxes are made from the same master. In the nave of the synagogue are two subelliptical rows with 150 seats. Around them and between them run wide aisles, covered with Mettlacher plates. This joinery all are made by local masters: Moll, Bühler, Unrein and Geyer. Above the gallery railing a finely crafted iron lattice is attached, which is a credit to its maker: Cash till manufacturer and master locksmith Müller, who also made the doors and door mountings in a pretty way, was the supplier of this grid.

Now we leave the lower rooms and enter through the north-east attached fire exit the hall and climb the emergency staircase, which for the constructor and worker for a long time was a real one, and we now reach the women's gallery. Apart from a few minor failings, about what opinions however still widely differ, the ensemble is an architectonic construction of the highest degree, if not necessarily ostentatious, but yet tasteful and in correct style. To this accomplishment the art of our local painters Deffner and Rosenhauer contributed not at least. What may be regarded as requirement in respect of ornamental decor in terms of taste, color coordination and drawing, is accomplished beautifully and masterfully. The main ceiling, divided into fields (cassettes), delights the eye. Likewise gorgeous is the color adornment of the ceiling and the large groove located there at the spot, where the Holiest is placed. Here the ceiling and wall painting is connected with the before mentioned stained glass in most harmoniously relation. A bewitching glance gives us the Holy of Holies (the ark), which is made by the art of the two gentlemen, as it comes apparent now. In general, the painting of the estrade achieves an effect which makes a huge impression on every visitor.

Thus all, the technicians, foremen and workers, joined in for an unanimous creative work. All were earnestly trying to achieve proficient and beautiful works. The project was accomplished without any accident whatsoever. That also is why the community can look with pride and with a genuine satisfaction to their place of worship. The City of Nördlingen however may be proud of its Israelites, since they have spared no sacrifice to give her fathertown a new city landmark. Laudable and worthy of recognition is that almost all works were supplied by local masters. To the already above mentioned suppliers, we have to add the following masters: Master carpenter Behringer with artfully constructed truss-framed roof and gallery balustrade, the master glaziers Vogel, Brackenhofer and Steier, for the delivery of very pretty Damasco glasses, Pfost (tinsmith) and Henninger (slater). Finally it also should be mentioned to what noble-minded extend our city fathers appreciate the work of their Jewish fellow citizens. With full unanimity both urban colleges granted 2,000 Marks to the expenses of the fence. May the newly built house of God be and stay a constant reminder for the care of love and harmony among the different religious confessions.