

History of the vaulted cellar
by Barbara Billy Bürckner

The beginnings of the vaulted cellar are uncertain. Ludwigstraße itself (formerly: Hintere Gasse) was originally constructed after 1191 by members of the Staufer dynasty, running parallel to today’s Kaiser-Marx-Straße.¹ The Staufer dynasty was significantly involved in the expansion and development of Kaufbeuren. Its status as an imperial city was confirmed by King Rudolph of Habsburg in 1286.² In 1325, the majority of the buildings in Kaufbeuren were destroyed by a devastating fire. At least seven houses were spared but it is unknown whether the building at Ludwigstraße 26 was among these.³ However, the building is clearly depicted in a drawing of the imperial city of Kaufbeuren from 1699 by Ernst Tobias Hörmann of Gutenberg.⁴

The history of the vaulted cellar really started in 1799. Back then Jonas Daniel Walch (1778-1827)⁵, a member of an important patrician family from Kaufbeuren, bought the »Goldener Hans« brewery and renamed it »Goldene Traube«.⁶ It was one of many breweries in the Upper Market (today’s Kaiser-Max-Straße) and game-changing for the eventual usage of the vaulted cellar. “One should not compare the breweries of the past with those we know today. They were rather so-called “Bierwirtschaften”: Inns that had bought the right to brew beer (“Bierbraugerechtigkeit”) from the city council and brewed mainly produced for on-premises consumption.”⁷

The brewery was later taken over by the owner’s son Gustav Adolph Walch the Elder (1811-1875), who was a brewer himself as well as a representative of the municipality, church administrator and the head of the district authority.⁸ In 1854, Walch redesigned the building complex in neo-gothic style starting from the Inn up to Ludwigstraße.⁹ The stepped gables on the facade are particularly worth mentioning. A stone tablet with the inscription »Built by Gustav Walch 1854« on the outer wall of Ludwigstraße 26 and an image of a vine still remain reminders of that reconstruction. Apparently, an expansion of the premises was necessary since the building at Ludwigstraße became a malthouse and the brick-built cellar was used as a storage room.¹⁰ At the time, breweries used to do the malting themselves in order to produce malt for their beer production. The method used to clean, soak, dry and crush the grain influenced the subsequent development of the alcohol and colour of the beer produced.¹¹



In March 1885, the »Goldene Traube« became one of the first stock-issuing companies of Bavaria¹² with Gustav Albert Walch the Younger (1843-1900) as its director from 1885-1887.¹³ In 1895, the brewery and all its premises were re-located to Hohe Buchleute.¹⁴ The building at Ludwigstraße stayed in the possession of today’s »Aktienbrauerei Kaufbeuren«.

In the late 1970s, the Kreis- and Stadtparkasse Kaufbeuren was searching for new premises and turned the former malt-house into their new headquarters in the course of a partial restoration of the old town. The conversion and expansion of the property started in January 1983. Substantial measures had to be taken in order to preserve two of the outer walls and a vault.¹⁵ The building has been owned by the Sparkasse since 01.02.1985. The vaulted cellar is used as an exhibition space by the Kaufbeurer Künstler Stiftung (Arts Foundation) since 2007 and since 2011 the premises of the former »Goldene Traube« belong to Kreis- and Stadtparkasse Kaufbeuren.

1 Cf. Dieter (09.11.2010) | 2 Stadt Kaufbeuren (2008) | 3 Cf. Dieter (1999), Sp 59 and p. 63 /footnote 121 | 4 Weitnauer, p. 272 | 5 Cf. Zimmermann, p. 370 | 6 Cf. Pietsch, p. 232 | 7 Pietsch, p. 231 | 8 Cf. Zimmermann, p. 371 | 9 Cf. Schmidt, p. 22 | 10 Cf. Kraus (ed.), p. 80 | 11 Cf. Fredersdorf. [Retrieved: 12.01.2018] | 12 Cf. Pietsch, p. 232 | 13 Cf. Zimmermann, p. 371 | 14 Cf. Pietsch, p. 232 | 15 Heerdegen, p. 184

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Structural elements and characteristics of the vaulted cellar
by Barbara Billy Bürckner

The vault

The vaulted cellar located at Ludwigstraße 26 is just under 240 m² in size and divided into three elongated sections (aisles). Each aisle is subdivided into four bays. The 12 almost-square bays support the vaulted ceiling with pillars and longitudinal transverse arches.

The barrel vault has a semi-circular cross section. Originating from the outer walls of the cellar, both side aisles start as barrel vaults and transition into a groined vault shape at the vertex of the ceiling. One can imagine the shape of a groined vault as four barrel vaults meeting horizontal at right angles. The four intersections on the ceiling form slightly prominent groined arches. The nave of the vaulted cellar is designed solely as a groined vault.¹

1 Cf. Koepf (compare bibliographical reference)



The floor

The floor of the vaulted cellar is covered with 40 cm x 40 cm tiles made from Solnhofener limestone. One hundred forty five million years ago, today's Bavarian Solnhofen was located inside a lagoon within the warm and shallow Jurassic Sea. The limestone, which became particularly famous for its fossil finds, was formed here over millions of years.²

The structures you can see in the limestone tiles are not fossils but dendrites (from Greek δένδρον Dendrites are mineral iron and manganese deposits on rock which look like »real« fossils.³ Geologists also call them »pseudo-fossils«.⁴

The rosette- or tree-shaped appearance of the dark brown to black manganese dendrites is created by the interaction of chemical processes and bacteria. There are no intersections within the delicate branching of manganese dendrite - adjoining branches do not even touch one another.⁵

The structure of the rarer iron dendrite is less delicate. Its homogenous appearance resembles a shallow brown puddle. Well-developed manganese dendrites are often found next to less developed iron dendrites.⁶

Both dendrite types grow outwards from a starting point. They keep growing until the dissolved and available mineral matter is exhausted and the bacterial activity stops.⁷

2 Cf. Bayerisches Landesamt für Umwelt (2008) | 3 Cf. Thewalt, pp.14-15 | 4 Cf. Spektrum Akademischer Verlag (2000) | 5 Thewalt, p. 19 | 6 Thewalt, p. 23 | 7 Cf. Thewalt, p. 20

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