

31. July 2025

City history

Town history: The school and fire engine house on Gasthausplatz

Photo of the month August of the city archive Bocholt

The photo of the month for August shows the former "School and Spritzenhaus" on Bocholt's Gasthausplatz. The photo was taken around 1920 in Bocholt's Langenbergstraße.

Until the end of the 1920s, the Gasthausplatz in Bocholt was not actually an extensive square in the true sense of the word. Rather, it was a large piece of municipal land on which the town's poorhouse - also known as "Gasthaus" - had once been located.

The area offered enough open space so that a generous development could be realised here. There used to be three school buildings there. This is why the road leading to Osterhinterstraße (later Gasthausstraße) was also known as "Schulstraße".

In the course of 1881, the municipal authorities had a new school and fire station built on the north side of the popularly named Gasthausplatz, which can be seen on the right-hand side of the photo taken around 1920. The viewer of the scene is in the upper Langenbergstraße, looking eastwards. The shop of the grocer Johann Hinse can be seen on the far right. The fire station with its four entrance and exit gates then rises up on the corner of Gasthausplatz.

There were two classrooms on the first floor above. The row of houses continues with the shop of master bookbinder Karl Wissing. Originally, the town of Bocholt had wanted to build two school buildings due to the growing population in the last quarter of the 19th century. However, as the previous fire station from 1864 had become dilapidated in the meantime, the decision was made in favour of a double solution on Gasthausplatz. The massive building had a floor area of 227 square metres and had a brick façade with typical period decorations below the verge on the gable and above the classroom windows.

The building plan was drawn up by the municipal building commission under the leadership of the engineer Clemens Forstmann, and the construction was carried out by the local building contractor Heinrich Kemper. Incidentally, the construction of this building caused some inconvenience for the mayor at the time, Bernhard Degener, because the timetable for the opening of the school premises in autumn 1881 had not been adhered to.

On 23 August 1915, Schulstraße was renamed "Am Gasthausplatz". The house was finally abandoned in the course of redesigning the entire area. The demolition of this "dark box", as the fire station and school building was contemptuously called at the time, began on 6 August 1929.

Photo: Bocholt city archive, image collection no. 2014, text: Wolfgang Tembrink



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Photo of the month August