

Photo of the month - May 2022

The cemetery chapel on Blücherstraße



The cemetery chapel on Blücherstraße is the subject of the Bocholt municipal archive's "Historical Photo of the Month" series in May 2022. In 1936/37, the city of Bocholt built a new cemetery chapel and mortuary with access on Blücherstraße according to the plans of its structural engineering department. This was not only done in the course of the general enlargement of the municipal cemetery itself.

Rather, it was felt that the previous storage of corpses in the mortuaries was often not done in a reverent manner. Therefore, the burial system was to be regulated more uniformly in the future. After the new mourning hall was put into operation, the funeral processions with the mourning relatives that had been common in the streets disappeared.

Construction work for the cemetery chapel began in April 1936 with the measurement of the groundwater level and the laying of the foundations in the following June. By the end of August 1936, the shell of the building was already complete and it was hoped that it would soon be ready for use. But it was not until the spring of 1937 that the building was finally completed. At the same time, the Bocholt councillors passed a statute with a scale of fees for the use of the cemetery chapel at a meeting.

Electrically operated bell

The new mortuary, measuring ten by ten metres, has since presented itself with a serious and heavy façade facing the street. The entrance façade is a porch softened by an archway, round windows and facing stone friezes. On top of the flat tent roof rises a belfry

with electrically operated ringing mechanism. Inside the chapel there is a retractable catafalque in the centre on which the coffin rises. Above it on the back wall is a large crucifix. The storey above the archway forms the gallery for a choir. A harmonium was once installed there.

Behind the mourning hall is the nave with offices, storage and recreation rooms for the cemetery caretakers and sanitary facilities. In the beginning, there was also a doctor's and post-mortem room here. In the basement there were ten mortuary chambers with rear access for undertakers and visitors. The Bocholt sculptor Hermann Schlatt created two allegorical figures for the rear side of the new building, depicting a sower and a reaper as symbols of life and death. The new cemetery chapel with mortuary was inaugurated on 19 May 1937.

About the photo of **the month**

The Photo of **the Month** is presented once a month by the Bocholt Municipal Archives. The texts accompanying the picture are written by Wolfgang Tembrink.

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