

Luzerner Zeitung

abo+ SERIES LOOKED

The portal at the Wettingerhaus in Walterswil bears witness to the baroque splendor of the past

Walterswil is now off the main road. The former monastery property was an important spa for almost 200 years. Today nothing remains of the impressive architecture of the late 17th century - except for the entrance portal.

Andreas Fassler

04.03.2022, 6 p.m

Comment now

abo+ Exclusively for subscribers



The Wettingerhaus in Walterswil has long since lost its age. Only the baroque entrance portal provides a clue.

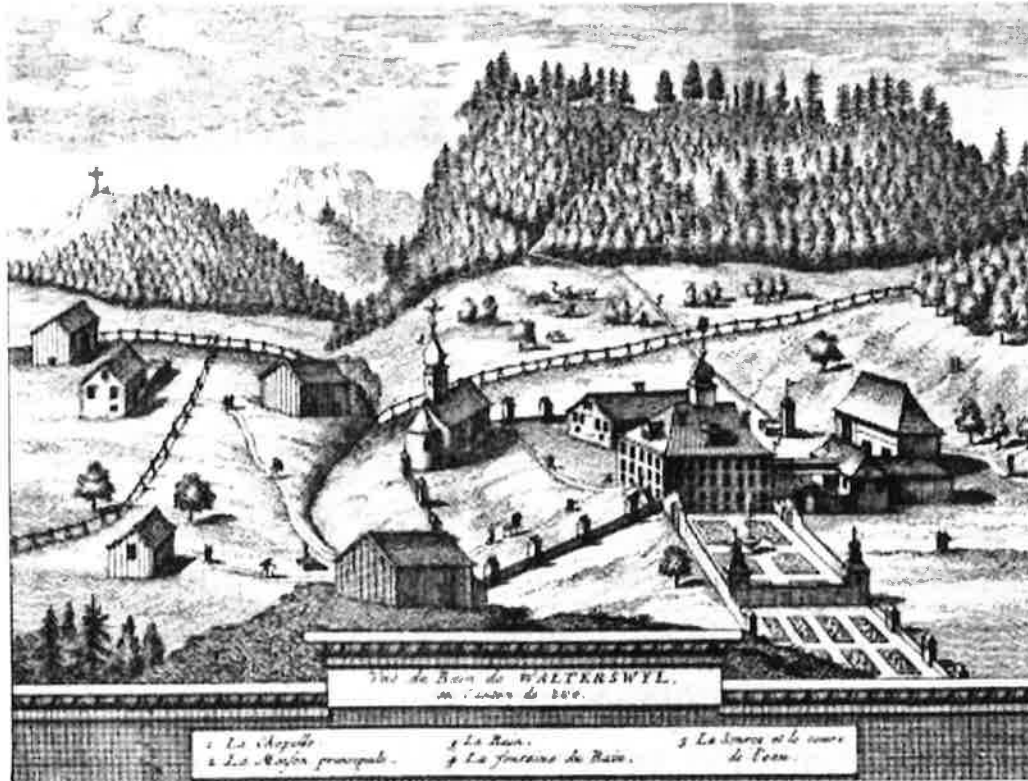
Image: Stefan Kaiser (Baar, March 4, 2022)

Hardly anyone would associate Sihlbrugg, a business location and transport hub that is completely uninteresting from a tourist point of view, with a spa. In fact, Walterswil, to the west of Sihlbrugg, was once known for a healing spring. A Zuger named Sigmund Schwarzmurer is said to have made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the early 16th century, where a wise Jew advised him to bathe his sore feet in the water that springs from the Baarburg. This is how the healing effect of this spring water was discovered. Although this event is of course a legend, the spring was considered healing from then on.

Between 1610 and 1630, the adjoining farms on the other side of today's main road and the Walterswil estate, including the bathhouse and little church, were acquired by the Wettingen Cistercian Abbey. No coincidence: the former Kappelerhof Walterswil was the family seat of the then Wettingen abbot Peter II Schmid (1559-1633, see also [Looked at June 18, 2021](#) and [Looked at dated August 17, 2018](#)). From 1692 to 1696 the so-called «Wettingerhaus» was built in Walterswil. It served as a hostel for the Wettingen monastery people, who relaxed here and made use of the healing effects of the Baarburg water. After the house was completed, a chapel was built right next to it, which was replaced in 1902 by the current building. The architect of both buildings was Johann Moosbrugger (1659-1710), one of the early representatives of the famous Vorarlberg master builder dynasty and brother of the Einsiedler monastery builder Caspar Moosbrugger.

From spa to educational institution

Around 1700, Bad Walterswil became very popular as a health resort. But as early as 1750, the entire complex passed to private owners. The structural condition of the Wettingerhaus deteriorated noticeably. But always poorly maintained, it has stood the test of time. Around 1900 the place had become meaningless as a spa and the stately home was converted into a children's home, run by the Holy Cross Sisters from Cham. In 1972, the sponsoring association "Children's Home Walterswil" was changed to "Walterswil Boarding School". This institution existed here as such until 1997, before the building complex, which was expanded several times, became the location of the International School of Zug and Lucerne ISZL.



Walterswil on an engraving from around 1750. In the center of it the Wettingerhaus – still with the roof turret – with the Baarburg in the background.

Image: PD

The Wettingerhaus with its massive structure is an impressive remnant of the baroque complex in Bad Walterswil. The longitudinal front has nine window axes, five of which the sides. With regard to its dimensions and shape with a large hipped roof, the Wettingerhaus should largely correspond to the original appearance – apart from the no longer existing ridge turret – but not in terms of design. Historical records indicate that the Wettingerhaus must once have been a real palace with a rich facade decoration, as can be seen in numerous other buildings by the early Moosbrugger master builders that have hardly changed to this day. The first losses of the original

appearance may have occurred during renovations in the 19th century.

Revealing coat of arms

Around the turn of the century - possibly in the course of the conversion to a children's home - the Wettingerhaus was robbed of almost all of its baroque ornamentation. Since then, the façade has been plain and sober and belies the real age of the building. The only surviving evidence of the original splendor is the impressive, round-arched sandstone portal on the east side - with its two-armed staircase in front, it inevitably draws the eye. Flanking half-columns in front of a rusticated back wall carry the entablature with a so-called sprung gable, i.e. an incomplete gable, the "gap" of which is intended for further ornamentation. This gap is filled with an opulent coat of arms cartouche, which refers to the builders and their backgrounds.



The coat of arms with its four fields reveals the background of the Wettinger house.

Image: Stefan Kaiser (Baar, March 4, 2022)

The shield under Abthut, divided into four fields and surrounded by foliage, shows on the one hand the carved "Cistercian beam" as a reference to the order, on the right the Wettingen monastery coat of arms with a double-tailed Melusine and the Stella Maris. The field with lily of the valley bottom left refers to the Wettingen Abbot Ulrich Meyer (1647-1694) from Mellingen, and the tree stumps with lilies finally refer to Abbot Basilius Reutti (1646-1703) from Wil SG. The Wettingerhaus was built during the tenure of these two abbots, which is why they are immortalized here as quasi-builders.

Restoration after the turn of the millennium

The condition of the Wettingerhaus at the turn of the millennium was worrying. Gaping cracks in the masonry, large chips in the sandstone elements, leaking windows and all sorts of other damage made a renovation essential. In 2001 this was finally tackled. Great attention was paid to the portal system. The coat of arms in particular was restored to its original state as far as possible. The original color version could be reconstructed on the basis of small remains of pigment. Broken pieces of the decoration could be replaced. Finally, the staircase balustrade, which no longer existed, was reconstructed - based on architectural models in Einsiedeln Abbey.



Historical photo from around 1902. The new chapel is being built next to the old one. On the right the Wettingerhaus with the entrance portal.

Image: PD

You hardly notice the historic Wettingerhaus in Walterswil these days unless you are busy on the campus there. It's a pity, especially since, according to the Zug art historian Josef Grünenfelder, it is unique in the inventory of Zug art monuments as a former monastic country seat and hostel. The manor houses St.Karl and Roost on Artherstrasse,

which were built later, are architecturally based on the form of the Wetzingerhaus in Walterswil.

On a weekly basis, we follow up on found objects with a cultural background and a connection to Zug.

0 comments

Show all comments

More on the subject:

[bar](#) Sihlbrugg

SERIES

Take a closer look: finds in the canton of Zug

12/17/2021

abo + SERIES

Take a look: this foolish trio has been in the middle of Unterägeri since the anniversary

Andreas Fassler · 02/26/2022

abo + SERIES

Take a closer look: The General Andermatt House in the center of Baar is the domicile of an opportunist

Andreas Fassler · 02/19/2022

Recommended for you

[More articles >](#)