News & Views
News
Features
Gallery
Weekly Roundup
Your Column
Past Editions
Resources
Acronyms
Addresses
Indonesian Cabinet
Indonesian History
Links
Where to go
Members Area
Register
Login
Archives
Who's Who
Provinces
Companies
Laws
About Us
Company Info
Subscription/ Advertising
Online Advertising
Associates
Search

Schlosskirche was once King's summer residence

"That is the landmark of Friedrichshafen," said Hubert, pointing to the twin towers of a church as we stood on Friedrichshafen ferry harbor.

In the distance, we could see the domed towers of Schlosskirche, or Castle Church, whose history is closely related to the founding of Friedrichshafen, in southwest Germany.

Although Friedrichshafen is renowned as the city of Zeppelin and his invention, its landmark building is Schlosskirche, a Protestant church that has been reconstructed and renovated many times over the course of time. Built in the Baroque style, its domes are carved out of Rorschach sandstone.

It is said that one thousand years ago, a small community church dedicated to St. Andrew stood in the same spot. One hundred years later, Bertha, the Countess of Buchhorn, found a nunnery nearby to honor St. Pantaleon.

The nunnery lost its independence after the bloodline of the counts of Buchhorn came to an end, and the abbots of Weingarten asked the provost to govern the nunnery. The abbey came to be popularly known by the name Hofen.

The 30 Year War burnt down both St. Andrew's and St. Pantaleon's in 1634, and were not rebuilt until the late 17th century, when Christian Thumb from Bregenz Forest in Austria rebuilt the churches from 1695 to 1701.

In 1802, the abbey in Hofen, as with all other ecclesiastical states and possessions in Germany, was secularized, and Hofen later became part of the Kingdom of Wuerttemberg. King Fredrick I of Wuerttemberg had the abandoned and crumbling abbey rebuilt as a castle to be used as a summer residence.

By 1812, the Castle Church had undergone another change, and served as the parish church of the Protestant congregation of Friedrichshafen, a year after King Fredrick I founded the city.

The church remained undisturbed until an air raid in

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1944 destroyed the woodwork of the roof, the cupola and the interior of the south tower, as well as the church pews and organs. After World War II, the church again stood empty for a while.

The original stuccowork by Johann Schmuzer from the school of Wessobrunn had eroded from dampness, so Joseph Schnitzer and his sons and assistants recreated and simplified the stuccowork in 1950, based on the original designs. A year later, the complete renovation of the church was finished, and the church once again opened its doors to the faithful.

The recreated stuccowork can still be viewed inside the church, which continues to provide daily religious services to the residents of Friedrichshafen to this day. --***Wahyuni Kamah***

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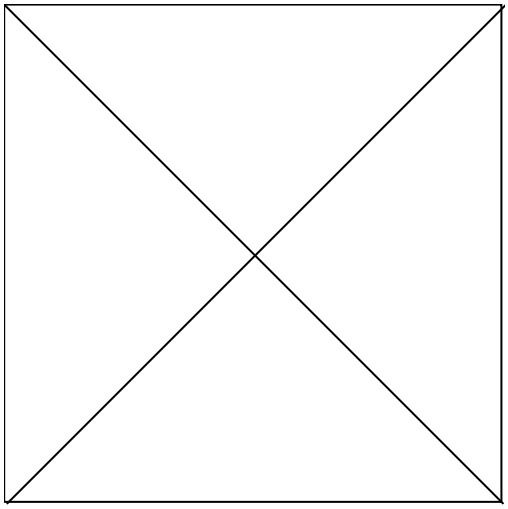

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