

DISCOVER OUR HERITAGE

ENDINGEN
LENGNAU

A STROLL WITH THE AARGOVIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

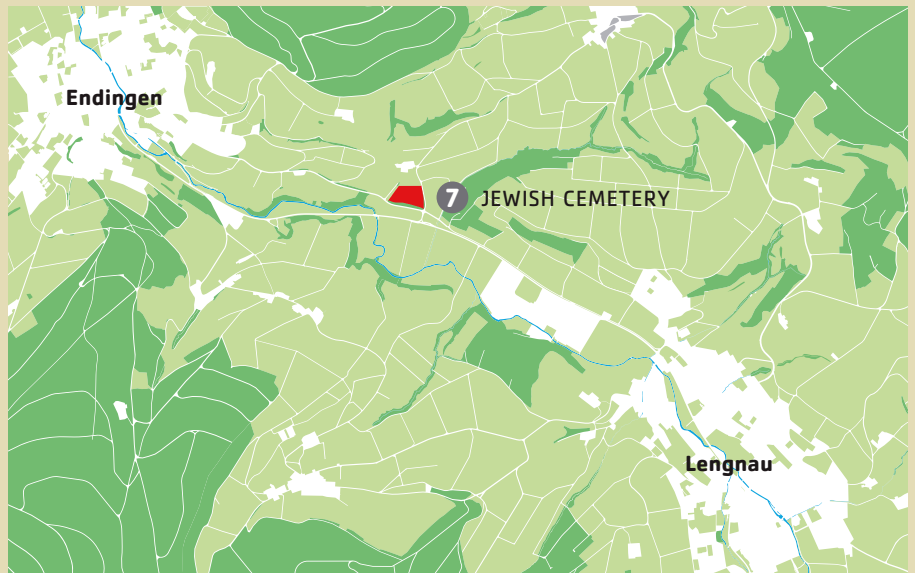
IN COOPERATION WITH THE SWISS HERITAGE SOCIETY AND THE JEWISH HERITAGE PATH ENDINGEN-LENGNAU



AARGAUER HEIMATSCHUTZ

Jewish **Heritage Path** Endingen-Lengnau

ENDINGEN-LENGNAU



Jews have been living in Endingen and Lengnau for 400 years. For decades they were only permitted to live in these two villages. Not until 1866 did the Swiss Federation allow them to settle elsewhere in Switzerland. Consequently, in the following years many moved away, to Baden, Zurich or abroad.

Around 1850 Endingen's Jewish population had grown to 900 individuals and that of Lengnau to 525. They accounted for 30 percent of Lengnau's residents and 50 percent of Endingen's. Until present times, their buildings have placed their distinctive stamp on the two villages, which are categorized as sites of national significance.

The concentration of Jewish building culture witnessed here is unique. The Jewish Heritage Path makes this cultural heritage accessible to the public. Starting with the two synagogues, it encompasses structural documentation of the Jewish culture in Endingen and Lengnau and includes Jewish cemetery located between the two villages.

In 1993 the Aargovian Heritage Society awarded the Cultural Heritage Protection Prize to the "Association for the Preservation of the Synagogues and the Cemetery of Endingen-Lengnau". The association was rewarded for "protecting the Jewish identity, for the maintenance of traditional Jewish practices and for the preservation of the synagogues and the cemetery".

1. SYNAGOGUE

Hinterstiege 5, Endingen
Year of construction: 1852
Architect: Caspar Joseph Jeuch, Baden

Around 1850 the Jewish community in Endingen had grown to 1000 individuals and was thus slightly larger than the Christian population. Even so, the synagogue, the largest edifice in the old part of the village, is not located in a prominent position but rather in a back alley, the "Hinterstiege" – quite unlike the location of the synagogue in Lengnau. The reason for this is simple: The first synagogue, built in 1764, had already been located at the same place. Now that the Jewish community had grown, more space was urgently needed.

The architect, Caspar Joseph Jeuch of Baden, designed an austere, neo-classical facade with windows reminiscent of Moorish arches. The synagogue is the only house of prayer in Endingen and is therefore equipped with a clock which still strikes the hour today.



The ornamental paintings in the interior of the synagogue complement the elements of Moorish architecture. With this Arabic-Islamic influence, the architect and the ornamental painter, Heinrich Wettstein, allude to the oriental roots of Judaism. Elements of Moorish architecture had been used already in German synagogues. Particularly ornate is the delicate grid of the balustrade, which



concealed the women on the three-sided gallery. The men, on the other hand, prayed on the ground floor. Prayer books and tefillin were kept in the bookrests.

Since 1963 the synagogue is protected by the Cantonal Cultural Heritage Protection Commission. In 1986 the facade was restored followed by the restoration of the interior in 1997/98.

2. PARISH HALL OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Hinterstiege 3, Endingen
Year of construction: 1806
Architect: unknown



A humble house behind the synagogue served as the assembly hall for the council of the Jewish congregation. It also functioned

as the Jewish school until the new school was opened in 1854. The rabbi lived on the first floor, as did the chorister upon occasion. Up to this day the house belongs to the Israelite Community Endingen which uses it to store its archives, the remainder of the premises being let.

After 1776, when Jews in Switzerland were restricted to taking up residence in Endingen and Lengnau only, the ban on owning property was no longer tenable. Consequently, only vertically separated dwellings were built, predominantly inhabited by Jews.

The layout of houses with two adjacent doors and a horizontal separation of the apartments originated during the 17th or 18th century. This also applies to the two buildings at hand, despite having been restored in the 19th century.

3. JEWISH RESIDENCES

Rankstrasse 1-3, Endingen
Year of construction: 1820 and 1825
Architect: unknown

As the Jewish population grew rapidly during the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century, more housing space was needed. However, at that time Jews were not allowed to own property. To bypass this problem, they offered to finance willing Christian builders, in order to afterwards rent a part of the finished house. The two entrances date from an ordinance, according to which Jews and Christians were not meant to "live together".



4. JEWISH SCHOOL

Würenlingerstrasse 11, Endingen
Year of construction: 1855
Architect: Caspar Joseph Jeuch, Baden

Just as the congregation faced the financially challenging construction of the synagogue, the canton demanded that the Jewish community finally build a proper Jewish school. Caspar Joseph Jeuch, the architect of the synagogue, also drew the plans for this building. The facade faced the village, from which the school was slightly distanced.



When the canton abolished parochial schools, the Jewish school and the Christian school were united in 1896. The former Jewish school became the property of the local municipality. When Endingen became the location for the newly created district school in 1938, the village commissioned the architect Eugen Schneider from Ennetbaden to add an additional floor and a gym. Beneath the large windows on the new second floor built in the style of Neues Bauen, Jeuch's subtly structured window frames with pointed arches are still visible on the raised ground floor and the first floor.

5. JEWISH SLAUGHTERHOUSE

Weidgasse, Endingen
Year of construction: 1823
Architect: unknown

The ritual of kosher butchering performed by specially trained Jewish butchers (in Hebrew shochet) took place in a humble precursor of today's slaughterhouse. With one swift cut the shochet severs the carotid artery and the windpipe of the non-anesthe-

tized animal. The animal is then suspended with its head down in order to drain all the blood since the consumption of blood is prohibited in Jewish culture. In Switzerland the kosher butchering of mammals has been prohibited since 1893 when a citizens' initiative was accepted by the Federal Council. Eversince, kosher meat has to be imported from abroad. Thus, the Jewish slaughterhouses in Endingen and Lengnau became useless. The one in Endingen was sold to the community in 1929 and is still used by the local butcher.



6. MIKVAH – RITUAL BATH

Mühleweg 1, Endingen
 Year of construction: 1867
 Architect: Caspar Joseph Jeuch, Baden

Situated on the ground floor of this pretty little house, behind the carefully placed high windows, was the ritual bath of the Jewish community. The bath consisted of a changing room and a narrow, deep basin, entered by steps. The basin has been preserved up to today and enables the complete immersion demanded by ritual. The first floor always housed an apartment. By planning this modest but well-proportioned building, his third assignment in this locality, Caspar Joseph Jeuch definitely established himself as the "house-architect" of Endingen's Jewish community.

A ritual bath requires pure running water. Endingen's mikvah had its own natural spring. Many of the pious perform the ritual immersion before holidays or days of fasting. New converts as well as women after men-

struation or after having given birth are obligated to immerse in the mikvah. Also, crockery acquired from non-believers or dishes tainted by other rituals must be purified by the immersion ceremony.



7. JEWISH CEMETERY ENDINGEN-LENGNAU

Between Endingen and Lengnau
 Year of construction: 1750

In 1750 the Jews of the Surbtal were permitted to buy land in order to build a cemetery. This meant that they could count on a permanent settlement in the area. Previously, they had to bury their dead on an island in the Rhine near Koblenz – a no man's land between the Confederation and the former Austrian territories in Southwestern Germany. The cemetery is located between the two Jewish villages and is accessible from both Endingen and Lengnau. The grounds of Switzerland's oldest Jewish cemetery are home to 2700 graves and to this day the deceased are buried there.

According to Jewish funerary tradition, the dead rest until the day of resurrection. Therefore, graves are never removed. Individual headstones have long since been overgrown by trees and many show their antiquity



through weathering and decomposition. Usually, the dead are buried with their feet facing towards the east, but here the burial sites are arranged from north to south. The reason for this anomaly is unknown.

Inscriptions in German began to crop up on headstones in the middle of the 19th century. Moreover, the appearance of the headstones no longer comply with the old ideal of the antique

stela and, in addition to the local sandstone or shell limestone, marble is used. The places of death, often inscribed on the headstones, disclose where the Jews of the Surbtal had moved to before returning to Endingen or Lengnau to be interred.

The cemetery has been protected by the Cantonal Heritage Protection Commission since 1963.



This is the 24th tour of "Discover our Heritage". All other tours are in German or French.
 To order other tours: www.heimatschutz.ch or phone +41 44 254 57 00.

8. SYNAGOGUE

Zürichstrasse, Lengnau
Year of construction: 1847
Architect: Ferdinand Stadler, Zurich

Dedicated in 1847, the synagogue dominates the village square with its impressive facade. The place of worship represents the new inner strength of the Jewish community, which by then had grown to 500 individuals. The synagogue's plans were drawn by the young Ferdinand Stadler from Zurich, who later became a renowned ecclesiastic architect. Inspired by the round arches of the Romanesque style, the ascending arch connects the main entrance with the central window and thus emphasizes the projection of the vertically exaggerated central section. It is fitted with a clock which is unusual for a synagogue.

Delicate wooden stilts support the surrounding women's gallery and divides the interior into three naves. The ornamental wall paintings, executed by three northern Germans, are exclusively ornamental, since Judaism forbids the depiction of human beings. The



predominantly applied shades of ochre, reminiscent of brass, copper, and gold, are lent a festive atmosphere when sunlight enters the windows. Since 1963 the synagogue is protected

by the Cantonal Heritage Protection Commission. In 1983/84 the facade was restored followed by the restoration of the interior from 1995 to 1997.

9. MATZO BAKERY

Vogelsangstrasse 7, Lengnau
Year of construction: 1813
Architect: unknown

This simple structure, built in 1813, satisfied many needs of the Jewish community. This is where the council and enfranchised men met. School was held during the day and a ritual bath was located in the basement. It was used as a residence after school and bath received their own buildings. Between 1875 and 1910, Samuel Daniel Guggenheim operated a matzo bakery before it once again served solely as a private residence. Matzos are unleavened flat bread which is eaten during Passover and is a reminder of the flight from Egypt, because there was no time to let the bread rise before departure. The run down building has been empty since 1973.



10. FIRST SYNAGOGUE

Vogelsangstrasse 9-11, Lengnau
Year of construction: 1750
Architect: unknown



On the site of this house stood the first synagogue in the Surb valley, the first Jewish sacred building in Switzerland in modern times. Before that, the few members of the Jewish community prayed in a makeshift lo-

cality "above the upper miller's shed". The community had grown to 39 households when the men decided to build a synagogue, 18 meters long and 15 meters wide, which was inaugurated in 1750. It was a utilitarian structure with a hipped roof.

11. JEWISH RESIDENCE

Vogelsangstrasse 13, Lengnau
Year of construction and architect: unknown

Until late in the 18th century, Jews were prohibited from owning property. If they acquired a house at auction, they were required to sell it to a Christian within a year, which was not always successful. This changed with the advent of freedom of trade. By 1830, somewhat more than half the houses in Endingen and Upper Lengnau were owned by Jews. The fact that Jews had already held the mortgages on many properties facilitated their acquisition. In addition, they built numerous new dwellings. As a consequence, for



almost a century the center of Lengnau with its triangular village square was firmly in Jewish hands. In Endingen as well, the houses in the center and at the most favorable locations were mainly owned by Jews. The architectural style with two doors was continued, even though there was no longer a legal justification for this special feature. However, newly built houses were now separated vertically, not horizontally.

12. JEWISH HOME FOR THE AGED, MARGOA

Grabenstrasse 9, Lengnau
Year of construction: 1903
Architects: Dorer and Füchslin, Baden

Since many Jewish emigrants still felt a strong connection to Eendingen and Lengnau, it was decided to provide a Jewish home for the aged in these communities. The choice fell on Lengnau, since the sons of Meyer Guggenheim, who had left Lengnau for New York, made generous contributions toward this building. They had gained enormous wealth with their industrial enterprises. In the beginning, 36 elderly people found accommodations in 12 rooms. In 1939, a semi-circular annex was added to the eastern side, and a nursing ward was adjoined to the western side in 1978. Since the 1980s, the institution also admits non-Jewish boarders.



13. JEWISH SCHOOL

Zürichstrasse 34, Lengnau
Year of construction: 1842
Architect: Builder Schmid, Zurzach

In 1830, the canton of Argovia abolished private Hebrew schools and demanded that Jewish children be educated in public elementary schools. A converted apartment in the Jewish parish hall barely sufficed for this purpose. Therefore, builder Schmid of Zurzach was commissioned to draw up plans for a Jewish school. It was inaugurated in 1842 and provided four class rooms. In 1894, the Jewish and the Christian schools were consolidated, and the building became the property of the municipality. After the enlargement of the village school house, the former Jewish school was only used for cooking and handicraft classes, and as a club house. In 1982, it was remodeled into the village hall.



14. JEWISH RESIDENCE

Zürichstrasse 14, Lengnau
Year of construction and architect: unknown



The Jewish house with two entrances exists in two versions. When accommodations are horizontally separated, the entrances are positioned at the gable walls. Starting around

1770, dwellings were increasingly separated vertically. This house still shows the indentation for the placement of the mezuzah on the right doorpost. A mezuzah is a piece of parchment contained in a case made of metal or wood inscribed with Hebrew verses from the Thora (Jewish bible), which are meant to bless the house.

15. MIKVAH – RITUAL BATH

Spycherweg, Lengnau
Year of construction: 1848
Architect: unknown

It looks like a summer house, but isn't: the small, unadorned functional structure was exclusively used as the ritual bath. Inside, one undressed and stepped into the deep basin, which no longer exists. Admission was between 15 and 75 centimes, depending on circumstances. For the mid-19th century, this was not cheap. Admissions covered the



custodian's salary and costs for heating and light. Various historical documents indicate that the Lengnau mikvah was solely reserved for women.

ABOUT THE SWISS HERITAGE SOCIETY

The Swiss Heritage Society (SHS) is a public-interest association that has 27 000 members. Founded in 1905, it is the overseeing organization for 25 cantonal chapters or sections. The SHS is devoted to preserving and cultivating the appreciation of high quality architecture. At the forefront of the Society's efforts are safeguarding and ensuring the appropriate use of emblematic examples of our architectural legacy, and the promotion of high quality modern architecture in new projects. The SHS pursues its goals through informative and public relations activities, through specialized consulting when new works are being planned and built, by carrying out pioneering projects and by taking legal action if need be. The SHS rewards exemplary commitments to the values it espouses by awarding prizes (Wakker Prize, Heimatschutz Prize, Schulthess Horticultural Prize).

Further information can be found on the Society's website at www.heimatschutz.ch



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