Kempen Is A Romantic Trip Back In Time

The picturesque town of Kempen is a postcard photographer's dream. Quaint narrow streets, richly decorated houses and a medieval castle are just a few places you'll want to see for yourself.

The Cologne's stone castle was built in the late 1390s. You can still see the coat of arms of its benefactor, the Cologne Archbishop Friedrich von Saarwerden just above the entrance. The castle was the home of the town's noblemen, who were protectors of the people and upholders of the law.

However, they couldn't protect the castle from the natural elements. In 1851, the castle was almost completely destroyed in a fire. With only its foundation walls remaining, it was rebuilt in the New Gothic style. The architect Wiethase designed this reconstruction, which lasted from 1856 to 1863.

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More amazing architecture awaits you along one of Kempen's prettiest roads, the Judenstraße. There are at least a dozen intricately ornamented buildings here and in the surrounding area. Simply put on your walking shoes to enjoy them.

The House Basels is a half-timbered house with a stucco facade from 1885. It was named after a local preeminent family who had lived here for over four hundred years. If you look just above the door, you can see the initials of two of them, Peter Jakob Basels and his wife Anna Catharina Dannewitz.

The House Witthoff–Peerbooms is located on the corner of Judenstraße and *Buttermarkt*. Built in 1741, it has an irregular, asymmetrical shape. (For example, its gable doesn't reach across the

whole facade.) There are more initials on this house too, but their source remains a mystery. The house has since been converted into a bakery.

The House Hall is another architectural delight. It is built in the Rococo style and its meticulously adorned door frame, with its palm leaf shapes and rosettes, is worth a stop.

Kempen has had a dark and violent history. In 1579, the plague killed half the town's residents. And in 1642 it was destroyed by the French during the [Thirty Years' War](#). It is truly remarkable that so much remains for us, the modern visitor or resident, to enjoy. :-)