

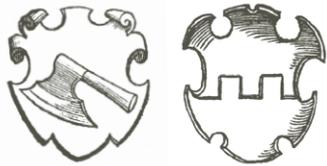
# Schloss Hohenkammer History

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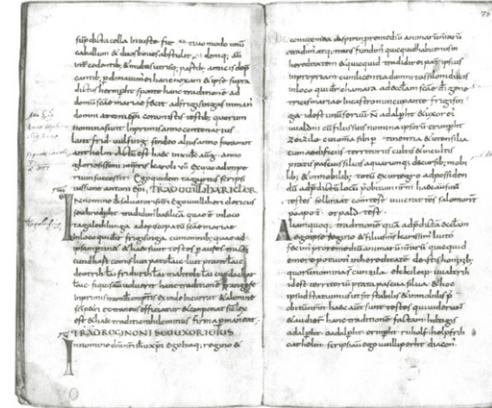
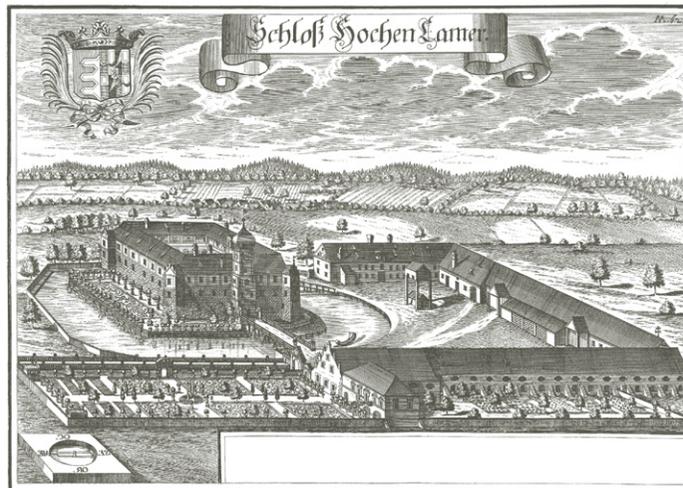


Detail from the cartographic plates of Philipp Apian, mathematician, physician, cartographer and herald, 1568

The coat of arms of the Knights of Camer and the Preysing coat of arms. Woodcuts by Jost Amman, 1566

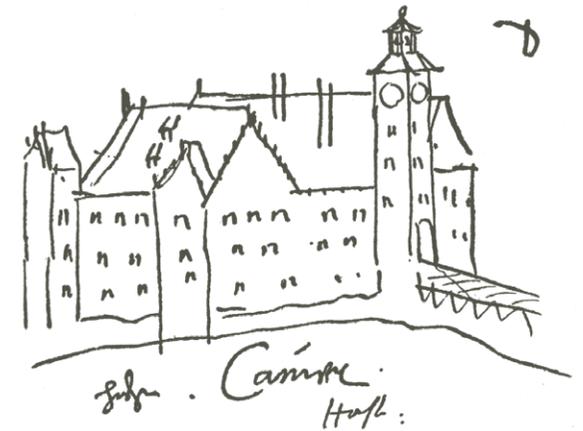


Copper engraving with the Haslang coat of arms by Michael Wening, court engraver of Elector Ferdinand Maria of Bavaria, 1701



The first reference to Hohenkammer, from the 8th century

Travel sketch by Nuremberg engraver Jost Amman, 1586



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1042–1551  
Lords of Kamer

### Eponym or name taker?

It stands to reason that the Lords of Kamer gave their place of residence their own name; yet, the opposite was the case. It is said that in the 8th century, on this spot along the river Glonn, a stately stone house stood, a *chamara*. A derivation of the Latin word *camera*, in Middle High German a *kamer* signified a room with a vaulted ceiling, a stately home or a courtroom. In other words, a relatively “noble” or “high house”, as it was then called.

At the turn of the first millennium, this high house – or *Hohe Kamer* – came into the possession of the Wittelsbach ministry officials, who now proudly called themselves “von Camer”. The same lords determined the fate of Hohenkammer for five centuries. The family did not take its leave of the estate until the time of the Copernican revolution, after which the sun no longer revolved around *Hohe Camer*, but the castle around the sun.

### The History

How can the nearly thousand-year history of a castle be told without filling page after page? A timeline accompanied by a few anecdotes is the usual solution. We felt it more fitting to tell Hohenkammer’s history through the stories of those who have lived here. Four noble families resided here in turn between 1042 and 1917. They were followed by institutions and companies, which survived the last century here – including a *Thousand-Year Reich* – leaving this unique castle ensemble intact for us today.

1551–1804  
Barons of Haslang

### Great politics and bad luck

For inexplicable reasons, the Lords of Kamer ran out of money. Crushing debt forced Christoph von Kamer, the last in his line, to sell the castle, shortly after which he died in dire poverty.

On January 31, 1551, the “noble estate Hohenkamer,” including “blood tithe on all subjects” and the extensive surrounding forests, fields, pastures, hunting rights and fishing grounds – 1,300 acres in all – was passed onto the royal council and governor of Ingolstadt, Georg von Haslang. At the time, the new owner was an avowed Protestant; his duke, Albrecht V, however, was a strict Catholic. The differences in beliefs had long since been resolved five generations later, when Georg Christoph Haslang was employed as important advisor and diplomat for his sovereign Maximilian I.

After the signing of the Thirty Years’ War peace treaties, Haslang also served his lord as a delegate. The war had taken its toll on the Haslang. In 1634 the castle burned for the first time; a second devastating fire broke out at the end of the war in 1648, burning the castle, as well as “... all the chattels of paintings, boxes, crates, chairs, together with the whole yard, cattle house, barn, stables and judge’s house.” The news of the disaster reached Georg Christoph von Haslang in Münster, where he was participating as a delegate in the peace negotiations. With the 2,000 florints he received as compensation for his loss, von Haslang rebuilt the castle and estate buildings.

1804–1833  
Earl of Preysing as heir and the Lords of Cotta

### Interlude and cultural heritage

With the childless Sigmund, the succession of the von Haslang came to an end. The last Haslang served as the Bavarian ambassador in England and preferred to die on his estate in Tüßling near Altötting. His two sisters were generous donors to churches and schools; their fame as such was so great that Franz Jakob Schwanthaler designed the tombstones of the two charitable women. The sisters’ possessions were inherited by the Earl of Preysing, who had been married to one of them. The Preysing family did not seem particularly in need of castles, however.

The castle remained in the Earl’s possession for a mere 17 years, after which it was sold to the Cottas. It was the newly ennobled Johann Friedrich Freiherr von Cotta who thus became the lord of the castle. His firm, the Cotta publishing house, published the works of all the great names of German classicism: Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin, Humboldt, Fichte, Hegel, Jean Paul...

King Ludwig I welcomed the presence of Baron von Cotta in his kingdom, as Bavaria lacked such a powerful publishing house. But Cotta’s ambitious and less ambitious plans – he wanted to start a sheep breeding farm – petered out over the years and the Vequel Family joined the succession in 1833.

1833–1917  
Barons of Vequel-Westernach

### The last noble family

The purchase agreement with the lawyer and member of the royal high court of appeals council Johann Baptist Freiherr von Vequel was meticulously drafted: “...various paintings with gilded frames, 12 leather chairs, 6 pewter spoons, 1 serving spoon, 6 pairs of knives and forks.” The contents of each room were similarly noted. The Baron – born Johann Baptist Reingruber – acquired his title and status through marriage and adoption. His son’s marriage to Baroness von Westernach brought even more renown to the family name, which thereafter was “von Vequel-Westernach.”

The period between 1833 and 1917 was, for those days, turbulent. Bavaria had become part of the German Empire, and industrialisation did not stop at the gates of the agrarian state. The period ended with the First World War, in which the only son and heir had died.

The three sisters of the fallen soldier sold the castle in 1917 to the Central Agricultural Cooperative in Regensburg. Mechthilde, who was the only one of the three to remain unmarried, stayed at Hohenkammer. In 1920 she moved into the so-called Baroness Villa, which had been built for her on a 16,000 square meter plot next to the castle grounds. The Renaissance turrets of her new home were reminiscent of the castle of her childhood.

1917–2005

### Modern times and happy ending

The new buyer was committed to keeping the castle estate intact and housing a charity in it as soon as possible. This came to pass in 1920 when the charitable organisation St. Georgsheim became the castle’s tenant. “Rising at 5.15 am” and “Evening prayer and then to bed at 8.30 pm” are the only two vertices quoted from the house rules. The Sacred Heart missionaries were followed by a Benedictine agricultural school, whose occupancy came to an end in 1933 due to the changing times. The SA-collection centre in Bad Godesberg rented the castle beginning in April 1936.

A Nazi cooperative school, including a “military training camp”, took the place of the collection centre from 1937 to 1940, followed by the Reich’s Forestry School, whose tenancy ended with the end of the *Thousand-Year Reich*.

The bad lessons of the past were followed from 1950 onwards by better times, thanks to the Bavarian Raiffeisen School’s long, constructive training period. A forestry school also found accommodation here. From 1975 to December 1998, the BayWa was responsible for the common training centre.

In the second millennium, Hohenkammer came to Munich Re’s attention while it was looking for a training, education, dialogue and communication centre. Since 2003, it has been the owner and innovator of Schloss Hohenkammer, where Munich Re celebrated its 125th anniversary two years later.

Since 2006

### The story continues

In 2006, three years after its acquisition of the castle, Munich Re decided to carry out a comprehensive restoration of the castle and to redesign the existing seminar centre of 1968. Those who are familiar with the history of Munich Re’s buildings know that the company’s strong quality consciousness would have accompanied both projects.

The restoration concept for Schloss Hohenkammer, to which the commissioned “Hild und K Architekten” and the owner quickly agreed, included uniting the castle’s different architectural histories into a superordinate architectural unity. And indeed, the interplay between the old and new impresses visitors with its naturalness and outstanding aesthetic.

This aesthetic gives the castle an impressive, authentic appearance, as in the best years of its nearly five hundred year history. At the same time it provides an atmosphere of well-being and fulfills all the demands of guests seeking a spiritual centre. A successful comeback.

Across from the castle lies the new reception building, which serves the entire castle complex. Once again, it was renowned architects, the Brückner brothers, who transformed a building from the late 1960s into an architectural counterpoint to the Renaissance style of the castle, a “second modernist” structure, which was promptly awarded a prestigious architecture prize.