



AMT FÜR KULTUR  
FÜRSTENTUM LIECHTENSTEIN

## Brick-factory and Hoffmann ring kiln in Nendeln

The Hoffmann ring kiln, built in 1881, was used in brick manufacturing and is still an exceptional cultural relic in the industry as well as social history of Liechtenstein. After fading into desuetude for over 100 years, the ring kiln has been excavated, restored and put under protection as a cultural piece of heritage in its original place in an estate on Churer Street 63. The preservation of this was initiated by the Conservation of Historic Monuments of Liechtenstein on the anniversary of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018. Financial contributions by the state as well as the Historic Society of Liechtenstein, the Valüna foundation and Karl Mayer foundation enabled the realisation of the project and allowed for public access to this cultural monument.



The ring kiln belonged to the manorial brickworks, whose beginnings can be traced back to around 1740. While the brick factory was initially used to produce bricks for local and regional needs, the construction of Hoffmann's ring kiln in 1881 represented a vast leap in brick production. Due to industrialisation and population growth, the demand for bricks had increased significantly. The ring kiln is named after the German master builder and engineer Friedrich Eduard Hoffmann (1818-1900) who applied for a patent in 1859. However, it had already been invented 20 years prior by a German master bricklayer in Berlin. The round or sometimes oval shape of the ring kiln allowed for uninterrupted brick firing and production. The fire moved from chamber to chamber inside the kiln with the help of a constant current of air. The fire could be stopped by partition walls that were gradually moved. Today, traces of these partitions, exhaust air ducts in the ground (also called fox holes), as well as the openings in the ceiling through which coal were thrown, are still visible. The ring kiln is the predecessor of modern tunnel kilns.

Then an ultra-modern burner factory in Nendeln, which was considered ultra-modern for the time, began to replace conventional simple brick kilns. The brick maker Anton Bickel (1842-1906) submitted an application to the government in Vaduz on 11th December 1881 for permission to create major structural measures. Instead of the existing lime and brick kiln, Bickel built a ring kiln with ten combustion chambers. He also had a new 80 foot (25,3m) high chimney installed on the mountain-facing of the building. The ring kiln in Nendeln was in operation for a good 30 years. Due to the outbreak of the war, the brickwork was forced to close down in 1914. Thereupon, the brickyard was shut down and, for the most part demolished. The ring kiln was filled up, the brickworks fireplace was demolished around 1943. The subsequent owners had the former main part of the building, which was directly above the kiln and had been forgotten about in the meantime, covered up with a concrete slab and converted into apartments.