

## 70 Years Anniversary Audi Ingolstadt

### The automobile manufacturer's early days in Ingolstadt – An excursion to historical production sites in a DKW Schnellaster van

Audi has been building automobiles at its Ingolstadt plant for 70 years. The heart of the Group beats in this major Bavarian city on the Danube, where AUDI AG has its headquarters and operates its largest production site. From the initial idea to the finished car, the entire production process for the Audi Q2, Audi A3, Audi A4 and Audi A5 models and associated derivatives takes place at the Ingolstadt plant. Around 44,000 people work here, helping to enable *Vorsprung durch Technik*. Audi is the region's economic engine and largest employer.

The founding of Auto Union GmbH in Ingolstadt in 1949 started a new chapter in the history of the automobile manufacturer, which was previously based in Germany's federal state of Saxony. In buildings of the former Ingolstadt Fort in the center of the city, the company began producing spare parts, motorcycles and DKW vehicles. To mark the 70th anniversary, a tour in a DKW Schnellaster offers a fascinating perspective on the historical production sites and the early days of previous Auto Union AG in Ingolstadt.

#### Where did Audi originate?

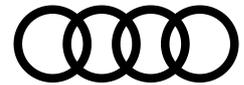
**Auto Union AG** was formed in Chemnitz in 1932 from the merger of Audiwerke AG, Horchwerke AG and Zschopauer Motorenwerke-J. S. Rasmussen AG (DKW). When it was founded in Chemnitz, having also acquired the automotive arm of Wanderer, Auto Union AG was the second-largest motor vehicle manufacturing group in Germany. The company emblem consists of four interlocking rings, intended to symbolize the unity of the four founder companies. The **four brands, Audi, DKW, Horch and Wanderer**, were retained. This allowed each of the brands to be assigned a specific market segment: DKW – motorcycles and small cars; Wanderer – mid-size cars; Audi – cars in the deluxe mid-size segment; Horch – luxury cars at the top end of the market.

The outbreak of the Second World War put an end to the successful development of Auto Union in Saxony. Auto Union AG built its last civilian vehicles in 1940 before switching entirely to the production of military equipment. After the war, Auto Union AG was expropriated and its manufacturing facilities dismantled by the Soviet occupation army. The company was removed from the commercial register of the city of Chemnitz in 1948. At this point, leading employees of Auto Union AG had already left for Bavaria, where they found a new home in Ingolstadt.

#### A new beginning in Ingolstadt

The signs that Ingolstadt would be the company's new site were already on the horizon on December 19, 1945, when **Zentraldepot für Auto Union Ersatzteile GmbH**, a central depository for spare parts, was founded. Its purpose was to supply the pre-war Auto Union vehicles still in existence (roughly 60,000 in the Western occupation zones) with spare parts. **Auto Union GmbH was founded in Ingolstadt on September 3, 1949, and the new company continued the tradition of the four rings in the automotive industry.** In extremely modest surroundings, the company initially focused on making small, economical vehicles: DKW motorcycles and cars with their typical two-stroke engines.

Ingolstadt was initially chosen as the site of the central depository due to its convenient location in the heart of Bavaria. The town elders of Ingolstadt also supported the establishment of the



central depository because it would benefit the regional labor market. However, one decisive factor in the relocation was the garrison city's military heritage, dating back centuries. It was possible to acquire vast open spaces directly, alongside numerous barracks, casemates, etc. – a valuable legacy to inherit. The resources for new buildings simply were not available. Starting with the former army provisions office on Schrankenstrasse, the company was able to utilize many other buildings previously used for military purposes, such as the armory, the granary, and the parade hall for its purposes later on. The way in which operational facilities were spread across the entire city meant that efficiently flowing production was almost impossible. Locals at that time wittily spoke of the “**united smelting works.**”

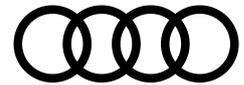
### **Takeover by Daimler Benz**

In April 1958, Auto Union was acquired by Daimler-Benz. In light of increasing competition from abroad, the Stuttgart-based company considered it sensible to expand its product range to the lower market segment. At this point, the company in Ingolstadt produced only DKW motorcycles, the DKW Schnellaster van, and the DKW off-road vehicle developed for the German Bundeswehr (M-Wagen or Munga as from 1962). The entire passenger car production of Auto Union was concentrated at the Düsseldorf plant, which had been opened in 1950. This was about to change. Given the better financial circumstances, it was decided in May 1961 to give up the location in Düsseldorf and consolidate the **vehicle manufacturing activities of Auto Union in Ingolstadt**. A further reason for expanding the Ingolstadt location was the decreasing demand for motorcycles, which had resulted in DKW motorcycle production being ceased in the fall of 1958. This had released a lot of employees who could work on the production of the DKW Junior passenger car instead. It first rolled off the line in Ingolstadt in 1959. Construction of the new automobile plant on Ettinger Strasse, on a former military area way outside the gates of Ingolstadt, started in the summer of 1958.

### **Moving away from the city center**

The company took over the new plant in the summer of 1959, but continued to use its facilities in the city to some extent for a long time after that. The last of these buildings, the granary used as a central archive, was not vacated until 1997. Daimler-Benz sold Auto Union to Volkswagen in several stages between 1964 and 1966, making **Auto Union GmbH a subsidiary of Volkswagenwerk AG**. **Following a merger with NSU Motorenwerke AG in 1969, the company was renamed Audi NSU Auto Union AG**. With the continued expansion of the plant premises on Ettinger Strasse and the associated relocation of the corresponding specialist departments to the new buildings of Technical Development in December 1970, the importance of the old facilities in the city center continued to decrease. When the Sales departments of VW and Audi were merged in 1974, the last remaining departments left the city center, too. The plant site on Ettinger Strasse, meanwhile, grew ceaselessly, eventually reaching its current monumental proportions and covering 2,737,500 m<sup>2</sup> (29,466,205 sq ft). In 1985, the automotive company was renamed to AUDI AG. Both the company and its products have borne the same name ever since.

A plaque on the former administrative building on Schrankenstrasse reminds passers-by of the years in which Auto Union was rebuilt.



## Historical Production Sites in Ingolstadt

### **Administrative building: Schrankenstrasse 3**

As a former garrison town with many vacant military buildings and due to its central location on the highway between Nuremberg and Munich, Ingolstadt provided excellent conditions for the new start of Auto Union. The foundation of the “Zentraldepot für Auto Union Ersatzteile” in December 1945 marked the beginning of the relocation of Auto Union from Chemnitz to West Germany. The administrative buildings of the royal provisions office on Schrankenstrasse and the army bakery and provisions warehouse located behind them, which were used as the storage area for the central depository, were leased in 1946 and served as the basis of the new location. After being used as a central depository, the setting was considered as the first administrative center of the newly founded Auto Union GmbH in Ingolstadt from 1949. The house was built in 1880/81 and originally had three floors. After the building was severely damaged during a bombing raid on April 21, 1945, the third floor was demolished and replaced with the roof structure as seen today. It is currently used as a branch office of the district court of Ingolstadt.

### **Central depository and customer service: Proviantstrasse/Adolf-Kolping-Strasse**

Behind the administrative building, several buildings were arranged around an inner courtyard. In the early 1950s, this courtyard was used as a meeting place for customers, visitors, employees and journalists for press presentations, for example. After 1954, customer service and the after-sales training school were set up in the former army bakery along Proviantstrasse. The provisions warehouse on Adolf-Kolping-Strasse has been demolished in the meantime. What is known as the “social city hall” is located in its place today. There was a building on the opposite side of Adolf-Kolping-Strasse that was used by the Auto Union Advertising, Export, and Sales departments. This building no longer exists. The technical college of the city of Ingolstadt can be found here today.

### **Engine and transmission manufacturing: The old armory at Unterer Graben**

At the beginning, the central depository had been stocked exclusively with old inventory or spare parts delivered by former suppliers. In 1946 the company started to produce more parts itself. This included most notably the production of complete engine/transmission units for the two-cylinder, two-stroke engine of the pre-war DKW F 5, F 7, and F 8 models, and the post-war DKW F 89 L and F 89 P models beginning in 1949/50. The company rented the old armory at Unterer Graben for this undertaking. In addition to the DKW two-cylinder engines, the transmissions for the DKW three-cylinder models were also assembled in this building as from 1953. **The old armory is considered to be the actual origin of automotive manufacturing in Ingolstadt because the prototypes of the DKW Schnellaster van were produced on the second floor of the building in 1948/49.** Using timber planks and ropes, the vehicles had to be moved via the staircase into the yard. Another product to come from this site was the first post-war DKW motorcycle, the DKW RT 125 W. Today, this building is occupied by a state vocational school.

### **Motorcycle production and delivery (until 1956): The granary at the Esplanade**

The former granary on a ground that was known as the “banana property”, was an important part of the early rebuilding period of Auto Union after the war. The granary, which was built in 1898, was used for motorcycle production beginning in 1949 and converted accordingly. The first assembly line for the DKW RT 125 W was set up in this building, and the RT 200 and RT 250 models followed later on. The granary was expanded in 1951, and the annex was used as a

distributing warehouse for the motorcycles. After motorcycle production had been moved to a new building next door, Auto Union workers used the granary to build motorcycle frames. The spare parts department then moved into these premises in 1958 once the production of two-wheeled vehicles had ceased. Later on, the central archive of Audi NSU Auto Union AG and AUDI AG was located here for many years before it moved to modern buildings close to the plant in 1997. Of all the buildings in the center of Ingolstadt used under the banner of the four rings, the granary is the one to have served the longest. The site continued to be used by various businesses until the end of May 2010.



**Schrankenstrasse 3: Central administration**



**Inner courtyard at Schrankenstrasse/Proviantstrasse: Central warehouse**



**Unterer Graben: Armory**



**Esplanade: Granary**

### DKW Schnellaster luxury bus



DKW F 800/3 Schnellaster luxury bus

#### Vehicle data:

- Year of production: 1956
- Construction period: 1955–1960/62
- Units: 449; total of 24,529

#### Engine data:

- Engine: Three-cylinder, two-stroke
- Output: 32 metric horsepower at 4,000 rpm
- Max. speed: 90 km/h (55.9 mph)

#### Construction data:

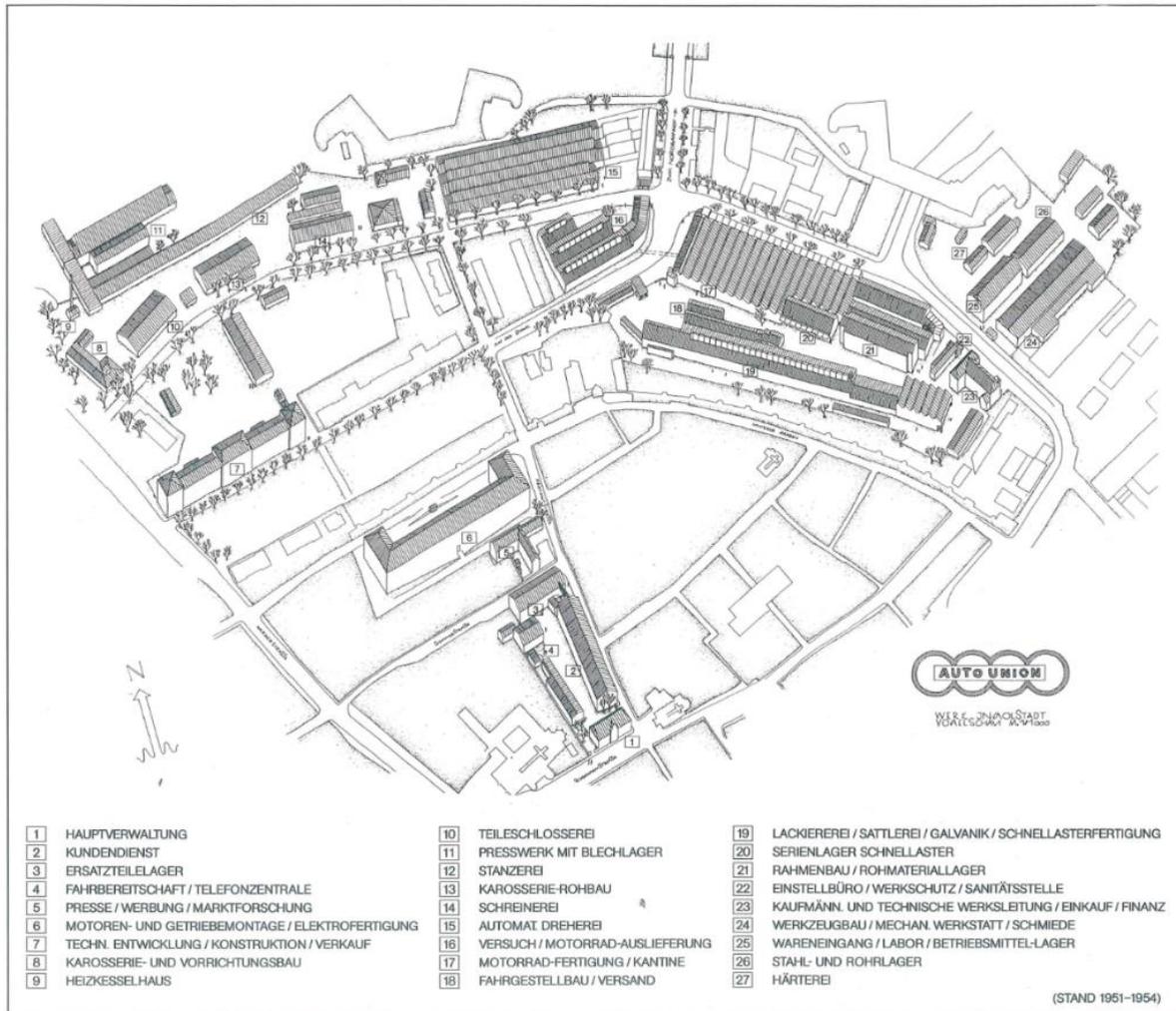
- Dimensions: 4,190 x 1,684 x 1,900 mm (165 x 66.3 x 74.8 in)
- Unladen weight: 1250 kg (2,755.8 lb)

**The DKW Schnellaster symbolizes the rebirth of Auto Union in West Germany in 1949. It was the first model built by Auto Union after the Second World War and the first vehicle that was produced in Ingolstadt.** The design of the DKW Schnellaster with its pioneering cab-over-engine construction was based on the proven DKW front-wheel drive technology from the pre-war period. The early DKW Schnellaster model F 89 L built in 1950 was initially fitted with a two-cylinder, two-stroke engine. The reliable 20-metric-horsepower (later 22) delivery van was offered with various body variants ranging from flatbed trucks, panel vans, and cattle trucks all the way to luxury buses. In 1952, Auto Union launched a revised model with an extended wheelbase and new four-speed transmission. The DKW F 800 model followed in 1954, featuring a new, longitudinally mounted two-cylinder, two-stroke engine developing 30 metric horsepower. The more powerful three-cylinder, two-stroke engine (32 metric horsepower) was launched the following year. The DKW F 800/3 model with the proven three-cylinder engine was produced starting in July 1955. Its predecessor, the F 800/30, was discontinued after just 14 months in production. The three-cylinder Schnellaster was also available in different variants; for example, as a crew bus and panel van (until 1962) or a flatbed truck (until 1960). The distinctive features of the luxury bus included its high-quality interior equipment, all-round glazing, steel sliding roof, and striking two-tone paint finish.



During the era of the Schnellaster, additionally 100 electric Schnellaster vans were produced in Ingolstadt and sold mainly to power companies, public utility companies, and battery manufacturers. The DKW “electric van” was fitted with a series motor with an output of five kilowatts. The lead batteries stored on the side in two boxes were rated at 80 volts and had a capacity of 200 amp-hours. The maximum range of the electric DKW was 80 kilometers (49.7 miles). With a top speed of 40 km/h (24.9 mph), it was used

primarily for short trips around town. The whereabouts of two of these vehicles are known to this day. Official production of the Schnellaster at Auto Union in Ingolstadt ended with the DKW F 800/3 model in 1960. It was briefly resurrected in 1962 with factory production for authorities before the era of the Schnellaster in the city on the Danube finally came to an end.



Site plan of the “united smelting works.” (1951-1954)

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