

RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION ISSUES IN THE REVALORIZATION PROCESS OF THE FORMER MAGDALENE ABBEY IN SZPROTAWA - A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

The article presents a model process of rescuing a historic object important for the cultural heritage of Silesia. The process under discussion includes a presentation of the history of the establishment and transformation of the Abbey of the Magdalene Sisters in Szprotawa from the first half of the 14th century to the beginning of the 20th century and its adaptation to a museum. The introduction presents historical, source, and literature research. The results of a detailed architectural study of the monastery building are presented. These became the basis for detailed conservation recommendations and the restoration project. The conservation work carried out made it possible to save this valuable building and adapt it for the Szprotawa Regional Museum. The conclusion presents the process of research, revalorization, and adaptation of the former Magdanek monastery against the background of the revalorization of other historic monuments.

Keywords: Silesia; architecture; Szprotawa; Abbey; Gothic; Renaissance; Baroque; Renovation; Museum

Introduction

The problem of interdisciplinary research of historic buildings and their adaptation to a new function is an extremely interesting and multi-threaded research area. The proper implementation of an adaptation project should be preceded by a wide range of interdisciplinary research. The scope of research work should include, among others, the commencement of the chronology of transformations of the building's structure, archaeological research in its interiors and the adjacent area, analysis of iconography, conservation, structural research, and other research. Their aim should not only be scientific knowledge itself, but above all the identification of the most valuable elements and their conservation and exposition. The aim of this article is to show the process of interdisciplinary research and adaptation of the former Magdalene convent of Szprotawa. It provides an example of a model approach to interdisciplinary research and the use of its results in the process of adapting a historical building to a new function.

Description of the building of the former abbey

Szprotawa is located in the southwestern part of Poland, in Silesia, near the border with Germany. The historical urban center is located on a promontory in the fork of the Bóbr and Szprota (Szprotawa) Rivers. In the center of the chartered town, there is a market square (almost square) with a town hall, and to the south of the town hall, there is Kościelny Square (the former cemetery) with a parish church. On the southern frontage of the square, there is a

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building of the former convent of the Magdalene sisters. The current building is the former northern wing of the abbey complex. The historical complex consisted of three wings that do not exist at present: one adjacent from the south to the eastern edge of the existing wing, one next to the current eastern façade, and the southern wing along the current Sądowa Street, closing the courtyard. The condition of the abbey buildings before 1945 is documented by aerial photographs, which are stored at the Herder Institute Marburg [1]. A narrow passage separates it from the church.

The three-story building of the former abbey faces north. It is covered with a gable roof with a ridge that is set along the east-west axis. The building was erected on a rectangular plan with dimensions of 40.6 meters by 11.5 meters. The interiors were arranged in a three-bay system, with the outermost ones being in a single-lane layout and the middle bay being in a two-lane layout. The middle bay had a staircase and two rooms from the south and a corridor from the north. The rooms in the basement and on the ground floor, as well as the corridor on the first floor, are covered with groin or barrel vaults, and the interiors on the upper floors are covered with ceilings.

The entrance is located from the north on the axis of a two-flight staircase located on the eastern edge of the middle bay. The runs of the stairs are covered with barrel vaults, and the landings with groin vaults. There is a four-bay corridor on the ground floor along the front wall, which has window openings in each bay. Two entrances leading to the rooms of the rear part of the building were formed in the southern wall. Both rooms are covered with barrel vaults with transverse lunettes and are illuminated by four windows placed in the axes of the lunettes. The vaults have plaster decorations on their panels and also on the liernes located at the intersections of the barrel vaults.

The western bay of the building consists of two rectangular rooms that are covered with groin vaults running down to the central pillar that is embedded in the wall between them. The intersections of the barrels are enhanced with triangular liernes. The southern interior is illuminated by two windows. By the inter-bay wall, there are stairs to the basement, which are covered with a barrel vault. The room in the eastern bay was built on a square plan and is covered with a four-field vault based on a central pillar. Light enters the interior through one window from the north and two from the east. Quarter-landing stairs, leading through a short corridor to a rectangular chamber covered with a barrel vault, were placed in the eastern bay.

The layout of the first and second floors follows the layout of the ground floor. In the middle bay, along the northern wall, there is a corridor lit by five windows from the north. Two entrances to the rooms of the rear part of the building lead from it. They are illuminated by two windows from the south. The western bay consists of two rooms, with the larger one from the south being illuminated with two windows and the smaller one from the north with one window. The eastern bay has a large room with three windows from the south and three from the north. A two-flight staircase with flights covered with vaults was constructed on the eastern edge of the middle bay.

The northern façade was designed as a three-story and ten-axis composition, with the entrance being located in the fourth axis (counting from the east). The windows were placed regularly on a wall devoid of articulation. In the middle bay, there are window openings in five axes: in the west, in two axes, and in the east, in three. All the openings have profiled frames with windowsills. The façade is crowned with a series of small square windows that are framed with smooth bands and that illuminate the attic. A profiled cornice is formed above the windows. The two-axis eastern façade is composed of windows that only illuminate the upper floors. At the level of the first floor, the southern opening is shaped as a niche. The finial of the façade is shaped in the form of a triangular gable that is set on a profiled crowning cornice. Two narrow attic windows are arranged in the axis of the gable. The western façade has a similar layout. There is a narrow window on the second floor. The composition of the gable is similar

to the eastern one, with the difference being that the northern window has been replaced by a niche (Figs. 1 and 2).



Fig. 1. Szprotawa, the former Magdalene abbey, view from the north - state before the works



Fig. 2. Szprotawa, the former Magdalene abbey, view from the north - state after the works

The southern façade has ten axes and entrances in the eighth and ninth axes from the east. The openings are placed regularly within the western and middle bays. In the east, however, they are somewhat random. The western bay has two axes, and the middle one has six. The windows in the two outermost eastern axes illuminate the staircase. The windowsills within the staircase are lower when compared to others, which is due to the levels of the

staircase's landings. The eastern bay has windows on the first and second floors, and an entrance is located next to the buttress.



Fig. 3. Szprotawa, the former Magdalene abbey, view from the south - state before the works



Fig. 4. Szprotawa, the former Magdalene abbey, view from the north - state after the works

On the first floor, the window is located above the door, whereas on the second floor, two windows were placed on a common sill in the same axis. Revalorization works that were carried out in recent years enabled elements of the Gothic architectural design to be displayed on the façades. Ogival recesses are shown on the northern façade, and traces of narrow openings covered with segmental arches are visible on the southern façade. On the side walls, the outlines of Gothic niches and ogival vaults can be seen from the east, whereas from the west it is the lower part of the Gothic gable that is visible (Figs. 3 and 4).

Experimental

Sources and the state of research

The first mention of the convent of the Magdalene sisters in Szprotawa is included in a deed issued on December 1, 1314, by Wrocław Bishop Henry from Wierzbno [2-4]. Thanks to the efforts of Mechtilda, the widow of Duke Henry III of Głogów, and her son Duke Henry IV the Faithful, the Bishop of Wrocław consented to the transfer of the abbey from Bytom Odrzański to Szprotawa. Important for tracing the transformation of the convent buildings are the dates of the fires that destroyed the city, especially those from June 19, 1672 [5, 6], and June 23, 1702 [7]. The abbey buildings were secularized on November 24, 1810, and on May 1 of the following year, the municipal commune purchased them for 502 thalers and allocated a school there [7]. The reconstruction of the interiors after 1935 is confirmed by the project that is kept in the collection of the State Archives in Zielona Góra [8].

Based on archival documents, a chronicle of the history of the parish church and the abbey was published by Clemens Baier [2]. He decided that the construction of the building of the Magdalene convent began in the 14th century - around 1314. Felix Matuszkiewicz mentioned the abbey many times with regard to a broader spectrum of the town's history [7]. A very concise description and discussion of the history of the building was published in catalogue publications that present the monuments of the Lubuskie region [9-11]. These publications indicate that the foundation of the abbey took place in the 14th century, which was associated with the relocation of the Magdalene convent to Szprotawa in 1314. Subsequent transformations were the result of fires that affected the city in 1672 and 1702, as well as the secularization of the abbey property in 1810. Conservation works that were carried out in recent years enabled detailed architectural research of the abbey to be conducted. During this research, the most important chronological phases were separated based on differences in materials and technology, as well as on the analysis of forms and architectural details. An initial summary of the research that presents the transformations of the abbey until the beginning of the 19th century was discussed by Andrzej Legendziewicz [12]. Conservation [13] and archaeological research [14] were carried out at the same time. Conclusions from the overall results of the research, as well as the issues concerning the conservation of façades and the revalorization of interiors, are the source material for the following text.

Research results and conservation issues

Phase 1st (around 1314)

The information contained in written sources indicates that the transfer of the Magdalene convent from Bytom Odrzański to Szprotawa probably took place at the end of 1314 [3]. The efforts of the powerful guardians of the congregation, Duchess Mechtilda - the widow of Prince Henry III of Głogów - and her son Prince Henry IV the Faithful, seem to confirm the possible thesis that the sisters lived in a newly erected brick abbey. Fragments of the original building, which can be associated with this fact, include walls built of both fieldstones on the ground floor and bricks (arranged in the Gothic bond pattern) on the first floor. The walls were within the outline of the current building, which is consistent with the previous building that was arranged on a plan similar to a rectangle measuring about 40.6 meters by 11.5 meters - with its longer sides towards the south and north. The ground floor, which was originally probably about 4.5 meters high, was built of erratics. The historical ground level of the area adjacent to the abbey from the north was about 2.5 meters below the present one. It consisted of a cobbled passage separating the walled area of the church cemetery from the abbey buildings. The ground floor, which was originally probably about 4.5 meters high, was built of erratics. The arrangement of windows on the façades remains unknown due to numerous openings that were made in the Baroque period. Out of the Gothic openings, fragments of one, located almost on the axis of the southern wall, were found. The opening, which was about 120cm wide, was covered with a segmental arch made of stone voussoirs. The splayed jambs were shaped from

carefully prepared bog iron blocks. The opening, destroyed during the Baroque reconstruction, could have been 30 to 40 cm wide. Its height remains unknown. The raising of the level of the surrounding area by about 2 meters suggests that it may have reached about 2.5 meters (Figs. 5 and 6).

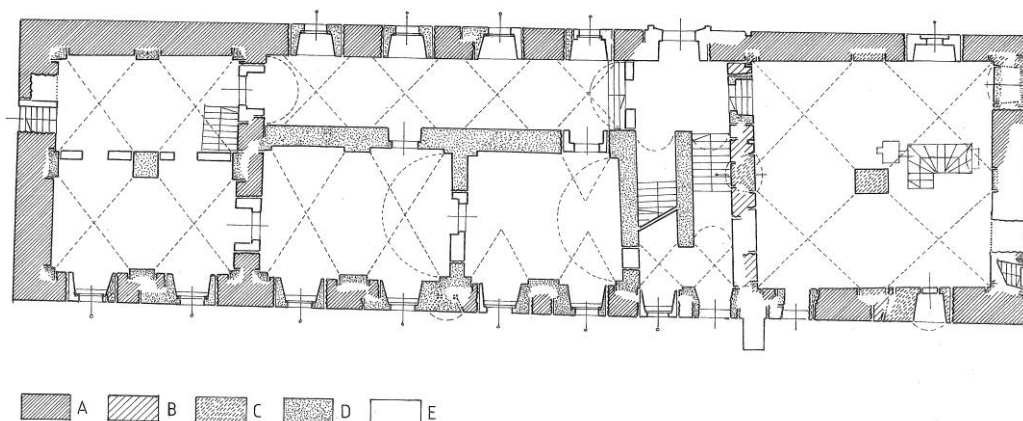


Fig. 5. Szprotawa, Szprotawa, the former Magdalene abbey, ground floor plan with chronological stratification of the walls (A - walls from 1314, B - walls from the 15th century, C - walls from 1580-1618, D - walls from around 1702, E - walls from the 19th and the 20th centuries, and those unrecognized)

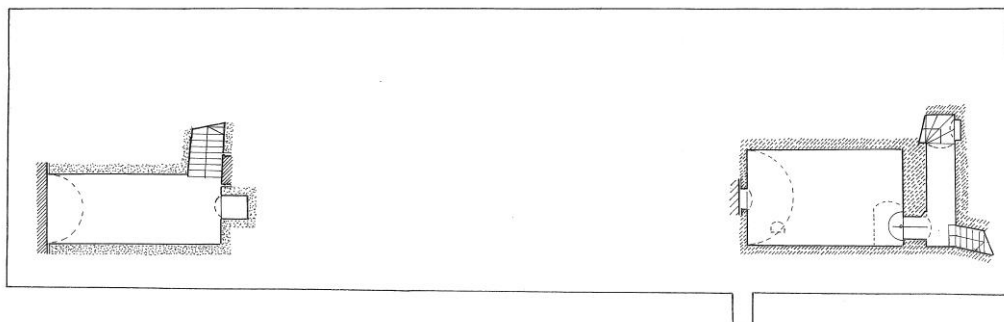


Fig. 6. Szprotawa, Szprotawa, the former Magdalene abbey, basement plan with chronological stratification of the walls

The composition of the façade of the first floor is partly known (Fig. 7). The layout of the southern wall in its western part consisted of 16 niches with a depth of half a brick and dimensions from 60 to 65cm wide and about 150cm high. The niches were spaced every 50 to 55cm. They probably had a segmental pattern, which is indicated by the fragments of the arch found in one of them. The windowsills of the niches were located at a height of about 3.1 meters above the current ground level. On the eastern edge of the façade, a stone and brick surface without openings, almost 4 meters long and reaching a height of about 5 meters above the current ground level, was registered. This suggests that the eastern part of the southern façade, during the erection of the northern wing, was planned to be further expanded.

The articulation of the first floor of the northern façade was composed differently (Fig. 8). It was formed by ogival recesses, which were composed in sets of three, in eight groups. The location of twenty of the recesses is known - in the pillars between the windows and the area between the floors. From the west, in the vicinity of the first window axis, fragments of three recesses were found: two partially preserved and one almost complete. Another whole one, and a fragment of a second one, were found between the second and third windows. A remnant of

the third group is a recess located in the pillar between the third and fourth axes. From the fourth group, three recesses were documented, including a whole one. Above the current entrance, a group of three recesses was recorded - two incomplete ones and the entire eastern one with a small window that measures 30×60cm.

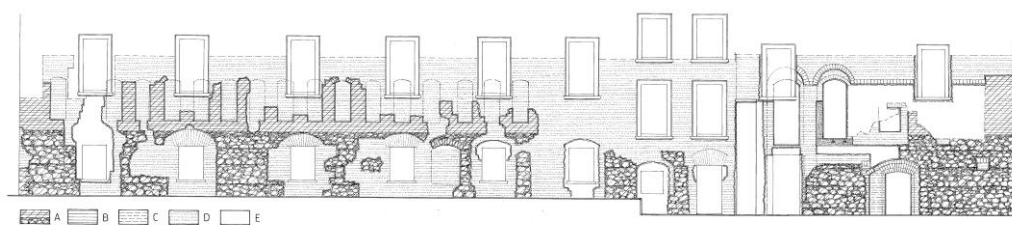


Fig. 7. Szprotawa, Szprotawa, the former Magdalene abbey, southern façade with chronological stratification of the walls (A - Gothic walls from 1314, B - walls from the 15th century, C - walls from 1580-1618, D - Baroque walls from around 1702, E - walls from the 19th and 20th centuries and those unrecognized).

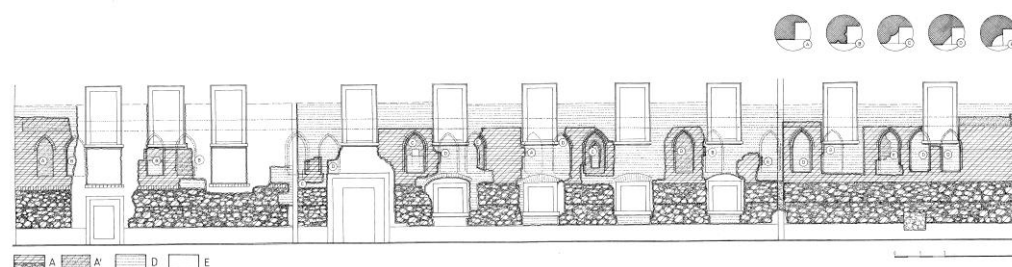


Fig. 8. Szprotawa, Szprotawa, the former Magdalene abbey, northern façade with chronological stratification of the walls (A - Gothic walls from 1314, A' - Gothic walls from 1314 (recesses), D - Baroque walls from around 1702, E - walls from the 19th and 20th centuries and those unrecognized (A-E - recess framing profiles)

On the left side of the entrance, two vertical sections of the jambs of two recesses of the sixth group were found. From the other two groups, four recesses are preserved to this day: two under the window of the ninth axis and one complete and one fragmentarily preserved on the eastern edge of the façade. The size of the background in all the recesses was similar and ranged from 60 to 65cm in width and about 150cm in height to the keystone. Four ceramic shapes (extruded before firing in plaster moulds) and simple bricks (profiles A-E) were used to shape the jambs. Above the recesses, three sections of a shallow frieze panel (4 brick layers high) were found. The height of the longer façades reached about 5 meters above the current ground level. Their size was determined on the basis of the location of the frieze that was made of bricks arranged in a stretcher pattern, which was registered on the western façade. It was probably the basis of a brick cornice of an unknown profile (Fig. 9a, b).

The western façade was crowned with a triangular gable, the base of which was the aforementioned brick frieze. The composition of the gable consisted of seven recesses of a currently unknown shape - probably ogival. The middle one, about 90cm wide and placed 4 layers of brick above the frieze, had edges made of ceramic fittings (the so-called "roller with a squint"). The other recesses had a similar width, straight edges, and were spaced about 45 cm apart. At the level of the first floor, a high window with a non-preserved arch and probably splayed jambs was found. Presumably, there were recesses on both sides of it - a fragment of the edge of such an element was discovered from the north. The recesses could have been similar to those found on the façade. No opening was recorded on the ground floor (Fig. 10).

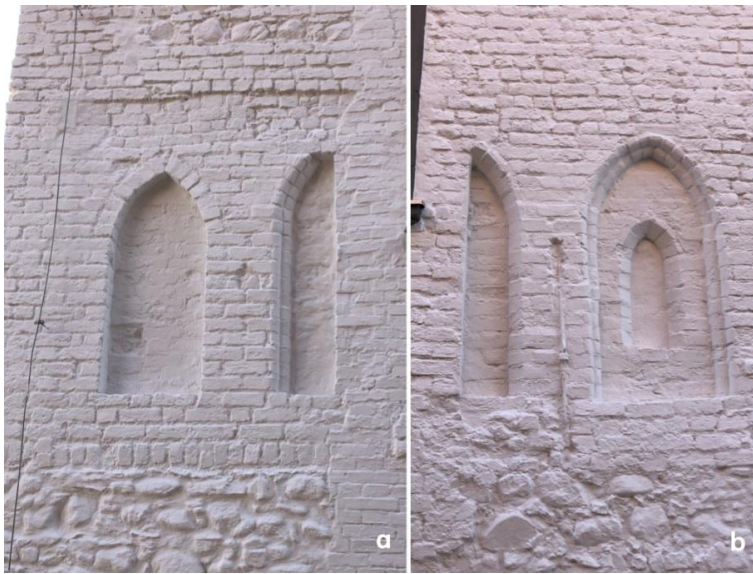


Fig. 9a, b. Szprotawa, the former Magdalene Abbey northern façade, detail of Gothic recesses - state after works



Fig. 10. Szprotawa, the former Magdalene abbey, façade, detail of the Gothic gable - state after the works

The arrangement of the eastern façade was probably similar to that of the northern façade. At the southern edge of the wall, an edge of an ogival opening was found, which was about 2.5 meters high (to the keystone of the ogival arch) and which had straight jambs made of ceramic fittings (the so-called roller with a squint - profile B). Its location indicates that it could have been an element of a composition of 3 to 5 windows, or possibly even windows and niches (?).

The original Gothic texture and colors of the façade were probably made of whitewashed brick with carefully prepared joints: the horizontal struck joint and the vertical vee joint. The composition of the façade of the first floor was emphasized by the execution of smoothed

plaster in the recesses. The ground floor, made of fieldstones, was also covered with smoothed plaster.

The medieval arrangement of the interior of the abbey was only recognized on the ground floor in its western part. A room with a plan similar to a rectangle with the dimensions of about 7.3 meters by about 8.3 meters was located there and was probably covered with a ceiling. The entrance to it was presumably located in the place of one of the entrances present to this day. The remaining interior divisions were probably made using wooden or wattle and daub walls (Fig. 5).

Phase 2nd (second half of 14th century)

It is probably in the second half of the 14th century when the eastern part of the northern wing was rebuilt and extended to the east and south. The abbey was connected to the church by an arcaded porch [15]. In the eastern part of the building, a room with a rectangular plan and dimensions of about 9.75 meters by 9.1 meters was separated from the rest of the area. It was probably covered with a beam ceiling, which is indicated by the lack of traces of vault springers. There was a pillar in the middle, which was probably due to the span of the room. The entrance to the room was located on the west, on the axis of the wall. The opening, with a sectional pattern and a width of about 100cm, was covered with a half-brick-thick arch. At its northern edge, there was a lighting niche covered with a triangular pediment. The second entrance to the room was located on the south side and led to the newly erected wing. This opening also had a sectional pattern with a similar arch. Fragments of the western jamb and a section at the base of the arch have survived to this day (Fig. 5).

The wall that separated the eastern room was reaching the height of the ceiling above the first floor. At the level of the upper storey, at a distance of about 1.5 meters from the southern wall, the northern edge of the door opening (with a fragment of a segmental arch) was found. The width of the entrance remains unknown because the southern edge was destroyed during the Baroque reconstruction. The introduced wall was probably plastered with a thin layer of lime plaster, which was made immediately after the erection of the wall. This thesis is confirmed by the discovered relics of plasters and flush blurred joints.

During the same period, the abbey was expanded to the east - as evidenced by the relics exposed on the eastern façade. The added wing probably had two floors. The part of the building for enclosed religious orders, with a corridor running along the present wall, was probably located on the ground floor. On the first floor there was a representative interior with a currently unknown function, which was covered with a three-bay ribbed vault. The ribs, with a single-cavity profile, were supported on corbels.

Phase 3th (end of the 16th century)

The Renaissance reconstruction was probably carried out at the end of the 16th century or at the beginning of the next century. The time frame of the works is determined by the block bond pattern in the walls, which began to be used in Silesia after 1580, and the decoration of the vaults in the form of a triangular lierne at the intersections of the barrels, which disappeared at the end of the first two decades of the 17th century. During the work, the room on the ground floor at the eastern edge of the wing was transformed. The room was covered with a four-field vault based on a central pillar (with shaft dimensions of 0.9/1.0 meters) (Fig. 11). The tas-de-charges of the barrels led from the corners and from places in the middle of the length of each of the walls. Due to the location of the vaults, the Gothic entrance from the west was walled up. The new one, which had a sectional pattern, was made to the north of the existing one. The entrance from the south was also moved and was located in the southeast bay. The 1.1-meter-wide opening was covered with a brick sectional arch (2x½ brick thick) (Fig. 5).

A window was also made in the northern corner of the eastern wall. Another window was also made in the eastern wall by the northern corner. Presumably, the room could have served as a refectory (?). A small basement measuring 3.8 by 6.5 meters was introduced under it. It was accessed by a descent with stairs that had brick treads located on the eastern side of the

pillar. The stairs were covered with a sectional vault. In the eastern wall of the descent there was a lighting niche, and in the western wall there was a niche with a cache. The entrance to the chamber was preceded by a corridor along the eastern wall, which was about 4.1 meters long and covered with a segmental vault. At its southern end there was an entrance to the chamber. Opposite it, there was a tunnel with steep stairs connecting the basements with the corridor of the part of the building for enclosed religious orders. The basement's chamber was covered with a semi-circular barrel vault, which was located along the east-west axis and based on foundation offsets. A small niche with traces of wooden shelves was placed in the western wall (Fig. 12).



Fig. 11. Szprotawa, the former Magdalene abbey, ground floor, eastern bay, interior of the Renaissance room facing south - state after the works



Fig. 12. Szprotawa, the former Magdalene abbey basement, eastern bay, interior of the chamber facing east - state after the works

An analogous arrangement of interiors (as on the ground floor) was introduced on the first floor. The room in the eastern part received a four-field vault with a central pillar. Traces of the tas-de-charges of the barrels were recorded in the corners of the present room. An

analysis of the design documentation from 1935 and an inspection pit in the floor showed that the original floor level was about 110cm lower than it is now [8].

Phase 4th (after 1672) and phase 5th (around 1702)

Probably after the fire in 1672, minor transformations were made within the western part of the abbey's wing [5, 6]. In the western gable façade, two small windows were pierced on both sides of the Gothic window.

The largest scope of transformations was carried out at the beginning of the 18th century - after the fire in 1702 [7]. The works included the reconstruction of the destroyed abbey's wing and the raising of it by one storey to a height of about 10 meters above the current ground level.

Due to the damage, the southern wall was demolished to the level of the arches of the Gothic recesses and, in some places, to the stone pedestal. On the northern façade, the Gothic cornice and part of the panel were demolished. The ogival gothic niches, which did not interfere with the new arrangement of windows, were bricked up. The western wall was preserved to a height of about 7 meters above the current ground level. Only the upper part of the triangular gable was demolished, and the lower parts of the niches and the frieze were preserved (Fig. 5).

The southern façade was composed of eight axes, and the levels of windowsills were shifted within the area of the staircase. The windows received a rectangular shape. The largest openings were placed on the first floor and were probably framed with bands of a currently unknown profile. The eastern part of the current façade was devoid of window openings - it was covered by the eastern wing. Communication between the wings was possible through the door opening on the first floor. The northern façade was probably composed of seven axes. The ground floor was illuminated by five windows, four of which are preserved to this day. They were placed in the middle part of the façade. Above them, the windows of the first and second floors, which were similar in size, were introduced. The arrangement of the eastern part of the façade remains unknown within the range of the Renaissance rooms. From the research concerning the church, we know that a Gothic porch connecting both buildings was located here [15]. The building of the abbey was covered with a high hip roof, which can be seen in the panorama of the city from the mid-18th century (by F.B. Werner) [16].

Changes also affected the layout and the design of the interiors. The rooms were arranged in a three-bay system, with the outermost ones being in a single-lane layout and the middle bay being in a two-lane layout. On the ground floor, a Gothic room from the beginning of the 14th century received a four-field groin vault based on a central pillar. The tas-de-charges were based on pilaster strips that were added to the walls in the middle of their length and in the corners. Lighting was probably provided by two windows located on the south, out of which the eastern one is preserved to this day. The floor inside was about 80cm below the current one and was made of bricks laid in the so-called herringbone pattern. The descent to the vaulted basement was located by the inter-bay wall. The barrel vault was based on the foundation offset of the southern Gothic wall and, to the north, on its own foundation. The barrel vault was adjacent to shield walls - in the eastern one, a niche covered with a segmental arch (half a brick thick) was introduced (Fig. 13).

In the middle bay, two rooms and a staircase were located from the south, and from the north, a corridor. The rectangular rooms on the south side received barrel vaults with transverse lunettes. They were based on wall pilaster strips. In each of the interiors from the south, windows were introduced in the axes of the lunettes. A stove was placed by the wall separating the two rooms. The corridor was covered with a four-bay barrel vault with transverse lunettes. Windows were placed from the north in the axis of each of the lunettes. The entrances to the rooms were located in the first and third bays - counting from the east. The vault was based on profiled plaster corbels (Fig. 14a, b).



Fig. 13. Szprotawa, the former Magdalene abbey, basement, western bay, interior of the chamber facing west - state after the works - state after the works



Fig. 14. Szprotawa, the former Magdalene abbey: (a) ground floor, middle bay, interior of the room in the rear part of the building towards the east - state after the works; (b) ground floor, middle bay, corridor of the front part of the building towards the west - state after the works

Next to the Renaissance rooms, a two-flight staircase was introduced. It had a central brick stairwell that supported the steps and sectional vaults of the tunnels. Groin vaults were placed above the landings and were separated by liernes supported on plaster corbels embedded in the walls and in the central stairwell. The stairs were lit by a pair of windows from the south. On the ground floor, from the staircase, there were two entrances to the room with a Renaissance vault. The third door was located opposite the northern entrance and opened towards the baroque corridor. The initial flight of stairs was placed at the wall of the western staircase and rose towards the south. Its first course was probably illuminated by a window in the northern wall in the place of the current entrance (Fig. 15a). From the first landing, a door led to a room on the second floor. This room was covered with a Renaissance vault. Probably due to the introduction of the stairs, this vault was moved slightly south in relation to the Gothic vault.

The layout of the rooms on the first floor was analogous to that of the ground floor. Only the rooms on the southern side had ceilings. They were illuminated by two windows. The room on the western edge of the wing had four windows - two from the south and two from the north. The change of usable levels in the interiors resulted in the blocking of the Gothic window and two Baroque windows from the 70s of the 16th century on the western façade. A vaulted five-bay corridor was introduced along the northern wall, which was illuminated by five windows from the north. The vault was based on profiled corbels. The regular arrangement of the column was disturbed at the height of the staircase, where two lunettes coming out of the tunnels of the stairs intertwined with it. The interiors on the second floor were similarly arranged. All the rooms, as well as the corridor, received ceilings. In the eastern bay, the entrance to the room above the Renaissance rooms was placed on the landing of the stairs. These rooms were probably illuminated by two windows from the north (Fig. 15b).

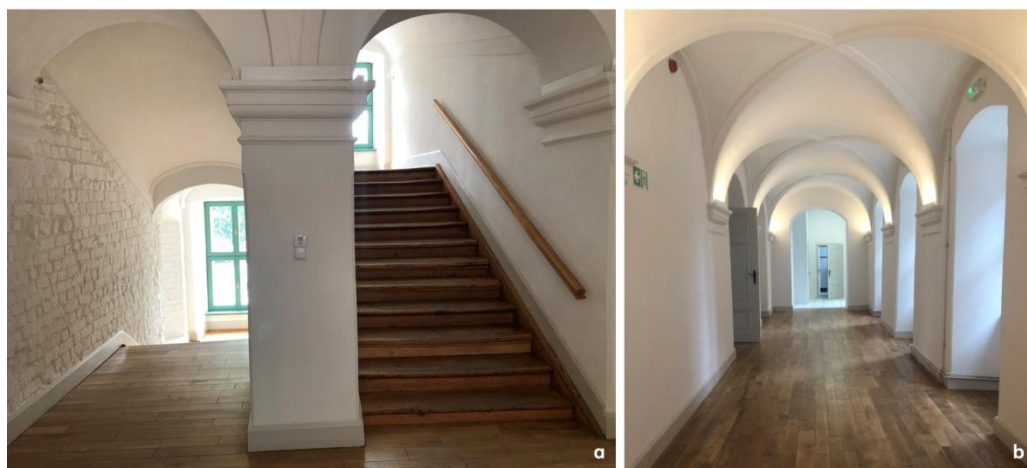


Fig. 15. Szprotawa, the former Magdalene abbey: (a) first floor, middle bay, Baroque staircase towards the south - state after the works; (b) first floor, middle bay, corridor - state after the works

Phase 6th (after 1810)

After the secularization of the church property in 1810, the abbey building remained unused for a short time. In 1811, the church cemetery was closed and the wall separating it from the northern wing of the abbey was demolished, which in turn raised the level of the ground next to the building by about 2.5 meters. In the same year, the city acquired the building, which was initially intended for a school and, in the mid-nineteenth century, for a court [7]. The scope of transformations covered the main building and, to a relatively small extent, the interiors. The building was made taller by extending its longer walls and erecting triangular gables at the top of the side façades. The body was covered with a gable roof, and the attic was illuminated by narrow windows set in Baroque axes. (Fig. 5)

The architectural design of the façade was also changed. A neoclassical decoration was introduced, which consisted of plaster bossage. The window openings were enclosed in bands and set on profiled windowsills. The entrance from the side of Kościelny Square was enclosed in a portal that was composed of pilaster strips on which a prominent simple entablature was based. Three more windows were made on the northern façade. On the ground floor, on its eastern edge, an opening was introduced in order to illuminate the interior of the Renaissance room. Above this opening, two high windows that allowed for the access of daylight to the Renaissance room on the first floor were introduced. Another four windows, two on each of the upper floors, were made in the eastern wall.

In order to enable access and use of the building, the above-mentioned entrance was made on the ground floor of the northern façade at the height of the staircase. Due to the differences in levels between the abbey area and the square around the parish church, it was necessary to introduce an additional landing and to partially block the door openings leading to the corridor and Renaissance room. In addition, to compensate for such significant discrepancies in the height of the floors, their level in the ground floor rooms was raised by about 80 cm. Thanks to these measures, flights consisting of four or five steps led from the landing to the corridor and the Renaissance room. Due to the change of levels, all door openings on the ground floor were rebuilt. Divisions of both rooms (with vaults based on a central pillar) were also introduced.

Phase 7th (around 1930)

The last pre-war transformations of the building of the former abbey took place in the late 1930s. On July 12, 1935, the reconstruction project was approved, which included the simplification of the existing façade decoration. In addition, it assumed a change in the layout and level of the floor in the Renaissance room on the first floor, the introduction of toilets on the second floor in the room at the western end of the corridor, and the execution of the so-called "dry moat" along the southern façade [8] (Fig. 5).

The neoclassical décor, including the entrance portal and bossage, was removed from the façades. Profiled bands and prominent windowsills were introduced by the openings, and the entrance was enclosed in a simple wide frame. Mirrors were introduced in the three central axes in the area between the ground floor windows and first floor windows. The next two mirrors were placed under the windows of the second floor - in the third and seventh axes counting from the west. Above the five central windows of this storey, triangular pediments were formed with the use of a framing profile.

The greatest transformations were introduced within the scope of the Renaissance Hall on the first floor. The level of its floor was raised to the level of the other rooms. This led to the demolition of the vaults and the central pillar. The entrance from the landing was bricked up, and a new door opening was made in the eastern wall of the corridor. The layout of the windows on the side of the church was changed. In the two existing windows, the level of the windowsills was raised by about 1.6 meters, whereas the third one was made in the pillar between them. The jambs of the opening in the eastern wall were rebuilt, and a pillar supporting the ceiling was introduced in the middle. The level of the window from the south was raised, and the passage to the interior of the eastern wing was transformed. Changing the level of the floor also led to a correction of the layout of the room above. The window jambs were rebuilt, the third window from the north was made, and an entrance from the corridor was introduced. The interior was divided by light walls into smaller rooms.

On the second floor, in a room located by the western end of the corridor, women's and men's toilets were introduced. Divisions were made using partition walls. It was probably due to the strong moisture of the walls along the southern wall that anti-moisture insulation was made in the form of the so-called "dry moat," with the walls inside being covered with tar to a height of up to 2 meters.

Conservation issues and the adaptation of the building to the seat of the Szprotawa Regional Museum

Conservation issues covered two main problems: the exhibition of the preserved medieval façade decoration and the revalorization of the interiors with their adaptation to the needs of the museum. In both aspects, the overriding goal was to show the discovered details of the historical architectural decor.

Due to the extremely valuable set of elements of Gothic articulation (including recesses, panels, friezes, and window openings), a decision was made to display them. Due to the Baroque layout of the window openings, a full reconstruction of the Gothic interior was abandoned. The Gothic recesses discovered on the northern façade were made more clear by

supplementing the missing material of their frames (Fig. 9a, b). A similar solution was adopted for the brick frieze on the western façade (Fig. 10). The outline of the windows and recesses of the western gable, as well as the outline of the vaults on the eastern façade, were enhanced by deepening the edges. Due to numerous masonry works and also damage, the display of the clean brick surface was abandoned. Based on the research findings, the surface of the façade was whitewashed in the color of natural lime. The Baroque color scheme was restored (with graphite detail), and the historical layers were exposed and made more legible [13] (Figs. 2 and 4).

The aim of the scope of works in the interiors of the ground floor and the first floor was to preserve the Baroque layout of the rooms (Fig. 14a, b and Fig. 15a, b). In addition, it was decided to restore the historical size and to partially reconstruct the Renaissance vault in the eastern room. The brick floor was restored inside the room, and two door openings were made to be unobstructed: one to the staircase and one to the eastern wing. In order to emphasize the historic form of the interior, lighting with the use of lamps placed on the floor was designed. Lighting placed in this way allows the interior to be exposed without contemporary elements, and the light emphasizes the plasticity of the plaster walls (Figs. 11 and 16). The entrance to the basement under the hall was restored. The corridor and chamber were cleaned and made accessible. The ceramic tile floor in the corridor was restored, and the stone paving in the chamber was replenished. The floors of two chambers in the basements were preserved and subjected to conservation work. (Figs. 12 and 13).



Fig. 16. Szprotawa, the former Magdalene abbey, ground floor, eastern bay, interior of the Renaissance room facing south - state after the works

The Baroque layout and architectural decoration in the staircase and the ground floor rooms were preserved. Based on stratigraphic research, the modest Baroque colors were restored. The first and second floors also retain the Baroque room layout. Due to the preserved architectural decor in the staircase and in the corridors of the upper floors, it was proposed to place lighting lamps above the architectural details - in places invisible to visitors. On the ground floor, the brick floors have been reconstructed based on uncovered relics. It was also decided to expose fragments of the stone surface of the western room. The wooden floors on the first and second floors were restored. In the halls and corridors, the historical color scheme was recreated based on the results of conservation research.

The interiors of the ground floor were adapted for the needs of a museum and a cafe. In the eastern room, stone architectural details and coins discovered during the works will be exhibited.

In turn, the collections of the Szprotawa Regional Museum were moved to the corridor and rooms on the first floor (Fig. 17). The exhibition was arranged thematically: crafts are shown in the corridor, and things related to everyday life (e.g., radios, porcelain, glassware, photographs, and documents) and to the nearby garrison (e.g., uniforms, hats, and small military equipment) are presented in the rooms. The technical rooms and the lift were located in the newly built building. The new building was connected to the old monastery building by restoring the historic doorways.



Fig. 17. Szprotawa, the former Magdalene abbey, second floor, middle bay, a room in the rear part of the building with a museum exhibition

Discussion

The issues involved in the revalorization of the former Magdalene Convent include a wide aspect of conservation work. The scope and definitions of individual conservation works have already been discussed by, among others, E. Małachowicz [17], R. Marconi [18], or I.C.A. Sandu, P. Spiridon, and I. Sandu [19]. In the case of the former monastery building in question, the main conservation issues cover three areas. The first is the presentation of the results of interdisciplinary research and their influence on the target form of the building. Another is the issue of the restoration of the entire building: the exposure and conservation of the façade and the revaluation and conservation of the interior. The third covers the issue of adaptation of the historic building and the introduction of a new function to its interior.

The results of detailed interdisciplinary studies of various historic buildings published in the literature are not often reflected in the display of historic relics after conservation work [20, 21]. Usually, elements of historical decoration are exposed on the facades [22, 23]. In the case of the former Magdalene convent, the extent of the research and the scale of the discoveries were exceptionally spectacular. The findings completely changed the previous dating and chronology of the building's transformation. The research also made it possible to uncover the historical detailing of the façade and the layout of the interior. They formed the basis for deliberate restoration activities aimed at renovating the building, exposing the transformation of its structure, and restoring the historic form of the interiors. Very often, the research results discussed here concern buildings whose later decoration covered up architectural transformations [20, 21, 24]. It is not often that the results of research have changed the façade and interior decoration to such a significant degree. There are usually very isolated cases, and the extent of the exposure is small [25, 26], involving mainly facades [23, 27].

The issue of conservation and exposure of Gothic façades has been discussed many times in the literature to date [17, 28, 29]. They mainly concerned the exposition of plaster-free brick or stone facades. The restoration and exposure of the facade combined with the restoration or reconstruction of its historic color scheme is a difficult conservation issue. Usually, such attempts have not been made due to the residual state of preservation of paint relics [21, 25, 30]. The subject has only been raised in the case of the restoration of fragments of façade decoration or detail [23, 26, 27] or in the context of a study reconstruction [31]. In the case of the former monastery, it was possible to show the disposition of all the facades, despite the partial state of preservation of the Gothic decoration.

The results of the interdisciplinary research were also used to revalue the interiors of the monastery. The results of the conservation research were quite modest, which may be due to the multiple reconstructions of the monastery and the rule of the order itself [15]. Nevertheless, they have succeeded in restoring the historical colors of the walls and vaults. The issue of conservation and restoration of interior decoration in historic buildings is discussed very widely [17, 18, 32, 33]. In the case of the building's monastery, it was possible to discover historical ceramic floors in the halls of the ground floor [12, 14]. The conservation work carried out, including the floors, is a very good example of such activities [34]. Based on the research findings, it was possible to restore the geometric arrangements of the bricks and ceramic tiles. The ceramic floors, together with the restored wall colors, are consistent with Renaissance and Baroque interiors.

The architectural survey made it possible to plan the adaptation work in such a way that it was not necessary to divide and replace the Renaissance-Baroque interior layout. It was also possible to restore the historical layout of two rooms on the ground floor. The eastern Renaissance Hall is the most reposeful interior of the former monastery building (Fig. 16).

Conclusions

The presented process of research, revalorization, and adaptation of the Magdalene Abbey in Szprotawa can be considered exemplary. Thanks to detailed architectural research, it was possible to recognize the original form of the building and the chronology of its transformation from the 14th to the 20th century. It was possible to recognize the historic interior layouts, vaults, and historic floors. Based on the results of the research, fragments of the façade and interiors with the greatest historical value were identified. Parallel conservation research provided information on the historical colors of the façades and interior decoration. The results of these studies provided the basis for the restoration of the historic interior layout, restoration of parts of the vaults, floors, ceramics, and coloring, and conservation of the stucco decoration.

Many examples of detailed surveys of historic buildings have been presented in the literature to date [22, 25]. After detailed identification, many of them are subjected to conservation work preserving their present, unchanged form [36]. The adaptation work carried out in parallel with the conservation work has made it possible to introduce a museum into the former abbey building and to restore it to the needs of the local community. The introduced museum and local community center are model examples of the change and adaptation of sacred interiors to a new function [37].

The conducted architectural and conservational research allowed for the first full recognition of the transformations of the Magdalene Abbey. The obtained results provided important material for making decisions regarding the display of the preserved historical décor and the scope of conservation and renovation works. Thanks to these works, it was possible to preserve an object that is very valuable for the cultural heritage of Silesia. The restoration process of the abbey, which was carried out on their basis, gained respect in the conservation community. In 2020, it was awarded the title of Laureate in the "Zabytek Zadbany" (Neat

Monument) competition that was organized by the Polish General Conservator of Monuments [38].

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