

PRESERVATION AND ADAPTIVE REUSE OF THE FORMER AUSCHWITZ I SLAUGHTERHOUSE AS A VISITORS' CENTER STRATEGY

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Abstract: *The aim of the article is to share the author's own experiences of the "Kozień Architekci" architectural office in modernizing a slaughterhouse belonging to the Camp Auschwitz I service area and incorporating it into the overall complex, taking into account the historical value of the former Auschwitz camp grounds. The approach to its preservation does not apply the strict rules that are followed at the protected-by-law memorial. The degraded building was adapted to the functional needs of visitors while restoring its wartime character, securing and highlighting historical fragments of its structure. Thanks to this approach, the museum gained a new place to serve visitors, taking it outside the protected area and at the same time incorporating it into the museum complex by recognizing the former slaughterhouse building as the most important point of the whole visitors' center.*

Keywords: *Preservation; Slaughterhouse; Auschwitz I; Adaptation; Visitors' center; "Kozień Architekci"*

Introduction

During World War II, over 1,600 German Nazi camps were located on Polish territory, including concentration and extermination camps (Auschwitz-Birkenau, Majdanek, Gross-Rosen, Kulmhof, Treblinka, and Sobibór) and numerous labor camps and ghettos; several million people, mainly Jews, Poles, Roma, and prisoners of war, passed through these camps.

The main types of camps were the following:

- concentration camps (KL): KL Auschwitz-Birkenau (the largest), KL Lublin (Majdanek), KL Gross-Rosen (in Rogoźnica), KL Stutthof (on the Baltic Sea),
- extermination camps (Vernichtungslager): Chełmno nad Nerem (Kulmhof), Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka – intended for mass extermination,
- labor camps (Zwangsarbeitslager): KL Plaszow in Krakow (initially a labor camp),
- ghettos: these were not camps in the strict sense, but they served a similar function to transit camps, and their liquidation led to extermination and concentration camps.

The Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, one of the largest Nazi camps, which existed from the end of May 1940 to January 1945, was established in the town of Oświęcim in Poland. It consisted of the Auschwitz I administrative center, the Auschwitz II (Birkenau) "death camp," and the Auschwitz III (Monowice) labor camp. The exact number of prisoners murdered in Auschwitz is unknown, as different sources give different figures - from 900,000 to 1.1 million people. The camp was established on the orders of Reichsführer SS H. Himmler. SS-Obersturmbannführer Rudolf Höß was appointed camp commander, later replaced by Arthur Liebehenschel and Richard Baer.

Auschwitz I served as the administrative center for the entire complex and was located in the brick buildings of pre-war military barracks. Block 11 served as a prison, and the basements housed “starvation cells.” There were also “dark cells” here, where prisoners They died of suffocation, and deadly cyanide gas was tested on prisoners. Experiments on humans were carried out in block 10. Between blocks 10 and 11 was the place of execution. In 1941 and 1942, a gas chamber and crematorium were in operation. After the war, they were reconstructed from original fragments.

In October 1941, construction of Auschwitz II (Birkenau) began. The plans included barracks for different categories of prisoners. It is recognized that, due to its much larger size, millions more people died here. There were four gas chambers disguised as shower rooms and four crematoria located nearby.

In January 1945, Soviet troops entered Auschwitz. After the liberation of the camp, a hospital was organized in some of the barracks for the prisoners who were then in the camp. After the liberation, the entire Auschwitz archive was taken to the USSR and classified, and most of the documents remain inaccessible.

In 1947, a museum was established on the site of the former concentration camp, which was later inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. A memorial complex with inscriptions in 20 languages was built on the site of the liquidated gas chambers of Auschwitz II (Birkenau).

In 2010, the museum organized an international competition for the architectural and urban design of the Visitors' Center (VC) of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim to move visitor services to the former bus station out of the memorial site, where the entrance and services were in building A-50. First prize in the competition went to the team of “Kozień Architekci”: Marek Kozień, Magdalena Kozień-Woźniak, and Katarzyna Kozień-Kornecka. The jury's opinion: "The prize was awarded for the concise and expressive concept of the visitors' center layout, based on the principle of an underground entrance and exit to the museum. The overall composition and proposed architectural character create an atmosphere of calm and concentration necessary in a museum complex of this nature. The design also preserves the historical appearance of the former Camp Slaughterhouse by removing secondary alterations, and the designed hotel structure provides a neutral backdrop for it.

The authors of the work based their concept on the assumption that the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp is a monument, a place, a sign, a zone of silence. The spatial composition of the service area and the entrance to this area should listen to this silence. In silence.

The subject of the study is the reconstruction and modernization of the former Auschwitz concentration camp slaughterhouse building, located on the site of the former PKS transport base in Oświęcim, which is the central element of the new VS complex. Research included in the conservation study shows that this is a multi-phase building, renovated several times and significantly transformed after the war, after its adaptation into a PKS transport base.

The construction of the camp slaughterhouse began in 1941 on the site of Polish Army ammunition bunkers built before 1939. One of them served as a cold store in the early stages of the building's operation.

The building was constructed in phases between 1941 and 1942, when its final form was developed based on a regular quadrangle with two rectangular courtyards. On the basis of a conservation study, an analysis of individual elements of the building was carried out, broken down into specific time periods. The basis for restoring the building to its former appearance was its appearance in phase V (renovation in 1942, when all the main elements of the complex with a coherent composition were created).

The aim of the article was to share experiences of the modernization of a building belonging to the Auschwitz I camp service area and its integration into the overall complex, taking into account the historical value of the former Auschwitz camp grounds.

Scientific sources were compiled in the following areas:

- comprehensive works devoted to the Auschwitz camp [1-3],
- methods of inventorying historic buildings and modern conservation technologies [4-21],
- publications devoted to the impact of war on architecture, art, and museum activities [22-27]
- publications devoted to the historic buildings of Oświęcim [28-30].

Also, a large series of bibliographic references from the scientific literature in the field were used in the preparation of this study, of which we mention only a few representative ones [31-35].

Materials and Methods

The study used historical analysis and cultural analysis methods to present the history of the Auschwitz concentration camp complex and the importance of its preservation for the memory of humanity. The evidence base was provided by the photofixation method and the grapho-analytical method. A description of the conservation measures aimed at modernizing the Auschwitz-Birkenau museum was used.

Results and Discussion

After World War II, former Nazi camps were transformed into memorial sites and museums. They serve a documentary and protective role as witnesses to history, as well as an educational one. Due to the different nature and scale of the buildings, their state of preservation, and the priorities of communication at different memorial sites, different conservation strategies have been applied.

At the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, the overriding principle is to preserve the buildings in as authentic a condition as possible. This is achieved by prioritizing and adapting conservation principles as follows [36]:

- 1) applying the principle of maximum respect for the original substance of the monument and all its values;
- 2) preventive conservation;
- 3) conservative/technical conservation;
- 4) applying the principle of minimum necessary intervention;
- 5) preserving or clarifying the aesthetics of the conserved objects in accordance with their appearance at the time of the camp's operation, which is key to their historical significance;
- 6) applying the principle of clarity and distinguishability of intervention.

Therefore, all interventions are minimal: the original substance - no replacement of material, visible signs of degradation have not been removed, there are no reconstructions. The architecture primarily serves as a witness to history, and its functional role as a museum is secondary. The Auschwitz I camp consists of brick barracks with gable and hipped roofs covered mostly with ceramic tiles and reinforced concrete structural elements. In Auschwitz II Birkenau, the barracks were built as temporary structures from low-quality wood, raw brick, concrete, and low-quality steel, which means they are subject to rapid biological, chemical, and mechanical

degradation. This makes the conservation of the buildings, while maintaining the adopted strategy, extremely difficult [37], [38].

Not all museums have adopted such a radical and demanding strategy. At the State Museum at Majdanek, which is smaller in scale and has a similar state of preservation of brick buildings, wooden barracks, and crematoria, a more technical and construction-oriented approach was adopted. The principle of authenticity was linked to the need for durability and accessibility for visitors. The replacement of materials and partial reconstruction were permitted [39]. At the former Gross-Rozen camp in Rogoźnica, apart from the entrance gate, only the foundations of the original buildings have been preserved. One of the barracks has been reconstructed.

Virtually, no architectural structures have survived in Teblinka II. No decision has been made regarding reconstruction. Protection is limited to archaeological and landscape conservation. The empty landscape of memory has primarily symbolic significance.

No buildings have survived on the sites of the former German extermination camps Kulmhof in Chełmno on Ner or Sobibór either. Visible and invisible traces of the camp are preserved as memory carriers.

The building of the former slaughterhouse of Auschwitz I is not located within the protected area of the Memorial. It is located across from Więźniów Oświęcimia Street, on land that has been used as a bus depot for several decades. However, it is listed in the municipal register of monuments (it is not listed in the national register of monuments), which does not entail any formal conservation obligations, although the Małopolska Provincial Conservator of Monuments agrees on investment decisions.

In view of the above conditions, the assumptions of the competition concept, the guidelines of the museum, and the degree of degradation of the form and substance of the building, the principles applicable to the Memorial Site, which is protected by law, were not applied so strictly in the approach to its conservation.

Basic assumptions of the project to adapt the former Auschwitz concentration camp slaughterhouse to a visitors' Center

Assumptions for the urban layout of the Visitors' Center

The main assumption of the project is to create a compact layout of the Visitors' Center area connected to the museum grounds by underground passages, emphasizing the moderate layout of the Auschwitz camp. In order to achieve one-way visitor traffic, the entrance and exit routes have been separated. The entrance to the museum area is a sequence of places from the parking lot zone, through the gate of the information and ticket office building (Fig. 1), to the hall and waiting room in the former slaughterhouse building, down to the underground, and towards the exit to the square in front of the preliminary exhibition building A-50 (where, until now, visitors waited for the tour to begin the visit on the grounds of the Memorial). The exit from the premises leads from the crematorium through the square to an underground passageway leading to a meadow disappearing over the horizon (the roof of the volunteer hostel).

Spatial and functional layout of the former slaughterhouse building

An analysis of the building's history verifies the layout of the rooms (Fig 2). The most valuable parts are considered to be the interior of the main hall, supported by reinforced concrete columns, the adjoining room intended for service functions, and the perpendicular hall—the oldest part of the building, where the waiting rooms are located. The pre-war bunker is treated as

a relic; its exterior can be seen from the courtyard, while its interior can be viewed from the stairs leading down to the basement (Figs. 3-6).



Fig. 1. Entrance gate to the former Nazi camp Auschwitz I
(photo: "Kozień Architekci" Archive)

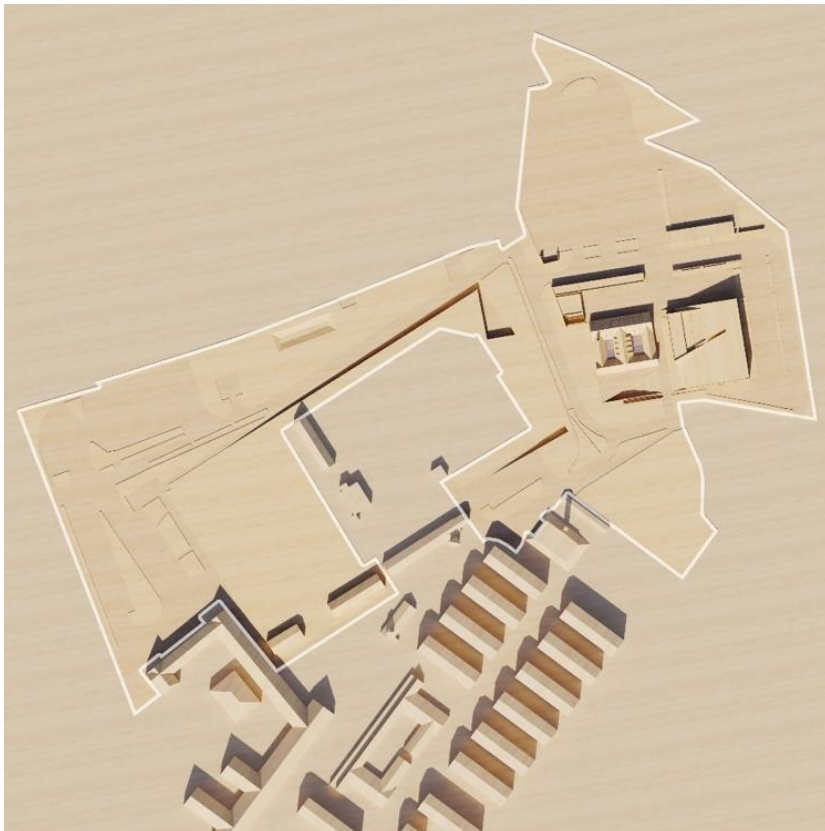


Fig. 2. Development plan for the project area of the Visitors' Center at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim (project: "Kozień Architekci")



Fig. 3. The building of the former camp slaughterhouse used by the bus depot – before the investment (photo: "Kozień Architekci" Archive)



Fig. 4. The hall of the former camp slaughterhouse used by the bus depot – before the investment (photo: "Kozień Architekci" Archive)



Fig. 5. Adaptation by “Kozień Architekci” of the hall of the former camp slaughterhouse for the hall of the Visitors’ Center of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim, (photo: “Kozień Architekci” Archive)



Fig. 6. Adaptation by “Kozień Architekci” of the courtyard of the former camp slaughterhouse and historic bunker – now the Visitors’ Center of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim (photo: “Kozień Architekci” Archive)

The historic slaughterhouse building is being converted into a facility that not only serves basic visitor services but also constitutes the main, primary entrance for visitors to the museum grounds. The building is being restored to its highly probable original wartime character, with the aim of avoiding significant interventions in its external form. The existing two-story building, with a basement added as a result of reconstruction, expansion, and change of use, will be used to serve and accommodate visitors to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim (Figs 7 and 8).

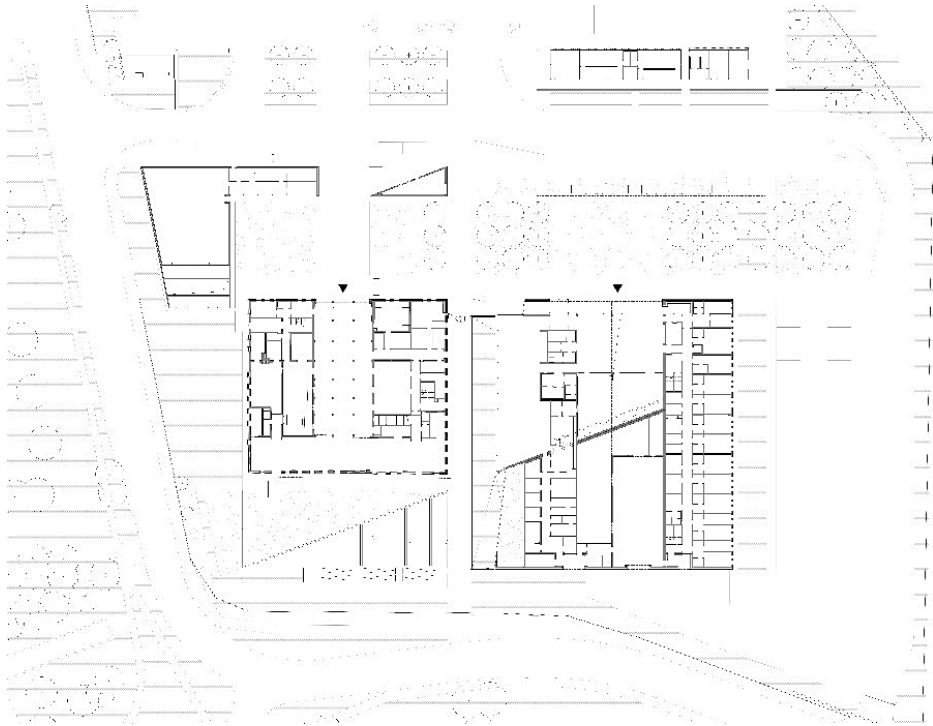


Fig. 7. Ground floor plan of the Visitors' Center project for the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim (project by "Kozień Architekci")

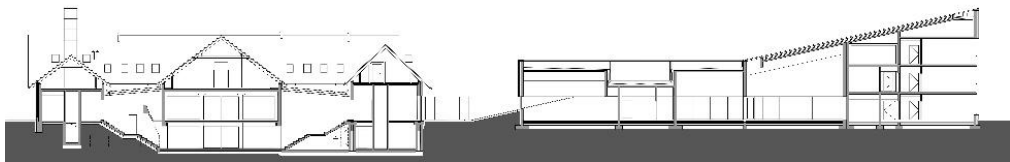


Fig. 8. Section of the Visitors' Center project for the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim (project by "Kozień Architekci")

The main building of the Visitor Service Center (COO) also houses the offices of the Visitor Service Section (SOO), rooms for guides and external companies with social facilities and commercial services, including a bookstore. The ground floor features the main entrance hall, waiting rooms, restrooms, commercial spaces, utility rooms, and auxiliary rooms. The main underground space consists of former cold storage and freezer rooms, where visitors pick up their

headphones and begin their tour of the museum. The walkways under Więźniów Oświęcimia Street have been lowered to approx. 4.0 m below ground level and, via a system of ramps and stairs, lead visitors to the museum grounds. At the end of the covered northern passageway, there is an open, lowered interior space that marks the beginning of the tour on the PMA-B side. This square is paved with granite stones from the demolition of the former road leading to the slaughterhouse. After passing through the northern ramp, footpaths lead visitors to the museum building marked with inventory number A-50. After touring the entire camp, visitors end their tour at building A-49 (crematorium) and are directed to another southern underground passage, compositionally connected with the VS and volunteer hostel buildings.

The building is being restored to its highly probable original wartime character, with the aim of avoiding significant interventions in its external form. Due to the poor technical condition of the existing roof truss, it is planned to replace the existing roof with a new one, preserving its character from the period of expansion to a two-courtyard layout. Glazed coverings are introduced above the courtyards, incorporating their space into the interior layout of the building. Ceramic tiles are used as roofing material. The necessary lighting for the office rooms in the attic (roof windows) is introduced.

The original wall covering (lastrico) in the interior of the main hall and the former cold store and refrigeration room in the basement have been preserved. In order to restore the interior to its original character, the volume of the main spaces has not been altered, with installations located in adjacent rooms wherever possible. Inside, the changes do not affect the preserved elements of the basic structure but aim to achieve an effect of openness and interpenetration of the existing halls and courtyards.

Adjustment to the landscape

The design concept was to restore the building to its former form from Phase V (renovation in 1942), when its final shape was developed—based on a regular quadrangle with two rectangular courtyards. The individual sections of the building are covered with traditional gable roofs with a symmetrical roof slope layout. The materials used refer to traditional ones, e.g., ceramic tiles, wooden window and door frames, and facade cladding made of recycled historic brick.

Visitor traffic in the building

The main entrance to the building is located on the side of the driveway with stops for passengers (northeast side). The creation of a forecourt is intended to raise the status and importance of the existing building. Visitors proceed through the lobby to the waiting room, from which they descend via side passages to the former cold storage hall in the basement. Visitor traffic is divided between two staircases to improve traffic flow. In the former cold store hall, visitors pick up headphones and begin their tour of the museum, heading towards the underground passage. On their way back, visitors stop at the headphone collection point and, passing through the bookshop, head towards the exit (Figs. 9 and 10).

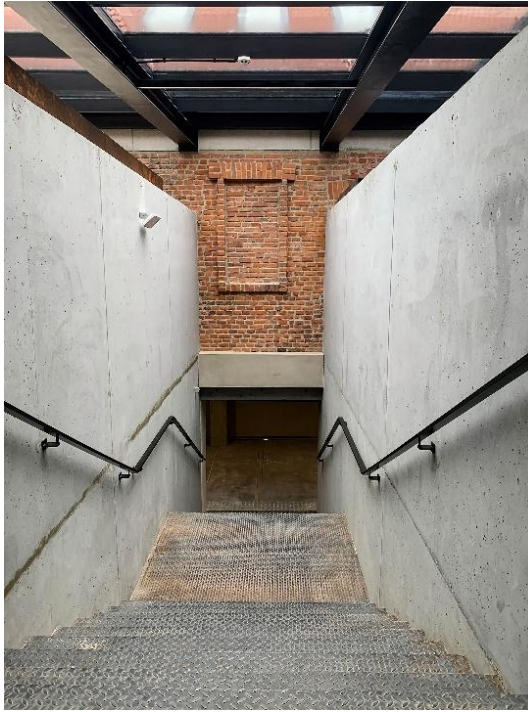


Fig. 9. Adaptation by “Kozień Architekci” of the descent into the basement of the former camp slaughterhouse – now the Visitors’ Center of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim (photo: “Kozień Architekci” Archive)

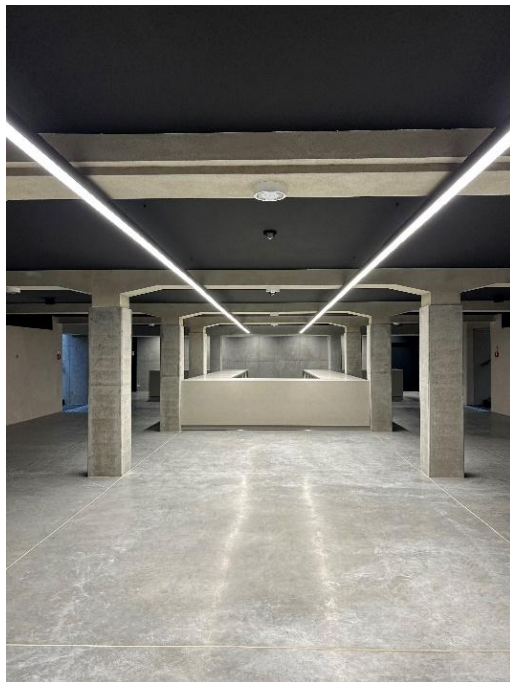


Fig. 10. Adaptation by “Kozień Architekci” of the cold storage hall in the basement of the former camp slaughterhouse – now the Visitors’ Center of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim (photo: “Kozień Architekci” Archive)

Safety requirements

The building meets the basic structural safety requirements. Safety of use is ensured in accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of Infrastructure of April 12, 2002, on the technical conditions to be met by buildings and their location (Journal of Laws of 2002, No. 75, item 690). Section VII: Safety of Use (§ 291-308).

Hygiene and sanitary conditions are met in accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of Infrastructure of April 12, 2002, on the technical conditions to be met by buildings and their location (Journal of Laws of 2002, No. 75, item 690, as amended) and the Regulation of the Minister of Labor and Social Policy of September 26, 1997, on general occupational health and safety regulations (Journal of Laws of 2003, No. 169, item 1650, as amended).

The building is designed in accordance with safety, hygiene, and health requirements, in particular:

- Air purity protection: The building has mechanical ventilation with cooling.
- Protection against moisture and biological corrosion: Appropriate moisture, water, and vapor barriers have been designed, as well as a rainwater drainage and drainage system. External and internal partitions meet thermal and humidity requirements.
- Protection against noise and vibrations: All external and internal partitions have increased sound insulation parameters. Vibrations from equipment are reduced by separating floors and structural elements from the building.
- Energy savings and thermal insulation: The partitions meet thermal insulation requirements. Ventilation and air conditioning equipment is fully automated to reduce energy consumption.

Due to the limited functional and spatial possibilities of the modernized facility, the consent of the Małopolska Provincial Sanitary Inspector in Krakow was obtained to reduce the height of rooms intended for permanent human occupancy and the location of permanent workplaces below ground level and without daylight in accordance with § 2 of the Regulation of the Minister of Infrastructure of April 12, 2002, on the technical conditions to be met by buildings and their location (Journal of Laws No. 75, item 690, as amended) and § 20, § 18, § 25 of the Regulation of the Minister of Labor and Social Policy of September 26, 1997 on general occupational health and safety regulations (Journal of Laws of 2003, No. 169, item 1650, as amended) from § 72, § 73, and § 58 of the Regulation of the Minister of Infrastructure of April 12, 2002, on technical conditions to be met by buildings and their location (Journal of Laws No. 75, item 690, as amended).

The rooms are equipped with mechanical ventilation and air conditioning.

A staff room with sanitary facilities on level +1, no further than 75 m from the workplace, has been designated for employees working in the service rooms on the ground floor.

The sanitary facilities and changing rooms on level -1 (headset service employees) will employ a maximum of 10 people, who will use the shared changing room alternately (§ 3, Appendix No. 3 to the Regulation of the Minister of Labor and Social Policy of September 26, 1997, on general occupational health and safety regulations (Journal of Laws of 2003, No. 169, item 1650, as amended)).

Adaptation of the building for use by persons with disabilities

The main entrance for disabled persons is located on the front façade (north façade) at ground level. The building has been designed with communication and entrances for disabled persons:

- a lift for disabled people with cabin dimensions of 140×110 (connecting the underground floor with the ground floor); the device is accessible from the main public area on the ground floor (hall) and basements (cold store room); the lift is equipped with handrails mounted at a height of 90 cm.
- all entrances are at least 90 cm wide in the door frame.

Architectural barriers have been removed from the building, and toilets for disabled people have been designed.

The route taken by visitors when leaving and returning to the VS building is fully adapted for disabled people (ramps and gentle slopes have been used in underground passages, and there is a ramp at the exit from the bookshop leading to level zero).

Detailed conservation solutions for the former Auschwitz concentration camp slaughterhouse building

The project was based on comprehensive conservation research carried out by Cempla i Partnerzy – Konserwacja Zabytków, based in Krakow at ul. św. Krzyża 7/8, in July 2011. A team of monument conservation specialists led by Bożena Boba-Dyga, MA, participated in the Kozień Architekci project.

Building structure

Secondary alterations to the gable walls and roof slopes were removed, restoring the symmetry of the gable walls (e.g., by lowering the roof slopes in the northeast corner). The dimensions of the building and the layout of the roof slopes were retained after adjustments were made to restore them to their original condition. Only the necessary external elements were introduced, resulting from the technical infrastructure of the redesigned building, such as air intakes and exhausts and sewage vents. They were located in the part of the roof visible from the courtyards. The annex from phase VIII on the west side of the building was demolished. The two-courtyard layout of the building was retained. The ammunition bunker, as the oldest part of the building, was retained. Secondary structures in the inner courtyards, including the bunker superstructure, were demolished. The original form of the facility as a stand-alone building was retained. The newly designed buildings forming part of the complex were located at such distances that they did not interfere with the perception of its original form. The planned extension of the COO building will be carried out at basement level, without interfering with the original structure. The walls obstructing the perception of the internal courtyards as a whole were removed. Glass walls and partial-height walls were used to separate the interior space. In order to make functional use of the courtyards (one courtyard serves as a cash hall and dispatch room, while the other exposes the bunker and also serves as a communication area in front of the commercial services complex), they were covered with a glass roof. Roof windows were used to illuminate the rooms located in the attic (Fig 11).



Fig. 11. Adaptation by “Kozień Architekci” of the hall with original ribbed concrete ceiling in the former camp slaughterhouse – now the Visitors’ Center of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim (photo: “Kozień Architekci” Archive)

External appearance of the building.

The garage doors in the northern, eastern, and western facades were removed as foreign elements distorting the original character of the building. Due to the small amount of original material preserved in the external walls, especially above the line of the modern window sills, it is impossible to remove the plaster from the walls in order to expose the raw brick in which the building was constructed. It was decided to use recycled historical brick, fired using traditional methods, with a color and properties similar to those of the other buildings in the camp, on the external facades and internal walls of the courtyards. The frames of all openings were removed. The roof surfaces were covered with ceramic tiles like those used in the camp. The room located on the bunker was removed. The room next to the bunker was removed. The existing window and door frames were replaced. The new design is adapted to the character of the woodwork in other buildings in the camp. The woodwork is dove-gray on the outside and white on the inside. An arcade was introduced in the central part of the northern façade in place of the existing garage doors, as a form of roofing for the entrance while at the same time using solutions that allow the space of the column hall to be read. In the background, a glass facade and structural profiles made of blackened steel were used (Fig 12).



Fig. 12. Adaptation by “Kozień Architekci” of the main entrance to the former camp slaughterhouse – now the Visitors’ Center of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim (photo: “Kozień Architekci” Archive)

Internal functional layout

The single-space character of the column hall has been restored, preserving its pillars and ceiling. The existing terrazzo fragments on the walls and pillars of the column hall and the walls of room 0/14 will be preserved. Due to the anticipated significant load in the main hall on the ground floor, it is not possible to preserve the ceiling above the basements. After the new structural ceiling has been completed, the floor in the main hall will be made of a material similar to black terrazzo, matching the original in color and texture. Existing and secondary openings in the walls have been preserved as far as possible in order to retain as much of the terrazzo wall surface as possible and to avoid causing major damage to the remaining masonry. No large openings have been made in the preserved terrazzo. The old openings connecting the column hall with the former slaughterhouse were restored. This created a single-space interior—serving as the main hall of the building with access to auxiliary functions in the side wings. The old large passage from the main hall to room 0A24 (communication) was restored. The original descent to the bunker in the walls of staircase 0A35 has been made clearer. In the basement, the space of the former cold store and freezer room has been restored and made clearer by removing all secondary divisions into small rooms. The authentic ceiling in the column-supported hall has been preserved. The roof truss structure has been replaced while maintaining the dimensions and geometry of the existing roof. In the office and social rooms located in the attic, lighting is provided by roof windows – wooden in dove gray. Part of the basement has been enlarged to include a bookshop with a coffee bar, as well as staff and technical rooms, which do not correlate with the existing building structure. The division of the remaining rooms in the building outside the main corridors has been adapted to their function, in accordance with the guidelines contained in the conservation study, with the preservation of the existing historical substance being the overriding priority.

Conservation works

I. Conservation of brick walls (internal courtyards):

- 1) gentle, manual removal of plaster;
- 2) low-pressure blasting using abrasive or electrocorundum or glass microbeads;
- 3) manual removal of defective fillings and salt-contaminated, non-original, degraded joints;
- 4) double disinfection of walls in a 14-day cycle;
- 5) local desalination using the method of free salt migration to an expanded environment, lignin, and demineralized water compression.
- 6) gradual wet-on-wet structural impregnation with silicic acid esters, and a waiting period of 21 days after completion of the treatment;
- 7) after 21 days: - filling minor brick cavities with colored putty with a grain size and color matching the local environment;
- 8) reinforcement with patches cut from so-called “Gothic” bricks (desalinated demolition bricks) using mineral tile adhesive;
- 9) jointing: filling with traditional mortar made according to historical recipes (1 part lime paste from pit-burned or dispersed lime) + 2 parts sand + 0.5 parts white cement with additives: crushed brick, crushed lime, charcoal; forming the joint to its historical shape; glazing it to the historical color determined in the stratigraphic analysis before the start of work;
- 10) applying glazes to blend discolorations and putty on the brick, equalizing the putty fillings with the original material;
- 11) blending discolorations resulting from difficult-to-remove atmospheric patina using the glazing technique.

II. Hydrophobization of the lower part of the wall with an organosilicon preparation Multi-layer brick exterior wall:

- 1) removal of plaster;
- 2) disinfection of walls;
- 3) light impregnation of bricks, 21-day waiting period;
- 4) rebuilding and filling with solid bricks;
- 5) installation of thermal insulation (12 cm of mineral wool);
- 6) laying a new layer of bricks: so-called “Gothic” bricks according to the character, color; and size of the bricks in the existing wall;
- 7) plumb line: conservation joint, half-round concave traditional joint, color as existing;
- 8) hydrophobization.

III. Conservative conservation of lastrico (walls and columns of the main hall, waiting room, room A09, freezer, and cold storage rooms):

- 1) removal of layers formed after phase V: chemically and mechanically, manually with thixotropic gels for removing oil, repainting, and scraping with shoemaker's knives and spatulas;
- 2) sanding the exposed lastrico manually with 100-1200 grit sandpaper, without damaging the original surface from phase V;
- 3) protecting the terrazzo surface by saturating it with hot varnish or paraffin oil;
- 4) applying a microcrystalline wax preparation – varnish;
- 5) polishing with felt;
- 6) in other areas (so-called “fillings”), chip away the plaster below the lastrico level (approx. 5 mm) and cover with a hydrophobic mortar in the color of lastrico IV.

Conservation dismantling of historical fixtures (to be carried out before any construction work begins): blood drainage trough, cleaning doors, steel window grilles, water system components, ceramic tiles, and blood sink.

Dismantling must be carried out under the supervision of the designer.

Basic building partition solutions

External walls:

Existing: external walls made of ceramic materials, insulated with mineral wool, finished with a facing layer of historic brick.

Courtyard walls – existing brick walls on the courtyard side will be cleaned of plaster.

From the inside, walls in selected rooms have historic terrazzo; in others, they are plastered and painted.

Planned: structural walls in the underground section made of reinforced concrete and ceramic masonry, finished with architectural concrete and cement-lime plaster.

Internal walls:

Existing: internal walls made of ceramic materials. In selected rooms, the historic terrazzo will be preserved; in the others, it will be plastered and painted.

Planned: structural walls

- reinforced concrete made of architectural concrete

- brick, plastered and painted

Partition walls made of ceramic materials in the basement and on the ground floor, made of plasterboard in the attic; waterproof in wet rooms; painted

Ceilings:

Existing ceilings: made of ceramic and reinforced concrete monoliths

Planned: reinforced concrete monolith ceilings

Roofs:

The roof of the building is made of a wooden structure and covered with ceramic tiles. The roof structure is made of 10×14 cm wooden elements, fireproofed by painting. The attic is separated from the roof structure and covered with 2×15 mm GKF plasterboard panels, with EI 30 fire resistance, according to the system solution. All wooden roof elements are protected by painting with a certified fire-retardant agent – to the degree of non-flammability.

Roof covering – interlocking ceramic tiles modeled in shape and color on the tiles of historic buildings in the camp. E.g., Koramic noble engobed brick-colored interlocking ceramic tiles or interlocking ceramic tiles.

Glass roofs:

Glazing above courtyards: constructed on a steel structure with fire resistance class R 30. The steel elements of the supporting structure were designed from profiles with a massiveness that allows the use of protective intumescent coatings with the required fire resistance class R 30 by painting with a certified set of fire-retardant paints. Aluminum joinery in a mullion-transom system, 50 mm standard, semi-structural. The glazing is made of ordinary glass.

Window joinery:

Wooden, matching the proportions and character of the window joinery from before 1943 in order to recreate the atmosphere of the building from the period of its expansion into a two-courtyard layout (Phase V). Front glass facade and bookstore facade – aluminum joinery in a mullion-transom system, 50 mm standard, semi-structural. Individual elements according to the drawings of joinery and metalwork.

Floors:

In cold stores, freezers, the main hall, waiting rooms, service rooms, and general communication areas, concrete floors are similar to the existing preserved fragments of black terrazzo floors. In other rooms, porcelain tile floors. In the office area, there is porcelain tile flooring and carpet. Porcelain tile flooring in sanitary facilities.

Conclusions

Over the last quarter of a century, there has been a trend towards creating Visitors' Centers near memorial sites, which are intended to serve as entrance areas, organizing visitor traffic and preparing visitors for their visit to the memorial sites [40]. They provide a range of facilities related to tourist traffic, such as toilets; service points: bookshops, restaurants, hotels, waiting rooms, luggage storage, campsites, parking lots, rooms for administration and guides, and conference rooms.

An important part of the Mauthausen concentration camp memorial site is the Visitors' Center, designed by the architectural firm MSPH Architekten (Herwig Mayer, Christoph Schwarz, and Karl Peyrer-Heimstätt) in 2003, with a minimalist concrete facade. In 2009, a Visitors' Center (Besucherzentrum) was established in Dachau at the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site. It is a modern building with a horizontal, austere form designed to fit into the context of the site.

In the design of the Visitors' Center of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, a completely different strategy was chosen. Here, the historic building of the former camp slaughterhouse was used. Despite its high degree of deterioration and the need for extensive building and structural interventions, preservation works, it is precisely this building, associated with the period of the concentration camp's existence, that is the central building of the complex.

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