

## **Between authenticity and conservation practice as exemplified by Tetmajerówka (Tetmajer's manor)**

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Mansions and manors are still quite common objects although their condition has deteriorated significantly due to the ownership transformations following World War II. They were erected as masonry objects or wooden structures. The problem of wooden structures preservation will be illustrated by Włodzimierz Tetmajer's manor house in Bronowice Małe, Krakow. It is a part of a complex of buildings and gardens typical of the late 19th century style in the area.

It is a symmetrical, single storey house with a central porch and two windows on each side. It is covered with a massive, Polish mansard shingle roof. On the right, there is a kitchen extension which is slightly set back from the façade. It is worth pointing out that extensions of all kinds were a characteristic feature of Polish manor houses. They originated from the inside and developed as the years went by to meet the needs of the generations of their inhabitants. In this way, their architecture was a reflection of gradual layers which added an individual character to the manors and enriched them, as was the case with Tetmajerówka. The manor walls consist of a wooden frame filled with brushwood mixed with clay mortar. This type of structure was not particularly durable but it was typical of many houses of the gentry which did not differ very much from peasants' huts. It survived in its original form until the 1990's when a conservator's interference became a must. This proved quite a challenge for the designing architect who had to preserve the authentic form of the building on the one hand and most of the wooden structure on the other.

Małopolska (Polonia Minor), a southern region of Poland abounds in specimens of wooden architecture such as beautiful churches and orthodox churches, belfries, shrines as well as manors, inns, mills and granaries that have been embedded in the landscape for ages. The architecture of the region is far from homogenous. The objects differ greatly both with respect to style and technology. The ones in the area around Krakow show some specific characteristics due to the scarcity of wood in the region. A typical regional house featured a straw-covered hipped roof and ring-beam walls made of clay and whitewashed or tinted blue. Another typical feature was a pillar structure which supported the roof. The best known examples of this kind of architecture are two manor houses in Bronowice Małe, Krakow – Tetmajer's house called Tetmajerówka and Rydel's house called Rydlówka<sup>1</sup>. The paper deals mostly with Tetmajerówka which is the most prominent monument of the kind and which has been listed since 1967<sup>2</sup>.

Location: the manor house complex called Tetmajerówka is situated between two streets: ul.Tetmajera and ul.Zeleńskiego. The complex includes: Tetmajer's manor, the reconstructed studio of Włodzimierz Tetmajer in the old barn, a pharmaceuticals factory, one-storey utility building. The artist's heirs were deprived of the old barn with the studio

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<sup>1</sup> Joanna Daranowska-Łukaszewska, *Małopolska architektura drewniana*, BOSZ 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Listed objects: complexes and single buildings in the city of Krakow: ul.Tetmajera 36, A-134, Tetmajerówka manor house 28.IV1967

and a large part of the garden in the 1970s. The new owner soon devastated the old buildings and built many greenhouses and other industrial and temporary objects that degraded the historical manor complex. Such a turn of events jeopardized the efforts of a number of people who had struggled to save the place through a campaign in the press, the radio and on TV. Fortunately, the legal owners managed to buy back the property in 1991 and started refurbishing works which involved great costs.

At the beginning of 1991, the Włodzimierz Tetmajer Foundation was set up to support renovation of monuments of Polish culture. Its first and foremost task was to renovate Tetmajer's house and studio. To propagate its activities, the Foundation awarded ten prizes to the artists associated with Tetmajerówka and Krakow's cultural life, including the people who saved architecture. From 1991 the Tetmajerówka complex underwent revitalization which aimed at restoring its homogenous character.<sup>3</sup>

The area of the lot varies in height and comprises an old orchard and many magnificent trees. They help visually isolate the property from the surroundings which are dominated by the new church tower. The complex is characteristic of the style of Bronowice in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Bronowice Male was a village picturesquely located on the outskirts of Krakow, a few kilometers away from the city centre. Its original traditions, local customs, the beauty of folk costumes and characteristic folklore were noticed by the artists from Krakow. Their fascination with the village life, the landscape, friendliness of the inhabitants were reflected in a new folk-style trend in the painting of Young Poland. The first artist to paint pictures which showed the unique atmosphere of the landscapes of Bronowice was Ludwik Delaveaux. However, it was Włodzimierz Tetmajer who made the beauty of Bronowice famous in his paintings which were much sought after at the time. The artist, who had lived close to nature since childhood and was fascinated by the atmosphere and colour of folklore, pioneered the trend in Polish art which soon found a number of followers and adherents. The village of Bronowice was also immortalized in Polish literature, which unquestionably strengthened its unique position in the history of Polish culture.

The history of the manor house.

Part of the village of Bronowice Male had been property of the Franciscan fathers until the parceling out in 1895. According to the literature on the subject, the manor was built in 1863. It was a modest building with white plastered walls and covered with a gambrel roof. It was erected to meet the needs of the fathers whose occupation was farming. In 1902, the manor house and the adjacent farmhouses were bought by Włodzimierz Tetmajer.

Tetmajer, who married Anna Maria Mikolajczykowna, a local girl, lived in Krakow at first but at the beginning of spring the couple moved to the family cottage of the Mikolajczyks to which a studio was added. Five years later, a new house and a studio, now called the Rydlowka manor, were erected and became the residence of the growing family of Tetmajer. A few years later, Tetmajer moved back to the post-Franciscan manor which has been the Tetmajers' family seat ever since. It is situated slightly above the first house and next to it there was a large old barn. In the course of necessary refurbishments both buildings were extended. According to the owner's wish, the barn was turned into a painter's studio lit through a huge window set in the northern wall and another one in the ceiling. Next to the studio there were three more rooms which had different functions to suit the family's needs. Additions to the manor house included a kitchen with a hall and a pantry.

The exterior of the building has preserved its original character. It is a single story symmetrical structure with a central porch opening onto a driveway, two windows on

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<sup>3</sup> Design works in connection with the Tetmajerówka complex; 1993-1994: conservation design and realization of the layout of W.Tetmajer's studio; design and realization of the layout of the living quarters above the studio (the barn); design of the pharmaceuticals factory on the site; design and realization of landscaping of the historical garden complex; conservation inventory of the manor house; design and realization of the multipurpose room in the barn. Authors: M.J.Żychowska, K.Styrna-Bartkovicz.

each side and a massive Polish mansard shingle roof. The extension on the right houses the kitchen and pantry which are slightly set back from the façade.

It is worth pointing out that extensions and additions of all sorts were very characteristic of Polish manor houses. They originated from the inside and developed as the years went by to meet the needs of the generations of their inhabitants. Their volumes demonstrate successive layers which enriched the architecture and added individuality to the buildings, as was the case with Tetmajerówka.

Guests are invited up three steps onto a porch which is supported by four whitewashed columns, two on either side. The window above lets the light into a small room which is the only one on the upper level. The entrance door with two side windows leads to a hall with rooms on the right and left and two more en-suite rooms to the back. The stairs in the hall next to the kitchen lead to the attic and the beautifully vaulted basement underneath.

The most representative interior of Tetmajerówka is the living room to the left of the porch. The furnishing has remained unchanged since the times of Włodzimierz Tetmajer. The interior breathes the past, secession memories and carefully cultivated family traditions. Old pictures and photographs are hanging on the walls and an unfinished painting rests on the easel.<sup>4</sup>

The atmosphere of the manor is described in a book by Józef Dużyk<sup>5</sup> *Sława Panie Włodzimierzu*. (Hail, Sir Włodzimierz) The hosts often entertained...young painters and literary men who spent time not only debating but also feasting at tables spread with all food available in the house. Sometimes sir Włodzimierz would get the last demijohn out of the depth of the cellar and offer it to the guests. Wincenty Witos often came to Tetmajerówka to discuss the matters of vital importance to the country. Other celebrities who made their presence in the living room were Piłsudski and Charles de Gaulle, who was a captain at the time.

Owing to the great care of the family, the manor has lost nothing of its original character and the interior looks as if the time stood still.

In 1996 refurbishment works started.<sup>6</sup> They continued for nine months. The roofing, which had been repaired a few years before did not require any interference. Neither did the basic elements of the roof structure. The manor had no foundations. The walls stood on ground beams which needed replacement because in the early 1990's they were found to be in very poor condition. Completely new foundations were then laid. The existing foundation was uncovered bit by bit and replaced with new foundations at the same time. Most of the walls were dismantled and rebuilt. The literature on the subject refers to the building as a wooden manor. However, the facts look slightly different. Many walls were built using a technique which is not very durable, namely a mixture of wood, brushwood, straw joined with clay-based mortar. This posed a great conservation problem during the refurbishing. According to historical research, the basic building material in the area in both the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was wood. Plaited structure of walls was obsolete at the time although it occurred in utility buildings. And yet, residential houses made of brushwood were not a rarity. According to the literature on the subject, there were whole villages built using this technique in the area round Krakow in the early 1900s. The reason was scarcity of wood in the area and the fact that the technique was practical and cheap. The structure was also typical of many houses of the

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<sup>4</sup> this is how Włodzimierz Tetmajer, the owner of the manor described his new house:

*Hallowed be my quiet, white country manor  
With a wooden porch, in a grove of old trees !  
In a garden smelling of herbs: mint and camomile!  
Every wall there breathes the air of different times!  
I built it for the children - I grew up in one like this,  
In one like this I was lulled by old fathers' songs!  
In one like this we were taught to love with all our hearts  
The people who had long moulded in the grave.*

<sup>5</sup> Józef Dużyk, *Sława Panie Włodzimierzu*,

<sup>6</sup> Projekt konserwatorski i realizacja zabezpieczenia dworku Tetmajerówki wraz z aranżacją wnętrza, 1995. (Conservation of the Tetmajerówka manor, design and implementation together with interior decoration) Authors: M.J.Żychowska, A.Białkiewicz.

gentry which often did not differ very much from the cottages of peasants. Their specific feature was their location: They were set in vast parkland, far away from neighbours.

Therefore the problem of preserving the authentic structure of the walls proved quite complex.. When plaster was removed and detailed inventory taken, it turned out that every wall had its unique structure. On the whole, there were two types of wall structure. The rooms in the eastern part of the main building had a (sumikowo-łatkowa) construction while the rest of the walls consisted of a post and frame filled with bricks, stones, wood, brushwood ,all joined by means of clay-based mortar. Significant fragments of inside walls were made of brick. The variety of structure and the basement under the eastern part of the building might suggest that the Franciscans extended the small building and gave it the form of a manor in 1863. However, there is no evidence to prove this hypothesis. The structure of the walls shows no regularity or repetitiveness. The walls seemed to have grown spontaneously. There was little chance of restoring a similar structure. Therefore a decision was made to apply wooden framework structure throughout the walls.

The kitchen extension was made of wooden logs which were partially protected and reused. By chance, a log with the date 1815 was discovered which Włodzimierz Tetmajer had put in the wall of the extended kitchen. All damaged details were carefully restored so as to do no harm to the original shape. Even the window bolts were made according to the original pattern. To show the original structure of the walls, a fragment of the original wall was left in the hall and protected with a glass pane.

The roof structure and its shingle covering were renovated in the 1970s. After careful inspection, some minor repairs proved necessary in the part covering the manor. Some rafters and beams had to be added to the roof structure over the kitchen extension. The shingles, apart from a few elements, were not damaged. However, the greatest obstacle in the course of the refurbishing works was the necessity to keep the roof structure intact. The walls were replaced section by section while the roof rested on a system of steel posts and lintels. The system proved quite effective as a protective measure although it made the works take much longer. The plumbing, wiring and gas pipes were completely replaced.

The overhaul of the manor complex began in 1991 with securing the barn that housed Włodzimierz Tetmajer's studio and three additional rooms used as living quarters. The artist converted the barn himself.

The first renovation design was made in June 1992 and included modernizing the studio, interior decoration of the attic above and the multipurpose room. The atelier and the adjacent room which belonged to the artist's daughter, who was also a painter, were restored on the basis of old photographs. Nowadays the building is partially a museum of the famous painter where various objects from the epoch are exhibited together with costumes which the artist used as models to paint his pictures. Some exhibits include Anna Tetmajer's clothes and regional costumes from Krakow area offered by the neighbours. The owners had intended the place to be not only a museum but also a place to meet for Krakow people associated with culture and art. It took a year to complete the renovation of the barn with Tetmajer's studio. The greenhouses behind the barn, which interfered so brutally with the surroundings, were gradually pulled down.

A new object was also added to the complex. Its architecture takes into account the aesthetic and spatial qualities of the historical surroundings. The basic principle was to make its volume conform with the determining features of the spatial and stylistic composition of the site. It was situated by the internal road with the approach from ul.Zelenskiego. The characteristic of the location and its main value was the opportunity to set the new volume deep in the ground using the existing driveway and the abutment so as to make it fit harmoniously with the historical space.

The architecture of the building refers to the adjacent objects and quotes discretely the details of the old architecture of the village of Bronowice. The basic composition element is the roof with tile covering which is made less massive due to the skylight and bay on the corner.

At this point it is worth mentioning problems which concern conservation of wooden structures in wooden church architecture objects. They are not connected with

the conservation of whole objects but with fragments which are often neglected because of their small scale. These problems do not concern wooden church architecture in Poland which has been an inseparable part of Polish landscape for centuries and has now become a significant part of Polish cultural heritage. Until recently, wooden Roman Catholic churches, uniate and orthodox churches and Jewish synagogues have been common factors shaping the panoramas of our cities. Wood was a popular building material but from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century masonry prevailed in church construction. This was due to the fact that: ... churchgoers regard a masonry church as better than a wooden one. It is a symbol of 'modernity' and opulence while a wooden one is a symbol of backwardness and poverty.<sup>7</sup> Old wooden objects were abandoned and either pulled down or left to decay which threatened their existence. Unfortunately, a similar phenomenon can be observed today. The current fashion in church construction is not to use wood as basic building material or as interior decoration element but to use composite wood for roof structures. Despite difficulties connected with the transport of huge frames and relatively high costs such structures occur and become an excellent decorative element.

A significant conservation problem is related to preservation of historical wooden roof trusses, especially in churches. They are valuable examples of spatial structures but the main threat to their existence is the passing time and leaking roof coverings.

In the 1990s, building materials with good technical parameters became available in Poland. They included roof coverings. Until then, damaged roof coverings, especially tiles, caused the vaults to be flooded by rainwater but, first of all, resulted in dampness and corrosion of roof trusses, including the historical or unique ones. In such cases, the conservation and renovation activities consisted in replacing the damaged tiles with tin or copper sheets. There were two reasons for this. The first one was lack of appropriate tiles and the other one was the weight of such covering which was usually 15% of the weight of tile covering. The renovation works usually commenced when much damage had already been done not only to the covering but also to the roof trusses.

A significant example is St. Anthony's church in Wrocław which was built in the years 1685-1692. We do not know the name of the architect. There is only information in the archives about his Italian origin. It was a monastery church erected by the Franciscan Reformati and transferred to St. Elizabeth's nuns by Prussian authorities in 1792. The church suffered little damage (5%) during World War II. In the years 1945 - 1998 the church was in the care of diocese priests and in 1998 was taken over by the Pauline order. The building was in good condition. The main problem was the roof covering. Many tiles were missing which caused profuse leaking. This resulted in dampness of the vaults and wooden structure of the roof. The last renovation of the roof took place in 1976 and consisted in relaying the tiles, replacement of the most damaged parts of the truss and the impregnation of wood with preservative. The tiles with appropriate parameters were very hard to buy in Poland at the time. In 2004 conservation of the roof truss and roof covering began. Detailed inventory was taken of all the elements, appropriate expert studies and conservation design of the renovation were made.

The roof truss is divided into three parts. The first one covers the main nave and side aisles in the highest part of the church whose projection is 17,5 x 21,9 m. The system used here consisted of rafters and collar beams with side and central purlins. The main trusses have an additional collar beam supported on the queen post which reaches the ridge while in the upper section of the truss there is a long beam and an additional purlin. In the hips there are diagonal cross braces. The posts rest on a tie beam (belka podwalinowa) lying on footing beams spanning the side walls of the nave. The second part of the truss covers the lower part of the church whose projection is 17.5 x 5.5 m. Its structure is slightly different. The supporting system consists of transverse trusses. The main trusses have a second collar beam which supports the central purlin. The collar beam rests on two queen posts with longitudinal. The layout of posts and cross braces in the hips is similar to the first part of the truss. The third part of the truss covers the

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<sup>7</sup> Ryszard Brykowski, *Ochrona drewnianej architektury sakralnej w Polsce (Conservation of wooden church architecture in Poland)* [in:] *Życie i myśl*, no 5 (311), Warszawa 1980, page 95.

presbytery whose projection is 7.5 x 7.0 m. because of the spanning, the structure is different. The supporting system consists of rafters spanned with one collar beam placed half way between the footing beam and the ridge. The second collar beam rests on a long beam and the collar beam spanning the rafters.

Expert structural study confirmed that the existing roof truss has a properly formed supporting system and appropriate cross sections of the elements. The original structure could be preserved and there was no need to introduce additional reinforcements. Some elements had to be replaced by their replicas because they were damaged by corrosion both biological and due to dampness. Because of the location of the damaged wood it was impossible to determine precisely the extent of the damage without removing the roof covering. It was decided that decisions as to the replacement of the elements would be made in the course of the renovation works after consultation with the conservator.

When the works began, most of the damage to the wood proved superficial. After the damaged layer had been removed, the cross section of the supporting elements was sufficient for the statics of the system. Finally, it turned out that only 6% of the truss needed replacement. As for the roof covering, it had to be completely replaced. The highest quality ceramic tiles were used for the purpose.

Similar problems occurred when the roof covering and wooden trusses of two other Pauline monasteries were renovated.

One of them was funded by prince Władysław Opolczyk and Bernard Wierusz in Wieruszow In 1401. The damaged roof structure has been renovated several times but not very competently and now its original form is to be restored. The roof covering made of galvanized iron ,which is in poor condition and leaking, will be removed. Ceramic tiles are to be used instead.

The other object is a monastery in Leczeszyce. The 17<sup>th</sup>-century building was seriously damaged during both world wars. It was first renovated in the 1970s but the building materials used in the process were of poor quality and the roof has to be repaired again. The damaged wood truss of the roof was reinforced with boards nailed to structural elements and the gaps between the tiles were filled with cement mortar. Unfortunately the elements of the roof structure continued to corrode and the roof soon started leaking again. In this case also a conservation design was made after expert studies and the original form of the roof structure is restored. New ceramic tiles will be used as roof covering.

To conclude, it can be said that the cultural value of unique objects of wooden architecture has recently been noticed and appreciated. The awareness of the need to protect such objects has also grown. This refers both to the objects in use and out of use such as churches and orthodox churches in the Bieszczady area as well as wooden structures in historical objects. There are fewer fears as to their fate than years ago. The factors that contributed to this situation include the growing awareness of the owners, better ownership regulations and availability of high quality building materials, especially roof coverings. Ownership regulations made it possible for legal owners to take over a significant number of buildings together with responsibilities for their maintenance. State conservation authorities also play a significant role since they supervise conservation activities and sometimes partly refund the sums spent on renovation of historical buildings.

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