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Chapel at St. Joseph's Church in Gdańsk

Introduction

Situated in the western part of Gdańsk's Old Town, the complex of St. Joseph's Church of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate originally belonged to the Carmelites. Its oldest parts include the few monastery buildings erected since 1464, as the monks used the nearby St. George's Church at that time. For this reason, the construction of a new one was not important at first. Work on the monastic temple began nearly 20 years later (from 1482). Of the monastery buildings built, including those later, the most interesting room is the chapel of the (now) Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (Fig. 1a). Research and conservation work began in the chapel in 2014, a year before the anniversary of the establishment of the shrine in the chapel (1964). As the architectural analysis was undertaken slightly later than the conservation work, not all the data was available yet. Nevertheless, hitherto unknown transformations were revealed, revealing much of the object's history.

To date, the chapel has either been overlooked in the literature, or described by stating the presence of pillars and vaults mounted on them [1], [2]. More information was included in a study from 1972–1973 by Hanna Domańska [3, pp. 19–21]. Some of the details of the chapel received construction explanations at that time. Most data currently available about the chapel is included in the study [4], resulting from the research of the walls carried out in 2014–2015.

State of preservation

The chapel has a roughly rectangular plan with internal dimensions of approximately 9.4 (9.5) × 13.6 (13.8) m. Externally, the north and east walls are not plastered. The former contains three buttresses. Between them are

wide, sharp-arched windows, with only the first one on the east not centrally located. Below the first window on the east is an extension. The wall surface to the south of the third buttress (counting from the east) is set back by approximately 15 cm. On the outer surface of the eastern wall, there are two sharp-arched recesses with a two-sided (hacked-off corner) framing (Fig. 1b). On the south side, a circular staircase of the church is attached to it, while on the north side, there is a 2 m high wall, delimiting the monastery area on this side. There is a narrow vertical recess between the southern recess and a section of the semi-circular staircase.

Access to the chapel is provided by passages in the west and south walls. The first of these leads from an adjoining room and also from a narrow corridor (linked to the monastery courtyard). The second passageway connects to the chancel of the church. Inside the chapel are two octagonal stone pillars. An elaborate stellar vault is set on them and on the wall supports. The walls have six recesses. Three of these are in the north wall, below the windows. They are topped by simple beams. The recesses contain suspended radiators. Two further recesses on the east wall are pointed. The last of the existing recesses, of a different size and reaching the floor, is located in the south wall. It has a rectangular outline. The floor of the chapel consists of stone slabs arranged obliquely to the walls. The only exceptions are a fragment of a rectangular floor made of planks adjacent to the northern wall and a circular stone base under the western pillar. Near the east wall, the floor has two steps, separating the priest's area with two altars. The interior of the chapel has the walls and vaulted ceilings covered with plaster and painted with whitewash, while the vault ribs are reddish brown and the supports are grey.

A basement is located in the eastern part of the chapel. It can be accessed via two entrances – from the interior – in the floor, against the north wall (obscured by a wooden trapdoor) and from the exterior – through an extension.

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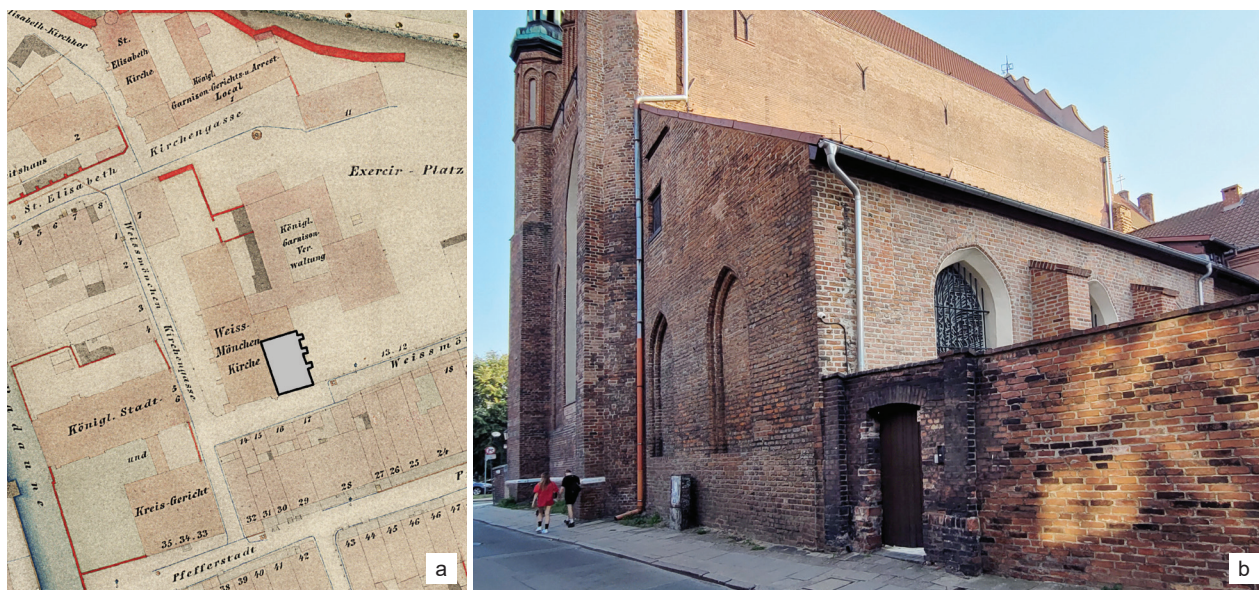


Fig. 1. Location of the chapel at St. Joseph's Church in Gdańsk:

a) fragment of a city plan (1866–1869) (source: BG PAN CIII 610), b) view from the north-eastern side (photo by A. Piwek)

Il. 1. Lokalizacja kaplicy przy kościele św. Józefa w Gdańsku:

a) fragment planu miasta (1866–1869) (źródło: BG PAN CIII 610), b) widok od strony północno-wschodniej (fot. A. Piwek)

The basement is covered by a brick barrel. On the south side, it has an additional room with a corridor facing the chancel. The south-western part of the interior is filled in by brickwork reaching the key of the brick covering.

Findings

The architectural analysis of the external surfaces of the walls brought some information about the history of the building, but much more was obtained by carrying out work in the interior of the chapel (Figs. 2, 3). The scope of the research undertaken was limited mainly to areas where the original plaster had not survived. In addition to fragmentary modern and younger painting decorations, conservators found medieval (consecration crosses) decorations on them. The original function of the described interior was therefore sacred, located within the present chapel space.

The northern wall

It is built of bricks: $29\text{--}30.5 \times 13\text{--}13.5 \times 7.8\text{--}8.3$ cm. The three buttresses, unrelated to this wall, were erected with machine-made bricks: $29\text{--}31\text{--}31.5 \times 15 \times 7.5\text{--}8$ cm. The height of the 10 bricks measured vertically with mortar (hereafter 10c) is 96 cm. This material has the dimensions of medieval bricks. It is known from the history of the building that it was regothicised at the beginning of the 20th century. Hence, the buttresses were built at that time. The hacked off outer face of the wall near the entrance to the corridor and the approximately 20 cm wide vertical strip on the nearby buttress is a trace of the narrowing of the wall. This was done to make a short section of the chapel wall face the adjacent room. According to documentation produced in 1947 [5], the protrusion of the chapel was

still present. It provided indirect evidence of the chapel's priority over the north wall of the adjoining room¹.

Only the third window from the east on the west side provided some information about the architecture of the Gothic windows. The bricks exposed above the sill contain fragmentary surviving Gothic moulding (Fig. 4a). A small fault with traces of thin plaster ran deep into the wall from the face of the wall. The inner parts of the fault were hacked off, so it is not known whether it still contained additional decoration. From an analysis of the better-preserved window decoration of the nearby older sacred refectory [7], it can be assumed that there was a shaft in the fault. The glyphs present behind this fault were created by hacking off the corners of the plain wall to give them neo-Gothic forms, considered more appropriate for medieval chapel architecture in the early 20th century than the plain wall.

An architectural analysis carried out on the inner side of the north wall revealed a considerable number of vertical grooves, connected to each other by segmental arches (Fig. 3a). The parts thus separated were found to be masonry of seven recesses. Three types were found among them. The first belonged to the first, second, fifth, sixth and seventh recesses (counting from the east wall) (Fig. 4a). They were 88–91 cm wide and 75–78 cm deep. The caps of the arches reached a height of 210–220 cm, while the edges of the base were 90 cm high (from the floor level). In recess five, the side walls (at the height of the fifth layer of bricks from its base) have a groove made up of two sloping walls. This is a remnant of a shelf. The recesses mentioned are original and date from the Middle Ages. They have been bricked up

¹ A different view, based on the length of the excavated arch foundation: [6, p. 196].

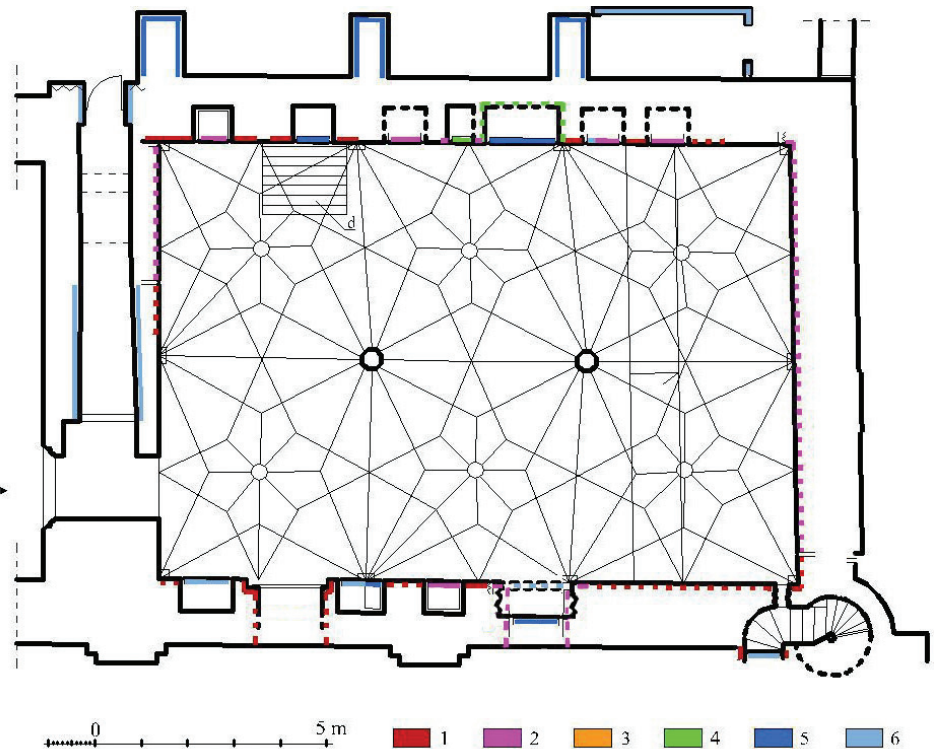


Fig. 2. Stratification of the walls of the chapel at St. Joseph's Church in Gdańsk on the ground floor (below the windows) and in the basement.

The letter "d" indicates the extent of the wooden trapdoor, different from the stone floor of the chapel.

Markings: 1 – late 15th century,
2 – 17th century,
3 – 18th century,
4 – after 1840, 5 – 1901–1920,
6 – 1945–2019

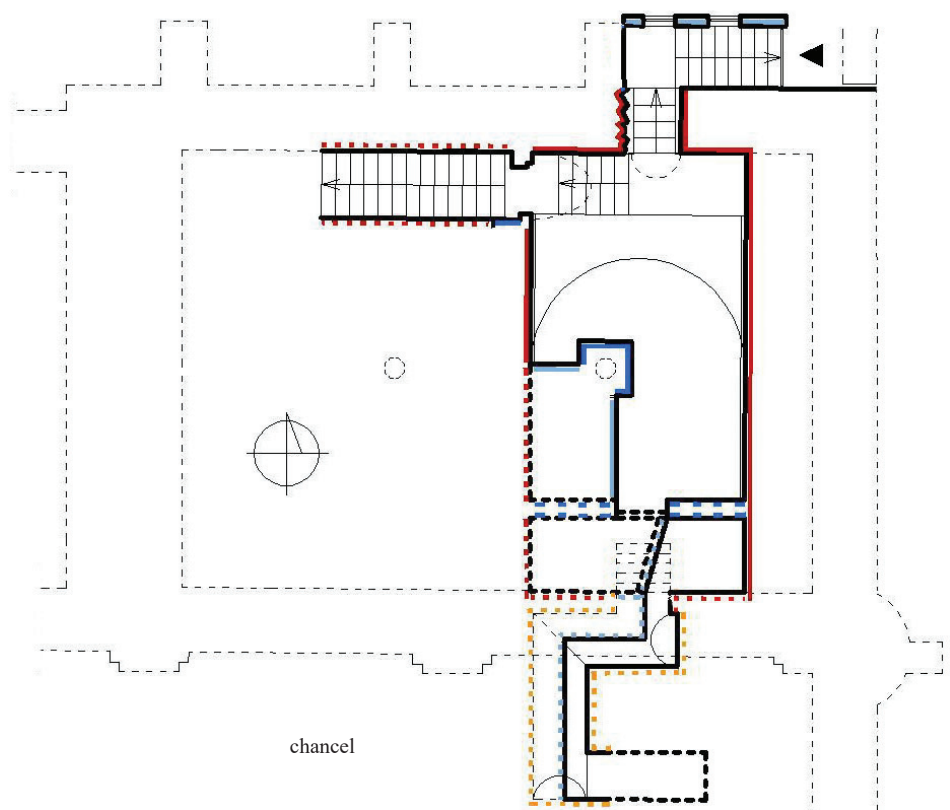
(elaborated by A. Piwek)

II. 2. Rozwarstwienie ścian kaplicy przy kościele św. Józefa w Gdańsku na parterze (poniżej okien) i w piwnicy.

Literą „d” oznaczono odmienny od kamiennej posadzki kaplicy zasięg drewnianej kłapy.

Oznaczenia: 1 – koniec XV w.,
2 – XVII w.,
3 – XVIII w.,
4 – po 1840 r.,
5 – lata 1901–1920,
6 – 1945–2019

(oprac. A. Piwek)



with bricks 13.0–14.3–15 × 7–7.5–8 cm forming thin walls. As stated, they were bricked up in the 17th century except for the sixth one (early 20th century). The third one (to the east), marked by grouts 449 and 609 cm away from the east wall, belongs to the second type of recesses. It differs from the aforementioned by its width (160 cm) and the fact that it reaches the floor. It was topped by a segmental arch starting

at 219 cm. As no traces were found on the outside of the wall that could be associated with this recess, despite its considerable dimensions, it was never a passage². The creation of

² At the time of the analysis, it was not possible to inspect the exterior surface of the north wall. As it turns out, it was wrongly thought at

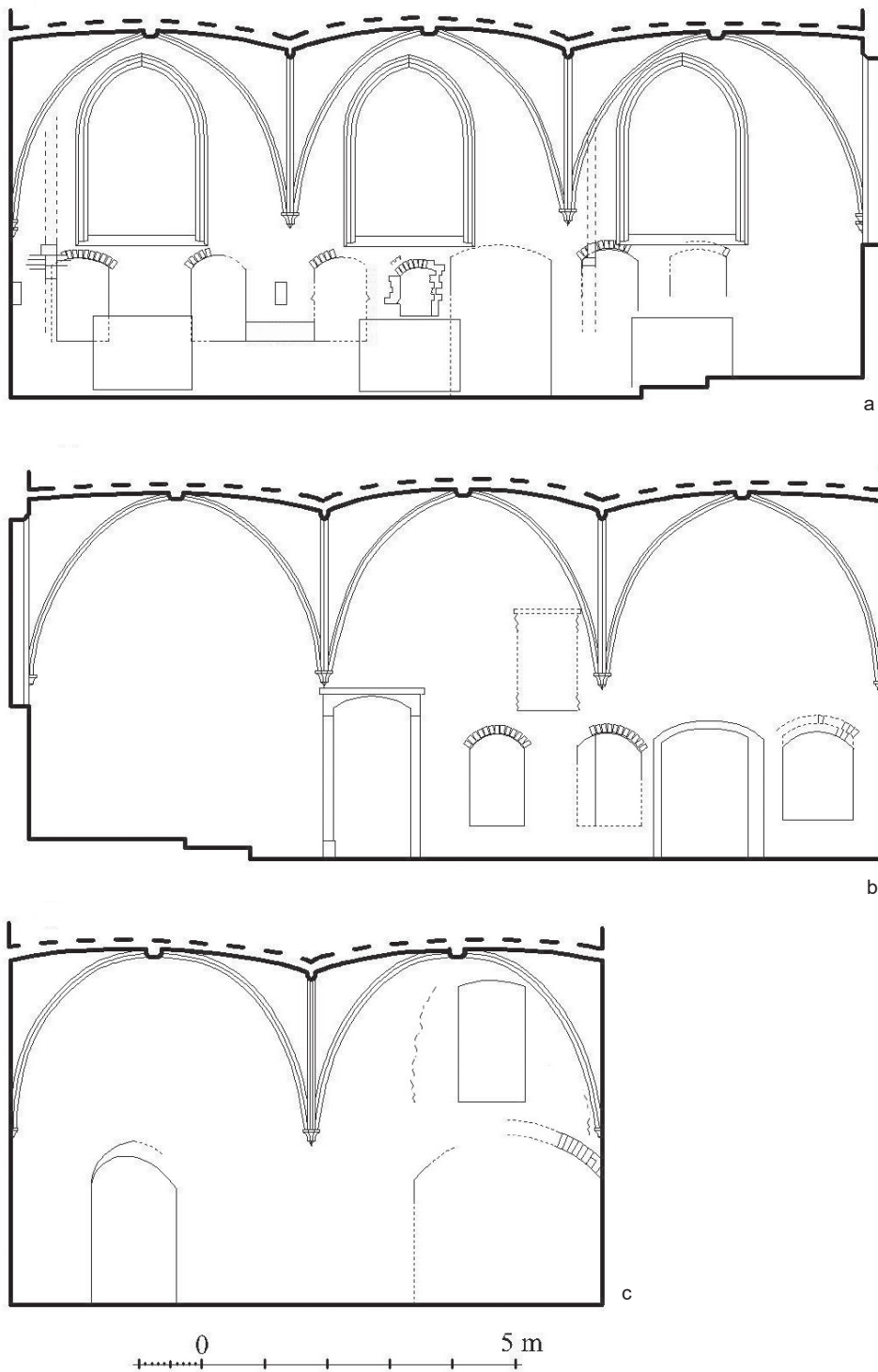


Fig. 3. View of the surface of the internal walls of the chapel at St. Joseph's Church in Gdańsk with marked traces of reconstructions: a) northern, b) southern, c) western (elaborated by A. Piwek)

Il. 3. Widok powierzchni ścian wewnętrznych kaplicy przy kościele św. Józefa w Gdańsku z zaznaczonymi odkrytymi śladami przebudów: a) północnej, b) południowej, c) zachodniej (oprac. A. Piwek)

the large recess dates to the mid-19th century. Its masonry, consisting of machine-made bricks: $14 \times 6-6.3$ cm, should be referred to the early 20th century. The third type is presented by the fourth recess. It begins at a height of 130 cm. At its western edge, the lower layers of bricks are medieval. Above them, at a distance of 15–25 cm from the edge, runs a grout, which separates the Gothic bricks

the time that, since similar marks in the opposite wall referred to a passage, it should also be found on this one [4, p. 4].

(west of it) from the bricks created in the 17th century (east of the grout). The former include a small fragment of the arch above the present one, while the latter include the damaged present arch and, on the east side of the recess, the three lower layers of bricks. Above these, the bricks date from the mid-19th century and form a walling. Above 20 cm from the base, the west side wall contains a sloping groove, the remains of a shelf. This recess did not differ in appearance from the original ones in the Gothic period. In the modern period, it was transformed into a smaller one, probably helpful for the setting an oil lamp to illuminate the



Fig. 4. Discoveries in the northern wall of the chapel at St. Joseph's Church in Gdańsk:

- a) a fragment of the first window from the west, b) three recesses; between two of them (on the left) there is a quarter circular indentation in the wall, c) a recess in the south wall, in the 2nd half of the 17th century, which was a passage to the chancel (photo by A. Piwek)

II. 4. Odkrycia w ścianie północnej kaplicy przy kościele św. Józefa w Gdańsku:

- a) fragment okna pierwszego od zachodu, b) trzy wnęki; między dwiema (po lewej stronie) ćwierćkolistwe wcięcie w murze, c) wnęka w ścianie południowej, w 2. połowie XVII w. będąca przejściem do prezbiterium (fot. A. Piwek)

interior. Its bricking up in the 18th century caused partial damage. The medieval recesses were not laid out identically. They started 218 cm from the east wall and then occurred every 50 cm or so. The two western recesses had a greater spacing, reaching 131 cm. This disruption indicates an interior disposition that was different in the north-western part than in the rest of the chapel.

Further traces on the wall are spatially related to the interior of the chapel. These include the quarter circular niche found (Fig. 4b) between the bricked up recesses of the second and third (from the west wall). It runs horizontally through their bases and is 30 cm high. It penetrates into the wall from 9.5 cm (on the eastern side) to 14.5 cm (on the western side). As it is close to the trapdoor covering the exit to the underground, it is most likely associated with it. Further traces include two rectangular niches filled with bricks probably dating from the 1st quarter of the 17th century. They are 20 cm wide, 59 cm high, and start at 885 cm and 1,340 cm from the present eastern wall at a height of 146 cm above the floor. They were created in the Middle Ages and are only associated with the north wall³. The last traces include two vertical strips 20 cm wide of machine-made bricks, narrowing the second and seventh recesses to the west. These covered the vertical channels forged in the wall (to a depth of about 20 cm). Soot marks were found on their surfaces. They are therefore associated with the addition of furnaces to the wall in the early 20th century.

From the interior of the chapel, additional information was also obtained about the windows – this was brought

about by the already described examination of the exterior surface of the north wall. Damage to the medieval recesses indicates that the windows were set higher than at present. The first window on the west side probably differed from the others. This may have been influenced by the previously mentioned different interior layout at this location, which was more precisely determined during the examination of the west wall.

The rectangular recesses of the windows that were discovered during the analysis damaged, to varying degrees, all the other recesses with segmental arches. They are among the last work to be carried out in the 20th century in order to improve the conditions for the believers, whose numbers increased significantly after the sanctuary was established in the chapel (1964). For that purpose, radiators were installed.

East wall

From the measurements taken of the exterior of the chapel's east wall, it is known to have been built of bricks measuring: $30 \times 12.2\text{--}12.5\text{--}13.5 \times 6.5\text{--}7.0$, $10c = 96$ cm. The backgrounds of the two recesses present with the rest of the wall are bonded⁴. There is an irregular grout between a section of the semi-circular staircase of the chancel and the chapel, in a narrow cavity, indicative of the different times of their construction. This is also confirmed by the building material of the chancel consisting of bricks measuring: $29\text{--}29.5\text{--}30 \times 13\text{--}13.5 \times 7.7\text{--}8\text{--}8.2$ cm, $10c = 98.5$ cm. The gable wall of the chapel contains clearly outlined re-building with machine-made bricks mostly about 70 cm above the recesses. These are the result of construction work undertaken probably in the 20th century.

³ In the course of the research work, a hypothesis was put forward linking them to the projected vaulting of the chapel [4, pp. 4, 5]. However, one of the reasons why it is not possible to find an analogous recess in the south wall is that the architectural layout there is arranged differently. Due to the impossibility of excavating the western wall at a similar height, the possibility of a similar recess (or recesses) there too cannot be dismissed at present, although it is rather unlikely.

⁴ They cannot, therefore, be regarded as window bricks, as marked in the 1947 inventory [5].

Examination carried out inside the chapel, in the north-east corner, revealed the absence of a bond between the east wall and the north wall. The same was true in the southern part of the eastern wall, at a distance of 78 cm from the south-eastern corner. This confirms the secondary nature of the east wall in relation to the longitudinal walls.

South wall

On its surface, three pairs of vertical grouts were found, connected by segmental arches (Fig. 4c). In terms of shape, they were similar to those recesses in the north wall, which were classified as type one. There were not very large differences between them in terms of dimensions: spacing, base height (167–176 cm), cap height (here 167–176 cm) and depth (70 cm). One reason for this state of affairs may be the priority of the commencement of the construction (perhaps the completion) of the large chapel (the present chancel) in the Middle Ages. The masonry of the recesses varied. The first to the east contained uniform brick material throughout its depth, probably dating from the 17th century. The interior of the second to the east, along a length of 29 cm, had an early 20th century solid brick infill. It was created to vent smoke through a vertical channel (40 × 90 cm) forged in the wall. The bricks obscuring its section from above contained traces of soot. The third recess, near the west wall, was walled up with a thin wall of machine-made bricks after 1945.

At distances of 438 and 593 cm from the east wall, a rectangular masonry reaching the floor was found, 263 cm high, composed of post-1945 machine-made bricks. When it was removed, a recess 16 cm narrower (on each side) was revealed, with a plastered segmental arch reaching 228 cm (Fig. 4c). It resembled the second type of recess from the north wall. The walls on which the arch was supported were partially hacked off (at 16 cm). The background of the recess had another masonry. It consisted of 26–26.5 × 12.5–13.5 × 6.5 cm machine-made bricks. Almost all of them were plastered. The front of the arch was obscured by a 9 cm high beam facing the wall. There was a vertical grout 40 cm from the southern edge of the recess. There was also a similar one on the opposite side. These indicate the forging of a passage into the chancel. It was created probably in the 17th century. Then, it was bricked up on the chancel side at the beginning of the 20th century. On the side of the chapel, the side walls have had their surface hacked off. The intention was to widen the resulting recess to make room for a wide rectangular cupboard with a wooden frame secured from above by a thin beam. Bright horizontal stripes (less dusty than the other surfaces) were found on the fragments of the plastered transverse partitions. It is thus known that the cupboard had five shelves. Their lower surfaces were found at the following heights from the floor: 39, 84, 129, 179 (top surface) and 215 cm. The passage with the fault between the two bricked-up western recesses was the original one, connecting the small chapel with the large one (the future chancel). It must be assumed that its further fate was interchangeably linked with the previously described passage forged in the 17th century in the same wall.

The last trace on the south wall is near the third vault bracket from the east (Fig. 4b). Vertical ripped grouts were found at 797 and 893 cm from the east wall. They started at a height of 236 cm from the floor. From above, they ended with a horizontally placed beam 8 cm high. Traces of its setting were found 390 cm from the floor. The re-building thus delineated contained 6.5–7 cm bricks on mortar containing clay. It was associated with the entrance to the level of the pulpit set on the chancel side. The stairs leading up to it had to be adjacent to the wall in order to cause as little disturbance as possible to the faithful gathered inside the chapel. The opening must have been forged before 1678, when the associated pulpit was destroyed.

West wall

At a distance of 200 cm from the floor, the base of a segmental arch was exposed, which “blended” into the north wall (Fig. 4c). Based on its curvature (the highest point was 150 cm from the north wall), it appears that the arch was 300 cm long. Below it, the wall contains bricks measuring: 29.5–29.9 × 13.5–14–15.5 × 7–7.5–8–8.5, 10c = 89 cm. The arch should be associated with a medieval recess. It is highly likely that its background had a passage. The bricked up recesses are associated with the removal of the medieval matroneum, which presumably took place in the 1st quarter of the 17th century. Above the described arch, two vertical grouts were found. They were found at 123 and 244 cm from the north wall⁵. They started at 325 cm from the floor level and ended at 508 cm to connect with the segmental arch. Within the area thus delineated were machine-made bricks measuring 25 × 12.2–12.2 × 6.7–6.8 cm, 10c = 81 cm. These form the masonry of the Gothic entrance made in the 20th century. Further analysis revealed that from this entrance (floor level), it was possible to access the now collapsed, one-flight stairs (Fig. 5). These were adjacent to the west wall. They were covered by a brick arch with a hacked-off corner, descending towards the south. An examination of the passage in the west wall to the adjoining room revealed a fragment of the Gothic arch on the north side. It therefore belonged to the original layout of the chapel. Its present irregular coping is the result of 17th–18th century alterations.

Chapel vaults

From the examination of the ribs of the present chapel covering and the traces at the wall embeddings (machine-made bricks), it is clear that the vaults are not authentic. They should be traced back to the 19th or early 20th century. This is confirmed by Domańska’s research [3, p. 11], which dates the creation of the eastern pillar to 1900–1901. The fact that two different heads appear on the pillar shafts suggests that they were reused. The fact

⁵ A 6.5 cm high field of machine-made bricks was found between the southern grout and another irregular grout 313 cm away from the northern wall. This was considered to be a re-building carried out in the 2nd half of the 20th century [4, p. 7].

that the vault is partially obscured by the northern part of the coping of the matroneum entrance also suggests that the vault is not authentic.

According to the plan of the monastery complex made by Bartel Ranisch [8] in 1695, the interior of the chapel had four vault fields, each with two intersecting barrels (with ribs?). It was supported by one square in the plan of the support and wall pillars. However, no such elements were found during the examination of the north and south walls. In addition, the chapel actually has one more span than is shown on the plan. The drawn pillar in the interior is therefore not reliable.

The motif of one pillar in the chapel was undoubtedly used, however. This seems to be confirmed by the circular (?) stone foundation in the floor only under the first pillar from the west. It is much larger than the base set on it. It was probably the base of another earlier support. This could only have happened in the medieval period and is clearly linked to the matroneum which was built at that time.

Basement

The extension with steps leading to the basement was made of machine-made bricks. Its absence on the documentation made after the World War II [5] indicates a recent time of construction. The entrance to the basement has an eastern border with a preserved brick face, while the western border has been hacked off. The reason for this condition can be seen from the exterior of the wall. A brick bevel runs in the thickness of the wall here. The adjacent, fragmentary east wall has a surviving face. These traces indicate a slanted basement window. From the preserved traces⁶, it is known that it was 80 cm wide and about 120 cm high. Its lack of re-building points to the Gothic period. It was turned into a passage when the passage to the basement was forged. Its frequent use, associated with its conversion to a farm storeroom, occurred at the beginning of the 20th century. The need for convenient access must therefore be referred to this time. The walls of the basement were made of bricks measuring: 29.5–30–31 × 13–13.5 × 7–7.5–8.5, 10c = 98.5 cm. At a distance of 90 cm from the ground (the bottom of the basement), the walls contain a small fault, and above it a row of hacked off stones about 10 cm high laid on a sand bed. These formerly formed the paving of the original room. The masonry present in the south-western part of the basement, consisting of two different blocks, appeared to be secondary (Fig. 6a). The larger one reaching the walls was not connected to them, nor was the smaller one protruding from its corner and occupying the central part of the basement. This smaller block has bricks measuring 29.0–30 × 13.5 × 7–7.5 cm, 10c = 93 cm. It was formerly

⁶ Several elements of it have survived to date. These include the small remains of a lunette in the barrel vault associated with a window, small fragments of the side walls in the thickness of the wall, a brick diagonally set overhang and a few bricks of the arch in the face of the chapel's north wall.



Fig. 5. A section of a partially buried descent from the level of the former matroneum to the ground floor of the chapel at St. Joseph's Church in Gdańsk (photo by A. Piwek)

Il. 5. Fragment częściowo zasypanego zejścia z poziomu dawnej empory do parteru kaplicy w kościele św. Józefa w Gdańsku (fot. A. Piwek)

a free-standing pillar⁷. The stated dimensions of the bricks from which it was built would indicate a medieval period. However, the recorded time of its construction (1900–1901) rectifies this observation [3, p. 11].

At the beginning of the 20th century, restoration work was undertaken on the chapel using new material of historic dimensions, so using only the size of the bricks in dating is not authoritative. The measurements of the ground floor of the chapel show that the pillar was located at the base of the first pillar to the east. The plastered room⁸ on the south wall contains a slanting wall and the entrance to a vaulted, also plastered, corridor. Its exit is in the floor of the chancel. From the entrance, which was pierced (east side), and its location next to the vault, it is clear that the corridor was created later than the basement. It probably dates back to the 18th century. The segmental arches

⁷ This condition was still recorded in the 1947 inventory [5].

⁸ The authors of the 1947 inventory do not know it although they give not only the size of the passage but also the dimensions of the room [5]. It was 160 × 475 cm.



Fig. 6. Underground parts connected with the chapel at St. Joseph's Church in Gdańsk:
 a) a view of the interior of the crypt under the eastern part of the chapel towards the south,
 b) a fragment of the present corridor connecting the former crypt with the chancel (photo by A. Piwek)

Il. 6. Części podziemne związane z kaplicą przy kościele św. Józefa w Gdańsku:
 a) widok wnętrza krypty pod partią wschodnią kaplicy w kierunku południowym,
 b) fragment obecnego korytarza łączącego dawną kryptę z prezbiterium (fot. A. Piwek)

of the brick covering were half covered by a bricked-up wall narrowing the passageway to 48–60 cm (Fig. 6b). It was probably made in the 20th century.

Located at the north wall of the basement, the communication passage, 140 cm wide, contains steps (24 × 22 cm) leading to the ground floor of the chapel. It is covered with fault arches. It was built of 29–30 × 14 × 7–7.5 cm bricks, 10c = 90 cm. It belongs to the original architecture of the chapel.

History of construction and transformation

The small chapel adjacent to the church has a rich history. This resulted not only from the demand of the Carmelites, but also from the later administrators of the monastic complex (parish priests, oblate fathers). Historical events, including those of a socio-religious nature, that took place in Gdańsk also had a certain influence. From the analysis of the found re-buildings, it is possible to distinguish six phases related to the construction and changes considered necessary at a given time. Their impact on the architecture and decoration of the chapel varied from significant architectural transformations to minor ones in artistic decoration.

Phase 1 (late 15th century)

After the Carmelites moved from the Young City, demolished in 1464, to the present site, between 1482 and 1496, the monks erected the large chapel of St. Elijah and St. Elisha (later the chancel of the larger establishment). Probably during or a little later, they also proceeded to build a small, rectangular-plan building with a sacred

purpose⁹. It was adjacent to the north wall of the existing building. Consecration crosses were painted on its plastered walls. The simultaneous construction of two religious buildings next to each other seems unnecessary given the small size of the monastery at the time. It is understandable, however, if one accepts the continuation of the cult of St. Eric¹⁰ by the Carmelites at this time and the construction of a new chapel for him. The monks thus maintained the earlier commitments they had made when the monastery was still being built in the Young City. The building roughly followed the outline of the present Chapel of Perpetual Adoration. Three passages led to its interior (Fig. 7a). One of them, in the western part of the south wall, provided a connection with the large chapel. The second was nearby, but in the west wall. It led to a smaller adjoining room (sacristy?). The third passage was in the northern part of the west wall. It was not connected to the monastery buildings. It allowed access to the utility courtyard. As it seems, the earlier buildings of the refectory [11] or presumably the kitchen may have already stood there¹¹.

The longitudinal walls of the small chapel contained recesses with segmental arches, which could have been

⁹ The most recent publication still supports the thesis that the chapel (identified at least in part with the adjacent sacristy) is older than the chancel [6, p. 196].

¹⁰ The time of interest in the cult of the Swedish saint, dating back to the Thirteen Years' War (1454–1466) at the latest, has been covered in [9, p. 151]. If future architectural findings are confirmed, it would have to be extended to the end of the 15th century or even the beginning of the 16th century. On the Carmelites' links with St. Eric see [10].

¹¹ This is uncertain because archaeological investigations have uncovered some foundations generally dating back to the 15th century [6, p. 197].

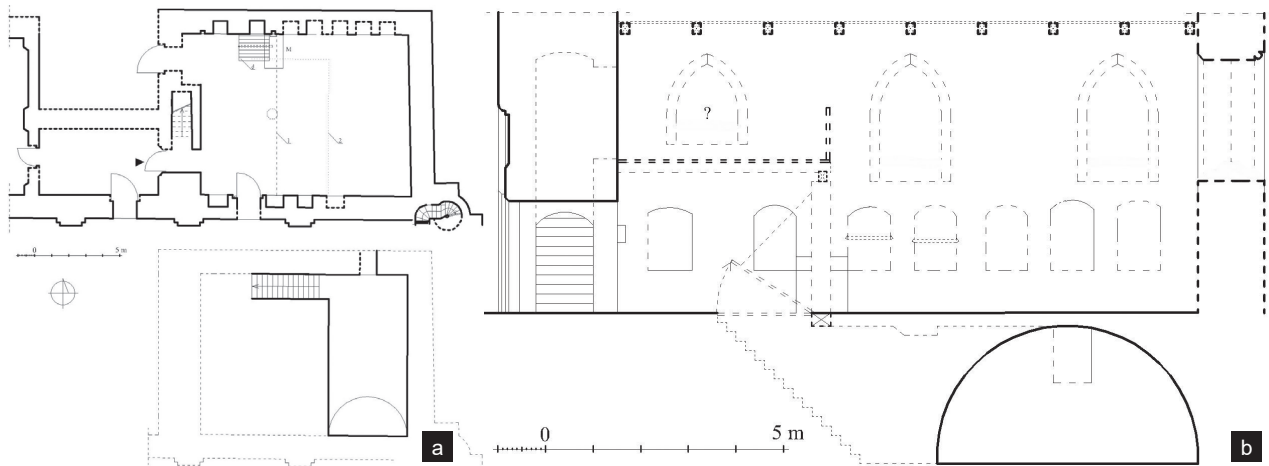


Fig. 7. Reconstruction of the chapel at St. Joseph's Church in Gdańsk and the crypt located under its eastern part from phase 1 (late 15th century):
a) plan, b) longitudinal section with view on the north wall,

1 – presumed range of the Gothic matroneum, 2 – the range of the crypt and the descent to its interior,
M – hypothetical location of the mechanism enabling the opening of the trapdoor covering the descent to the crypt, d – trapdoor
(elaborated by A. Piwek)

II. 7. Rekonstrukcja kaplicy przy kościele św. Józefa w Gdańsku i znajdującej się pod jej częścią wschodnią krypty z etapu I (koniec XV w.):
a) rzuty, b) przekrój podłużny z widokiem na ścianę północną,

1 – przypuszczalny zasięg gotyckiej empory, 2 – zakres krypty i zejścia do jej wnętrza,
M – hipotetyczna lokalizacja mechanizmu umożliwiającego otwarcie kłapy przysłaniającej zejście do krypty, d – kłapa
(oprac. A. Piwek)

used as a library and storage for precious devotional objects. The north wall contained seven recesses along its entire length (Fig. 7b). The opposite wall of the small chapel probably had four recesses (the first one on the east side is presumed), but, as analysis [4, p. 5] has shown they could only have started at a length of about 3.5 m from the then east wall. The west wall was devoid of similar recesses. Instead, it contained one-flight stairs enclosed by a vaulted brick flight of segmental arches with chamfering. They led to the matroneum in the sacred interior¹². The matroneum was supported by a single pillar, the axes of which were about 4.5 m from the longitudinal walls and about 4.2 m from the west wall. Below the matroneum, in the northern part of this wall, there was a 3 m long recess surmounted by a segmental arch. The aforementioned passage to the utility courtyard was probably inside it.

The interior of the small chapel was covered by a ceiling. Lighting was probably provided by five sharp-arched windows¹³. Three of them were in the north wall, the other two in the east wall. The windows were set about 50 cm higher than the present ones. They did not have glyphs on the periphery and a slanting sill on the outside. The decoration on the side of the utility courtyard was formed by a shaft set in a fault. At least these two elements (and perhaps also the cross wall) were covered with thin plaster. On the interior of the chapel, the windows were prob-

ably decorated with a small bevel. Against the east wall, between the windows, was an altar, possibly dedicated to the Swedish saint.

The small chapel in the eastern part had a crypt. The exit to it was located in the north-western part, just inside the north wall. It was covered by a trapdoor in the floor. As is to be presumed, for safety reasons in order to illuminate this part of the interior of the chapel, darkened because of the matroneum, two rectangular oil lamp recesses(?) were formed in the north wall. Not far from them was a trapdoor opening mechanism. It probably consisted of a table fixed in the quarter circular undercut of the wall between the second and third recesses (west side) and gears. The descent led to a narrow arched corridor with steps. It connected to a rectangular room set transversely to the longitudinal walls of the chapel. It contained a single window in the north gable wall. It was shaped just below the vault. The interior was covered by a barrel vault with a large lunette connected to the entrance to the passageway and a smaller one to the north window. The floor was made up of irregular stone slabs. Initially, in the absence of a separate place for the confraternity of St. Eric, the crypt may have been used as a meeting place for its members, and after the disappearance of the cult of this saint, as a burial crypt. The small chapel at ground level, on the west side, in addition to being connected to the sacristy (?) of the large chapel, may have had a connection with another room, forming part of the monastery.

Phase 2 (17th century)

The first changes to the architecture of the small chapel (phase 1) resulted from the social and religious turmoil and restrictions that intensified in Gdańsk after 1522.

¹² As it has not yet been possible to examine the wall with the staircase on the west side, it cannot be ruled out that the chapel may not originally have had a matroneum.

¹³ An analysis of the later recesses of the east wall and the window decoration of a building older than the chapel – the monastery refectory – is helpful in establishing the window decoration on the interior side, the original interior mouldings and sills [7].

As a result of these, the Carmelite monastery was repeatedly destroyed. The chapel was burnt down and its walls partially damaged. The repair work carried out at the beginning of the 17th century consisted of building a new eastern wall, moved towards the east by the thickness of the destroyed one. In order to prevent future damage from Protestants attacking the monastery from the street, sharp-arched recesses were probably built in the axes of the old windows in the east wall, and they were repeated on the interior side of the chapel. The form of the recesses was intended to imitate the earlier openings.

After the extension of the large chapel in 1623 with a double-span west hall, it was decided (around 1636) to add a new pulpit. It was set on the north wall of the chapel area, in the second span (east side), against the double-span east lesene. As it was to be accessed from the small chapel, the necessary work was carried out there. This consisted of punching a rectangular opening in the separating wall (the entrance to the pulpit). The associated steps were placed on the east side. For this reason, the fourth recess on the west side (if it was previously built) and probably the third recess were bricked up. The matroneum had to be removed at this time. The entrance on the upper part of the west wall was bricked up. The large recess in the matroneum was also removed, thus eliminating the entrance to the courtyard. It became redundant, probably due to the enlargement of the adjacent sacristy. The small annex below the steps was probably incorporated into the sacristy. It was illuminated by a window in the north wall. The two narrow oil lamp recesses(?) were also removed. They were replaced by a larger one, which was created by reducing an earlier recess with a segmental arch. The location of the resulting recess was advantageous because, being halfway along its length, it provided good lighting for the entire interior.

In the 2nd half of the 17th century, a tumult took place (1678) during intensified clashes between Protestants and Catholics. It caused considerable damage to the church's decoration. For example, the pulpit in the church was destroyed. The repair work undertaken by the Carmelites between 1679 and 1681 also affected the architecture of the chapel (phase 2). It was decided to place the new pulpit, dating from 1680, in a different position than before – at the rainbow arch. This location was chosen to improve the reception of sermons in the church, which extended by almost half of its previous length. The entrance to the old pulpit was bricked up as unnecessary. At the same time, the wooden steps tied to it were removed. This made it possible to rebuild a hypothetical medieval recess into a new passage to the chancel. This action made it necessary to replace the old entrance in the south wall with a cupboard. Most of the medieval recesses were also bricked up. The chapel was converted into a sacristy. It is not known whether it also partly retained its sacred function.

Phase 3 (18th century)

Reconstruction of the sacristy probably occurred in the 18th century, although it is currently impossible to exclude an earlier occurrence. The architectural work included

the construction of an underground corridor between the crypt and the eastern part of the chancel. It was covered by a segmental vault. The descent into the chancel was done by raising a horizontal partition (trapdoor, panel?). It was located in the north-eastern part of the chancel. A carved opening in its south wall led to the crypt. As it was located right next to the vault, there must undoubtedly have been steps placed next to it. The difference in height between the floors of the corridor and the crypt (approx. 114 cm) suggests that there may have been six of them. The creation of the underground communication was intended to make the crypt active for those who could not financially afford to build their own tomb, but still wanted to be buried at the Carmelites. Between the 17th and late 18th centuries, there were five small crypts in the central part of the chancel. They were between 2.6 m and 4.3 m long and between 1.3 m and 3.4 m wide [6, p. 201]. In the 2nd half of the 18th century, the number of burials increased so much that the construction solution used seemed optimal. One can also surmise from this, the much less frequent use of the crypt entrance on the chapel side. This seems to have been motivated by the reactivation of the sacred function in the sacristy. An altar to Our Lady of the Scapular was placed inside¹⁴. It was an object of worship not only for the faithful, but also for the worshippers of the Holy Scapular organised in a confraternity [12] taking care of the chapel.

Phase 4 (after 1840)

After ten years of abandonment of the monastic foundation by the last Carmelite in 1830, a parish was created. The church was given the name of St. Joseph. The change of management and administration of the former site led to minor alterations to the existing chapel. The introduction of the sacristy function necessitated the creation of space mainly for liturgical vestments. The south cupboard was probably of little use due to its size and the votive offerings it contained. It was therefore decided to create another one. To this end, the oil lamp recess(?) in the north wall was bricked up, and a nearby medieval recess was carved out to create a cupboard recess with a segmental arch. It was located opposite the entrance in the south wall to the chancel, creating an axial composition simulating a homogeneous artistic solution.

Phase 5 (1900–1920)

The radical reconstruction of the sacristy took place between 1900 and 1901, and it was probably already envisaged that it would return to its sacred function. It was decided to give the interior a grandiose Gothic décor. Two octagonal stone pillars were therefore inserted into it. The west pillar was placed in place of the historic one, while the east pillar was placed on the barrel of the basement. The latter, in order to prevent a building disaster, was supported by a brick pillar set in the crypt, on a floor that had been

¹⁴ The cult of Our Lady of the Scapular in the Carmelite Order actually began from 1564 [9, p. 134].

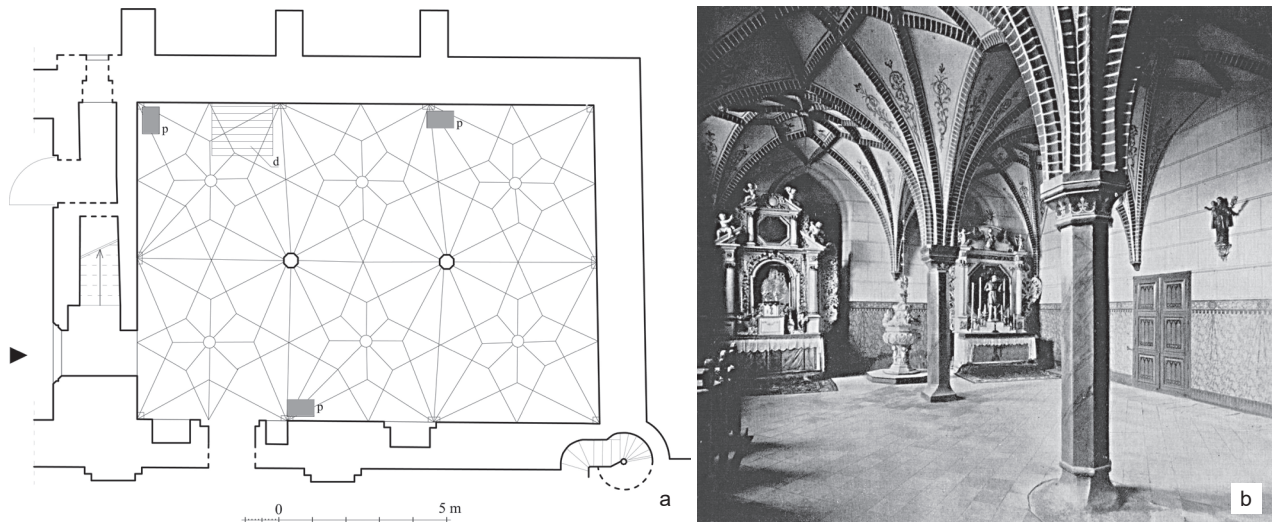


Fig. 8. The chapel at St. Joseph's Church in Gdańsk in the early 20th century:
 a) reconstruction of the plan from 1904 (p – location of furnaces) (elaborated by A. Piwek),
 b) view of the interior towards the south-east, circa 1920 (source: [14, p. 127])

II. 8. Kaplica przy kościele św. Józefa w Gdańsku w początku XX w.:

- a) rekonstrukcja planu z 1904 r. (p – lokalizacja pieców) (oprac. A. Piwek),
 b) widok wnętrza w kierunku południowo-wschodnim, stan z ok. 1920 r. (źródło: [14, s. 127])

deepened by 1 metre. The lowered level of the floor there made it necessary to add new steps to the old ones (leading to the ground floor level), maintaining the previous direction. On the pillars of the chapel, six vaulted areas were created, each with an extended star-shaped plan. It was probably at this time that cracks appeared in the west wall, below the north-west vault. Some of these were re-built to stabilise them. The cupboard recess in the north wall was removed. The south aisle was converted into a two-door cupboard, after a slight demoulding of the side walls and partial bricking up. The old entrance at the west wall was activated. Probably at that time, the windows were widened and glyphs were created by hacking off sections of the wall. The north wall of the chapel was reinforced (if not in 1916) with three buttresses. In 1904, furnace heating was established in the interior [13] (Fig. 8a).

From the locations in the longitudinal walls of the flues, it is known that two of them were positioned against the north wall and one against the south wall. At the former, the furnace stood at the west end. As the section between the west wall and the nearby recess in the north wall was shorter than the width of the furnace, the recess had to be bricked up in order to form the flue without difficulty. The second furnace was positioned to the north of the east window (the first on this side), parallel to the wall. As in the case described, use was made of the existing recess, running part of the channel associated with the furnace in its cavity. At the south wall, the furnace was positioned to the east of the second recess (west side). Here, too, a flue ran through the recess and occupied the eastern part. With this layout, an attempt was made to disrupt the existing interior as little as possible. The alternate positioning of the furnaces made it possible to heat the chapel relatively uniformly. The necessary fuel for them was stored in the basement, presumably in a separate small rectangular inte-

rior against the south wall. In order to make access easier and not to interfere with the sacred activities, the north window of the basement was turned into an entrance. It was located at a considerable height above the basement floor. Several steps had to be added to it. It also became necessary to add an external staircase, as the ground level was above the newly formed entrance.

During the renovations of the church in 1920, the interior of the chapel was artistically enriched (Fig. 8b). The walls were painted in two stripes imitating – in the lower one – a curtain wall, while in the upper one – stone walls. The vaults were also decorated with floral motifs (the vaulting drains, keystones and their nearest parts). The ribs were covered with a thin brick-coloured plaster with the introduction of painted white divisions to imitate the rhythm of the laid bricks. Significant furnishings included, against the east wall, two altars associated with the cults of Our Lady of the Scapular and St. Joseph dating from 1730 [14, p. 131]. Between them was a carved baptismal font from 1750 [14, p. 136]. A row of pews for the believers stood against the north wall.

Phase 6 (1945–2019)

Phase 1 refers to the condition of the church immediately after the World War II. The destruction of the vaults in the chancel was probably the cause of the damage to the corridor leading to the basement. Additional walls were added to secure it. Narrowed in this way to 48–50 cm, it took on the characteristics of a utility passage. After 1947, two smaller interiors were separated by a diagonal wall in a room against the south wall of the basement. The western one, intended for storage, had a connection to the basement. A narrow corridor provided access to the eastern one, which was probably also used for storage. In order

to strengthen the previously free-standing pillar in the basement, the space between it and the utility room and the west wall of the basement was filled with bricks.

The post-war period was not conducive to expensive work. The wall painting was abandoned and the walls and vaults were whitewashed. With the exception of the first recess in the south wall to the west, all were bricked up. This was also removed shortly afterwards. A cupboard in the south wall, considered redundant, was treated in the same way. The furnaces were dismantled, leaving only the one in the north-west corner as the least intrusive to the perception of the interior. The chapel was used temporarily as a sacristy.

Phase 2, covering the years 1964–2013, followed the establishment of the cult of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel (1964). The work undertaken during this time was to improve the use of the chapel. The previously planned (1947) creation of a narrow vaulted corridor [5] from the steps in the western wall was not completed until 1972. At that time, a window was carved into its north wall, creating a passage to the courtyard. It was probably at this time that the bricked up entrance to the former matroneum was replaced. In the 1980s, furnace heating ceased to be used. Instead, a floor heating system was installed. Rectangular recesses were cut in the north wall, about 20 cm above the floor, into which radiators were inserted.

Phase 3 is the result of the 2014–2015 research. The medieval period was taken as the basic time for the new architectural decoration of the walls. In some justified cases, this principle was deviated from. The radiator recesses were removed. Bricked-up recesses with segmental archways were exposed, and those that were damaged by modern alterations were repaired, restoring them to their original form. The northern modern cupboard recess was uncovered, and the original one from the medieval period was reconstructed in its place. The rectangular two oil lamp recesses(?) were marked in the plaster by outlining. In the south wall, the cupboard recess was again

exposed. The connection to the chancel was made by activating a medieval passage. Traces of the entrance to the pulpit were plastered over. However, the medieval entrance to the matroneum level found on the west wall was exposed and left as a recess. The former large arch below it, as a relic of Gothic decoration, was exposed by partially exposing the face of the bricks forming it.

The historic lime plasterwork on the walls was preserved and the painting relics found on the walls were conserved. The medieval consecration crosses were partially reconstructed. The same applies to some of the vault decorations.

Summary

A reconstruction of the history of the chapel has not yet been possible due to the introduction of a permanent cult (1964). It was only as a result of the subsequent architectural research undertaken (2014–2015) that the hitherto unknown history of the chapel was identified. In addition to medieval details, modern and contemporary details were found. The discovered traces made it possible to establish six phases of construction, which have been described and justified. The first, which forms the basis of all the later ones, concerns the building erected during or immediately after the construction of the future chancel. The interior of the chapel with its west matroneum was covered by a ceiling, which was only replaced by vaults at the time of re-gothicisation (early 20th century). The chapel was probably originally associated with the confraternity of St. Eric. It was soon replaced by the Confraternity of the Holy Scapular. From the 17th century onwards, the chapel periodically served as a sacristy. The rich history of transformations was derived from the current opportunities and needs of the Carmelites and later their legal successors.

Translated by
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Abstract

Chapel at St. Joseph's Church in Gdańsk

The subject of this article is the chapel located in the former Gdańsk Carmelite monastery complex. The results of the architectural research carried out in it in 2014–2015 are presented. As a result, the time and purpose of the building's construction were established. The original appearance and traces of later alterations were also recognised. The recesses found on the longitudinal walls, of similar dimensions, not reaching the floor, were considered to be the original decoration of the chapel. Other details, such as the original passage into the church and the west matroneum, also belonged to it. The wide cupboard recesses reaching to the floor were evidence of later changes, also linked to the function of the sacristy. Other changes include a major redesign of the interior at the beginning of the 20th century. This involved the construction of two stone pillars and the installation of vaults on top of them. Recent construction and restoration work has left exposed medieval details, some reconstructed in fragments or even as a whole. Traces of alterations considered secondary have been eliminated. The principle adopted allowed the medieval decoration of the chapel to be shown to a considerable extent for the first time in centuries. The building is one of the most interesting to be found in the city today.

Key words: Gdańsk, Carmelite monastery, chapel, crypt

Streszczenie

Kaplica przy kościele św. Józefa w Gdańsku

Tematem artykułu jest kaplica znajdująca się w dawnym gdańskim zespole klasztornym karmelitów. W pracy przedstawiono wyniki badań architektonicznych przeprowadzonych w niej w latach 2014–2015. W ich rezultacie ustalono czas i cel powstania obiektu. Rozpoznano także pierwotny wygląd i ślady późniejszych przebudów. Znaleziono wnęki na ścianach wzdłużnych, o podobnych wymiarach, nie dochodzące do posadzki uznane zostały za oryginalny wystrój kaplicy. Do niego należały także inne detale, takie jak pierwotne przejście do kościoła, empora zachodnia. Świadectwem późniejszych zmian, powiązanych także z funkcją zakrystii, były szerokie dochodzące do posadzki wnęki szafowe. Do innych należała przeprowadzona w początkach XX w. zasadnicza zmiana wystroju wnętrza. Polegała na ustawieniu dwóch kamiennych filarów i założeniu na nich sklepień. Niedawno podjęte prace budowlano-konserwatorskie pozostawiły odsłonięte średniowieczne detale, niektóre po zrekonstruowaniu fragmentów, a nawet całości. Ślady uznane za wtórne zostały zlikwidowane. Przyjęta zasada pozwoliła po raz pierwszy od stuleci pokazać w znacznym stopniu średniowieczny wystrój kaplicy. Obiekt ten jest jednym z ciekawszych, jakie obecnie znajdują się mieście.

Słowa kluczowe: Gdańsk, klasztor karmelitów, kaplica, krypta

