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Inspirations with regional architecture form in the Sudetes landscape

Introduction

The Sudetes Region is one of many European borderline mountain areas with specific and different culture which has been developed through centuries. This specific culture resulted from the fact that this region belonged to different countries during the previous centuries (Poland, Czechs, Austria and Germany) and the important European trade routes, which connected Lower Silesia with the countries of Western and Eastern Europe, crossed this region. The variety of culture was reflected, among other things, in the whole sphere of folk art, including native and wooden architecture.

Native regional culture also appeared in Lower Silesian traditions and legends, which in turn, influenced painting, sculpture and architecture of this region enriching them with new concepts often filled with the spirit of mysticism and symbolism.

Beautiful landscape of the Sudetes with the highest range of the Karkonosze Mountains inspired with its beauty and danger the people living there for ages and the tourists of the 19th century who visited this place more often.

The magic of the Karkonosze Mountains also significantly influenced the life and creative activity of the artists who more willingly settled there and at the end of the 19th century they founded a colony assembled around the writers Carl and Gerhart Hauptmann.

The main personality, who lived in Szklarska Poręba among the members of the artistic colony, was the writer and

Nobel Prize winner Gerhart Hauptmann and similarly, the structures built in 1903 were the main buildings in the Seven Houses Valley; the house of the painter Hermann von Hendrich (Hendrich-Haus) and first of all “Hala Baśni” – “Fairytale Valley” (“Sagenhalle”) situated nearby became the objects associated with the Karkonosze Mountains symbolism.

Their interior decoration was filled with the atmosphere of Karkonosze-like traditions and legends, which was additionally enriched with paintings and sculptures created by the artists who lived in colonies [6, 16].

Woodcarving, which was quite common in the Sudetes and gave a specific character to the new buildings, developed already in the second half of the 18th century. Woodcarving reached its culmination before the outbreak of World War I and mainly thanks to Woodcarving School in Cieplice Zdrój which was founded in 1902. Native folklore was cultivated in different forms, for example, wooden signposts were used in the mountain tourism, which became a characteristic part of the Sudetes landscape [16].

The interiors of shelters, inns and taverns were decorated with the local artists’ woodcarving, who graduated from Cieplice Zdrój School. Unfortunately, after 1945 many of those interiors were devastated or totally destroyed and Cieplice Zdrój School was closed. The new School of Artistic Craftsmanship does not continue artistic creativity of its predecessor.

“Hala Baśni” and the Sudetes villas

“Hala Baśni” was built in 1903 and the author of its design was the Berliner architect Paul Engler. Its construction aroused heated discussions but finally, “Liczy-

rzepa Castle” was built and it became a place of particular worship of Liczyrzepa – Woltan. “Hala Baśni” often called “Nordic framework temple” was a building simple in form with a framework construction and covered with a steep gable roof. The main entrance, which was situated on the side of the gable wall, was flanked with two

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Fig. 1. “Hala Baśni” in the period before World War I.
Source: <http://fotopolska.eu>



Fig. 2. House of Gerhard and Carl Hauptmann in Szklarska Poręba Średnia.
Photo by author, 2001

high columns on the model of old German clasped spears “Eidring” and decorated with god Thor hammer hanging on chains. Above the entrance, there were dragons and horses” heads stylized in wood [16].

On the outside of “Karkonosze Legends Temple” there were old German external sculptural decorations (“Sagenhalle des Riesengebirges”), whereas the interior was decorated with the symbols based on the legends and fairy-tales connected with the Karkonosze mountain spirit called Liczyrzepa. The themes of the interior paintings by Hermann Hendrich who initiated the building of the “Hala Baśni” were magnificent Karkonosze landscapes and the figure of the spirit of these mountains. The paintings presented in the fairy-tale convention, with specific colours, in specially designed frames, were full of mystery and poetry, thus creating a unique climate which permeated

the interior [6]. Shaped in this way, the Fairy-Tales Valley was complemented by the Karkonosze landscape which spread from its entrance – powerfully influencing the imagination by being the source of all inspirations and created by nature itself.

Peculiar magic of these mountains became a ‘strong magnet’ attracting many artists who often came from different parts of Germany and settled at that place under the influence of the mountains” charm and beauty, which was expressed in their creative activity [16].

The influence of the native type of wooden buildings, which had been shaped in the Sudetes for centuries, on the creative activity of architects who worked in the circle of the artistic colony was emphasized by means of particular villas and pensions. A characteristic escape – made by many members of the artistic colony – from big and

overpopulated cities to this mountainous region and the return to nature, communion with nature, had an influence on the character of new buildings as well as on the choice of old village huts as the place for living. The membership of Wilhelm Bölsch and Brunon Will (the artists who belonged to the artistic colony in Szklarska Poręba) in German Association of Cities-Gardens (*Deutsche Gartenstadtgesellschaft* – the aim of this association was the popularization of living in detached houses surrounded by gardens and using the models of the local and regional architecture – contributed to strengthening the movement of *Heimatschutz Bewegung* (Protection of Regional Culture Movement), which existed since 1880 in the Sudetes where many important persons from cultural and artistic circles decided to live in old regional buildings.

Most of them were adapted by new owners according to their needs through changes of the construction and the roof shape, creation of new rooms and other more or less significant alterations [16].

We should also mention, among other things, the houses which belonged to Gerhart and Carl Hauptmann who were first to become the owners of a wooden house in Szklarska Poręba Średnia in 1880, a village house of John Henry Mackay (*Siebenhausern*), houses belonging to Wilhelm Bölsche and Brunon Wille situated near “Hala Baśni” in Szklarska Poręba Średnia, a house of Hans Fechner also in Szklarska Poręba Średnia or a village house of Alfred Wilm in Zachełmie.

In the group of buildings, which were designed from scratch, the most distinctive are the following ones: the house of the painter Georg Wichmann from the years 1908–1909 in Michałowice, the house with a framework construction of the mayor of Berlin Reicke in Szklarska Poręba Średnia from 1907, the house of the painter Hermann Hendrich from 1905 designed by Paul Engler situated near “Hala Baśni” in Szklarska Poręba Średnia and finally, the house of the historian of art Alfred Koepen built opposite to the Hendrich villa in 1905 and designed



Fig. 3. Hermann Hendrich House (Hendrich-Haus) in Szklarska Poręba Średnia. Photo by author, 2001

by a well-known Berliner architect Bruno Möhring. The “Lukas Mill” (“Lukasmühle”), which was designed by Franz Egbert Scumann and opened to public in the years 1922–1923 in the centre of Szklarska Poręba, certainly deserves our attention as well. The building was the seat



Fig. 4. Georg Wichmann House in Michałowice. Photo by author, 2001.

of St. Lukas Artistic Society (Künstlergemeinschaft St. Lukas) with a hotel and restaurant [10, 12, 16].

The architecture of this building was explicitly inspired by the Sudetes regional elements of architecture and it mainly referred in its essence to the principles of St. Lukas Artistic Society, i. e. protecting and propagating the native architecture.

Tourist buildings

The influence of regional elements was particularly emphasized in the architecture of objects which were connected with tourism.

The objects which are directly connected with recreation and active leisure time certainly come to the fore here. These are first of all shelters, mountain hotels, inns (taverns), pensions of different sizes and agro-tourism buildings which were arranged for this purpose in the adapted Sudetes houses.

Most often, their forms were inspired by regional architectural elements both in construction and building details.

The biggest concentration of the buildings of this type is in the highest part of the Sudetes, i.e. the Karkonosze, where tourism developed at the earliest in comparison to other parts of these mountains [12, 13, 14].

In these mountains, the most known shelters in the Sudetes were built from shepherd or chimneyless huts. In their form they often referred to the native heritage of the region (“Pod Łabskim Szczytem” – “Alte Schlesische Baude”, “Strzecha Akademicka” – “Hampelbaude”, “Bronek Czech” – “Schlingelbaude”, “Samotnia” – “Kleine Teichbaude” or relatively the newest “Na Hali Szrenickiej” – “Neue Schlesische Baude”).

Important elements, which also influenced the shape of the wholeness in the case of shelters or inns, were practical aspects, i.e. higher resistance of the building construction to the impingement of weather changes which are particularly destructive in higher parts of the mountains.

In high mountains shelters, the elements which are so frequently used in the construction of buildings situated in lower parts and serve the purpose of tourism, such as balconies, loggias, terraces, dormers and others, are reduced to the minimum. Peculiar asceticism and monumentalism, which serve the purpose of practical goals, are dominant in the shape of the buildings. The only characteristic elements in the shape of shelters and inns are verandas where there are dining rooms and which constitute an excellent place for admiring this magnificent mountainous landscape.

The examples of shelters which have compact and crude forms are: “Na Szrenicy” (“Reifträgerbaude”) at the top of Szrenica Mountain at the height of 1365 m above sea level built in the years 1921–1922; “Strzecha Akademicka” (“Hampelbaude”) built on the slope of Złotówka meadow at the height of 1258 m above sea level – the present building was designed after the fire in 1906; and finally, the old shelter “Nad Śnieżnymi Kotłami”

It should be mentioned here that the above mentioned villas – as a result of the native building tradition – were not only more or less successful copies of the Sudetes regional architecture but they also constitute its creative development. Each of these designs had some individual formal solutions which enriched the architecture and made it more charming and sophisticated.

(“Schnee grubenbaude”) at the height of 1490 m above sea level from the years 1895–1897. Also the third shelter “Na Śnieżce” (“Schneekoppe Baude”) built on top of Śnieżka Mountain at the height of 1603 m above sea level in 1862 survived for 104 years and it had a compact construction with visible features of the regional architecture. And the shelters with a stepped and pyramid-shaped form of the roof, for example “Dom Śląski” (“Schlesierhaus im Riesengebirge”) from the years 1921–1922 at the height of 1394 m above sea level as well as “Odrodzenie” (“Jugendkammhaus *Rübezahl*”) on Karkonoska Pass – 1236 m above sea level from 1928 are characterized by a simple form [14].

The interiors of the Sudetes shelters and inns were in many cases arranged in a very interesting way. The interior decorations were based on regional elements which were enriched with motives from fairy-tales and legends connected with mountains and their unique atmosphere as well as a majestic landscape.

After 1945 many of these interiors were deprived of their most precious elements and equipment and some of them somehow disappeared along with the buildings like, for instance, Altschlesische Bauernstube in Kowalowa – Fuchswinkel colony (Lisi Zakątek) near Mieroszów in the Suche Mountains in Wałbrzych district. There were many interesting exhibits in form of furniture, dinner sets, ceramics and fabrics with a regional origin, which were collected in this building by director Bertram from Sokołowsko. The interiors of such shelters, among other things, as “Strzecha Akademicka” in the Karkonosze Mountains, “Dom Śląski” at the foot of Śnieżka Mountain or the present pension “Irena” (the old “Kaffebaude”) in Karpacz are also worth paying attention to. The shelters situated in Kłodzko district such as already non-existing “Hindenburgbaude” in Zieleniec or “Puhu Baude” on Puchaczówka Pass in the massive of Śnieżnik, which have stylistically designed interiors with the Sudetes regional character.

Now we would like to present some interiors in the tourist industry structures which survived the war destruction and due to their redecorations we can now see their old beauty and style.

The interior decorations of “Andrzejówka” shelter (“Andreasbaude”) in the Suche Mountains in Wałbrzych district in Rybnica Leśna town (Ober-Reimswaldau) come to the fore here for sure [14].

This shelter was built in the years 1932–1933 as a result of an architectural competition in 1928 announced



Fig. 5. Shelter "Andrzejówka" with a sculptured signpost, photograph from the 1930s. From the collections in the Wałbrzych Museum



Fig. 6. Interior of "Andrzejówka" shelter. Inter-war period. From the collections in the Wałbrzych Museum

by GVW (Waldenburger Gebirgsverein) – Wałbrzych Mountains Society which was the part of Wałbrzych Mountains Federation. The initiator of this development was the chairman of GVW Andreas Bock and the shelter was given his name. Thanks to Bock's determination, the process of building the shelter was accomplished despite a very unfavourable financial situation resulting from the world economic crisis. The winner of this competition was the Wałbrzych architect Friedrich W. Kronke, the member of BDA who also managed the whole building place. The building was supposed to be a structure with the architecture referring in its form and construction to the regional traditions and fulfil contemporary functional requirements.

The cornerstone for the building of "Andrzejówka" was put on 20th June 1933 and the official opening of the building located at the height of 805 m above sea level took place already on 22nd October in the same year.

The shelter is a one-storey building with a basement and utility attic. The whole structure is covered with a hip and stepped roof. Grey stone walls of the basement, brown beams of the ground and first floor walls along with white joint of carcasses of the building and finally a silver shade of the roof eternity cover created a particular artistic effect of the shelter.

The carpenter's works during the framework construction of the shelter walls were performed by the master Petrick, while bricklayer's work were performed by the Wałbrzych company called Becker and Bergmann.

We should focus our particular attention on all decorations and woodcarving made by the artist and sculptor Hans Brochenberger from Janowice Wielkie. By sculpturing forest animals, local highlanders, dancing couples or skiers Brochenberger presented the regional topics which were strongly connected with the Wałbrzyskie Mountains. The climate of the building's interior with the open-access



Fig. 7. "Andrzejówka" shelter,
view from south.
Photo by author, 2004



Fig. 8. "Andrzejówka" shelter, southern side Shelter interior fragment.
Banquet room. Photo by author, 2004



Fig. 9. "Andrzejówka" shelter. Stylized sculpture of a goat supporting.
Photo by author, 2006

part for guests as well as lodging part was dominated by woodcarving of the native character which was strongly inspired by the Sudetes and filled with local legends and fairy-tales, which was the wish of the investor – Wałbrzych Mountains Society.

The first leaseholder of the shelter was a famous tourist activist Otto Rübartsch who along with his wife Margareta ran the shelter for several years and popularized the ideas of active recreation among tourists from Wałbrzych who visited this place in large numbers. He fitted the shel-



Fig. 10. “Andrzejówka” shelter.
Cap of the column with
the motif of a dancing couple.
Photo by author, 2008



Fig. 11. “Andrzejówka” shelter, staircase to the first floor. Skier.
Photo by author, 2009

ter interior with furniture at his own expense and several years later he connected the building to the water main. In 1944 Hitlerjugend took over the shelter and one year later Wehrmacht came there. After the war ended the German leaseholder came back to “Andrzejówka” but in 1946 he left it for good. After the war in 1947 the Wałbrzych PTT took over the shelter and together with the Lower Silesian Coal Industry Association it belonged to the PTTK till 1992 when the company ZG PTT “The Sudetes PTTK hotels and shelters” in Jelenia Góra was established.

Most of the shelter woodcarving made by the artist was preserved until today and now we can admire the artistry and symbolism of human and animal figures as well as mountain spirit allegories enchanted in wood [14].



Fig. 12. Rybnica Mała.
Gospoda Sudecka Doliny Rybnej.
Entrance façade.
Photo by author, 2009

“Gospoda Sudecka Doliny Rybnej” (*The Sudetes Inn of Fish Valley*) is another well preserved structure situated not far from the “Andrzejówka” shelter, namely in Rybnica Mała. This building was erected in 1713 as a mill and later it was converted into an inn. It performed this role until World War II, however, after the war ended it became a residential house.

After the general overhaul at the beginning of 2002, which restored the beauty and style of the inn building, this structure again became a place that was willingly visited by tourists.

The interior part, in particular the banquet room on the ground floor, which is kept in the austere interiors style of the old Sudetes inns, is really worth noticing. Simple wooden furniture, small windows giving very little light and the beam construction of the structural ceiling on which there were simple decorative motives created the atmosphere of the interior.

The relatively low interior of the banquet room along with a marked rhythm of the structural ceiling beams additionally create the atmosphere of familiarity and warmth, which is so typical of the Sudetes wooden houses.

Summary

In the Sudetes region, a type of wooden building with characteristic constructional and formal features was created as a result of different cultural influences through centuries. It became a creative inspiration for many generations of architects and builders who designed residential houses, public utility buildings and in particular pensions, inns and shelters in this mountainous region.

The additional significant factor, which had an influence on the shape of creative activity of the representatives of art and culture who lived in the Sudetes, was the magnificent mountainous landscape, especially the highest part of the mountains, i.e. the Karkonosze. The local folklore, which was strongly embellished with mysticism and fairy-tales, in particular the mountain spirit figure – Liczyrzepa, became the force which inspired and stimulated artists’ imagination.

“Hala Baśni” (*Fairy-Tales Valley*, also called *Mountain Spirit Castle*), which combined the features of the old German and Sudetes regional buildings, constituted in a way a symbol that united various domains of creative activity of the artists who lived in the artistic colony in Szklarska Poręba.

Another significant element, which shaped the character and climate of houses in the Sudetes, was also – apart

from their wooden construction and proportions of the particular parts – the interior decoration which often referred to the local symbolism through the style of woodcarving.

Unfortunately, after the end of World War II, the cultural continuity in the Sudetes was broken; the artistic colony in Szklarska Poręba stopped existing, “Hala Baśni” was demolished, Cieplice Zdrój School of Woodcarving does not exist any longer and the newly built houses in the Sudetes do not refer in their form and detail to the local regional models which were crystallised throughout the centuries.

However, especially during the recent years after 1989, among the inhabitants of the Sudetes region we can observe the rebirth of interest in its rich cultural heritage and among architectonic projects we can notice more or less successful attempts to refer to the regional character of the buildings, although this is by no means a permanent change in the building style. The process of crystallisation of cultural influences, which takes place in the changing social and economic conditions after the year 1945 in the Sudetes, is still in its early stage and we must wait till we see its mature form.

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Inspiracje regionalną formą architektury w krajobrazie sudeckim

Region sudecki jest jednym z wielu europejskich pogranicznych obszarów górskich o ukształtowanej w ciągu minionych stuleci specyfice i odrębności kulturowej. Złożyły się na to: przynależność do różnych organizmów państwowych w poprzednich wiekach (Polski, Czech, Austrii i Niemiec) oraz przebieg ważnych europejskich szlaków handlowych, łączących Dolny Śląsk z krajami Europy Zachodniej i Wschodniej.

Wielowątkowość kulturowa uwidoczniła się tu także między innymi w całej sferze ludowej sztuki, w tym w rodzimej formie drewnianej architektury.

Rodzima kultura regionalna zaznaczyła się także w podaniach i legendach dolnośląskich, co z kolei wywarło wpływ na malarstwo, rzeźbę

i architekturę tego regionu, wzbogacając je o nowe wątki przesyczone często duchem mistycyzmu i symboliki.

Wspaniały krajobraz Sudetów z najwyższą ich partią Karkonoszami inspirował swym pięknem i grozą ludność zamieszkującą te tereny od pokoleń oraz turystów przybywających tu coraz liczniej od XIX wieku.

Magia Karkonoszy wywarła także głęboki wpływ na życie i twórczość coraz chętniej osiedlających się tutaj artystów, którzy z końcem XIX stulecia założyli kolonię skupioną wokół pisarzy Carla i Gerharta Hauptmannów.

Key words: Sudetes Region, regional architecture

Słowa kluczowe: Sudety, architektura regionalna