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*Palace and church in Smolice in Greater Poland
– a Neo-Baroque work of Wrocław architecture company
“Gaze & Böttcher”*

Smolice is a village situated in southern Greater Poland, in the vicinity of the border with Lower Silesia. Nowadays, it is located within Krotoszyn district, in Kobylin commune. Nearby, five kilometres south of Smolice, there is Jutrosin, next to which, in Sielec Stary, representatives of the Greater Poland branch of the Czartoryski princes resided. Until the mid-1700s, the Smolice manor belonged to the Umiński family [1], [2], and from 1860 to Erazm Stablewski whose sons led the indebted property to be auctioned [3]. In 1878, the estate was acquired by Samson Woller, an industrialist from Leśna in Lower Silesia. Subsequently, he also purchased the neighbouring Dłóń¹. This is how the history of the village saw the beginning of a new chapter, resulting in important investments which have been shaping its image ever since.

The aim of this article is to present the history of the buildings which make Smolice significant for the modern history of Polish art and for the German architecture of the early 20th century: the von Zieten palace and the parish church. The aim is also to analyse their artistic value as representatives of Neo-Baroque. To this end, the available literature regarding the locality was used, together with documents from the archives in Poznań and Toruń. Unique prints and typescripts, stored in Poznań in the University Library and in the library of The Poznań Society for the Advancement of Arts and Sciences, were also used. It was important to inspect both buildings personally, as well as documents and blueprints kept on site. Only a part of

the abundant material gathered was used, due to the requirements regarding the length of the text. The material became an opportunity to closer examine and present the achievements of Wrocław architecture firm, “Gaze & Böttcher”, the authors of the aforementioned works, whose activity has not hitherto seen an exhaustive analysis.

Samson Woller is an extremely interesting character – a Jew, a convert, an industrialist connected with Lower Silesia, who invested in purchasing land in Greater Poland [4]. Acquiring manors in Dłóń and Smolice was not accidental. The Wollers originated from the abovementioned Jutrosin and the manufacturer was sentimental about the area which was his father’s homeland. Woller bought the estates as a dowry for his daughters: Helena Marianna (born 1869) and Ottilia Maria (born 1871). Samson Woller died at the end of 1900 and in his will, he left Smolice to the older daughter and Dłóń to the younger one².

In 1893, Helena married Count Leopold Klemens von Zieten, a representative of a family originating from the Dechtow branch (Brandenburg area), whose great-grandfather, Hans Friedrich Ernst, a general, a participant in the Waterloo battle, settled down in Lower Silesia. They were Catholic nobility who would get married to members of the local noble families, such as the Schaffgotsch of Cieplice (Warmbrunn). By marrying von Zieten, Helena Woller acquired a coat of arms and a title of a Countess, bringing into the relationship a perfectly managed latifundium which generated high income.

When the married couple moved to Smolice, there was a small palace built by Helena’s father, probably at the turn of the seventies and the eighties, replacing a wooden manor

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¹ State Archives in Poznań, Catastral Office in Gostyń, no. 638 (Gruntsteuerverwaltung Gut Smolice).

² State Archives in Toruń, files owned by notary Jan Zakrzewski from Toruń, no. 92.



Fig. 1. South-western view of the palace,
archival photograph from 1908–1909 (source: according to
a photocopy owned by Plant Breeding Smolice Ltd. IHAR Group)

Il. 1. Widok pałacu od południowego zachodu, fotografia archiwalna
z 1908–1909 r. (źródło: fotokopia w posiadaniu firmy:
Hodowla Roślin Smolice Sp. z o.o. Grupa IHAR)



Fig. 2. Palace in Smolice
– front elevation (south-east)
(arch. „Gaze & Böttcher”, photo by E. Grochowska/K. Stefański, 2019)

Il. 2. Pałac w Smolicach
– elewacja frontowa (płd.-wsch.)
(arch. „Gaze & Böttcher”, fot. E. Grochowska/K. Stefański, 2019)

house. Its initial shape is shown in an undated archival photo. It was a building erected on a long rectangle plan, with the façade facing south-west, enriched with a low tower [5, p. 14]. Right next to it, on the northern side, there was a wooden St. Adalbert parish church from the 18th century, with brick annexes at the chancel and the tower topped with a spherical helmet dome with a roof lantern [6].

Most likely, the subsequent extension of the palace occurred at the beginning of the 20th century, after Samson Woller's death, when Helena von Zieten became the legal owner of the estate. Presumably, the count and the countess desired to live in a manor which would be adequate for their titles. The new shape of the building is shown on two postcards from the beginning of 1908 (Fig. 1) [5, p. 13], [7]. First and foremost, the south-eastern part of the building was developed. The tower was heightened and covered with a Neo-Baroque helmet dome of convex-concave profile. At the south-eastern wall of the tower, an avant-corps appeared with the gable enclosed by lateral volutes. On the opposite side, a biaxial, shallow avant-corps was heightened and enriched with a small finial. The entrance on the ground level was preceded by a one-storey extension. Slightly later, in 1908 or 1909, the building was extended towards north-west. A biaxial avant-corps was added, topped with a gable on both sides. In the south-western elevation, in turn, a porch with a terrace appeared on the second storey. Additionally, from the north east, the building was lengthened with a one-storey annex with large arcaded windows. Most of the elevation was faced with sandstone. It was probably then that the south-east elevation was also shaped, with the main entrance on the axis. The von Zieten coat of arms was placed in the gable above.

In 1910, works began on further modifications of the palace, which gave it its final shape. To this end, an empty space was used, freed after dismantling a wooden church a year before. The south-eastern wing was created then, which took over the role of the main seat. It was given a representative character by shaping the façade axially (Fig. 2). In the centre, an avant-corps was placed with the

main entrance on the ground level. It was preceded with a portico and a driveway. The face was covered with sandstone on the ground-level (first) storey and the second storey of the avant-corps. However, on the second-storey level of the lateral parts, and on the third storey of the avant-corps, the stone facing was only partial. In the high mansard roof, three dormers were placed on both sides, with the middle one enclosed with a stone gable with a motif of a shell in the tympanum. At the top, the von Zieten coat of arms carved in sandstone was placed. On the shield field the following emblem is placed: a cauldron hook (Keffelhaken), the count crown in the crest, and above a figure of a young woman with loose hair, in a modest outfit (a shirt with rolled-up sleeves and a laced corset) in a hat with an ostrich feather, she holds the hook in her right hand.

The north-western end of the new building partly occupied the former chancel of the dismantled wooden church. It is evidenced by a stone cross placed on the spot of the former main altar in 1909, mere 5 m from the northern corner of the new part of the building. The elevation on this side was made to be more decorative (Fig. 3). It faces the part of the garden created on the exact site of the old church, and is preceded by a terrace with a balustrade. On the axis, a doorway was located, with a flat portico, two ionic columns and a narrow terrace on the top. On both sides, there are large arcaded windows, crowned with a semi-oval headstall with the motif of a shell. The entire structure is crowned with a curved pediment of concave-convex profile. In turn, in the western elevation of the new part, an avant-corps of a staircase appeared, also topped with a gable, together with an avant-corps tower topped with a chunky spherical helmet dome.

At the same time, the north-western part of the old palace was also remodelled. It received a two-storey form, covered with a high mansard roof. A pseudo-avant-corps, located in the northern elevation and crowned with a semi-oval pediment, was also modified. In its field, a date MCMX was carved, which indicated the time of the restructuring, even though the works certainly protracted into 1911. Slightly



Fig. 3. Palace in Smolice.
North-eastern elevation of the main body of the palace
(arch. “Gaze & Böttcher”, photo by E. Grochowska/K. Stefański, 2019)

Il. 3. Pałac w Smolicach.

Elewacja północno-wschodnia głównej bryły pałacu
(arch. „Gaze & Böttcher”, fot. E. Grochowska/K. Stefański, 2019)



Fig. 4. Palace in Smolice.
Interior – the so-called hunting study, southern annex
(arch. “Gaze & Böttcher”, photo by E. Grochowska/K. Stefański, 2019)

Il. 4. Pałac w Smolicach.

Wnętrze – tzw. salon myśliwski, aneks południowy
(arch. „Gaze & Böttcher”, fot. E. Grochowska/K. Stefański, 2020)

later, the north-western elevation was enriched with corner avant-corps towers covered with spherical helmet domes, corresponding to the avant-corps in the western elevation of the main body of the building³. The roofs are covered with roof tiles and the helmet domes with galvanised steel sheets, originally made of copper. The palace is surrounded by a carefully composed landscape park, founded by Jan Nepomucen Umiński at the beginning of the 19th century, extended and enriched by Leopold Klemens von Zieten who specially imported new exotic plants.

After the 1910–1911 extension and modifications, the Smolice palace gained its final L-letter shape, composed of the main, south-eastern part, and the south-western wing which was re-shaped from the old building. Despite several stages of works, the residence presents a uniform architectural style, namely Neo-Baroque, even though in various interpretations, which illustrates different construction periods. While analysing architectural and decorative elements of the palace, both similarities and notable differences between particular parts of the building must be observed. The earlier part (the south-western wing), created in several stages, is marked with greater mobility and decorativeness. Moving elements forward and backward, as well as differentiating the height of particular parts of the mansion creates an artful play of the blocks and contributes to the impression of dynamics. The dominant is constituted by a low tower, divided into two storeys and crowned with a tall helmet dome of an expressive shape. The plasticity of this part is richer, it is marked with clearly outlined details, developed with great precision.

In the main part of the building, we deal with a more massive and compact block. The development of particular forms and details indicates the willingness to simplify

and synthetise, which is characteristic of the subsequent historicism, already tending towards modernism. It is particularly visible in the shape of the roof dormers whose silhouette is flattened and graphic. The northern elevation was developed in a more decorative way, especially including a window in the gambel and using the panoply motif giving away its connections with the southern wing of the palace. The element which appears in all the elevations is the motif of a shell crowning the gambles. Using it in the newer part of the palace shows a purposeful reference to the original part. The north-western section is, in turn, remarkable for its simplicity, enriched by corner avant-corps towers. A similar element was added to the north-western elevation of the main part. A similarity with *Heimatsstil* or *Heimatschutzarchitektur* can be noticed in the shape of the avant-corps-towers. This trend was characteristic of the German architecture around 1910–1914 and meant a return to the “indigenous” motifs [8], [9, p. 152].

Attention must also be paid to the interior of the palace. In spite of a fire which took place in February 1945 [5, p. 15] and the subsequent adaptation works, a great part of the lavish interior has luckily been preserved. The main body and the lateral wing are two-bay. The main entrance leads through the hallway to the lounge. In its north-western part, there is a three-flight wooden staircase, separated by arcades supported by ionic columns and pilasters. The representative rooms of the ground floor are the “pink hall” (decor destroyed by the fire), the hunting study, the library and the dining room. The richest interior can be found in the so-called hunting study, maintained in the Renaissance-Baroque style, with a wooden coffered ceiling, panelled walls, decorative door woodwork, wall tapestries, and with a lateral annex at the south-western wall, separated by wooden columns and openwork decorative balustrade (Fig. 4). In the library, there are in-built oak wardrobes in English Gothic style, door portals and a stone fireplace (currently located in the hall separated

³ A photocopy owned by the company: Hodowla Roślin Smolice Sp. z o.o. Grupa IHAR (Pland Breeding Smolice Ltd. IHAR Group).

by a wall). The second (originally the main) staircase, in the lateral wing, is adorned with a stained-glass window on the landing, with von Zieten coat of arms. In the preserved interior of the residence, we can find a variety of decorations, characteristic of the late historicism, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Movable cultural property did not survive. Source materials also remain unknown. There are no signatures, which prevents us from defining the authors. It can only be assumed that they originated mostly from Wrocław or Berlin area, similarly to the authors of the interior of the nearby church.

After the extensions, the Smolice palace gained a representative form, and Helena and Leopold von Zieten gained a seat design of their aristocratic position. It is emphasized by the coat of arms placed in the façade, by the motifs of panoply with imperial eagles and the acronym S.P.Q.R. located in the southern elevation. This can be understood as an emphasis of Leopold von Zieten's status and his political ambitions connected with a career at the imperial court in Berlin. First and foremost though, it is a reference to the famous ancestor, Napoleon's defeater. It should be added that the palace, erected from the dowry of Helena von Zieten, was her property, similarly to all the Smolice estate. It was repeatedly acknowledged in the archival documents, where she appears as *the owner of the knightly estate of Smolice*. Importantly, her maiden name, Woller, is always mentioned which is a clear emphasis on the provenience of her wealth and the rights to Smolice estate inherited from her father⁴.

The palace in Smolice is a unique work in Greater Poland. It is remarkable for the quality of execution, the use of great amount of sandstone veneer⁵ and rich sculpture detail. That is why it aroused interest of the most important researchers of the residential architecture in the 19th and 20th century, namely Jan Skuratowicz and Tadeusz S. Jaroszewski. The former wrote about the palace in a paper describing Greater Poland's residences, referring to it as a "German execution", in which *Neo-Baroque-Classical forms were used in their excellent imperial, Williamesque version*, by which he indicated the Berlin trace. *An excellent creation* is also mentioned. In the publication, there is no word of the author but it was emphasised that the same creator built the von Bernuth family palace in Krzyżanów. There is no justification of this statement, however, and the style of the building does not bear great similarities with Smolice [10, p. 113]. Skuratowicz returned to this issue, releasing a richly illustrated popular science book in 2020. Describing the palace in Smolice, he repeats his prior opinion about the Neo-Baroque-Classical shape of the palace

and advances a [...] *courageous thesis... it might be a work by Sławski* [11, p. 186]. Furthermore, the building attracted Jaroszewski's attention. In the article *Dwór polski tuż przed I wojną światową* [Polish Manor on the Verge of the World War I], he mentioned the von Zieten palace in Smolice *from around 1910*, describing it as *very Viennese* and suggested its connections with Viennese studio "Fellner & Helmer". He thus questioned Skuratowicz's opinion about the *Neo-Baroque in its imperial, Williamesque version* [12, pp. 212, 240, note 16]. In turn, in *Architektura neobarokowa w Polsce* [Neo-Baroque Architecture in Poland], he wrote: *In the area of The Great Duchy of Poznań, a beautiful Neo-Baroque palace was built in Smolice around 1910, of insofar undetermined authorship, remarkable for its Viennese colouring* [13, pp. 80, 81].

However, the identification of the actual author of the Smolice palace did not require particular efforts. In the collection of the contemporary user of the building, a company called Plant Breeding Smolice Ltd., a great collection of the plans (original and copies) of the development from 1910 was found. On some of them, there are stamps of architect company from Wrocław "Gaze & Böttcher. Architekten. Breslau" and the signatures of the creators⁶ (Fig. 5). It is possible to read the dates 20.01.1920 and August 1910 on some drawings, and in some parts, there are changes and adjustments drawn in, indicating the creative process of developing the final concept of the project. Among the drawings, a board with a different version of the elevation of the main body of the building survived, probably slightly earlier chronologically, possibly from 1909, which was rejected. A question arises whether also the earlier phase of the reconstruction from 1908–1909 is the work of the Wrocław company. It seems to be the case, if one takes into account the similarities between particular elements, such as roofs with dormers or development of the carved detail.

Shortly before the extension of the palace, another important investment was made in Smolice. In 1907–1909 a new parish church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was erected. It replaced the old wooden church mentioned above which was dismantled to create space for the extension. The new church was founded by Helena von Zieten, a patron of the church. In this case, the authorship casts no doubts. In the parochial collection, there are several boards containing plans made by "Gaze & Böttcher" [14, pp. 26–31]⁷, and there is an additional drawing in the archives in Poznań (Fig. 6)⁸.

Importantly, the original design, dated August 1907, demonstrates a Neo-Romanesque building with modernist simplifications [14, pp. 26, 27]. It was supposed to be

⁴ State Archives Poznań, Cataster Office in Gostyń, no. 638 (Gruntsteuerverwaltung Gut Smolice).

⁵ It was supposedly a work of "Zeidler & Wimpler" workshop from Bolesławiec. Founded in 1872, the masonry-carving company working with high quality sandstone extracted from several nearby quarries, received the title of Königl. Hofsteinmetzmeister. It provided stone and carving elements for buildings in Berlin (Reichstag, Lutheran Cathedral), Gdańsk, Saint Petersburg, Dresden and many objects in Silesia. The sandstone used to build the so-called Imperial Castle in Poznań also came from this company; see *Adressbuch zu Bunzlau*, Bunzlau 1903, 1913 – advertising vignettes.

⁶ Our thanks for making the plans available go to the vice-president Mariusz Giermazik and to retired employee Wojciech Niedbał. Already in the publication from 2015 [4, p. 39], the authors were certain of the contribution of architect company "Gaze & Böttcher" to the extension of the palace and building the presbytery and organist house based on very particular characteristics of these buildings, the time of creation, and the founder, which was then confirmed by subsequently discovered records.

⁷ Archives of the Sacred Heart of Jesus parish in Smolice.

⁸ State Archives in Poznań, State Construction Supervision Inspector Rawicz, no. 5044.

Fig. 5. Palace in Smolice – plan of north-western elevation of the palace in Smolice, 1910 (arch. “Gaze & Böttcher”, source: collection of Plant Breeding Smolice Ltd. IHAR Group)

Il. 5. Pałac w Smolicach – projekt elewacji północno-zachodniej pałacu w Smolicach, 1910 (arch. „Gaze & Böttcher”, źródło: ze zbiorów firmy: Hodowla Roślin Smolice Sp. z o.o. Grupa IHAR)

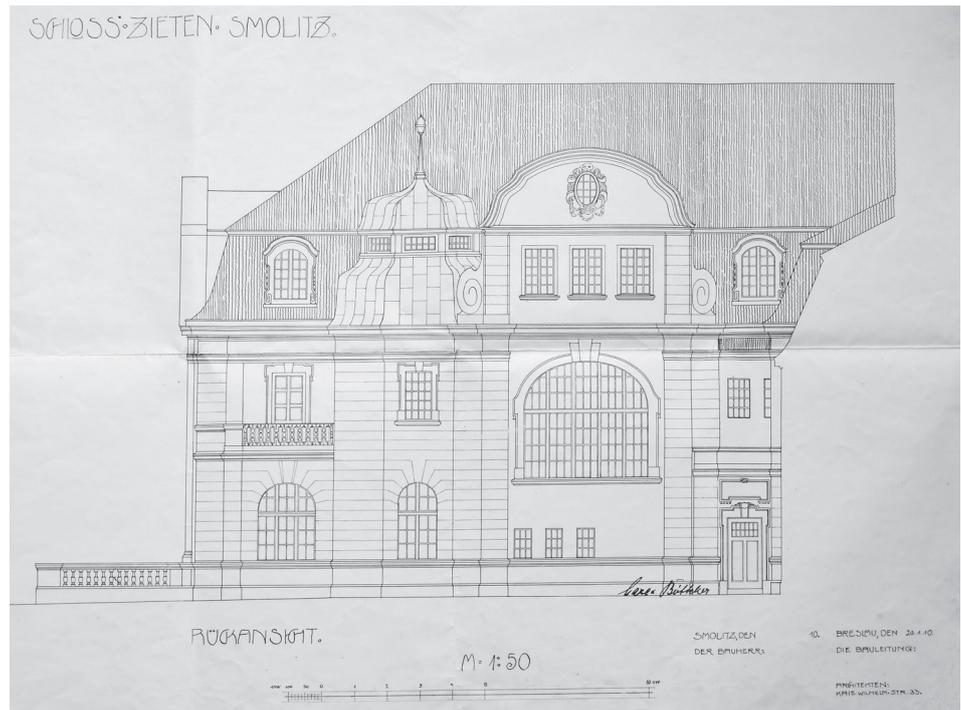
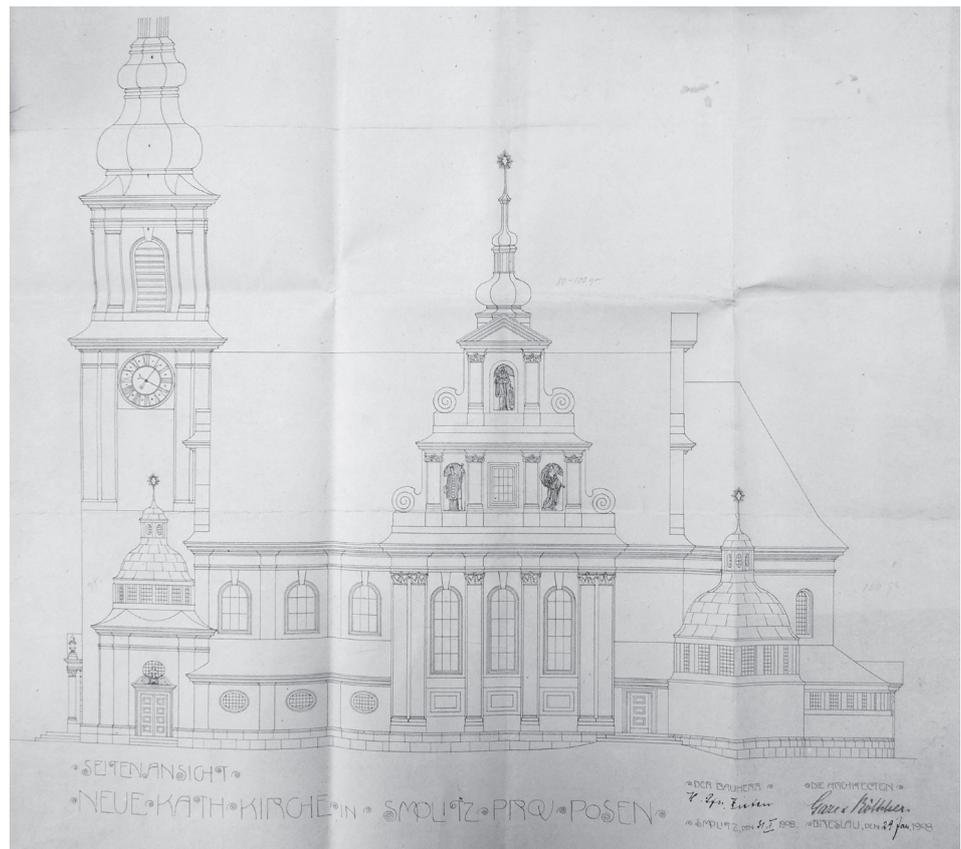


Fig. 6. Palace in Smolice – plan of side elevation of parish church in Smolice, 1908 (“Gaze & Böttcher”, source: collection of State Archives in Poznań)

Il. 6. Pałac w Smolicach – projekt elewacji bocznej kościoła parafialnego w Smolicach, 1908 (arch. „Gaze & Böttcher”, źródło: ze zbiorów Archiwum Państwowego w Poznaniu)



a three-aisle basilica-type building, with a massive tower and a narthex in the façade. It also possessed a chancel with three sides at the end, enclosed with a semi-circle ambulatory on the ground level and flanked on two sides with annexes containing the sacristy and the patron’s pew. The influence of the main architectural work of the crea-

tors from Wrocław is visible here, namely of the former St. John’s Lutheran church in Wrocław. It was created between 1907 and 1909, so at the time when the Smolice temple was being developed. With a different plan and shape, as the Wrocław church is a centralised building with a tower erected over the middle part, we can still notice



Fig. 7. Parish church in Smolice – general outlook
(photo by E. Grochowska/K. Stefański, 2019)

Il. 7. Kościół parafialny w Smolicach – widok ogólny
(fot. E. Grochowska/K. Stefański, 2019)

many similarities in the styling of the Rhein Romanesque architecture. The Romanesque forms, initially suggested by “Gaze & Böttcher” for Smolice, could have also been inspired by a church in the nearby village of Jutrosin. The temple designed by Tomasz Pajzderski, erected there between 1900 and 1902, was built thanks to the financial support of Father Zdzisław Czartoryski (a priest). It also referred to the Rhein Romanesque architecture, more specifically to the Speyer cathedral and it was considered one of the most interesting works in Polish sacral architecture at the time [15].

A spacious, rectangular building plot was allotted for the church in Smolice, sectioned off from the park surrounding the palace, slightly less than 100 m north-west of the residence. It is likely that the construction works began and the foundations were laid in September – it is evidenced by the date 1907 placed in a stained-glass window as a commencing date of erecting the temple. However, shortly afterwards, an important conceptual change regarding the architecture occurred. In January 1908, a new project by the same authors was created, presenting a completely different shape of the building. This time, the church assumed Neo-Baroque features. The designers, however, had to respect the original outline of the building, due to the fact that the foundations had already been executed. That is why in the new conceptual design, the church remained a three-aisle basilica, with a semi-circular chancel with an ambulatory. The lateral parts of the

narthex were formed as chapels, a different shape was given to the annexes near the chancel. A prominent transept was a new element, which gave the temple a clear outline of the cross.

Lack of information does not allow us, however, to unequivocally state the reason for such a radical stylistic change or what made the Wrocław architects turn towards Baroque. Baroque elements appear already in their earlier works, which will be discussed below, but in a definitely modernised interpretation, far from historical schemes. In this case, the motifs used, despite certain simplifications and the tendency to synthesise, are of visibly conservative nature. Surely, the change of the design was decided by the founder of the church, Helena von Zieten, who supposedly wanted to create a stylistically uniform complex of buildings referring to Baroque, the era of bloom of sacral and residential architecture, which was at the same time closer to the tradition of the local area. It might also have been important to make reference to the Baroque decor of the old temple, which will be discussed later.

The church⁹ was built quickly, as it was completed in September 1908 by crowning it with a radiant cross forged in iron. At the foot of the cross, in a sphere, commemorating documents were placed. They read, among other things, that [...] *this new parish church was founded and erected by the heir of the estate in Smolice, Her Excellency Countess von Zieten, née Woller, at her own cost* [14, pp. 32–35]. At the time, the building was in shell condition, and finishing works lasted well until the next year. On 21st October 1909 the temple was finally consecrated. Adding the decorations and furnishing protracted until 1913 [14, p. 8].

A large-scale work was created (45.5×21 m), situated on the north-west – south-east axis (similarly to the palace), with the chancel on the south-east, with clear Neo-Baroque features in its external architecture (Fig. 7). It is a building with a three-aisle, three-bay main body and a transept barely separated on the plan, but much clearer in the actual building. The chancel part is terminated with a semi-circle, including a low ambulatory and two lateral annexes. The massive building is dominated by a three-storey tower situated on the axis of the façade, with the main entrance on the ground level. The semi-circular doorway is enclosed by a portal with columns on the sides, and with a motif of a double cartouche in the keystone. In the field of the lower part of the cartouche, an image of Sacred Heart of Jesus in radiant glory was placed. In the upper part, there is a Christogram. The whole doorway is crowned with the image of the Christ modeled after a famous work by Bertel Thorvaldsen. The portal was made of honey sandstone and the Christ figure probably of terracotta, similarly to other sculptures adorning the gambles of the transept. Within the second storey, there are round holes, originally meant for clocks. The tower is crowned by a slender pear dome, covered with copper plate. The main entrance to the church leads

⁹ We would like to thank Ms Dorota Krajewska for her help in examining the interior of the church.



Fig. 8. Sacred Heart of Jesus parish church in Smolice – the interior (photo by E. Grochowska/K. Stefański, 2020)

Il. 8. Kościół parafialny Najświętszego Serca Jezusa w Smolicach – wewnątrz (fot. E. Grochowska/K. Stefański, 2020)

through a porch located on the ground level of the tower, with adjacent lateral porches, shaped as central domed chapels built on a square plan, covered with helmet domes on tholobates. Lateral elevations were developed in a modest way. Along the main body of the nave and aisles, they are divided by lesenes separating particular bays. In each bay there is a window: in the lower part, these are horizontal oval windows; in the upper part, the windows are arcaded. Particular storeys are divided by flat cornices. Significantly more opulent forms were given to the high elevations of gable walls of the transept, divided into three storeys. The lower storey is divided by pilasters in the composite order, between which tall, narrow windows were placed, each enclosed by a half-moon. The significantly smaller middle storey, laterally enclosed with volutes, repeats the divisions of the lower storey. In the centre, a rectangular window was built and to the sides, niches with figures of saints were created. The highest storey, also laterally enclosed with volutes and a centrally placed niche containing a figure of a saint, is crowned with a triangular pediment.

The chancel part is built of several different blocks. Slightly lower than the main body, the apsidal chancel

is circumvented by a low ambulatory. On the sides, there are the aforementioned annexes, namely the sacristy in south-east and the patron's pew in the north-east. They received the form of circular chevets with domed roofs covered with a copper plate. The main body and the transept are covered with tall gable roofs, the chancel is covered with a semi-circular roof, and the aisle and ambulatory with shed roofs. The entire roof is made with ceramic roof tiles. In the crossing, there is a ridge turret with a copper pear dome.

The interior of the church is dominated by a wide three-bay nave covered with barrel vaults with lunettes. On the sides, there are low aisles separated from the nave with arcades supported by four-sided pillars adorned with pilasters. The nave merges into the transept space. The square crossing is covered with a flattened dome, also circular in shape. The wings of the transept are covered with barrel vaults. The chancel part was divided into a bay of the width of the nave, and a narrower apse with two small arcaded windows (Fig. 8).

The decor and furnishing of the church attract attention with their opulence and thoughtful composition, connecting the 18th-century altar settings and the famous-for-



Fig. 9. Sacred Heart of Jesus parish church in Smolice – stained-glass windows in the south-western transept: a) Helena von Zieten, née Woller, b) Leopold von Zieten, 1913 (photo by E. Grochowska/K. Stefański, 2020)

Il. 9. Kościół parafialny Najświętszego Serca Jezusa w Smolicach – witraże w transepcie południowo-zachodnim: a) Helena von Zieten ur. Woller, b) Leopold von Zieten, 1913 (fot. E. Grochowska/K. Stefański, 2020)

miracles Marian image with a new main altar and the remaining elements. They were executed in the Neo-Baroque style, so that they would match the original decor of the dismantled church. This way, they created a harmonious whole and ideologically referred to the era of a triumph of Catholicism and a high position of the aristocracy. The founder emphasised her role in the creation of the temple, putting herself in the lower part of a stained-glass window with an inscription: HELENA COMITESSA DE ZIETEN. NATA. WOLLER.// HANC ECCLESIAM. AEDIFICAVIT. A.D. MCMVII=IX.//. The window containing her image together with her patron Saint Helena, and another window with the image of her husband and his patron saint were placed on the right of the transept. Originally, they were separated with a baroque altar containing a 17th-century copy of the icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa (today, the interior is partially changed) (Fig. 9). The spouses thus made a reference to the history of the place and became worshipers of the famous image. The main altar with images of Christ with burning heart (the other one functions as a veil), makes reference to the dedication of the church. In this way, the Smolice temple became a site of worshipping Holy Mary and the Sacred Heart of Christ.

The authors of the rich decor and furnishing of the church must also be mentioned. Nowadays, a majority of artists whose works fill the space of the building are known. They are people connected with the artisan-artistic environment of Wrocław and Berlin. The altars and the adorning figures were created in a famous Wrocław studio, i.e. workshop of Carl Buhl [16]. The main altar for Smolice was presented at an exhibition of religious art in 1910 [17]. In the church, the altar was completed with images of Christ, both of which were signed and dated. They were executed by recognised painters of those times, namely Angelo Count von Courten from Munich (1910) [18] and Gottfried Hofer, a painter and lithographer connected with Berlin (1915) [19]. Hofer is also the designer of the afore-

mentioned stained-glass windows depicting the owners of the estate with their patrons saint, both executed by Adolf Eckhardt in his Charlottenburg workshop [20, pp. 266–270]. The organ screen is probably designed by Buhl's workshop, and the instrument was executed at Wilhelm Saur's workshop [21]. Three bells, confiscated during the World War II, were cast in a Wrocław bell foundry of Albert Geitner [22, p. 94], [23]. The works connected with covering of the domes with copper, as well as the radiant cross crowning the church tower were executed by an artisan coming from Wrocław – Emil Lehmann [14, p. 8].

The palace and the church, a secular building and a sacral one (together with several adjacent buildings) located in Smolice and founded by Countess Helena von Zieten, née Woller, create an architectural complex of high quality from the beginning of the 20th century, maintained in the Neo-Baroque style (Fig. 10). The complex has barely been noticed in the literature so far. It is enough to mention that in the *Katalog zabytków sztuki w Polsce* [Catalogue of Monuments of Art in Poland], only the church is mentioned, without the authors, and the manor park from the 18th century, [...] located near a palace from 1910 [24, p. 41]. The creator of this complex is “Gaze & Böttcher” architectural company, operating mainly in Wrocław and in Silesia, whose portfolio contained many realised projects in the first decades of the 20th century. The company has not received particular attention so far. Their works are only briefly mentioned in *Atlas architektury Wrocławia* [Atlas of Wrocław Architecture] [25] and *Leksykon architektury Wrocławia* [Lexicon of Wrocław Architecture] [26]. A more exhaustive description presenting the architects and their works is included in the latter publication and a note prepared by the same author in *Encyklopedia Wrocławia* [Encyclopaedia of Wrocław] [27], counting a dozen lines. In *Leksykon architektury Wrocławia*, the church of Smolice is mentioned, although the date of execution is erroneous – 1909 [26, p. 972].

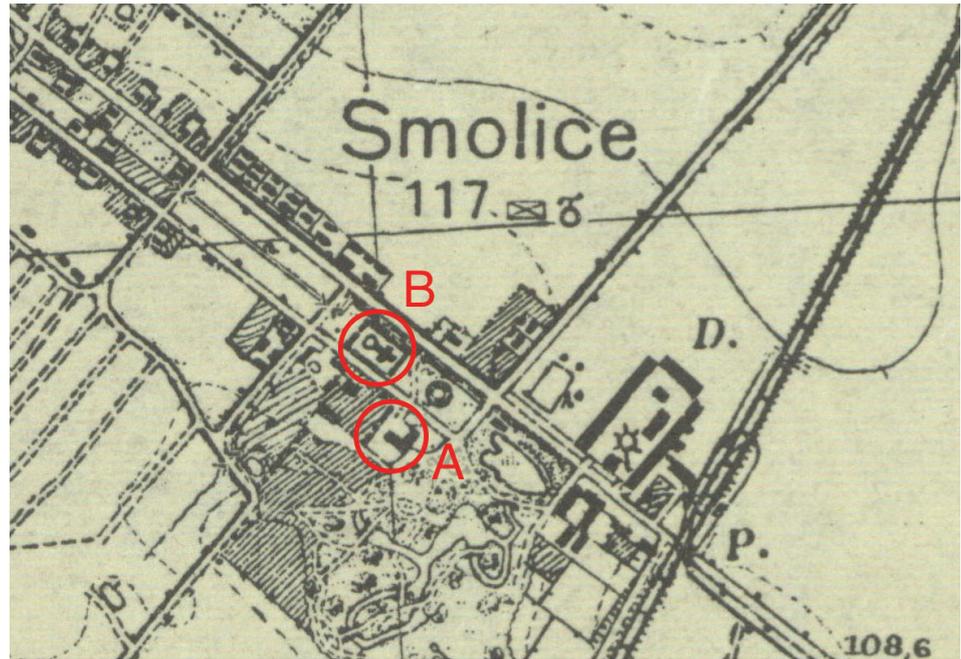


Fig. 10. Site plan of Smolice:
A – palace, B – church
(according to the Polish Army staff
map from the interwar period)

Il. 10. Plan sytuacyjny Smolice:
A – pałac, B – kościół
(wg mapy sztabowej Wojska
Polskiego z okresu
międzywojennego)

The company was founded by Alfred Böttcher (1872–1926) and Richard Gaze (1872–1943), peers, working together after completing the apprenticeship, from 1901 until Böttcher’s death. Their achievements include villas, palaces, industrial estates, public facilities, and a few religious buildings. They used historical motifs modified to a great degree, initially in the spirit of Art Nouveau which was a leading trend at the beginning of the 20th century. Subsequently, they introduced solutions which were closer to the early modernism and elements of the “indigenous” style (*Heimatstil*).

Religious architecture plays an important role in their artistic work, connected – apart from Smolice and Sisters of Mercy of St. Borromeo chapel in Gliwice (Gleitwitz) – with Lutheran religion and the area of Lower and Upper Silesia. Their most important work of this kind is the aforementioned former church of St. John (currently Roman Catholic St. Augustine church) in Wrocław. In 1903, a contest was announced for the design of a temple which was supposed to be erected in the southern, fast-developing at the beginning of the century district of Wrocław, in what is now Sudecka Street. The awarded works were not realised, though. Instead, the proposal put forward by “Gaze & Böttcher” was chosen [28], [29]. It was a great success for the young architects, which opened doors to subsequent prestigious commissions. The building was erected in 1907–1909 – exactly the same time as the church in Smolice. One of the most monumental buildings in the capital of the Lower Silesia was created. The church was built on the plan of a cross, with a large square space covered with a dome. Its exterior was crowned with a massive, four-sided tower covered by a slender hipped helmet dome. Rhenish Romanesque forms were used, making reference to the “Groß St. Martin” in Cologne, and the stone veneer gave a monumental feel to the building. Inside, introducing elements of late geometricised Art Nouveau draws attention [30].

The first completed work of the company was, however, a church in Klecina (Klettendorf) near Wrocław (nowadays a district of the city), consecrated in September 1905. It is a building of loosely interpreted Neo-Gothic shapes. It presents a three-aisle basilica structure including a chancel with straight-ended termination and a three-bay cloister at the front. The façade is dominated by a lateral high tower with a slender hipped helmet dome. On the opposite side, there is a corresponding octagonal lower tower. Inside, the nave is covered by a wooden roof and the aisles contain wooden galleries. The church was highly valued – it was emphasised that using simple means, the architects managed to create a non-pretentious work, well-suited to the suburban surroundings [31].

The architects further developed the solutions used in Klecina in the two following religious buildings. In 1907–1908, simultaneously with churches in Wrocław and Smolice, which meant a highly intensive period for the company, a temple in Oborniki Śląskie near Trzebnica was created (Obornigk / Bad Obornigk)¹⁰. It was composed as a massive brick construction of three aisles, with the nave covered with a tall gable roof, and the aisles covered with transverse mansard roofs. The façade received a triangular shape, with the main entrance enclosed with an arcaded portal and triangular shallow avant-corps. A tower in the western corner of the building constitutes a dominant, with a corresponding lower tower in the eastern corner, covered with a spherical helmet dome, similarly to the avant-corps towers of the Smolice palace. Inside, the galleries in the aisles were supported by low stone pillars. Stained-glass windows by Adolph Seiler are an important element of the decor of the church. The church presents Romanesque motifs loosely interpreted in the spirit of modernism, connected with Baroque-related elements (helmet domes, roofs).

¹⁰ Nowadays, church of St. Juda Tadeus and St. Anthony of Padua.



Fig. 11. Town Hall in Kamienna Góra (Landshut), 1904–1905
(arch. „Gaze & Böttcher”,
photo by E. Grochowska/K. Stefański, 2021)

Il. 11. Ratusz w Kamiennej Górze (Landshut), 1904–1905
(arch. „Gaze & Böttcher”,
fot. E. Grochowska/K. Stefański, 2021)



Fig. 12. Palace in Kamieniec (Kaminietz) near Tarnowskie Góry – façade.
Restructuring by „Gaze & Böttcher”, 1910
(photo by E. Grochowska/K. Stefański, 2021)

Il. 12. Pałac w Kamieńcu (Kaminietz) koło Tarnowskich Gór – fasada.
Przebudowa „Gaze & Böttcher”, 1910
(fot. E. Grochowska/K. Stefański, 2021)

Slightly later, in 1910–1911, a church of Christ the King in Prusice (Prausnitz) was erected¹¹. Its massive silhouette reminds us of the previously described building. However, instead of Romanesque solutions, we find inspirations by architecture of the late northern Renaissance here, together with strong modernist trends. The structure of the façade is identical to the one in Klecina, with a high corner tower and a lower one on the other side of the front elevation. Introducing stone veneering at the plinths was a novelty, so was extending the stone portal, which gives the building a more solemn appearance. In the development of particular details, namely the staircase at the tower and small bay windows flanking the portal, the modernist tendencies are visible.

What is more, „Gaze & Böttcher” could boast several important realizations in the area of secular building. They certainly include the town hall in Kamienna Góra (Landshut) from 1904–1905 (Fig. 11). The building possesses features of northern Renaissance, consisting of two wings of different heights, between which a massive tower was placed. The building is remarkable for its abundant

stone detail with carved decorations and lavish interior [32]. However, palaces and villas by „Gaze & Böttcher” are more important in the context of the palace in Smolice. The 1910 palace in Skorogoszcz (Schurgast) on Eastern Neisse near Brzeg (non-existent, demolished after the war) [33] and simultaneously restructured palace in Kamieniec (Kaminietz) near Tarnowskie Góry must both be mentioned here. Especially the latter object displays forms similar to the solutions used in Smolice, such as the shape of the roofs and the gable, as well as the portico adorned with stone lions supporting the scutcheons (Fig. 12). The circular chapel adjacent to the building is a reminiscence of the annexes at the chancel of the Smolice church. A number of features similar to the architecture of the palace in Smolice can also be found in the Herman Działas villa in Zalesie in Wrocław (currently the Monastic House of the Carmelite Sisters at no. 1, M. Karłowicza Street) [34]. Furthermore, „Gaze & Böttcher” are the authors of a student corporation „Lusatia” building in Wrocław, dated 1906, (currently the Youth Cultural Centre „Śródmieście” [Downtown]), presenting forms of modernised Baroque, close to the solutions used in Smolice (composition of the gable and rich stone detail) [35].

The listed structures do not exhaust the achievements of the Wrocław architects. They were also active after the

¹¹ Nowadays, St. Joseph church, affiliated with St. Jacob Apostle parish in Prusice.

World War I, until 1926, when Böttcher died. From that period, their most important work was certainly “Haus Oberschlesien” hotel in Gliwice, realised in 1924–1928. After war damage and rebuilding, it now houses the Municipal Office. The most important part of “Gaze & Böttcher” achievements dates back to pre-1914. It places the company among the most interesting workshops in Wrocław at the time. The architects remained in the area of historical forms, skillfully modifying them, however,

and introducing elements connected with the new emerging trends: Art Nouveau, early modernism and the “indigenous” style. The complex in Smolice, presented in this text, occupies a special place in their achievements. It is a homogeneous architectural-urban work, remarkable for its high artistic value at the same time.

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Abstract

Palace and church in Smolice in Greater Poland – a Neo-Baroque work of Wrocław architecture company “Gaze & Böttcher”

The article deals with the former palace of the von Zieten family and the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Smolice, both located in southern Greater Poland, which are the most interesting neo-baroque architectural complexes in the early 20th century in Poland. Both are the work of Wrocław-based company “Gaze & Böttcher”, which has not yet been noticed by researchers. The buildings were founded by Helena von Zietzen née Woller, who financed these using the legacy of her father Samson Woller, a Lower Silesian industrialist. The palace was built in 1908–1911 in two or three phases as an extension of the previously existing small residence of Woller. The palace was built in 1908–1911 in several phases as an extension of the previously existing small Woller residence. At the same time, in the years 1907–1909, a large neo-baroque church with an axial composition on a cross plan was erected. Artists and craftsmen from Wrocław and Berlin took part in the decoration of the temple.

The palace in Smolice was mentioned in the publications of such researchers as T.S. Jaroszewski and J. Skuratowicz, however it was mainly considered the work of unrecognized artists. The archival research carried out by the authors made it possible to find the original designs of the palace by renowned architectural firm “Gaze & Böttcher” from Wrocław, which changed this situation.

The authors of the article, based on archival and bibliographic research as well as examination of autopsy objects, determined the authorship of the palace and the stages of its expansion, and in the case of the church, the authorship of individual elements of the interior. The architectural forms of the complex in Smolice were analyzed in the context of the achievements of “Gaze & Böttcher” company, which allowed us both to find common style features with other works of the Wrocław architectural office, and the distinctiveness determining the value of the buildings erected in Smolice.

Key words: Polish architecture of 20th century, German architecture of 20th century, Smolice, architectural company “Gaze & Böttcher”

Streszczenie

Pałac i kościół w Smolicach w Wielkopolsce – neobarokowe dzieło wrocławskiej firmy architektonicznej „Gaze & Böttcher”

Tematem artykułu jest dawny pałac rodziny von Zietenów i kościół pw. Najświętszego Serca Pana Jezusa w Smolicach na terenie południowej Wielkopolski. Należą one do najciekawszych zespołów architektonicznych utrzymanych w stylistyce neobarokowej na ziemiach polskich początku XX w. Budowle te powstały jako fundacja Heleny von Zietzen z domu Woller, która sfinansowała je, wykorzystując spadek po ojcu – dolnośląskim przemysłowcu Samsonie Wollerze. Pałac powstał w latach 1908–1911 w kilku fazach jako rozbudowa wcześniej istniejącej niewielkiej rezydencji Wollera. Jednocześnie w latach 1907–1909 wzniesiony został duży neobarokowy kościół o osiowej kompozycji na planie krzyża. W wystroju świątyni brali udział artyści wrocławscy i berlińscy.

O ile autorstwo kościoła było znane (wrocławska spółka „Gaze & Böttcher”), o tyle pałac w Smolicach, mimo że odnotowywany w publikacjach takich badaczy, jak S.T. Jaroszewski i J. Skuratowicz, uchodził za dzieło nierozpoznanych twórców. Jednym z celów artykułu było określenie autorstwa pałacu, kolejnym – przedstawienie dziejów budowy. Przeprowadzone przez autorów artykułu badania archiwalne pozwoliły na odnalezienie oryginalnych projektów pałacu przygotowanych we wrocławskiej firmie architektonicznej „Gaze & Böttcher”. Tym samym, a także na podstawie kwerendy bibliograficznej oraz badań obiektów z autopsji autorzy artykułu ustalili twórców pałacu oraz fazy jego rozbudowy, a w przypadku kościoła autorstwo poszczególnych elementów wystroju. Dokonano analizy form architektonicznych zespołu w Smolicach w kontekście dorobku firmy „Gaze & Böttcher”, co pozwoliło na odnalezienie zarówno wspólnych cech stylowych z innymi dziełami wrocławskiego biura architektonicznego, jak i odrębności decydujących o wartości budowli powstałych w Smolicach.

Słowa kluczowe: architektura polska XX w., architektura niemiecka XX w., Smolice, firma architektoniczna „Gaze & Böttcher”