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## *New functions of rural sacral buildings in the Groningen province, The Netherlands*

### *Introduction*

Changes which occur in social and cultural life of a given society affect sacral architecture. A religious building plays a significant role in the life of an individual, as [...] *it satisfies human religious, spiritual and social needs, as well as the need for affiliation* [Author's own transl.] [1, p. 10]. For centuries, sacral buildings have demonstrated achievements in the field of architectural engineering combined with creative possibilities of architects. Nowadays, sacral architecture is still of great importance to the common identity of the nation. Historic churches – being a symbol of national identity, culture and heritage – constitute an essential part of collective memory. Hence, apart from their historical, architectural and ethical value, sacral buildings are marked by a cultural and social significance in Europe.

In many European towns, the lack of church-goers coupled with excessive maintenance cost results in churches being purchased by private persons with the view to transforming them into cultural, residential or service facilities. The problems that arise from changing the function of sacred space and adapting sacral buildings to other purposes is a multifaceted one. The circumstances under which sacral buildings currently find themselves exemplify the process of desacralization and secularization of Europe.

Buildings of religious worship function not only as carriers of sacred, historical and cultural values. They rather constitute an important element of the landscape, as they participate in shaping the urban structure, especially in small towns and villages. Visible from a distance, sacral architecture would tower above remaining buildings and arrange space. Moreover, religious buildings provided the center of political and spiritual life of a given community. Churches,

which are usually the oldest monuments, [...] *are places where the cultural development of humankind was shaped, as well as places where, for centuries, the values of coexistence between people were conveyed and presented* [2, p. 13].

Adaptation of old religious buildings in the Groningen province, the Netherlands, is the subject of the present paper. The Netherlands has been selected as a country in which the widespread phenomenon of church adaptation may be observed. The article is aimed at drawing attention to the fact, often overlooked, that the adaptation of sacral buildings should be considered on various levels due to the multifaceted nature of the objects. Apart from historical, aesthetic and cultural values, sacral buildings hold also semantic and religious values.

### *Justification for the choice of topic*

These days, the fact that former places of worship are adapted to other purposes often arises from a necessity. Architects, restorers, historians, owners (church authorities) and the public must address the problem of what should be done with a desacralized object. Should it be retained as a witness to history and bygone times, should it be used for new functions or rather demolished completely? Due to the multitude of unfrequented places of worship, each solution must be carefully considered. Owing to semantic-narrative dimension, historic sacral objects should be treated differently from other monuments. If the adaptation process of a building is conducted with respect to the existing building tissue, its heritage and historic character is preserved, causing no cognitive dissonance. Although the functional values may alter as a result of reconstruction or adaptation to other functions, the symbolic and emotional values remain unchanged.

The issue related to adaptations of former churches is of very complex nature and sparks controversy, especially

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in societies that foster Christian values. The problem was raised many times at meetings of the Council of Europe (The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe – PACE) and at conferences of the Holy See. At one of the meetings of the Council of Europe in 1989, Resolution 916 was adopted, the last 11 point of which concerns the cooperation of church bodies with secular organizations in order to find solutions and take effective action regarding the development of abandoned and desacralized churches [3]. In 2000, at the Council meeting in Eversdijk, the issue of putting church buildings into new use was discussed. Three possible solutions were agreed on, i.e., adaptation to religious purposes (e.g., a pilgrim center, a catechetical center, a place of retreat and contemplation), partial use of space by a religious group (mixed functions), and finally demolition of sacral objects owing to their abandonment [3].

The document, which was issued by the Holy See in October 2018 [4], points out that places of worship cannot be treated solely in terms of their economic function because of the identity of the place, its current function and symbolism. As Pope Francis I stated, religious heritage is a witness to the faith of the community which formed it over the centuries, and thus is also an instrument of evangelization. The Pope emphasizes that taking into account the missionary nature when adapting abandoned churches would be a proper solution. The document also draws attention to the need to keep elements of church equipment in mind when adapting the sacral building to secular purposes.

In Poland, however, the topic is rarely acknowledged. So far, one book directly related to the issue of church adaptation has been published by Andrzej Białkiewicz [5]. The book contains general information and examples of such activities in various Western European countries. Moreover, a doctoral dissertation was prepared by Martyna Wojtuszek [6] at the Silesian University of Technology, which focused on architectural and construction issues connected with the adaptation of churches.

However, the topic is extensively discussed in Western European countries. Among the numerous scientific publications, we must mention the works, inter alia, by Coolmans [7], Fiorani, Kealy, Musso [8], Wesselink [9], Reinstra [10], Velthuis and Spennemann [11], Netsch and Gugerell [12]. The above authors discuss issues of heritage in the case of sacral architecture in a secularized Western society and the appropriate intended use of former church buildings that have ceased to serve their original function.

Publications and the research which was conducted by non-governmental organizations dealing with preservation of religious heritage in Europe, such as Future for Religious Heritage, Churches Conservation Trust, Groningen's Historic Churches Foundation, Sacred Places/Civic Spaces and Reliwiki.nl, are of great cognitive value.

### ***The situation in the Groningen province and the activities of the Stichting Oude Groninger Kerken foundation***

Since the mid-1960s, the Netherlands has observed secularization of society, a progressive decline in the number of church-goers in Protestant and Catholic parishes as

well as the disappearance of traditional religious values. It is also there that an increasingly frequent phenomenon of adaptation of abandoned sacral buildings to other purposes is observed. According to statistical data of 2017, over a half of citizens do not feel associated with any religious community [11]. Moreover, in the Netherlands, a steady decline in the number of church-goers that participate in religious services is noticed. In 1971, still 37 percent of the population regularly attended church services at least once a month. This figure, however, fell to 17 percent in 2012 and to 16 percent in 2017 [11]. According to Wesselink [9], at least one fifth (around 6,900) of Dutch former church buildings were remodeled so as to serve secular functions. Moreover, around 25 percent of Dutch churches which were built between 1800 and 1970 are now used for non-religious purposes, including housing complexes, offices and cultural centers.

The situation in the northern, mostly rural, province of Groningen, is similar, as depopulation and the decline in the number of church-goers, progressing secularization and laicization are changing the reality of the local community. Along with the economic development of the city of Groningen, a decline in the population as well as population aging in the municipalities further away from the city, especially in rural areas are observed [13]. Desolated sacral buildings fall into ruin, but the local community is taking action to save such objects and pass them on to future generations<sup>1</sup>.

In 1969, in response to the poor technical condition of many churches in the Groningen province, the Stichting Oude Groninger Kerken Foundation (SOGK) was established, whose function is to handle the local cultural heritage. The institution was established by volunteers of various denominations who took over the management of sacral buildings from the church authorities. Ever since the foundation was commenced, it received financing from private donors. It was not until 1980s that the foundation was supported by government programs and subsidies for the protection of monuments.

Since its very beginning, the management board of the foundation promoted its activities by means of trips and publications, in which the scale of the problem was presented by displaying pictures of rundown churches [14]. It was assumed that the local community would play an important role in the management of the places of former worship. Direct involvement of rural residents was considered a condition for successful adaptation, and then for its proper use and protection. In 2013, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science formally established the foundation as an organization for the protection of monuments – Professionele Organisatie Voor Monumentenbehoud (POM). From then on, the foundation has been

<sup>1</sup> In 2019, the author conducted field research on desecrated religious buildings in this Dutch province. She also took part in the international conference "International Conference Religious Heritage in a Diverse Europe: New Directions in Practice, Policy & Scholarship", which took place in Groningen. The event was co-organized by the Stichting Oude Groninger Kerken foundation. The article stems from the aforementioned research.

able to submit simplified applications for co-financing the restoration of monuments<sup>2</sup>. In 2019, SOGK celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Within 50 years of its operations, the foundation has become one of the main heritage protection organizations in the Netherlands. Currently, it supervises 93 churches, 9 free-standing towers, 57 cemeteries. 700 volunteers are involved in various conservation activities. So far, members of the foundation have organized around 1,000 cultural events<sup>3</sup>; the foundation continues to pursue the same goals as specified in Articles 1 and 2 of its statute. These are as follows [16]:

a) the acquisition, conservation, restoration, management and maintenance of historic sacral buildings as well as buildings and adjacent areas in a proper technical and operational condition;

b) striving to use buildings and adjacent areas to the greatest extent possible in accordance with their nature<sup>4</sup>;

c) undertaking initiatives related to consultation, information, publication and establishing contacts with owners of facilities referred to in point a.

The practical activities of the SOGK foundation are illustrated by the examples of three projects for the adaptation of historic churches for secular purposes – these include the former churches in Garmewolde, Klein Wetsinge and Leegkerk.

### *The Church in Garmerwolde*

In 2003, the medieval single-nave church in the village of Garmerwolde<sup>5</sup> was passed to SOGK by the Protestant community, thanks to which it was preserved and renovated. The Romanesque-gothic cross-plan church, with a free-standing tower, was erected in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Originally, it belonged to the Roman Catholic community, but since 1594 it was property of Protestants. This led to a change in the functional and spatial layout of the temple and its interior design. In 1859, the nave and the presbytery were demolished, only the transept and the choir (church porch) were retained [17]. The remains of the wall are visible on the west side of the church adjacent to the cemetery.

The external wall of the transept and the choir is decorated with pilasters and niches. Inside, the walls and vaults are decorated with paintings which depict scenes from the lives of Mary, Jesus and the Apostles. The paintings were made at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 1). The late-baroque pulpit of 1740 was placed in the center of the temple after 1859 [17]. Numerous stone tombstones with



Fig. 1. View of the interior of the former church in Garmerwolde, towards the porch and transept.

Condition during renovation works, 2019 (photo by M. Arno)

Il. 1. Widok wnętrza dawnego kościoła w Garmerwolde w kierunku kruchty i transeptu.

Stan podczas prac remontowych, 2019 (fot. M. Arno)

carved decorations and coats of arms are found inside the church. The object was entered in the register of monuments on November 2, 1971 (registration no. 9780).

In the years 2013–2014, the foundation conducted comprehensive restoration works inside the church. As a result, the paintings on the walls and vaults as well as the interior design were revitalized. Moreover, the tombstones were renovated, while the benches and the floor were painted. The organs, dating back to end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were renovated and repaired, whereas their original colors were restored. The instrument, which was built by the P. van Oeckelen company from the northern Netherlands, is valuable both in terms of sound and appearance [17].

The church is rented for celebrations such as weddings, funerals, various meetings, receptions, concerts and exhibitions (Fig. 1). Nevertheless, its original function has been preserved – once a month the service of the reformed Protestant community of Garmerwolde Thesinge is held there<sup>6</sup>.

In 2020, the church building in Garmerwolde became an educational building and was used for cultural activities and events, mainly aimed at children [18]. The church, together with the adjoining tower, has become the chief place where national program “Fest! In ost und west” [Holidays! Find out what you celebrate] is implemented. The program was initiated by the Catharijneconvent museum in Utrecht in cooperation with ten other museum institutions in the Netherlands. Its aim is to promote knowledge about the material and non-material heritage of religious holidays of various denominations and to provide an impulse for intercultural dialogue in the Netherlands.

An exhibition is planned at the church in Garmerwolde. The organization of the event was entrusted to the

<sup>2</sup> According to a speech by Agmar van Rijn (SOGK member) at the conference “Religious Heritage in a Diverse Europe. New Directions in Practice, Policy & Scholarship”, Groningen, June 19–21, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Based on the foundation’s statistical data [15].

<sup>4</sup> Never before has the foundation decided to adapt the church buildings to a completely new function (such as adaptation for residential or commercial/utility purposes). New functions were always sought in line with the historical purpose of the church as a place of gatherings and meetings, culture and retreat, respecting history and traditions and in consultation with the local community.

<sup>5</sup> In 2019, the village of Garmerwolde, north of the city of Groningen, had a population of around 500.

<sup>6</sup> According to a speech by Anne Benneker (member of Local Group Church Garmerwolde) at the “Religious Heritage in a Diverse Europe. New Directions in Practice, Policy & Scholarship”, Groningen, June 19–21, 2019.

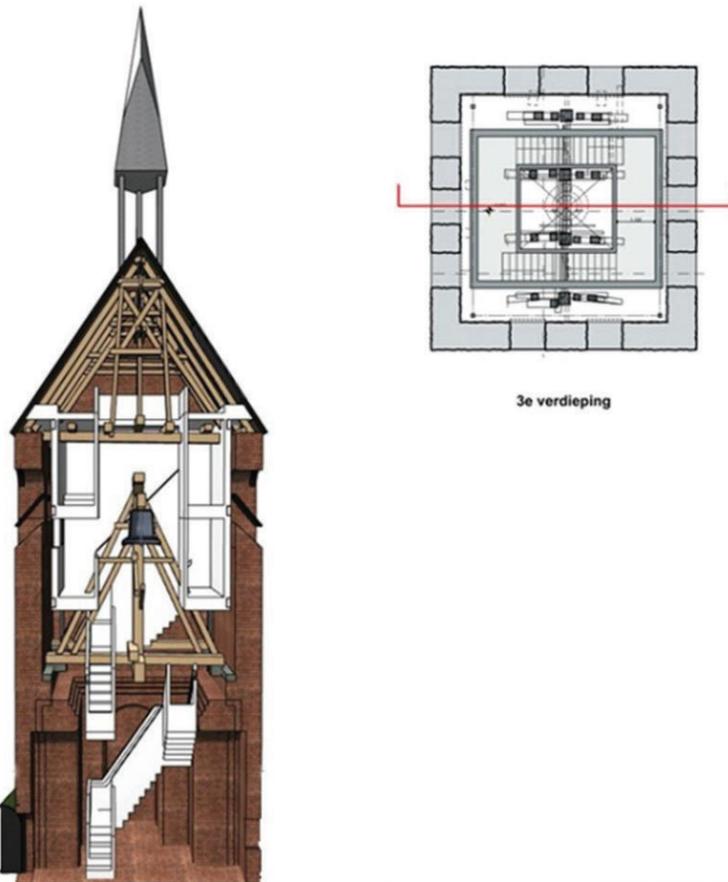


Fig. 2. Adaptation project of the church tower in Garmerwolde for exhibition functions. Cross-section and projection (source: MX13 design materials)

Il. 2. Projekt adaptacji wieży przykościelnej w Garmerwolde na funkcje wystawiennicze. Przekrój i rzut (źródło: materiały projektowe pracowni MX13)

MX13, a Dutch architectural studio. The exhibition concept comprises three facilities (the newly designed building, the church and the church tower). The new building, the so-called Kerkhörn, houses an information desk, an exhibition room and educational rooms. The highlight of the event is the exhibition held in the tower, which depicts eight important Christian and Islamic holidays. The exhibition is authored by the 212 Fahrenheit studio. The inside of the tower houses a staircase, about 20 m high, which winds around the bell structure (Figs. 2, 3). In this way, a visitor takes a walk around the bell and the clock structure. The bell dates back to 1604, whereas the clockwork originated in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1990s, the clock mechanism was repaired and electrified [19].

The MX13 studio designed the exhibition in such a way as to prevent it from interfering with the heritage and historic value of the tower. Stairs and remaining devices are placed on an independent structure, so they can be removed with no trace at any time. The stairs, which are made of a wooden frame structure, are covered with a polyester finish which conceals all the technical elements.

### *The Church in Klein Wetsinge*

The Protestant church in the village of Klein Wetsinge was erected in 1840. In 2003, it was passed to SOGK by the Protestant community. Designed in a neoclassical style, the small hall church replaced two medieval congre-

gation churches in nearby villages, as the objects had been desolated and subsequently demolished. The analyzed object was built of red brick and covered with a gable roof with pantiles. The bell tower, designed in the form of a wooden superstructure, was crowned with an octagonal pointed cupola. The preserved original wooden pulpit probably originates from the old church in Wetsinge, whereas the organs, still functioning, were installed there no sooner than 1914 [20]. Both the pulpit (17<sup>th</sup> century) and the organs (18<sup>th</sup> century) are regional products from various historical periods, prior to than the construction of the church. The aforementioned elements of the church equipment symbolically link the present with the past and strengthen the sense of identity of the local community (Fig. 4). The building, which was entered in the register of monuments on July 22, 1998 (registration number 510816), was rundown and required a major renovation.

In 2014, the former reformed congregation church was fully renovated. The decision was guided by the idea to create a meeting place for the inhabitants of the village, with only 45 residents as of 2019<sup>7</sup>. The former church now became a center for cultural events such as lectures, various performances and concerts, as well as weddings and other celebrations. Situated at the intersection of two

<sup>7</sup> The population decreased by 25 percent compared to 2013, when it had amounted to 60 [21].



Fig. 3. A photograph following the implementation of the project in the tower in Garmerwolde, July 2020  
(source: design materials of the MX13 studio)

Il. 3. Zdjęcie po realizacji projektu w wieży w Garmerwolde, lipiec 2020  
(źródło: materiały projektowe pracowni MX13)



Fig. 4. View of the interior of the former church in Klein Wetsinge towards the porch. Condition before renovation, 2011 (source: [20])

Il. 4. Widok wnętrza dawnego kościoła w Klein Wetsinge w kierunku kruchty. Stan przed remontem, 2011 (źródło: [20])

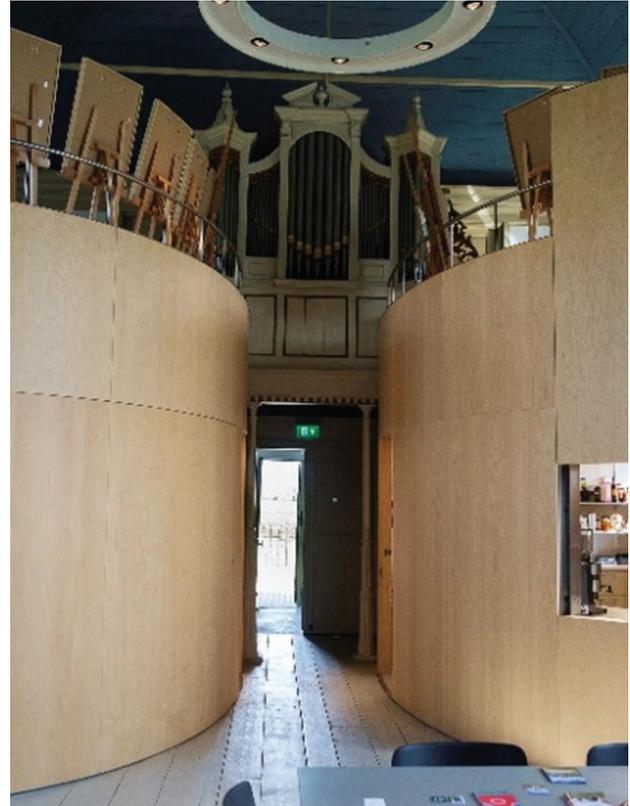


Fig. 5. View of the interior of the former church in Klein Wetsinge towards the porch, 2019  
(photo by M. Arno)

Il. 5. Widok wnętrza dawnego kościoła w Klein Wetsinge w kierunku kruchty, 2019 (fot. M. Arno)

bicycle routes to Groningen, the church also functions as an information and gastronomic center, as well as a viewing point.

The new church space was designed by J.O.N.G. Architecten, a Dutch architectural studio. The architects incorporated two kiosks on the oval plan into the nave. The kiosks house a kitchen and a small meeting room (Fig. 5). Interior lighting fixtures provide a modern element of the equipment. The round shape of the chandeliers is a reference to the rounded shape of the vault [22]. Simple tables and black chairs make it easy to adapt the interior to particular needs. During the renovation of the church, all historical elements were refurbished – the pulpit still towers over the interior, as it occupies a central place in the space of the nave. During the renovation, features such as a new sound system and underfloor heating were installed. Sanitary rooms were also arranged in the entrance area. Above the choir, a wooden footbridge was designed on the first floor. It leads to a panoramic viewpoint (window) located in the roof slope (Fig. 6).

The adaptation project of the former Klein Wetsinge church interiors was awarded with the BNA architectural Prize for the best building of 2016 in the category “Best Building of the Year 2016” (category “Liveability and Social Cohesion”) [23]. As stated in the jury’s verdict, the appreciated features included not only the adaptation of

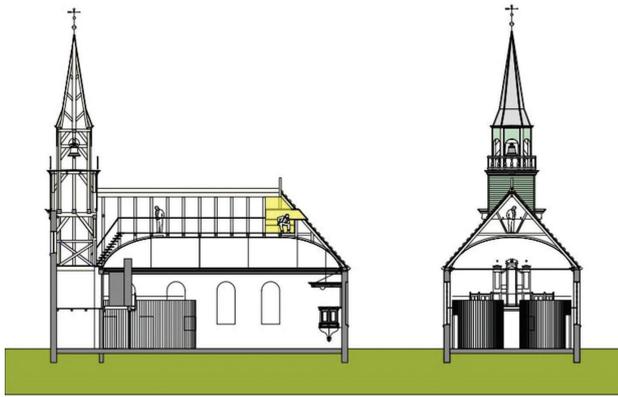


Fig. 6. A project to adapt the interior of the former church in Klein Wetsinge to cultural, gastronomic and tourist functions.

Longitudinal and cross section

(source: design materials of the J.O.N.G. Architecten studio)

Il. 6. Projekt adaptacji wnętrza dawnego kościoła w Klein Wetsinge do funkcji kulturalnych, gastronomicznych i turystycznych.

Przekrój podłużny i poprzeczny

(źródło: materiały projektowe pracowni J.O.N.G. Architecten)

the interior to secular functions, but also exposition of the value of the place and the emphasis of the historic values of the building.

### *The Church in Leegkerk*

Rebuilt in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the medieval church in Leegkerk, with 75 inhabitants as of today – is located west of the city of Groningen, amidst the fields and meadows typical of the Groningen countryside landscape. The church was built for the Roman Catholic community but in 1594 it was handed over to Protestants [24]. Therefore, the original interior layout and equipment changed. Around 1550,



Fig. 7. View of the interior of the former church in Leegkerk towards the presbytery.

Condition prior to renovation, 2012 (source: [24])

Il. 7. Widok wnętrza dawnego kościoła w Leegkerk w kierunku prezbiterium.

Stan przed remontem, 2012 (źródło: [24])

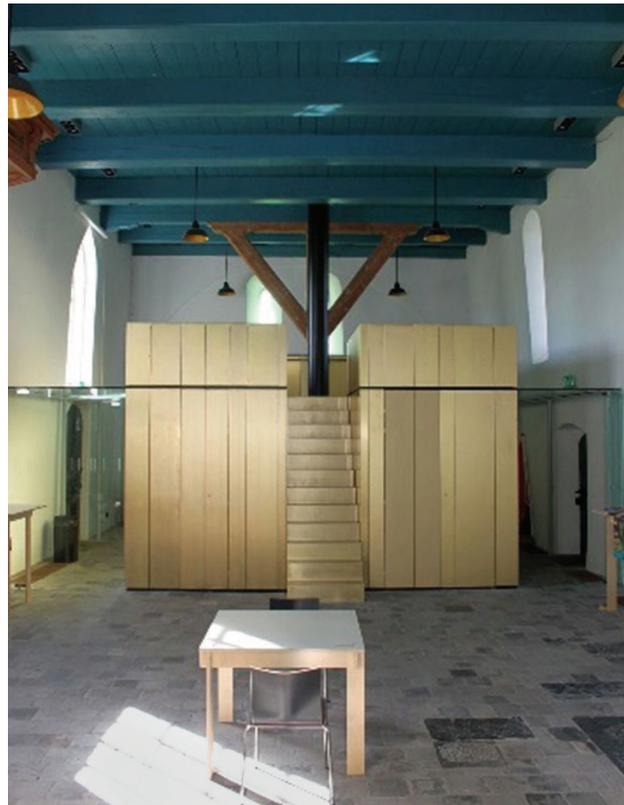


Fig. 8. View of the interior of the former church in Leegkerk, towards the church porch, 2019 (photo by M. Arno)

Il. 8. Widok wnętrza dawnego kościoła w Leegkerk w kierunku kruchty, 2019 (fot. M. Arno)

a 3.5-meter high wall with an arcaded passageway was built between the nave and the presbytery. A panel with the Decalogue written on it was placed on the wall. The only elements which recall the Roman Catholic rite include the sacramental niche at the entrance to the building and the piscina dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the wall paintings [25, p. 63].

The last liturgy of the Protestant community was held here in 1965. The church was deemed redundant due to the decreasing number of church-goers and the inability to maintain the object. In 1969, the building was in very bad technical condition, which was one of the reasons for establishing the SOGK foundation. In 1970, the church was passed to the foundation by the Protestant community for a symbolic amount of 1 gulden [20]<sup>8</sup>. In the years 1970–1973, the building was thoroughly renovated and refurbished. The church appearance and décor dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century were largely restored by removing various elements from the 16<sup>th</sup>-century reconstruction period (Fig. 7). Some of the windows were replaced, the western wall was plastered, the entrance towards the east (introduced in 1910) was bricked up, whereas the original entrance towards the south was reopened [24]. The church became a place of occasional cultural events. The building

<sup>8</sup> Dutch guilder – the currency of the Netherlands from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to 2002. 1 guilder = 100 cents.

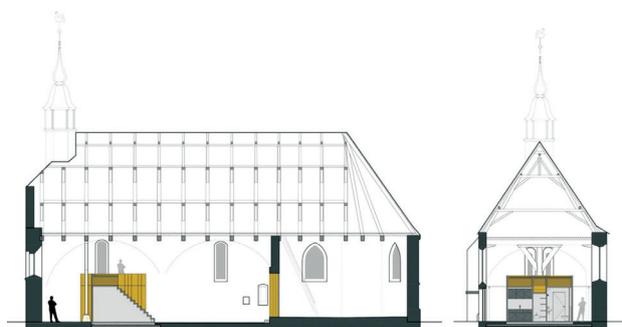


Fig. 9. Project of adapting the interior of the former church in Leegkerk to cultural and gastronomic functions. Longitudinal and cross section (source: AWG Architekten design materials)

Il. 9. Projekt adaptacji wnętrza dawnego kościoła w Leegkerk do funkcji kulturalnych i gastronomicznych. Przekrój podłużny i poprzeczny (źródło: materiały projektowe pracowni AWG Architekten)

was entered in the register of monuments on November 9, 1971 (registration no. 18755).

In 2013, a major renovation was conducted and the church was adapted to cultural needs and events such as weddings, meetings and concerts. The interiors were designed by Jan Verrelst of AWG Architekten from Antwerp. The presbytery and the nave were separated by a double door, the pulpit from 1647 was retained (it was moved to the opposite wall). Also the plaque with the Decalogue from 1653 located above the passage between the nave and the presbytery, as well as tombstones were preserved.

A golden cube with a side of 6 m with a kitchen and sanitary facilities was designed in the main nave. The cube was intersected with stairs leading to the observation deck with which the object was enclosed (Fig. 8). The golden color of the cube cladding – an alloy of copper and aluminum was chosen for a reason. On the one hand, its task was to illuminate the interior by reflecting light, and on the other – it was to symbolize the sacred [26].

In 2013, the project to revitalize the church in Leegkerk won the audience award in the Grote Groninger Building Survey 2013 in the adaptation category (Fig. 9).

## Conclusions

The adaptation of abandoned religious buildings provides a possibility of preserving their heritage for future generations. The optimal solution is to combine the new function with the identity of a given place and its values, both historical and cultural ones. The adaptation phenomenon is by no means a new solution, characteristic only of our times. During the Reformation in the present-day Netherlands, a significant part of previously Roman Catholic churches were passed to Protestants. This fact led to changes in interior design of these objects and their adaptation to the needs of a different liturgy.

The Netherlands has been selected as a country where the phenomenon of church adaptation is widespread. Numerous examples of adaptation performed there can help architects, conservators, historians and owners of sacral objects in other countries in the analysis of the phenomenon and may offer a chance for implementation of selected solutions.

Thanks to the activities of the SOGK foundation, the desolated and rundown churches have gained a new function and recipients. Due to the cooperation and commitment of the local community, the new functionality of the church raises no objections from the inhabitants. The objects perform other functions – as cultural venues, tourist spots, places of meetings and integration of residents. The churches, in their new function, contribute to the promotion of the Groningen Province, which significantly increases the attractiveness of the region to tourists. It is important to mention that all the interference into the historic tissue in the form of new layers are not permanent and can easily be removed. New elements may be dismantled, in order to restore the original sacral function to the buildings.

Unlike secular objects, sacral buildings, whose function is unique, require an individual approach to the issue of transformation, modernization and adaptation. Adaptation and modernization of churches force designers to pay attention not only to the aesthetic value of the preserved tissue, but also to the elements and spatial arrangements related to the original function of the objects.

Translated by  
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## Abstract

### *New functions of rural sacral buildings in the Groningen province, The Netherlands*

Religious buildings are an important element of the European cultural heritage. The aim of the article was to show that due to secularization of Europe, adaptation of religious buildings to other functions becomes a necessity. Their owners (Church institutions), architects, conservators and historians are facing the dilemma: how to preserve the building or transform it so that it can have a different function.

The article presents the issue of restoration and adaptation of historic sacral buildings to other purposes. Most Western European countries are struggling with the problem of a constantly growing number of unused churches, most of which are historic buildings of high historical and architectural value, but also of cultural and social value. This issue is particularly evident in the Netherlands, where, due to the lack of church-goers and the excessive maintenance cost, churches are purchased by private persons or institutions and transformed into cultural, residential or service facilities.

The author presented and discussed the cooperation of the Stichting Oude Groninger Kerken foundation, which, together with architectural studios, provides for abandoned religious buildings in the Groningen province. This cooperation resulted in the creation of many attractive projects for adaptation of old churches. Abandoned and rundown buildings have gained a new life. Three adaptation projects seem particularly interesting: in Garmerwolde, Klein Wetsinge and Leegkerk. They were transformed into cultural, tourist, meeting and integration facilities. With their new function, the former churches contribute to the promotion of the province of Groningen, which significantly increases the attractiveness of the region to tourists.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the adaptation of abandoned sacred buildings is one of the possibilities to preserve the religious heritage for future generations. The optimal solution is to combine the new function with the identity of a given place, its historical, cultural and sacred value.

**Key words:** adaptation, former churches, religious heritage, The Netherlands

## Streszczenie

### *Nowe funkcje wiejskich budowli sakralnych w prowincji Groningen w Holandii*

Obiekty sakralne to ważny element dziedzictwa kulturalnego Europy. Celem artykułu było pokazanie, że z powodu laicyzacji Europy adaptacja obiektów sakralnych na inne funkcje staje się koniecznością. Ich właściciele (instytucje kościelne), architekci, konserwatorzy oraz historycy stają przed problemem, jak zachować obiekt bądź przekształcić go na inną funkcję.

W artykule poruszono problem rewaloryzacji i adaptacji zabytkowych obiektów sakralnych do innych celów. Większość krajów Europy Zachodniej boryka się z problemem stale rosnącej liczby nieużytkowanych świątyń, z których większość jest obiektami zabytkowymi o wysokiej wartości nie tylko historycznej i architektonicznej, ale również kulturowej i społecznej. Szczególnie jaskrawo problem ten widać w Holandii, gdzie wskutek braku wiernych i zbyt dużych kosztów utrzymania kościoły nabywają osoby prywatne lub instytucje, by przekształcić je w obiekty kulturowe, mieszkaniowe lub usługowe.

Autorka przedstawiła i omówiła współpracę fundacji Stichting Oude Groninger Kerken – opiekującej się opuszczonymi obiektami sakralnymi w prowincji Groningen – z pracownikami architektonicznymi. Współpraca ta zaowocowała powstaniem wielu atrakcyjnych projektów adaptacji dawnych świątyń. Opuszczone i popadające w ruinę kościoły zyskały nowe życie. Szczególnie interesujące wydają się trzy projekty adaptacji: w Garmerwolde, Klein Wetsinge oraz Leegkerk. Przekształcono je na obiekty pełniące funkcje kulturalne, turystyczne, miejsca spotkań i integracji mieszkańców. Kościoły w swojej nowej funkcji przyczyniają się do promocji prowincji Groningen, znacznie zwiększając atrakcyjność regionu dla turystów.

Podsumowując, należy podkreślić, że adaptacja opuszczonych budynków sakralnych jest jedną z możliwości zachowania dziedzictwa dla przyszłych pokoleń. Optymalnym rozwiązaniem jest połączenie nowej funkcji z tożsamością danego miejsca, jego wartością historyczną, kulturową i sakralną.

**Słowa kluczowe:** adaptacja, dawne kościoły, dziedzictwo religijne, Holandia