

Anna Tejszerska*

***Gothic church of Saint Lawrence in Gniezno:
interwar expansion according to the plans
of Lucjan Michałowski
and contemporary continuation of the project***

Abstract

The article is devoted to the history of transformations of the Gothic church of St Lawrence in Gniezno. Particular emphasis was given to the church's extension carried out in the 1930s following the design by Poznań architect Lucjan Michałowski (1883–1943). The research was based on historical studies, archival documentation of two versions of the design (1924 and 1935), cost estimates, explanatory notes to the design, and related correspondence. In order to reconstruct the building's state before the extension an analysis was carried out of historical studies, plans presenting the earlier concept of the temple's enlargement undertaken at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, and photographic documentation from that period. Use was also made of the documentation made available to the author concerning the ongoing renovation of the church in which the unfinished pre-war elements of Michałowski's interior design are now being completed. An on-site inspection was conducted to check which parts of the comprehensive design, including the church's furnishings, were actually implemented. Additionally, the paper includes fragments of writings explaining the ideas that guided the architect in developing his concept. The project under discussion is presented in the context of contemporary debates on the conservation and transformation of historic buildings.

Key words: Lucjan Michałowski, interwar architecture, church expansion, Gniezno, church of Saint Lawrence

Introduction

In the history of architecture, the expansion of historic religious buildings was a common phenomenon, allowing at least some of the original structures to survive. In the Second Polish Republic, significant population growth, and thus an increase in the number of parishioners, forced decisions to be made either to build new churches or to expand existing ones. At the same time, a backlog was cleared that had arisen due to the difficulty of obtaining the necessary permits during the period of partitions (Kumor 1980, 665, 666; Jabłoński 2002, 7–28; Tejszerska 2019, 30). The expansion of historic churches became the focus of conservation debates and discussions among architectural theorists and active designers. Attempts were made to give this

practice the right direction, to define at least general rules of conduct in line with the emerging conservation doctrine (Cybichowski 1928; Szyszko-Bohusz 1912/1913; Tomkowicz 1901, 59; 1912; Muczkowski 1912, 21; Dettloff 2006).

The article is devoted to the interwar extension of the Gothic church of St Lawrence in Gniezno, designed by Poznań architect Lucjan Michałowski (1883–1943). The first was obtaining access to the project documentation compiled by Lucjan Michałowski, together with fragments of correspondence related to this investment¹. The second is the ongoing restoration of the church, with plans to complete the unrealised parts of the pre-war design.

¹ At this point, the author would like to express her sincere gratitude to Mr Piotr Michałowski for sharing materials preserved in his family archive. Unless otherwise stated, all excerpts from Lucjan Michałowski's writings quoted in this article come from the private collection of Piotr Michałowski (file no. 6).

* ORCID: 0000-0001-7872-4496. Faculty of Architecture, Białystok University of Technology, Poland, e-mail: anna.tejszerska@pb.edu.pl

The author's aim was to collect, verify, systematise and share the fullest possible range of information concerning the history of St Lawrence's Church, with particular emphasis on the changes proposed and implemented as part of the reconstruction carried out by Michałowski, and to present the issue in the light of the conservation debates taking place at the time.

The research was based on archival materials – project documentation (drawings, cost estimates, etc.)², correspondence, as well as old diocesan schematics helpful in reconstructing unexplored pages of the church's history. The in situ research enabled a comparative analysis of the design drawings with their implementation, both in terms of architectural form and the temple's furnishings. The work was greatly aided by information and materials obtained from the local heritage conservationist and the architect responsible for the ongoing renovation of the object.

State of research

The Church of St Lawrence – one of the oldest churches located around the medieval stronghold of the first Polish capital – is mentioned in the *Liber beneficiorum* by Bishop Jan Łaski (1456–1531), published four hundred years later in a study by Father Jan Korytkowski (de Lasco 1880, 11–13)³ and in *Brevis descriptio* (Korytkowski 1888, 33, 34), which presents basic information about the Catholic churches of the diocese according to the state of knowledge at the time. Equally important is the four-volume catalogue of monuments published during the period of partition and compiled by Julius Kohte (1861–1945), which covers the province of Poznań at that time. In addition to brief descriptions of the form and history of the church, it also includes drawings of its floor plans (Kohte 1897, 129). Subsequent studies on individual churches of the metropolis relied heavily on the aforementioned works and often replicated the information they contain. This is also the case with St Lawrence's Church. Individual references to the building appear in publications cited in the article concerning broader issues, including the history of architecture in the region (Maluśkiewicz 2008; Tomala 2007). The beginnings of the temple's history are described in the article by Michał Muraszko (2013). A concise presentation of the building and its history, extending into the 20th century, is provided in the *Katalog zabytków sztuki w Polsce* [Catalogue of Art Monuments in Poland] (Ruszczyńska, Sławska 1963, 68). The matter of the church's enlargement in the interwar period, which is the main topic of the present study, is mentioned in a single sentence.

History of the church building

The Church of St Lawrence is one of the oldest churches in the first capital of Poland. In the early Middle Ages, in the area of present-day Gniezno, apart from the cathedral

located in the outer bailey and St George's Church within the castle walls, both built in the 10th century, there were four churches serving the faithful living in the settlements surrounding the castle. These were: Church of the Holy Cross in the northern settlement on Lake Bielidło (also called Lake Świętokrzyskie) (see in more detail: Muraszko 2012), the church of St Peter in Piotrow (Zajezerze), situated to the west of the stronghold, St Michael's Church located by the road leading to Kruszwica and the Church of St Lawrence, belonging to the trading site located in the south. The temples situated around the stronghold also included the Church of St John the Baptist, built outside the settlement area (Skwierczyński 1996, 9, 10). All these temples were built between the 11th and mid-13th centuries. Their exact dating is often uncertain or difficult to determine.

Korytkowski's schematism states that the ancient church of St Lawrence was supposedly founded by the courtiers of Bolesław Chrobry⁴. This dating can also be based on information contained in a footnote to the reprint of *Liber beneficiorum*, stating that [...] *According to oral tradition, this church was built and endowed by the courtiers of King Bolesław Śmiały* (de Lasco 1880, 11). Both versions come from publications by the same author⁵. Does this suggest that 19th-century tradition preserved two versions of the events, or rather that Korytkowski, in one of his publications, confused the ruler's epithet? It is difficult to determine with certainty whether either version corresponds to historical reality. Some sources repeat it, other authors question it (cf. Muraszko 2013, 29). In the diocesan schematism of Father Stanisław Kozierowski, it can be read that the church [...] *was founded and endowed by the owners of Ludziska (the Symon family, descendants of Degnon of Oćwieka?) in the 1st half of the 13th century* (1934, 49). The first reliable source referring to the church dates back to 1255, when Prince Bolesław the Pious issued a foundation charter for the town of Kłecko (de Lasco 1880, 11; Korytkowski 1888, 33)⁶.

Father Korytkowski states that the church, originally wooden, was probably rebuilt and erected in brick in the 16th century (1888, 33). It is well known that in mid-1331, during the Teutonic Knights' invasion, the church and the suburb to which it belonged were set on fire and completely destroyed (Galewski⁷ 1929, 43). The construction of the brick temple is therefore most likely a more or less direct result of this fact. Originally, it was a single-nave building with a massive western tower located on the northern side of the body, covered with a low tented roof. The unplastered brick walls of the western elevation and the tower, built in Polish bond, testify to the church's medieval origins, as do the north-western buttresses at the junction of the nave and the tower, which serve to reinforce the structure. Three tall, clearly visible window openings in the façade, crowned with

² The photographs and scans of design drawings included in this article were taken by the author of this article.

³ The author of the 16th-century *Liber beneficiorum* is Primate Jan Łaski, but what is most important in this work are the extensive comments that Korytkowski added to the reprint of the manuscript published in 1880.

⁴ *Eccl. S. Laurentii M. mur. antiqua, quae ab aulicis Boleslai Chrobry, Regis Polon., exstructa et dotata esse dicitur* (Korytkowski 1888, 33).

⁵ The quoted fragment comes not from the original *Liber beneficiorum*, but from Korytkowski's footnote.

⁶ It records the tithe belonging to the church from Kraiewo, one of the town's four districts (Muraszko 2013, 27).

⁷ In the cited edition of the guide, although it is only a supplemented reprint of Józef Galewski's 1924 publication, the author's name is not given.

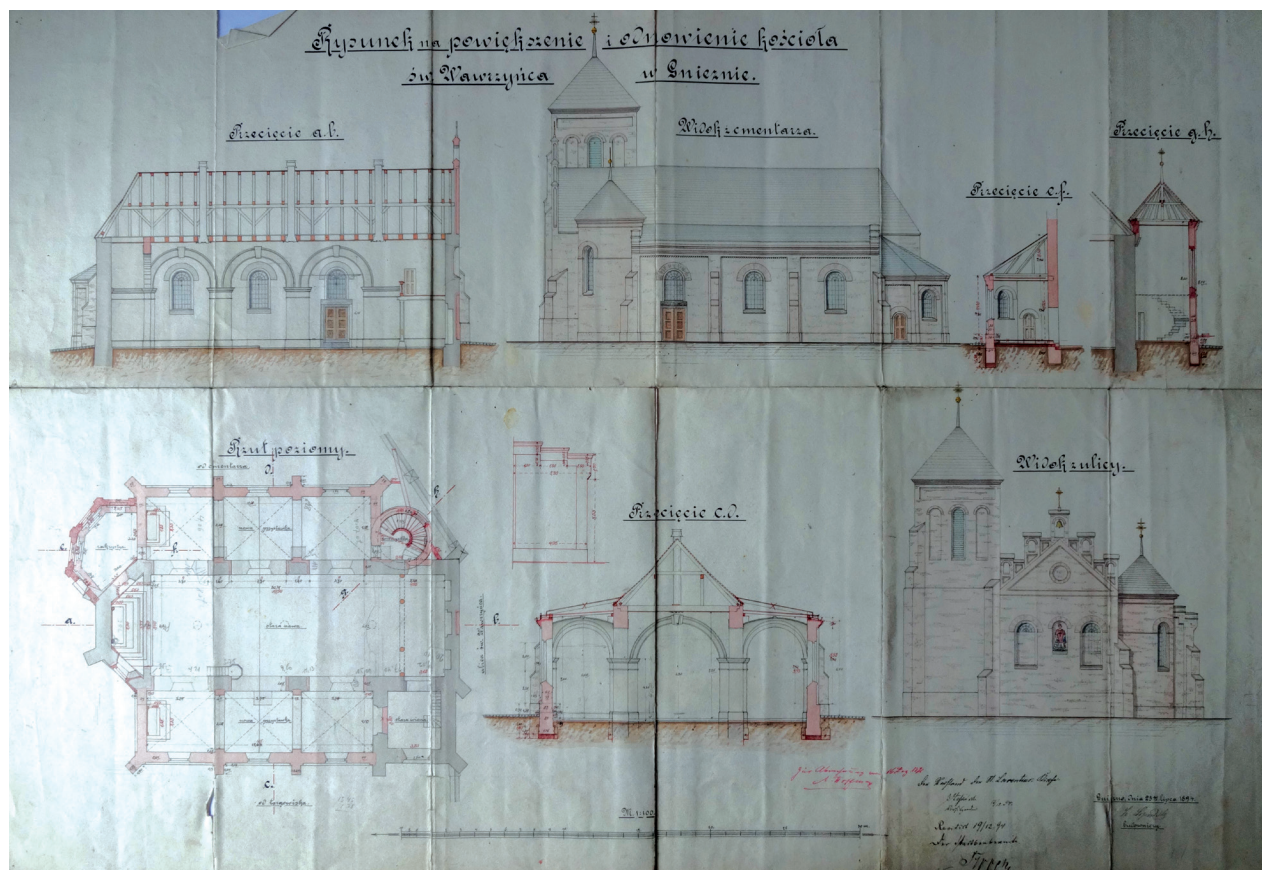


Fig. 1. Design for the extension of St Lawrence Church in Gniezno, 1894 (source: private collection of P. Michałowski, photo by A. Tejszerska)

Il. 1. Projekt powiększenia kościoła pw. św. Wawrzyńca w Gnieźnie, 1894 (źródło: zbiory prywatne P. Michałowskiego, fot. A. Tejszerska)

a semicircular arch and now bricked up, bear witness to the alterations made to the temple.

The church was desecrated and devastated by Napoleon's soldiers during their campaign against Moscow in 1812, and was then used as a granary. On 2 February 1817, following restoration work, it was returned to its religious purpose (de Lasco 1880, 11; Korytkowski 1888, 33, Ruszczyńska, Sławska 1963, 68). In the 19th century – from 1896 onwards – it was significantly expanded (Ruszczyńska, Sławska 1963, 68) according to a blueprint dated 1894 (Fig. 1). The building then gained three-bay, cross-vaulted side aisles in a hall layout, a low, round tower with stairs on the south side, and a sacristy adjacent to the chancel and the side aisle from the south-east. The central window opening in the façade was partially bricked up. There were also plans to transform its gable⁸. A guidebook to Gniezno from the late 1920s states

that the church was renovated [...] *in recent years thanks to the efforts of parish priest Father [Stanisław] Kubski (1876–1942)*⁹, who held this position between 1910 and 1917 (Galewski 1929, 43, 44). Thus, the expansion that began at the end of the 19th century continued for the next twenty years, until 1917, when the enlarged church was consecrated by the then suffragan bishop of Gniezno, Wilhelm Kloske (1852–1925) (cf. Rocznik 1929, 56).

When the expansion of the church began in 1893, the parish of St Lawrence had 3,423 members (Elenchus 1892, 15), while in 1924 it had 8,000 (Elenchus 1924, 19). Such a substantial increase in the number of parishioners meant that only seven years after the consecration, a decision was made to expand the church once again. The plans were commissioned from Lucjan Michałowski, a Poznań-based architect educated in Munich (1907).

Lucjan Michałowski – artist profile

Lucjan Michałowski gained professional experience under various mentors, including Raimund Jeblinger (1853–1937) during a one-year postgraduate internship (1907–1908) at the Archbishopal Building Department in Freiburg, which undoubtedly influenced the architect's later work, dominated

⁸ The Baroque-style gable visible in photographs taken before the reconstruction carried out in the 1930s does not correspond to the Gothic form presented in the 1894 design. It can be assumed that either the reconstruction which started at the end of the 19th century did not go according to plan, or that in later years certain changes were made which were not recorded in the sources, which seems less likely. In the 1840s, the church still had a simple brick triangular gable, as can be seen in an illustration from that period (Pasiel 1989, 167). Therefore, it seems unlikely that the Neo-Baroque gable was erected before the reconstruction at the end of the 19th century, and the design of the gable developed in 1894 (clearly marked as a new element in the cross-section) was intended to regothicise the building, which was not carried out.

⁹ Blessed of the Catholic Church, martyr, murdered in the Hartheim concentration camp.



Fig. 2. Design for the extension of St Lawrence Church in Gniezno (sketch), 1924 (source: private collection of P. Michałowski, photo by A. Tejszerska)

Il. 2. Projekt powiększenia kościoła pw. św. Wawrzyńca w Gnieźnie (szkic), 1924 (źródło: zbiory prywatne P. Michałowskiego, fot. A. Tejszerska)

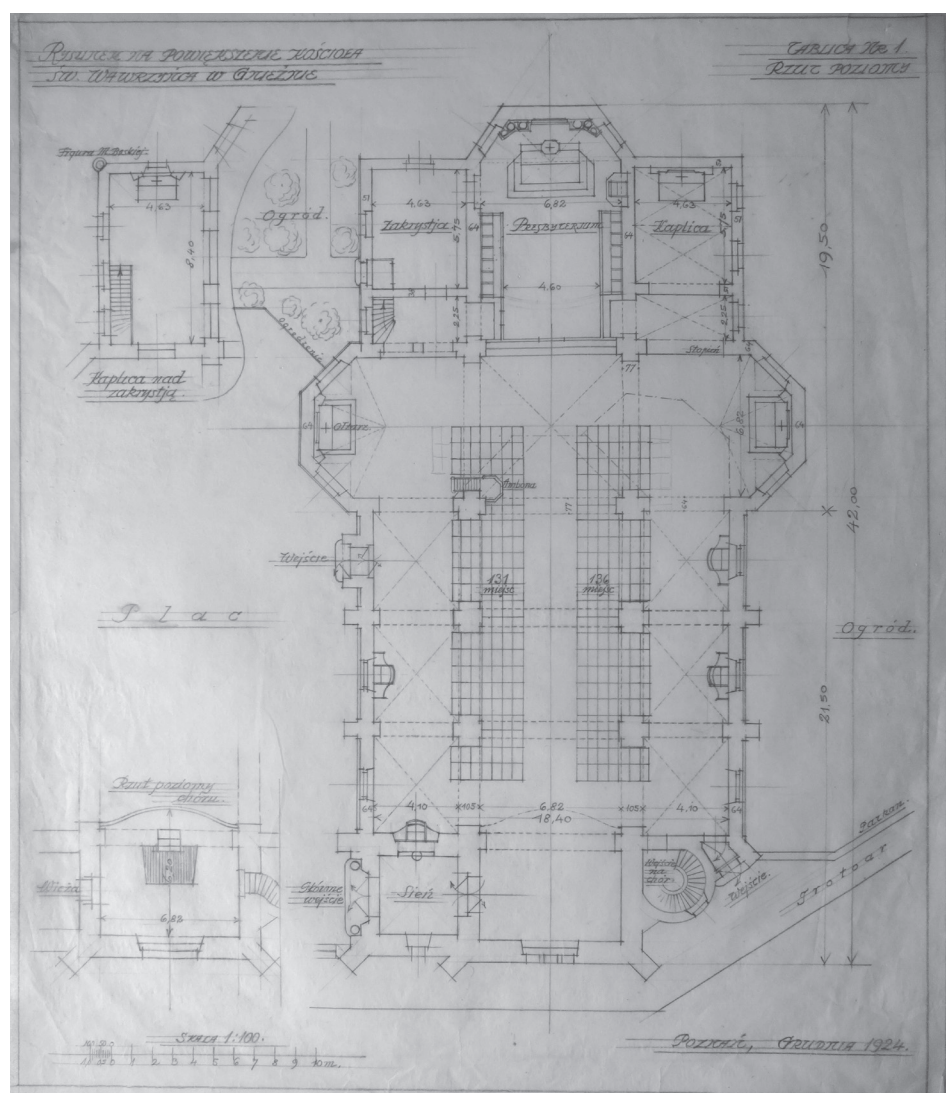


Fig. 3. Design for the extension of St Lawrence Church in Gniezno (plan), 1924 (source: private collection of P. Michałowski, photo by A. Tejszerska)

Il. 3. Projekt powiększenia kościoła pw. św. Wawrzyńca w Gnieźnie (rzut), 1924 (źródło: zbiory prywatne P. Michałowskiego, fot. A. Tejszerska)

by objects of a religious purpose. Upon his return to Poznań, he spent several years as an assistant to Stanisław Borecki (1855–1924) before becoming fully independent. It can be assumed that this collaboration introduced the then novice architect to the path of national romanticism, to which he remained faithful throughout his career. In addition to architectural structures, Michałowski designed numerous elements of church furnishings. He was also an art collector, draughtsman and painter. The architect was known to the clergy of Gniezno for his design work carried out since 1915 for St Michael's Church and the parish church of the Holy Trinity (since 1916), as well as for his designs for numerous tombstones in St Peter's Cemetery. He also completed a small commission in the form of a roadside cross design near St Lawrence's Church (1915)¹⁰.

At the time of the project's implementation (1935–1936) Michałowski already had almost thirty years of design experience, mainly in the field of sacred architecture. His achievements included designs for the construction or extension of churches in Rogów (1932–1934), Domachowo (1928–1931)¹¹, and Ludziska (1932–1935), while at the same time working on the reconstruction of the church in Brześć nad Gopłem (1935–1936). They are all part of the Neo-Baroque “national style” trend, characteristic of the period when these designs were created (cf. Stefański 2000). Throughout the decade from 1929 to 1939, Michałowski carried out projects to enlarge and furnish the church in Kłecko. This project is most closely related to St Lawrence's Church due to the medieval origins of the Kłecko temple and, as in the case of the previously mentioned buildings, due to the Neo-Baroque form of the added sections, which is maintained in the national romanticism spirit.

Extension of the church in the interwar period

The project to enlarge St Lawrence's Church in Gniezno was developed by Michałowski in two stages. The first architectural plans were drawn up in 1924 (Figs. 2, 3). Correspondence concerning the development of the concept also dates from this period. The slightly modified version that was ultimately implemented (Figs. 4, 5) was created a decade later. Correspondence concerning the details of the project dates back to 1935. In March, the architect provided the parish with a complete set of cost estimates for masonry, carpentry, roofing and tinsmithing works, as well as a list of timber and other materials. The design plans were approved by the provincial authorities in May 1935¹². An unrealised detailed design to raise the tower and change its spire to a Baroque style dates back to 1936. That same year, drawings of the interior furnishings were created.

The project to enlarge St Lawrence's Church involved extending the oriented temple towards the east and adding a transept, which increased the floor space from 290 to 580 m² and made it possible to accommodate 1,500

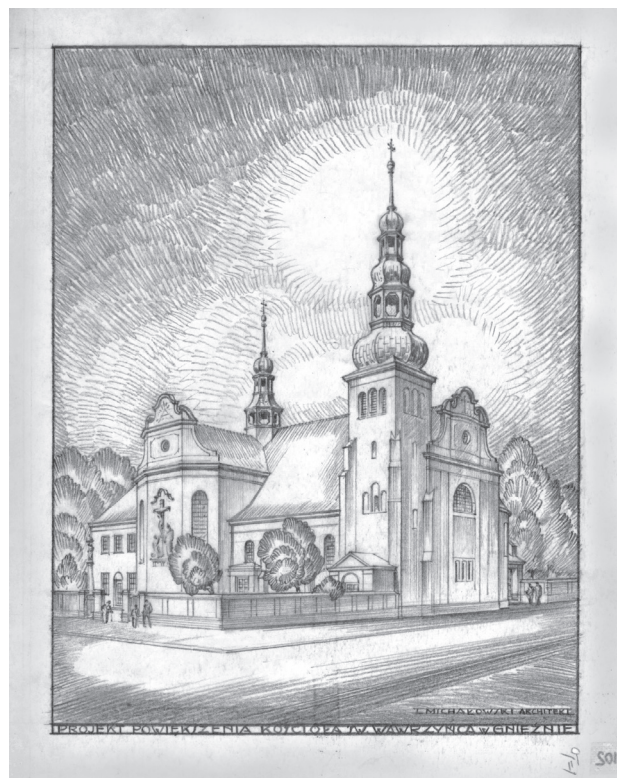


Fig. 4. Design for the extension of St Lawrence Church in Gniezno (sketch), 1935
(source: private collection of P. Michałowski, photo by A. Tejszerska)

Il. 4. Projekt powiększenia kościoła pw. św. Wawrzyńca w Gnieźnie (szkic), 1935
(źródło: zbiory prywatne P. Michałowskiego, fot. A. Tejszerska)

people¹³. The design also included interesting functional solutions for the interior. During the extension, the eastern wall of the chancel and the sacristy, added at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, were demolished. A new chancel was built, flanked on both sides by the sacristy and the chapel. A transept with three-sided gable ends was erected.

The floor in the old part of the church was raised, so were the walls of the nave (Fig. 6), and a barrel vault decorated with a simple Neo-Renaissance metalwork motif based on a Rabbit mesh and a new raised roof were installed¹⁴ (Fig. 7). A considerably higher Neo-Baroque gable was added to the western façade, while a vestibule was built in front of the northern side entrance¹⁵. A Mahra air heating system was used.

¹³ 300 seats and 1,190 standing places. Information based on manuscripts entitled: *Explanation of the design* and *Calculation of seats and entrances*.

¹⁴ A type of artificial vault popular at the beginning of the 20th century, based on a profiled metal mesh suspended from the ceiling (for further details see: Pająk 2009).

¹⁵ There are some doubts as to when the north-western porch, considered to be part of the extension from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries or from 1936, was built. In the 1924 design, the main entrance (under the tower) is not preceded by a porch. In the 1935 plans, however, the porch appears as an existing element. Michałowski devoted an entire design board (1935) to the shallow vestibule added to the side aisle in front of the side entrance. If the porch had been his work, he would certainly have done the same. It can therefore be assumed that either it was indeed built at the end of the 19th century, even though it was not included in the plans, and Michałowski, when creating the first concept

¹⁰ Piotr Michałowski's collection includes dated design drawings of altars and other furnishings from the churches mentioned above.

¹¹ A more detailed discussion is presented in Tejszerska (2023).

¹² Letters from L. Michałowski to the parish priest dated 25 March 1935 and 21 May 1935.

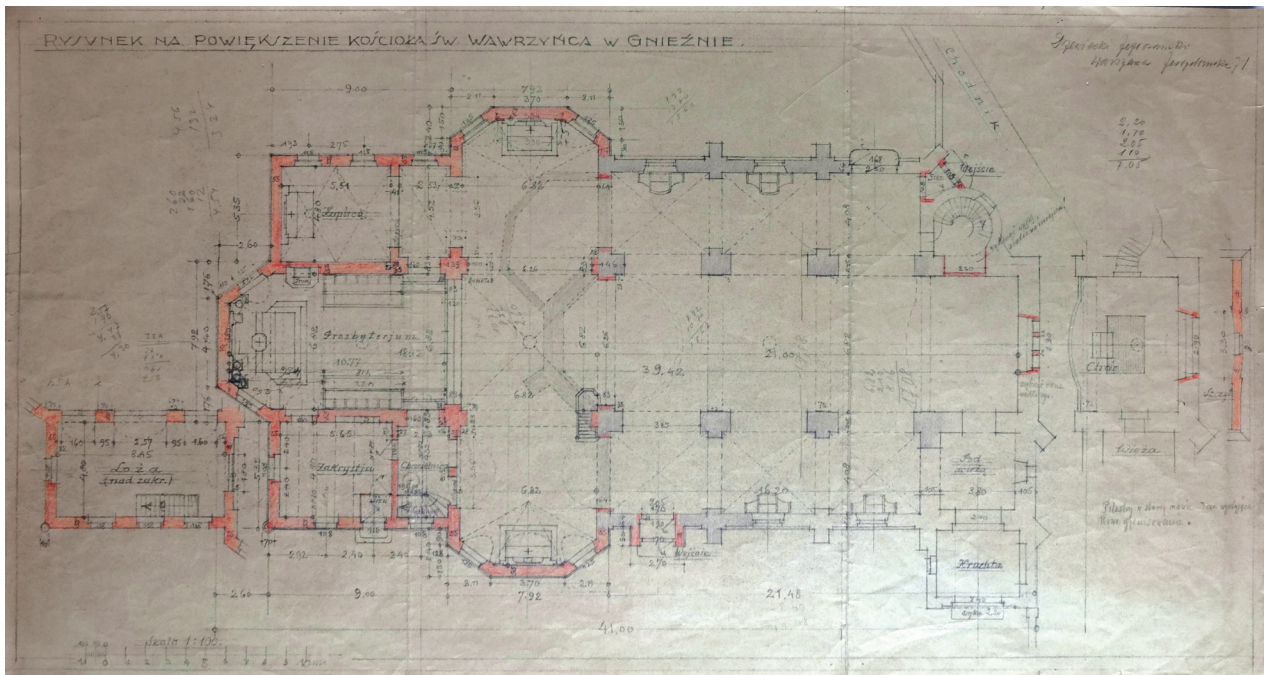


Fig. 5. Design for the extension of St Lawrence Church in Gniezno (plan), 1935 (source: private collection of P. Michałowski, photo by A. Tejszerska)

II. 5. Projekt powiększenia kościoła pw. św. Wawrzyńca w Gnieźnie (rzut), 1935 (źródło: zbiory prywatne P. Michałowskiego, fot. A. Tejszerska)

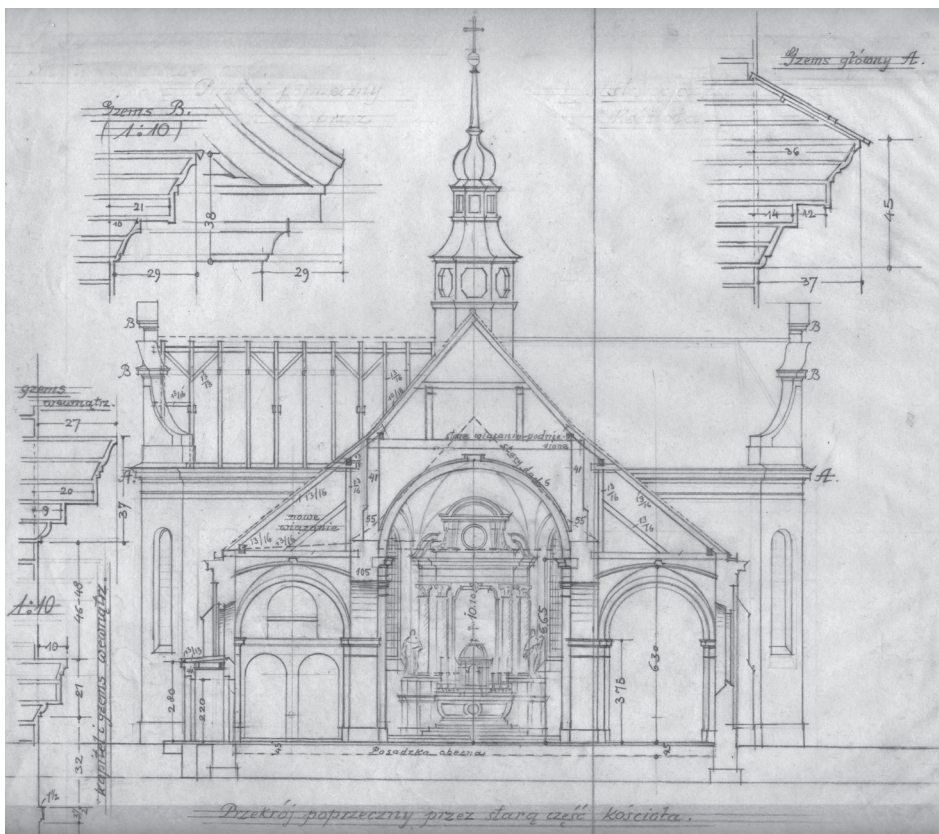


Fig. 6. Design for the extension of St Lawrence Church in Gniezno (section), 1935 (source: private collection of P. Michałowski, photo by A. Tejszerska)

II. 6. Projekt powiększenia kościoła pw. św. Wawrzyńca w Gnieźnie (przekrój), 1935 (źródło: zbiory prywatne P. Michałowskiego, fot. A. Tejszerska)

In a letter dated 26 August 1936, Father Józef Chilomer (1885–1942; parish priest of St Lawrence's Parish from

of the transformations, based his work on an incorrect, unverified floor plan, or it was built between 1924 and 1936.

1923 to 1942) informed the architect that the extended church had been inspected by the building police, mentioning at the same time that [...] it looks wonderful, everyone is delighted, and the Bishop said that we will have a beautiful and homely church.

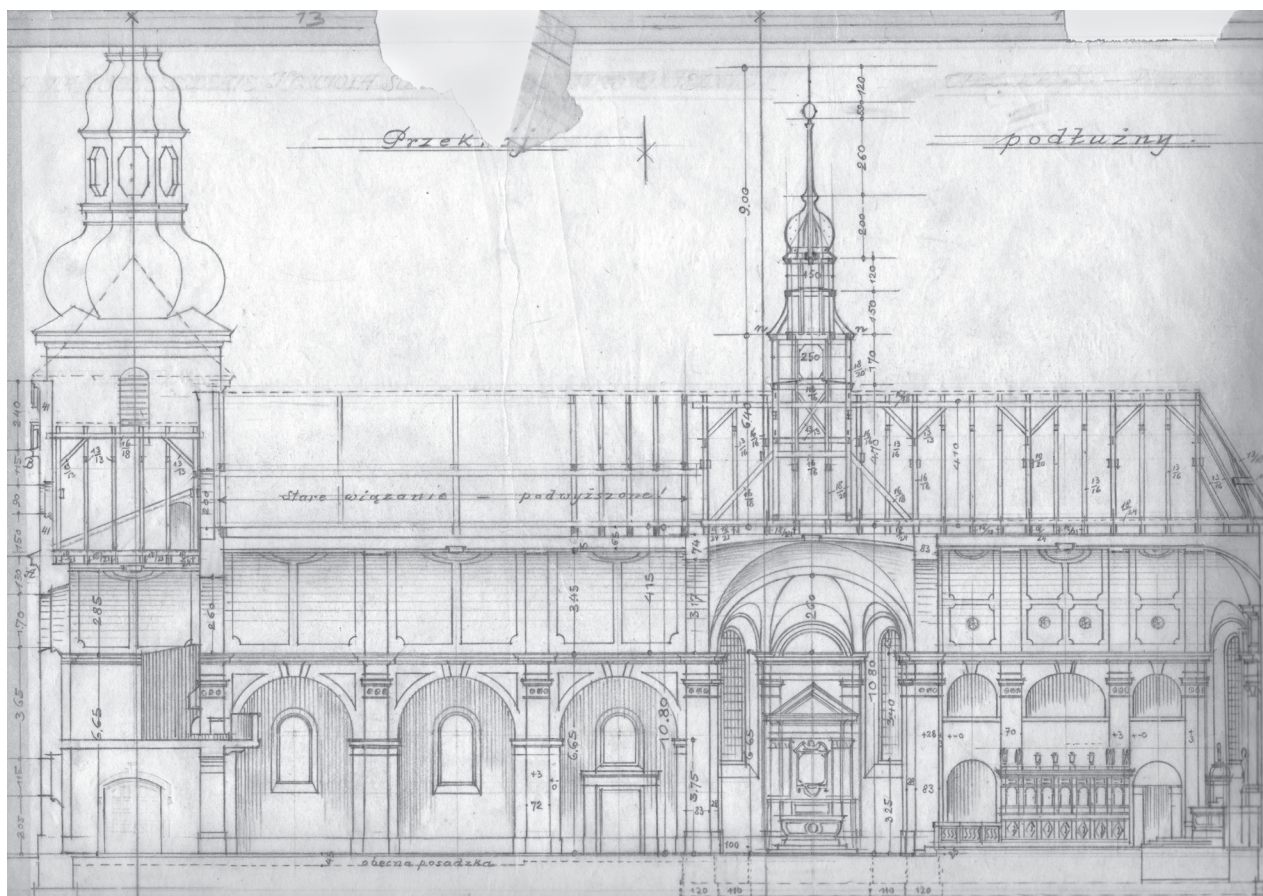


Fig. 7. Design for the extension of St Lawrence Church in Gniezno (longitudinal section), 1935
(source: private collection of P. Michałowski, photo by A. Tejszerska)

II. 7. Projekt powiększenia kościoła pw. św. Wawrzyńca w Gnieźnie (przekrój podłużny), 1935
(źródło: zbiory prywatne P. Michałowskiego, fot. A. Tejszerska)

Architectural form

The expanded church of Gothic origin, significantly changed its architectural shape. Preserved relics include the unplastered brick tower and the lower part of the façade with bricked-up window recesses¹⁶. Above them, in the raised wall of the façade, at the level of the former gable, a large thermal window was installed, *letting* [as the author wrote in the project description] *a beam of light into the main nave of the church*. A significant trace of the past visible from the street are two buttresses located in the corner of the tower and in the north-western corner of the nave¹⁷.

¹⁶ Before Michałowski's renovation, the side openings were glazed, while the central one – a narrower recess, partially walled up – served as a niche for the statue of St Lawrence.

¹⁷ Absence of the south-western buttress. In the drawings from 1924, the western elevation is flanked on both sides by corner Gothic buttresses. In the 1935 design, however, the southern buttress does not appear on any of the sheets, including the site plan, where the other buttresses are clearly marked. It is possible that in developing the 1924 concept, Michałowski relied on unverified plans from 1894, on which both buttresses are indicated. On one copy of the 1894 design the southern buttress is crossed out by hand (Fig. 3). A plausible, though undocumented, hypothesis is that it was dismantled during the alterations initiated in 1896, as its position conflicted with the tower added at that time. It is unlikely that

Unplastered elements of the object reveal Polish (Gothic) bond. In accordance with Michałowski's recommendation, the rest of the church's external walls, constructed as part of the last two expansions, was plastered (Fig. 8)¹⁸. The extensions were given a modernised Baroque outline, typical of the final phase in the formation of the Polish "National Style". In the local context of the Gniezno citiscape, this measure aligned the church with a whole series of sacred structures rooted in the Middle Ages and more or less clad in a Baroque style. Raising of the nave gave the interior a sense of spaciousness and, in its external perception, a sense of monumentality. A new Neo-Baroque gable of the façade served as a compositional link between the historical and extended parts thus ensuring a sense of cohesion with the form given to the gable walls of the transept (Fig. 9). Concern for the compositional unity of the extended objects is a distinctive trait of Michałowski's projects.

such work would have been carried out during the 1936 remodeling of the western façade without being recorded on any of the plans.

¹⁸ A drawing of the church made in the 1840s by Kajetan W. Kiliński, accompanied by a brief description of the materials, indicates that until the church's enlargement the entire façade, the tower, and the buttresses remained in brick, while the side walls were plastered (Pasciel 1989, 166, 167, fig. 137, 138).



Fig. 8. St Lawrence Church in Gniezno, north-west view
(photo by A. Tejszerska, 2024)

Il. 8. Kościół pw. św. Wawrzyńca w Gnieźnie,
widok od strony północno-zachodniej (fot. A. Tejszerska, 2024)



Fig. 9. St Lawrence Church in Gniezno, north transept gable wall,
in the photograph: Father Chilomer and the architect's wife
(source: private collection of P. Michałowski, photo by L. Michałowski)

Il. 9. Kościół pw. św. Wawrzyńca, ściana szczytowa transeptu
północnego, na fotografii ks. Chilomer i żona architekta
(źródło: zbiory prywatne P. Michałowskiego, fot. L. Michałowski)

The harmonious integration between the newly added and the existing parts of the building was also one of the key general requirements in the enlargement of churches. In his lecture dedicated to the extension of historical churches, Stefan Cybichowski, while warning against striving for stylistic homogeneity, stressed that [...] *the main emphasis should be placed on ensuring complete harmony and balance between the old structure and the newly added one* (Cybichowski 1928, 21). Michałowski likewise endeavoured to keep this balance in the 1924 project, maintained largely in the medieval spirit, with minor Neo-Baroque additions (the gable and the ridge turret).

Attention to compositional unity also influenced the decision to raise the tower in the 1935 design. During the works on both versions of the project (1924 i 1935), Michałowski approached it with particular attentiveness stemming from the recognition of the tower's historical significance. In the letter dated 4 November 1924, he wrote: *In sketching, constant attention had to be paid to the tower, ensuring that it did not come into direct contact with the tall roof of the nave or its gable, as it would otherwise lose its prominence*. In the Explanatory Note to the 1924 design he likewise emphasized: *The walls of the present church remain untouched. [...] The ridge of the main roof is kept at the same height as the cornice of the old tower, which is to be preserved unchanged [...]. Beside the tower, on the street side, a new gable considerably higher than the existing one [...] yet not so high as to diminish the tower's significance and proportions*.

In his concept of 1935, Michałowski decided to raise the tower and crown it with a Neo-Baroque dome stylistically integrated with the new gables of the façade and the transept. Its elevation to a height of 36 m, through the raising of the belfry storey, was intended to prevent a disruption of the proportions between it and the heightened nave, and appeared – as stated in the letter from 27 February 1935 – *necessary to harmonize the whole project*. The alteration of the tower, however, was never carried out.

Such an interference with the medieval structure hardly accords with contemporary conservation principles, yet for centuries historical buildings were altered to suit the needs and tastes of their users (Misiowski 2001, 272). The inter-war period, by contrast, was a time of gradual abandonment of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc's purist ideas, of ongoing doctrinal disputes among conservators, and of a shift toward a non-restrictive, individualized approach to monuments – particularly those that continued to serve their intended function.

The contemporary position of conservation science, [as Stanisław Tomkiewicz argued], may be summed up in a short phrase: the principal rule is – as few theoretical, absolute rules of procedure as possible [...] in practice, everything depends on prudence, sound judgment, and compromises (1912, 22, 23). *No principle can be applied absolutely in the practice of human works; if anything, the restoration of historic buildings, with their centuries-long histories and still in active use today, must consist of a hundred compromises* (Tomkiewicz 1901, 59). Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz, in turn, asserted that *every building must above all correspond to its practical purpose; and if it is to continue fulfilling that purpose – if it is not to become a mere mu-*

seum relic – it must, in many cases, undergo successive alterations, extensions, and additions (1912/1913, 6). *In the case of enlargement [...], of utility buildings requiring expansion, the modern additions should be executed in such a way as to harmonize artistically with the old structure – yet without obscuring the distinction between the new and the old* (Muczkowski 1912, 21).

The above instructions were implemented in many projects. In a broad survey of interwar undertakings, Paweł Dettloff observed that, indeed, one of the most common solutions employed in the enlargement of historic churches was to stylistically differentiate the new parts from the old (2006, 372). For Gothic churches, it was nearly standard practice to design the extensions in a Baroque idiom (eg. Kazanice, Jeżewo, Wojnicz). Dettloff also emphasizes that the choice of architectural style may have been influenced by the widespread perception of Baroque as a “Polish” style, particularly in the territories of the former Prussian partition (Dettloff 2006, 374). The expansion of St Lawrence’s Church in Gniezno thus fits into a broader formal and ideological context¹⁹.

Michałowski valued the historical significance of the monument and submitted his design proposals for consultation with the appropriate conservation authorities. After preparing the full set of design drawings, in a letter of 10 December 1924 he informed the parish priest of Gniezno: [...] *Yesterday I conferred with the Provincial Conservator, Dr Pajzderski*²⁰; *he has no objections and accepts the project, with only one request – that the main entrance to the tower be simplified*. With regard to the planned raising of the tower, a year before the detailed design was drawn up – on 27 February 1935 – the architect wrote: [...] *the inclusion [of the tower superstructure] is now necessary in order to secure the conservator’s approval*. In the available sources, there is no information as to why the project to raise the tower was abandoned. Perhaps the general objective of conservation was given precedence over the idea of stylistic coherence and compositional proportionality, in order to [...] *preserve monuments in a state as little altered as possible, in the most authentic condition*²¹ (Tomkiewicz 1912, 23). Perhaps to Gniezno came the echoes of the debate that arose around the words of Father Zygmunt Baranowski [...] *For historical reasons, one may preserve a mixture of styles; yet in the name of what slogans are Baroque additions imposed today upon Gothic churches? Is it only the Baroque that is granted the right to exist in our country? Is pure Gothic truly so intolerable that it must be curtailed and supplemented with Baroque forms?* (1930, 6). It is also possible that other, e.g., financial, reasons led to the abandonment of the project. Later dating of the detailed project of the tower and its spire (1936) and the omission of the works associated with it from the cost estimate from 1935 indicate that these plans were supposed

to be carried out at a later stage. Given that Michałowski intended to consult with the conservation officer regarding the project with the preliminarily sketched elevated tower in 1935, and developed detailed solutions toward the end of 1936, it is difficult to imagine that he did not receive the conservator’s approval. Moreover, all the boards of the project approved by the regional authorities in 1935, featuring the tower (view, cross-section, elevations), present it in its elevated form. It is, therefore, plausible that it was precisely economic reasons that prevented the project from being carried out before the outbreak of the World War II²².

Michałowski approached church design in a comprehensive manner. That is, apart from the architectural concept, he prepared drawings of multiple elements of the church furnishing. The letter of 25 November 1937 concerning, *nota bene*, the request for the payment of the architect’s fee, contains an enumeration of all the design works he executed for the parish. Besides the projects of the church expansion and the unrealized elevation of the tower the works also included: altar in the upper chapel, the main altar, altar for the Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, side altar in the transept, confessional, choir stalls, galleries, throne, the sacristy doorframe, and pews. Furthermore, the rectory, designed in the manor-house style, along with the garden, and the fence surrounding the church and the square.

A considerable number of the objects mentioned above was produced before the war, albeit not in the full scope. Currently, a hundred years after the first version of the project was created, Michałowski’s plans are being implemented as part of the renovation of the church.

An unusually interesting functional solution proposed by Michałowski was the creation of a baptismal chapel located in the corner between the chancel and the left side-nave, linked to both of the aforementioned spaces by open arcades. During the service, the priest could approach the baptismal font directly from the chancel, while the candidates for baptism would come up from the nave. Presently the arcades are bricked up and the space intended for the unrealized chapel is taken up by a utility room (Fig. 10). Plans have been drawn up to open the arcades and implement Michałowski’s concept.

Another unconventional solution proposed by Michałowski was the arrangement of the area above the baptismal chapel. It was designed as a gallery, open through arcades to the presbytery and the nave, intended to function as an additional chapel. A two-sided altar was designed for it, facing the nave on one side and the chapel’s interior on the other. The altar was created and placed in the previously designated location. The architectural detail, however, was not executed – namely the metal balustrade securing the arcades of the gallery, nor the balustrade along the stairs leading to the chapel, whose course, moreover, was given a slightly different alignment than that foreseen in the design. At present, the elements of architectural detail are to be carried out in accordance with the design based on Michałowski’s concept. It is also planned to complete the

¹⁹ It is worth mentioning here that its “baroquification” (introduced in the form of a new gable) began before the extension in the 1930s (cf. fn. 7).

²⁰ Nikodem Pajzderski (1882–1940) heritage conservator of the Poznań (from 1919) and Pomerania (from 1923) voivodships.

²¹ Although, as Ewa Łużyniecka (2013, 43) observes, the unambiguous definition of authenticity remains problematic to this day.

²² A few years earlier – in 1930 – Michałowski developed a design for adding a Neo-Baroque tower to the Gothic body of the church in Klecko, and this concept was realized.

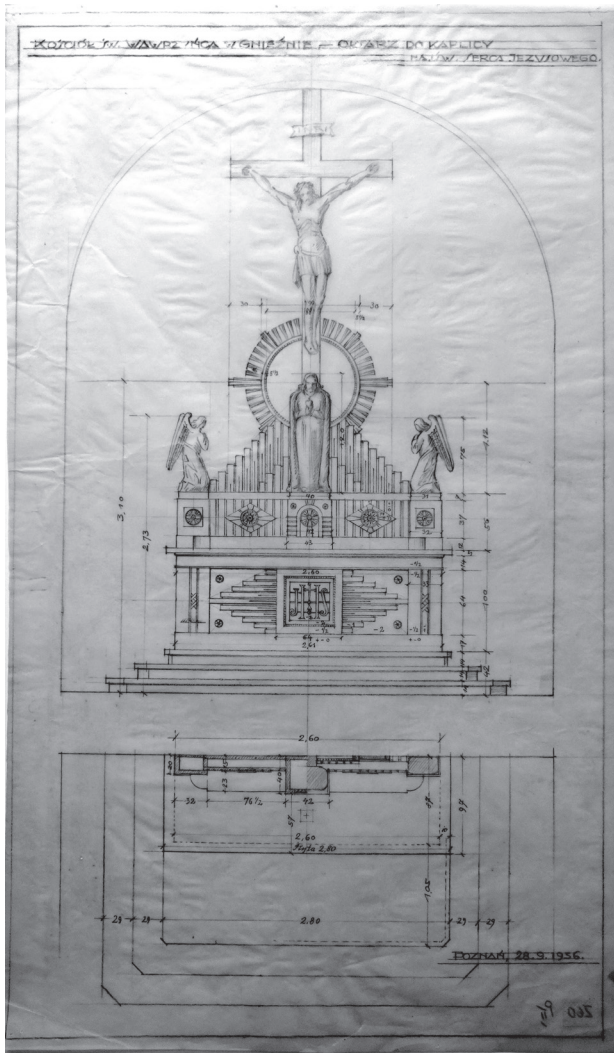


Fig. 10. Design for the Altar of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, 1936
(source: private collection of P. Michałowski,
photo by A. Tejszerska)

Il. 10. Projekt ołtarza Najświętszego Serca Pana Jezusa, 1936
(źródło: zbiory prywatne P. Michałowskiego,
fot. A. Tejszerska)

partially executed altar in the Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Fig. 11). As part of the renovation, the original colour scheme of the walls is also to be restored. In the church interior, exploratory stratigraphic probes – point-based and, in some areas, strip-based – were conducted to determine the original painted decoration.



Fig. 11. St Lawrence Church in Gniezno, interior, current state
(photo by A. Tejszerska, 2024)

Il. 11. Kościół pw. św. Wawrzyńca, wnętrze, stan obecny
(fot. A. Tejszerska, 2024)

Conclusion

Comparative studies and analyses of archival documents conducted within the research helped to substantially reconstruct the history of transformations of the Gniezno church. Nevertheless, some research gaps and unanswered questions still remain. The study of the architect's writings, mainly his letters and explanatory notes to the project, allowed for an understanding of the Michałowski's fundamental idea, which, following the advice of contemporary theorists, was aimed at attaining compositional unity in the extension of the temple. The Neo-Baroque form of the additions, typical of the author's projects and harmonized with the slightly transformed historic part, became a characteristic element of Gniezno's cultural landscape. Moreover, it also bears witness to methods of dealing with the historic structure. Besides providing the expected functional space, the church's extension supervised by Michałowski added monumentality to the body of the temple and shaped its contemporary character, typical for the interwar-period churches erected in the so-called "national style". The ongoing attempt to realize the unfinished elements of the project, if successfully completed, will make it possible to fully achieve the visual and functional integrity of the interior as originally intended by the architect. The realization of the final stage of reconstruction envisaged by Michałowski, namely the raising of the tower, is impossible under the present conservation doctrine, which diverges from that applied in the interwar period.

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Katarzyna Bednarska-Adamowicz

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Streszczenie

**Gotycki kościół pw. św. Wawrzyńca w Gnieźnie
– międzywojenna rozbudowa według planów Lucjana Michałowskiego i współczesna kontynuacja realizacji projektu**

Artykuł poświęcony jest historii przekształceń gotyckiego kościoła pw. św. Wawrzyńca w Gnieźnie, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem rozbudowy realizowanej w latach 30. XX w. według projektu poznańskiego architekta Lucjana Michałowskiego (1883–1943). Badania prowadzone były w oparciu o historyczne opracowania, archiwalną dokumentację dwu wersji projektu z 1924 i 1935 r., kosztorysy, objaśnienia do projektu i związaną z nim korespondencję. W celu odtworzenia stanu sprzed rozbudowy przeanalizowano opracowania historyczne, plansze prezentujące wcześniejszą koncepcję powiększenia świątyni realizowaną na przełomie XIX i XX w. oraz materiał fotograficzny z tamtego okresu. Wykorzystano także udostępnioną autorce dokumentację prowadzonej obecnie renowacji kościoła, w której ramach kontynuowana jest realizacja niewykonanych przed wojną elementów projektu Michałowskiego w zakresie aranżacji wnętrza. W celu weryfikacji, które elementy kompleksowego projektu, obejmującego również wyposażenie kościoła, zostały zrealizowane, przeprowadzono wizję in situ. W artykule zaprezentowano też fragmenty pism wyjaśniające idee przyświecające architektowi podczas tworzenia koncepcji. Tytułową realizację przedstawiono na tle współczesnych jej dyskusji dotyczących konserwacji i przekształceń obiektów zabytkowych.

Słowa kluczowe: Lucjan Michałowski, architektura międzywojenna, rozbudowa kościoła, Gniezno, kościół św. Wawrzyńca