



## NEW PROPOSAL FOR THE FORMER SYNAGOGUE IN KIELCE

### NOWA PROPOZYCJA DLA BYŁEJ SYNAGOGI W KIELCACH

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#### Abstract

*The current trend of conservation of immovable monuments is – in addition to ongoing maintenance and protection – adaptation. Simply taking care of a monument is not an effective way to keep it in good repair if it is not used. Utility is the primary function of architecture, as buildings are erected for this purpose only. No building can survive without function, especially a centuries-old one. This is because the lack of a user condemns any monument to destruction, which leads to ruin and, ultimately, to demolition. Therefore, proper adaptation to new functions and current technical conditions is necessary. In the process of adaptation, all the heritage values of the object should be brought out and only then should new ones be introduced, taking into account the integrity of the monument and ensuring authenticity. Sacred architecture has special cultural and historical values, both tangible and intangible, i.e. spiritual. Continually discussed adaptations of religious buildings in the case of Judaic religious buildings destroyed and abandoned after World War II proved to be the best way to reclaim synagogues. The Kielce synagogue is one of the early examples of adaptation to another function. The building, destroyed during World War II, was rebuilt in the 1950s in a different form than the original one, for use as an archive. This historic building, however, has been standing useless for more than a decade now, and this fact has a destructive effect on its heritage value, therefore it is necessary to take action as soon as possible. Numerous concepts for this building located in a prestigious area in Kielce can be produced, which will be presented and evaluated in terms of substantive potential of utilizing its value in a new incarnation.*

**Keywords:** monument protection, conservation, adaptation, synagogue, Kielce

#### Streszczenie

*Nurtem współczesnej ochrony zabytków nieruchomych jest nie tylko bieżąca konserwacja i ochrona, ale adaptacja. Samo dbanie o zabytek nie jest skuteczną metodą utrzymania w dobrej kondycji każdego obiektu, jeśli nie będzie użytkowany. Użyteczność to podstawowe zadanie architektury, ponieważ tylko z tego powodu tworzone są budowle. Żaden budynek nie przetrwa bez funkcji, a szczególnie wiekowy. Brak użytkownika skazuje bowiem każdy zabytek na zniszczenie, co doprowadza do ruiny, a z czasem skazuje na rozbiórkę. Dlatego konieczna jest właściwa adaptacja na nowe funkcje i do obecnych warunków technicznych. W procesie adaptacji powinno się wydobyć wszystkie wartości zabytkowe obiektu i dopiero wprowadzać nowe, uwzględniając integralność zabytku i wpisujące się w autentyczność. Szczególne wartości zabytkowe ma architektura sakralna, zarówno te materialne, jak i niematerialne – duchowe. Cały czas poddawane dyskusji adaptacje obiektów sakralnych w przypadku zniszczonych i opuszczonych po drugiej wojnie światowej budynków kultu religii judaistycznej okazały się najlepszą metodą na odzyskanie synagog. Kielecka synagoga należy do wczesnych przykładów adaptacji na inną funkcję. Budynek zniszczony w czasie drugiej wojny światowej odbudowano w latach 50. XX wieku, w innej formie niż pierwotna z przeznaczeniem na archiwum. Obecnie jednak ten historyczny budynek od ponad dekady stoi bezużyteczny, a fakt ten ma destrukcyjny wpływ na zabytkową substancję, dlatego konieczne jest jak najszybsze podjęcie działań. Pomysłów na ten obiekt w prestiżowej lokalizacji w Kielcach jest wiele, zostaną one przybliżone i ocenione pod względem możliwości merytorycznego wykorzystania jego wartości w nowym „wcieleniu”.*

**Słowa kluczowe:** ochrona zabytków, konserwacja, adaptacja, synagoga, Kielce

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There were many Jewish communities in the Świętokrzyskie province before World War II, which is evidenced mainly by the remaining objects of worship – synagogues<sup>1</sup>. There are 14 synagogues<sup>2</sup> preserved in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, and the fact that there were more is evidenced by written sources<sup>3</sup>. All masonry buildings<sup>4</sup> lost their original function after World War II and are now in various states of repair and serve a variety of functions. This is because some have been adapted for cultural functions (Chęciny, Chmielnik, Kielce, Pińczów, Połaniec, Sandomierz, Szydłowiec), some are privately owned and have a service/commercial function (Busko-Zdrój, Ożarów), but most fell into disrepair (Wodzisław, Działoszyce, Nowy Korczyn, Klimontów, Tarłów).

One of the synagogues dating back to the beginning of the 20th century can be found in Kielce, which is the capital of the Świętokrzyskie province, at 17 Warszawska Street, in the strip separating the road ways of IX Wieków Avenue Kielc (Fig. 1).

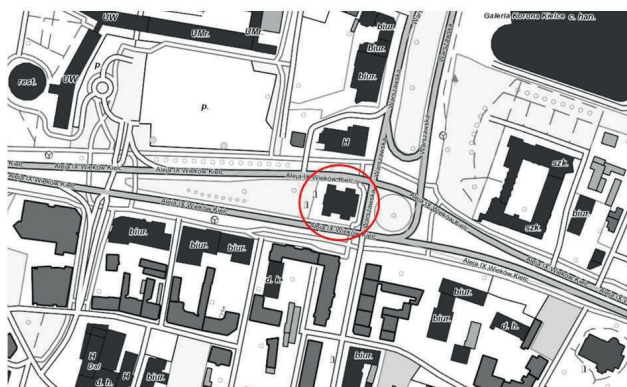


Fig. 1. Synagogue in Kielce. Current Situation. Base Source: [2]

As sources indicate, this detached building was erected on what was then called Nowowarszawska

<sup>1</sup> The synagogue was not a temple, although its space was considered sacred. It is a multifaceted establishment in which worship was held, it had the role of a school, shelter, court, charitable institution, and was a place for communal meals and meetings. See: [1].

<sup>2</sup> Kielce, Busko-Zdrój, Chęciny, Wodzisław, Działoszyce, Pińczów, Nowy Korczyn, Połaniec, Szydłowiec, Klimontów, Sandomierz, Ożarów, Tarłów, Chmielnik.

<sup>3</sup> Będzin, Bodzentyn, Bogoria (wooden), Końskie, Małogoszcz, Nowa Słupia, Oksa, Opatów, Radoszyce, Raków, Skarżysko-Kamienna, Starachowice, Staszów, Suchedniów, Wiślica, Włoszczowa.

<sup>4</sup> Wooden synagogues came before masonry ones in Będzin, Bodzentyn, Busko-Zdrój, Sandomierz.

Street (Fig. 2), there was a wall with a gate between the synagogue and the street, and the plot also included the rabbi's house. The synagogue was taken over by the state treasury after the war, but the owner of the building was probably the Jewish Religious Community in Katowice. Currently, the city of Kielce is its owner. The synagogue building was entered in the register of monuments on 14/07/1987, under No. 1038, and has been legally protected ever since.

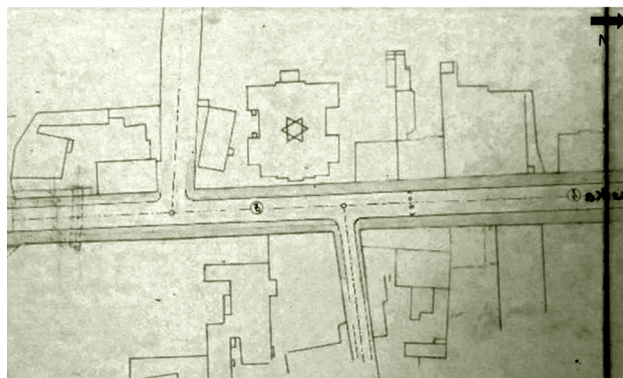


Fig. 2. Synagogue in Kielce. Location plan on a scale of 1:1000, 1919–1939 [3]

## 2. HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF THE OBJECT

The Kielce Synagogue was built in 1902–1903, but its history dates back to the late 19th century, or perhaps a bit earlier, when, under a tsarist decree in 1867, Jews were granted the right to settle in the city and began arriving in large numbers in Kielce. Earlier, they resided here “illegally”; despite a permit issued in 1833 for the Jewish worshippers to settle in the city, due to pressure from residents a decade later, an order was issued in 1843 to expel them from Kielce [4]. For, as a bishop's city, Kielce had the privilege of *Privilegium de non tolerandis judaeis* (Latin: privilege of not accepting Jews), which was in effect until the reform of Alexander the Great. On 24 May 1862, a decree was issued which led to the full emancipation of Jews in the Kingdom [4]. In 1868, a new Synagogue District was approved in Kielce, as a result of which the Kielce Orthodox Jewish community organized a place for services in a private house on Bodzentyńska Street<sup>5</sup>. The concept of putting up an object of worship for Kielce's Jews – a synagogue – appeared in 1897. In order to permanently mark the presence of Jews in the city, a member of the board of directors of

<sup>5</sup> The synagogue was set up in a private house at Borzęcka Street (currently Bodzentyńska). See: [4].

the Jewish community in Kielce, Moses Pfeffer<sup>6</sup>, along with his wife Esther, donated 20,000 rubles and their own square at 17 Nowowarszawska Street for the construction of the temple. Construction of the synagogue, designed by Stanisław Szpakowski<sup>7</sup>, began in 1902, while a year later it was made available for use by the Jewish community.

In 1907–1908, with funds raised for paid seating in the synagogue, a wall, gate, rabbi's house, a modern brick mikvah – bathhouse – were erected, and the square around the synagogue was paved. Thus, in Kielce, alongside the cathedral and the Orthodox church, another religious building was erected, dominating the small, mostly wooden houses of the suburb of Nowy Świat, where there was the largest concentration of Jews in Kielce (Fig. 3a) [4]. The building served not only a sacred function, but was also a place for meetings of the Jewish community, the formation of certain social attitudes and decision-making of Jews living in Kielce.

The synagogue was first destroyed during World War I, when an artillery shell damaged the structure and fence. Nevertheless, the synagogue was bustling with activity, such as prayer and social meetings, a school for boys called 'cheder' and a men's choir. During World War I, also an "Affordable canteen" here and the "Society for the Relief of the Poor of the Mosaic Faith" functioned there. This was the case until the outbreak of World War II, at which time in 1940 the building was taken over by the German occupiers and used as a detention center and warehouse for stolen Jewish goods. At the end of the war, when the building was no longer needed, it was set on fire, and thus 70% destroyed along with

all movable equipment, which made it unable to be operated according to its pre-war purpose.

The decision to rebuild the synagogue building was made in 1951, but the exact dates when the works were carried out, as well as the author of the design of the now-famous body of the building, are difficult to determine (Fig. 3b). Earlier studies pointed to Władysław Dmoch<sup>8</sup>, while others to Jerzy Żukowski<sup>9</sup>. According to recent findings, the assumptions of the synagogue reconstruction plan were developed by engineer Stanisław Skibniewski, while the design was drawn up by Dmoch in cooperation with B. Hermanowicz [10].

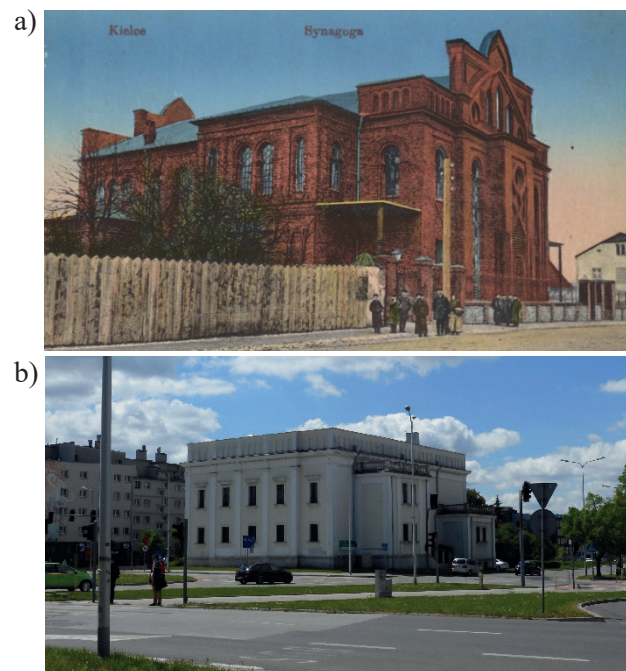


Fig. 3. a) Synagogue before World War II – reproduction of a postcard, 1913 or 1914, from the collection of the Kielce History Museum [7, 8]; b) Synagogue in Kielce. View of the northern and east facade from Warszawska Street, 2022, photo by M. Doroz-Turek

As a result of this post-war reconstruction, the synagogue lost its original architectural form, and with it the function was changed from sacred to secular. The State Archive was moved to the rebuilt building in 1955

<sup>6</sup> Moses Pfeffer (?–1920 Warsaw) – social and political activist, landowner, merchant. He gained considerable wealth by supplying materials for the construction of the Iwangorod-Dąbrowa railroad line (Dęblin-Dąbrowa Górnica, with a branch line from Ostrowiec to Koluszki) in the 1st half of the 19th century, managed by J.B. Bloch. At the end of the 19th century, he was one of the leading personalities of the Jewish community in Kielce, a member of the local Synagogue Dispensary, co-founder of several charitable societies (including the Society for Aid to the Poor of the Mosaic Faith) [Polish name: Towarzystwo Pomocy Ubogim Wyznania Mojżeszowego]. He generously supported various social projects in Kielce, including the construction of a synagogue (1902) and the fight against typhus (1905–1907). He ran, unsuccessfully, in the State Duma elections. He was a member of the Agudat Yisrael, which he represented in the Council of State as a nominee of the Regency Council. See: [5].

<sup>7</sup> Stanisław Szpakowski, a Kielce-based engineer-architect. Major projects, beside the synagogue, implemented by him in Kielce included: in 1902, St. Nicholas Orthodox Church – currently the Garrison Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary Queen of Poland; 1903 – Holy Cross Church; home-shelter for retired priests in Kielce. See: [6].

<sup>8</sup> It was restored in 1951–1955 to a design by W. Dmoch for use as an archive. See: [9].

<sup>9</sup> Jerzy Żukowski, architect, graduate of the Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw University of Technology. In Kielce, in 1944, he attended secret classes of the Architecture Department, led by Professor Bohdan Pniewski, teaching freehand drawing. Since then, he was active in the Kielce province and Kielce, where he carried out several projects, including the design of the building of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in Kielce at S. Żeromskiego Street in 1952. See: [6].



Fig. 4. “Freedom Garden” – a proposal to develop the area in front of the former synagogue building – in the strip separating the roadways *Aleja IX Wieków Kielc* [13]

and the new function housed it for several decades. In the 1990s, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Kielce pogrom<sup>10</sup>, the former synagogue building was renovated [11]. Despite this, the building was still in a bad repair, as there was a lack of funds for ongoing repairs and maintenance, which was also related to the legal-ownership situation. The National Archives changed its location in June 2011. It was known beforehand that it was going to be relocated, and as a result, the city authorities were thinking of another use for the monument. In 2009, the then mayor of Kielce Wojciech Lubawski, who believed that the adaptation of the former synagogue building was very important for the city, invited Peter Zumthor<sup>11</sup> to cooperate. The Swiss architect was to take on the project of adapting the synagogue to a cultural function, making the building a center for the meeting of cultures and religions, where Jews who come to the city as tourists can pray and meet. The general concept for the transformation of the building was to house Grzegorz Artman’s New Avant-Garde Theater and a public library with a reading room. The mayor emphasized the tradition of the building, the function it originally served, which he believed should be respected [12]. Unfortunately, the unregulated ownership of the building prevented the plan that the city authorities had with architect P. Zumthor, who

wanted to create a modern building in the center of Kielce. Property ownership was clarified in May 2014, but unfortunately cooperation with P. Zumthor was not resumed. In the following years, a new idea was born to adapt the synagogue building into a Pałac Lalek [*Doll Palace*], but it did not come to fruition.

In February 2022, a proposal was announced to develop the space in front of the former synagogue, named “Freedom Garden”<sup>12</sup> with greenery, small architecture and educational paths. The project has been implemented since July 2023, and the work is scheduled to be completed in spring 2024. The space will be the first stage to create an Island of Understanding. Plantings will quiet and separate the entire area located between the road lanes of *Aleja IX Wieków Kielc* – the island – from heavy traffic. It is intended to be a separate enclave of park and garden space providing opportunities for recreation. The area is to be an introduction to the former synagogue building. Designed interactive educational sites with multimedia elements will inform about historical examples of the development of freedom in Europe. It will also serve the function of strengthening civic attitudes, building awareness of the freedom transition on the European continent and the values that have shaped Europe’s cultural heritage (Fig. 4).

<sup>10</sup> The pogrom took place on 4 July 1946, in a tenement building at 7 Planty Street in Kielce.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Zumthor (born 1943) is ranked among the world’s top contemporary architects. In 2009, he received the Jay Pritzker Prize in Buenos Aires, which is considered the Nobel Prize in architecture.

<sup>12</sup> The project would be implemented within the framework of the Polish Order program “Zielona rewitalizacja Śródmieścia Kielce – Skwer im. I. Sendlerowej, Rynku, ul. Bodzentyńskiej wraz z placem św. Wojciecha i terenem przed dawną Synagogą” [Green Revitalization of Downtown Kielce – I. Sendlerowa Square, Market Square, Bodzentyńska Street together with St. Adalbert Square and the area in front of the former Synagogue]. See: [13].

The synagogue building is currently unused, and public consultations on its new function are underway.

### 3. HISTORICAL AND CURRENT FORM OF THE BUILDING

Stanisław Szpakowski designed the synagogue in the Neo-Moorish style with oriental decorative motifs on the facade and a richly decorated interior. The architect was probably inspired by the architecture of the largest synagogues in Europe built in this style, i.e. in Budapest (1854–1859, rebuilt) and Vienna (1854–1858, no longer in existence), as well as in Berlin<sup>13</sup> (1866–1938). These structures made this style popular in the 19th century in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and in the Prussian partition. Unfortunately, most of these civil structures have not survived to this day. Almost all of those located within the German Reich, had already been completely destroyed during Kristallnacht in 1938.

Neither did the Kielce synagogue survive in its original style. The original synagogue building plans have also not survived, and the existing ones were drawn up in 1949, in connection with the planned reconstruction of the synagogue in its original form and purpose. Z. Wróblewski and P. Przybylski were the authors of the inventory plans [15]. Eventually, the building was rebuilt in the Socialist Realist style for use by the Provincial State Archive in Kielce [16].

#### 3.1. The original form of the building

The building in Kielce was a classic example of synagogue architecture, built on a near-square plan, with a women's gallery located at the top. It was a detached building with a basement, set on stone foundations. The front was extended in relation to the main body by a lower extension and two symmetrically positioned annexes, in which staircases were located.

Originally, the building's facade was made of rough brick on lime mortar. In later years, probably in the interwar period, it was plastered over. The main entrance was on the east side hence the front facade was very ornate. The facades featured geometric and floral decorative motifs, including gables and frames for window and door openings, inspired by Romanesque, Arabic and even Orthodox church architecture. The two-story body of the temple was covered with a gable roof with a decorative attic on the east and west sides.

In 2020–2021, a member of the Jan Karski Association, Piotr Świerczyński, attempted to create

visualizations depicting the synagogue building both from the outside – originally masonry (Fig. 5) and after plastering (Fig. 6), known from several iconographies, as well as its lesser-known interiors. The visualizations were based on the building inventory taken before the reconstruction, pictured above. Since no photographs depicting the synagogue's interior are known, its reconstruction is based on two post-war memoirs of Kielce Jews describing them, while the wall paintings, bimah and aron ha-kodesh are presented based on the appearance of these elements in synagogues decorated in a similar style.



Fig. 5. Synagogue in Kielce – originally masonry. 3D reconstruction of the former Kielce synagogue building, according to P. Świerczyński [7]



Fig. 6. Synagogue in Kielce – after plastering. 3D reconstruction of the former Kielce synagogue building, according to P. Świerczyński [7]

According to witnesses, the interior was richly decorated and had a clear layout. The main entrance, located in the western facade, was for men. The vestibule with two columns, where there was a bowl

<sup>13</sup> The Berlin architect Eduard Knoblauch (1801–1865), who designed the synagogue in Berlin, was inspired by the Moorish style of the Alhambra palace complex in Granada. See: [14].

or washbasin for washing hands before entering the main hall – the *kijor*, led straight to the main hall, to the right to the *cheder* – a Jewish religious school for boys or to the left to the Jewish Benevolent Society room. Women entered separately, through side entrances to balconies.

The main hall, the prayer room, was roughly square in shape and was divided by pillars into a nave and two aisles. Its interior was richly decorated. The 12 tribes of Israel were painted on the blue ceiling symbolizing the sky. There was the Wailing Wall to the right from the entrance, Rachel's tomb to the left, while in the center there was a richly decorated *bimah* – a lectern for reading Torah. Against the east wall, in a small apse, there was the altar closet – the *aron ha-kodesh*. To the right of the prayer hall there was a wide gallery for the choir. Women galleries were supported by pillars painted in the color of marble<sup>14</sup>.

### 3.2. Present condition of the building

The current form of the former synagogue building is the result of the 1951–1955 reconstruction, during which its original exterior and partial interior layout were changed to accommodate the activities of the State Archives.

The body of the building, the facades devoid of original detail, are significantly different from pre-war ones. The transformation of oriental motifs through the use of simple neoclassical divisions significantly simplified the building's form. The new form is dominated by an attic with narrow niches topped with a semicircle, being a reference to the details of the synagogue's original style, as well as classical divisions of the facade. The extensions have balustrades made of balusters, separated by low quadrilateral posts. The main entrance is preserved in its original location, on the west side, framed by a stone portal with a wooden double door with panels, with stone steps leading to it. The size and shape of the window openings were completely changed, from arched, characteristic of the Moorish style, to rectangular ones. Currently, the windows are wooden, double, with four (on the ground floor) and five (on the first floor) panes in the sash. In addition, metal bars have been installed in the windows of the ground floor. The building is fully plastered. Its color scheme has changed over the years, but in 1996 the original blue-gray color was restored.

The plan and cross-section of the building also show the changes made. On the ground floor, two

staircases housed in symmetrically arranged annexes were eliminated, replaced by a single representative staircase. Two rows of columns to support the ceiling of the first floor, which was laid over the entire building (previously, the first floor had women's galleries located on both sides, and there was no ceiling over the rest of the hall – it was topped by an unusual wooden vault) were additionally designed in the main hall, the former prayer hall. The cross-section shows changes in the height of the floors. Originally, both the main hall, vestibule and annexes were located on the same level, while the women's balconies were located 5.4 meters higher. Currently the rooms are located on different levels. The entrance area in the vestibule is located higher than the level of the main hall. An additional level between the floors was also added, at a height of 2.7 meters running along the aisles. The entire height of the building has also changed. In the original design, the building was 19.75 m high (measured to the highest point), while measured to the ridge it was 17.4 m high. Currently, the building is much lower, and its height, measured to the top of the attic, is 14.9 m. The building has a partial basement on the west side.

In addition to the building, the development of the area around the former synagogue (Fig. 1) consists of a square with memorials and a green area. The square with memorials to the site is located on the west side, right at the entrance to the building. There is, among others, a stone with a plaque commemorating the victims of the Kielce ghetto and death camps, which bears the inscription: "Pamięci 27000 Żydów z kieleckiego getta zamordowanych przez Niemców w latach 1939–1944 w Kielcach, Treblince i innych obozach zagłady" [*To the memory of the 27,000 Jews from the Kielce ghetto murdered by the Germans in 1939–1944 in Kielce, Treblinka and other extermination camps*]. Next to it there is a monument with a large inscription SPRAWIEDLIWY WŚRÓD NARODÓW ŚWIATA [*To the righteous among the nations of the world*] commemorating Poles who died for helping Jews. It also features two plaques: "JA SŁYSZĘ TEN TYTUŁ I STARAM SIĘ O TYCH LUDZIACH MYŚLEĆ, CO CHRONILI MNIE. JA PYTAM I PYTAM: – O, NA MIŁY BÓG, CZY JA BYM NA ICH MIEJSCU TAK UCZYNIĆ MÓGŁ?" [*I hear this title trying to think about these people who protected me, and I keep asking myself: Oh, for goodness' sake, would I in their place have done the same?*] and "PAMIĘCI POLAKÓW ZAMORDOWANYCH PRZEZ NIEMCÓW

<sup>14</sup> Interiors description. See: [9].

W LATACH 1939–1945 ZA UDZIELANIE POMOCY ŻYDOM I RATOWANIE ICH PRZED ZAGŁADĄ” [To the memory of Poles murdered by the Germans in 1939–1945 for helping Jews and saving them from extermination].

The remaining area, from the square to the end of the plot, is a green area. It features irregularly spaced, sparse trees and shrubs, with no paths or sidewalks. The area is connected to the adjacent streets by pedestrian crossings located at the eastern and western sides of the plot.

#### 4. ADAPTATION OF THE SYNAGOGUE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS ON THE EXAMPLES OF STUDENT PROJECTS OF THE KIELCE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

“As an architect you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown” – applying Norman Foster’s words to the analyzed area shows how important it is to be aware of the history of a place – *the past* – and how difficult a task the designer faces – *for the present*, whose goal is to design the *future* of the place in the context of its surroundings.

The interest of architecture students at Kielce University of Technology in the design activities related to the former synagogue shows how valuable this micro-area [22] is in the city of Kielce, as can be seen in selected course projects and theses. The creative insight of the young architects, their expression and attempt to search for solutions other than standard ones, shows new possibilities for the adaptation of the former synagogue and the development of the land next to the building located in a prestigious location in the median strip of Aleja IX Wieków Kielc near the intersection with Warszawska Street.

The authors of the projects presented below faced a major design challenge, difficulties and complexity of problems, such as:

- adaptation of the historic synagogue building, taking into account the history of the site and its importance not only for the Jewish people, but also for the city of Kielce, to a new utility function;
- difficult location – the plot is located in the median strip, with heavy traffic streets on each side, difficult access for pedestrians and vehicles;
- the shape of the plot – oblong, narrowing gradually as one moves away from the building;
- surrounding buildings – historical and modern, dominant buildings.

##### 4.1. Student conceptual design for the adaptation of a former synagogue into a Museum of Jewish History and Culture [23]

The conceptual design for the adaptation of the former synagogue, the main goal of which was to restore interest in the building by giving it a new function – the Museum of Jewish History and Culture, as well as the development of the site (Fig. 7) in a way making it attractive to visitors, is an example of a student project carried out as part of the course in Conservation Design. The design objectives set by the authors of the concept include: partial restoration of the synagogue’s original external appearance; development of the site in a way making it attractive and safe for users – linking the communication systems of the building, the plot and the surroundings, introducing an underground tunnel providing direct access to the building; adapting the interior of the building to modern needs and utility requirements,



Fig. 7. Land development [23]

adapting the rooms to the new functional program, introducing an underground story that will be a museum of Jewish history and proposing a new facility with the function of a café.

An important aspect of the project is an attempt to restore the memory of the site's history. According to the authors, the goal will be achieved by introducing a cultural function to the former synagogue building – the Museum of Jewish History and Culture. The functional program would include, among other things, a library and reading room, a conference and exhibition hall in the main hall, which would be restored to its former majestic appearance, along with mezzanine floors, a prayer room for worshipers of Judaism, in the south wing, and technical, administrative and sanitary rooms (Fig. 8). In addition, an underground story was introduced, housing a museum of Jewish history. This story

is connected to Kozia and Targowa Streets with a tunnel, and is also a link to a new building with a café, whose interior and exterior design is full of symbols and references to Jewish culture.

In their concept, the authors also propose to show the changes that the former synagogue building has undergone over the course of history. An installation of mesh on a grid attached to the facade, molded to resemble the original Neo-Mauritanian style, was applied to the building's renovated Socialist Realist facade. With the superimposed images, it is possible to observe the elements that have been changed or removed (Fig. 9).

The concept is complemented by the development of the plot, through the introduction of a new building with a café function and a water reservoir integrated into an orderly low and high greenery, which will reduce the noise of the neighboring streets (Fig. 10).

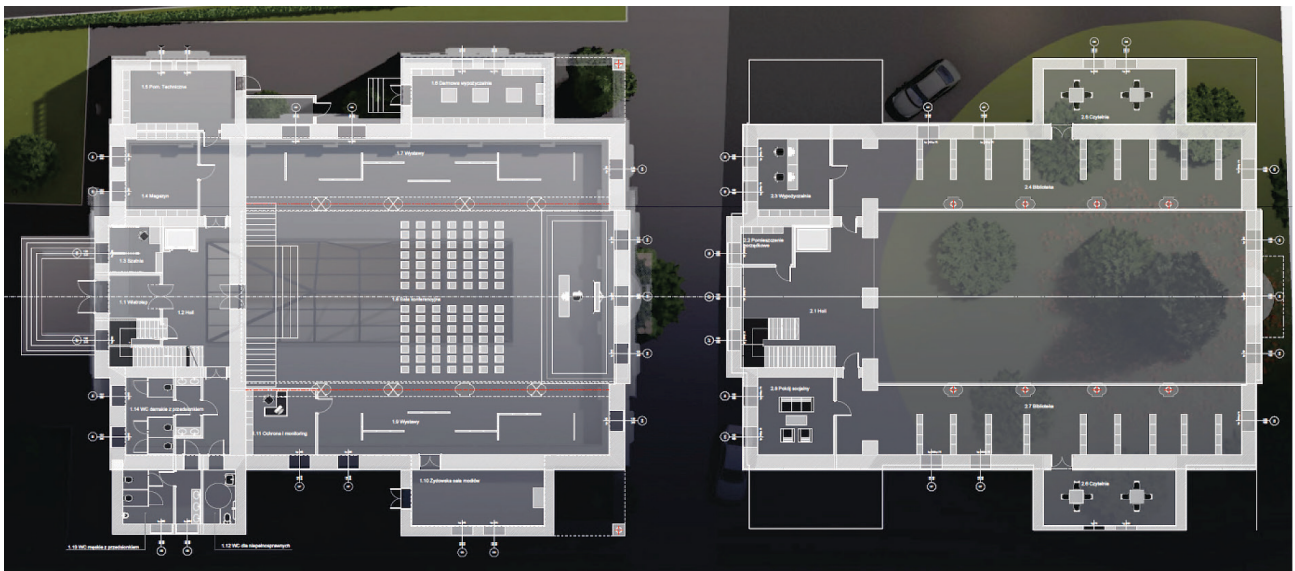


Fig. 8. Synagogue in Kielce. Design. Ground and floor plan [23]



Fig. 9. Design visualizations – bird's eye view from the east [23]



Fig. 10. Design visualizations – view of the western facade including the surroundings [23]



#### 4.2. The adaptation of the former synagogue building at Warszawska Street in Kielce to house a fringe theater [21]

The main assumption of the author of the diploma project was that the adaptation of the historic building of the former synagogue to the new function of a fringe theater should take into account the history of the place and its importance not only for the Jewish people, but also for the city of Kielce. Therefore, with the aim of respecting the historical and cultural context, the historic building was preserved in its existing state, providing for the renewal of the facade while maintaining the current color scheme. Taking into account the value of the monument, the author has proposed a cultural function – a theater, involving, in addition to the use of the existing building, upward and underground extension by two floors below ground level next to the existing building.

The project site is in a rather difficult location. Despite the advantages of being located in the city center, connecting the plot to the rest of the city is problematic. Although directly adjacent to the transportation system, access to the building is difficult, both for pedestrians and wheeled vehicles. The author

proposed a solution for underground parking, with an entrance road planned from Targowa Street, while pedestrian access to the entrance area through a garden located on the west side of the plot, near the existing pedestrian crossing.

The author proposes to develop the area around the building with orderly plantings of trees and shrubs. Taller vegetation has a filtering and protective function – located at the border of the plot, it becomes a natural barrier against pollution and noise coming from the busy streets surrounding the development area (Figs. 11, 12). The concept also retains, slightly changing their location, the memorials. The stone with the plaque and the brick wall will be moved to the garden area, while the plaque on the building will be left in its current place.

The author proposes to adapt the former synagogue building into a theater. The former nave will house the stage and auditorium, while the aisles – facilities for both staff and actors. Former women’s gallery will be transformed into audience balconies. The annexes will house toilets and dressing rooms, as well as scenery, costumes or stage equipment storerooms (Fig. 13).

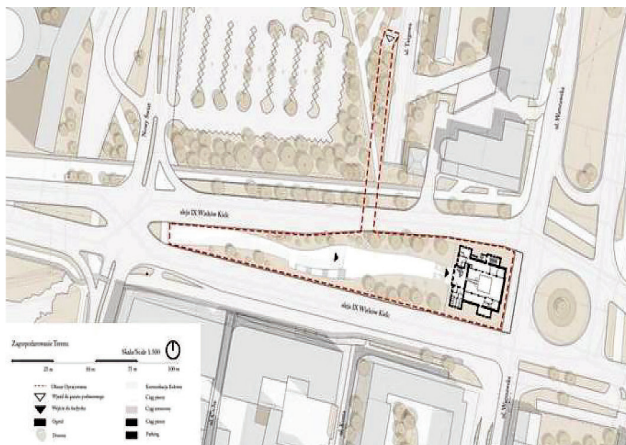


Fig. 11. Synagogue in Kielce. Design. Land development [21]

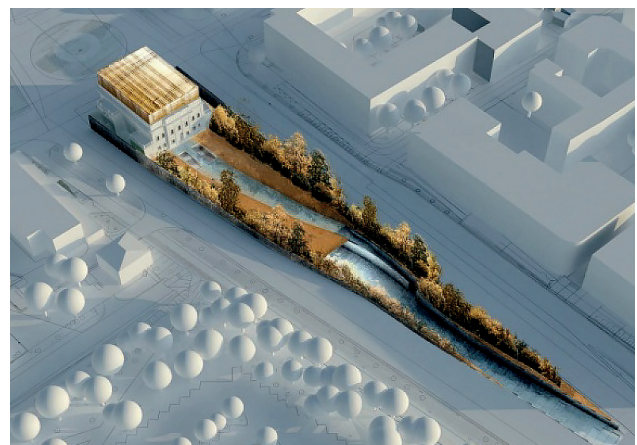


Fig. 12. Synagogue in Kielce. Design. Visualization – bird's eye view of the entire study area [21]

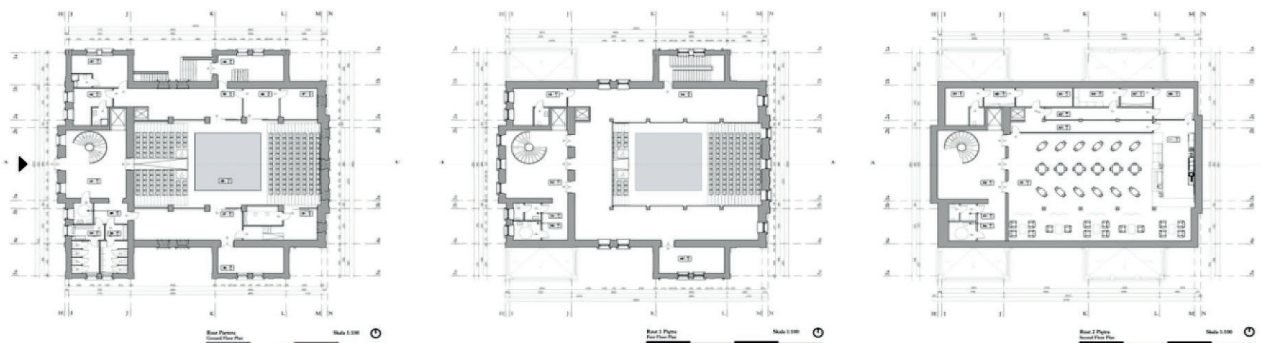


Fig. 13. Synagogue in Kielce. Design. Floor plans of the building (ground floor, first floor, second floor) [21]

The extension of the building proposed by the author involves a café designed on the top floor and its roofing. It was projected above the attic, thus increasing the height of the building aligning with the height of the contemporary frontage located on both sides of Warszawska Street (Fig. 14).

The entrance to the former synagogue building will be left in its original location and skylights will be located in the same axis to light up the entrance area from above, as well as supplementary functions for the theater in the new part of the building on level -1 (Figs. 15, 16). Underground parking lot has been envisaged on the lower floor, with access from

Targowa Street. The proposed expansion is linked directly to the theater (Fig. 17).

A usable green roof has been designed over the new underground section to continue and complement the garden zone.

Symbolism also plays an important role in this project. The entire design was divided into 3 parts: the open zone – the garden, the semi-closed zone – the further part of the garden surrounded by a wall, and the closed zone – the existing building. The enclosed zone, due to the former function of the building, can be equated with the *sacred* zone. Thus, the garden and open part becomes the secular – profane zone.



Fig. 14. Synagogue in Kielce. Design. Warszawska Street frontage [21]



Fig. 15. Synagogue in Kielce. Design. Visualization – view of the entrance from the west, facing the garden [21]



Fig. 16. Synagogue in Kielce. Design. Visualization – view from the interior, showing illumination of the entrance area [21]

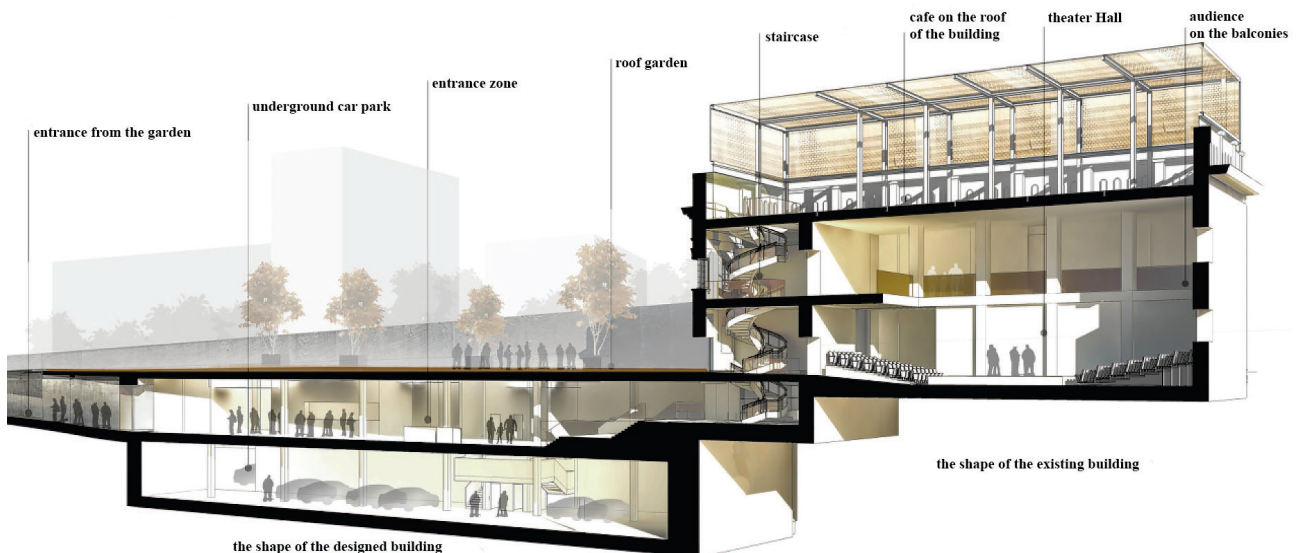


Fig. 17. Synagogue in Kielce. Design. Perspective cross-section [21]

In order to enter the very center, which is the theater, it is necessary to pass through all three zones, which can be compared to a kind of rite of passage and purification. This creates a certain mystique of place that influences the viewer through the space produced.

The project described above is an original student attempt to interpret the concept of adapting a former synagogue into a fringe theater according to P. Zumthor. Considerations on the form, functional solution, communication and development of a plot of land with an unusual shape, located in the center of the city, are presented. The multifaceted nature of the project stems primarily from the rich history of the site and its significant symbolism, which creates the ideological layer of the entire project assumption.

### 4.3. Revitalization of the synagogue at Warszawska Street in Kielce for a Multicultural Center [24]

In her work, the author of the diploma project set the goal of finding appropriate functional and aesthetic-design solutions for the currently unused building of the former synagogue. In addition, the project addresses the aspect of multiculturalism, concerning the past and present, and attempts to answer the question of how architecture can influence the aspect given.

The introduction of a new function – the Multicultural Center – would allow the building to provide an open space for dialog and allow individuals to find elements of their culture and the opportunity to learn about different cultures. Through such activities, the local community, which may feel lost in the flurry of information from different parts of the world, could understand the phenomena occurring in it.

The square next to the building is located on the west side and features a network of paths that symbolize the vicissitudes and windings of human life. Elements of an underground building poke out between the paths, indicating that something is hidden underground. The area is mainly covered with low greenery, grasses and herbs (Fig. 18). At the edge of the site to the west, a long tunnel can be seen. This is the entrance to the underground part of the designed architectural assumption, in which the main zone of the Multicultural Center is located (Fig. 19).

The structure of the entrance to the building is reinforced concrete, and in the southern facade there are openings of 20 x 20 cm, which symbolize the number of lives that were taken during World War II. Inside the tunnel on the left, photos and short films showing the beauty of different parts of the world and their cultures

ZAGOSPODAROWANIE TERENU skala 1:500/  
SITE PLAN scale 1:500

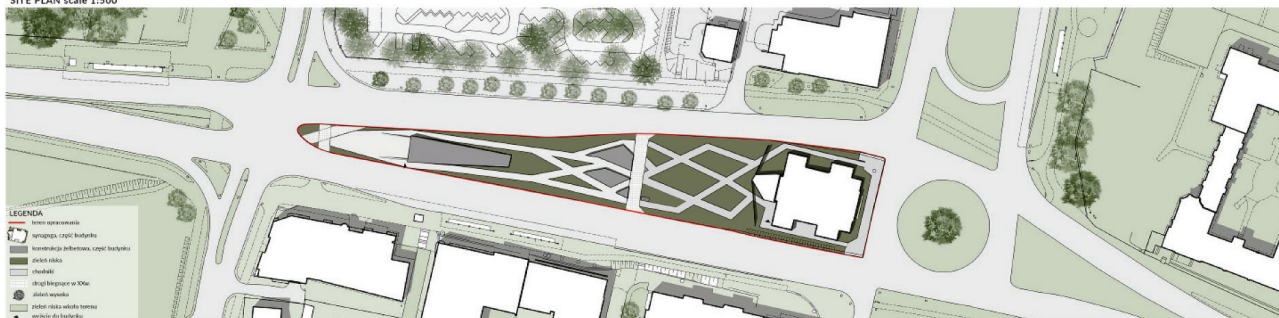


Fig. 18. Synagogue in Kielce. Design. Land development [24]

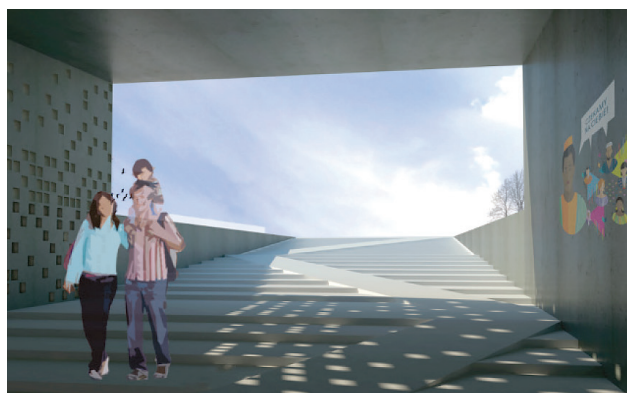


Fig. 19. Synagogue in Kielce. Design. Visualization – entrance area on the west side [24]

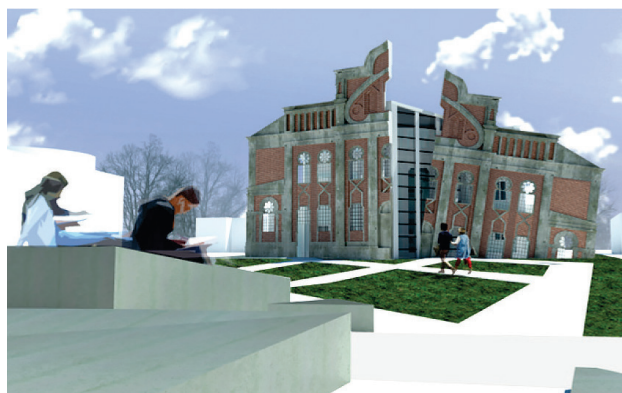


Fig. 20. Synagogue in Kielce. Design. Visualization – view of the building from the west [24]

will be displayed. This part of the building also features a huge open space that can be developed in any way, including integration meetings of organizations working for intercultural tolerance with residents of the city and province, as well as food court.

The design did not transform the exterior form of the building on the north, east and south sides. The plasterwork and details were restored, and kept in the current color scheme. The most visible changes were made to the building on the west side. This façade took the form of a pastiche, imitating the past form of the synagogue. And while it is not a faithful reproduction of the building's original façade, the author shows her own interpretation of history and reference to it. The main structural element is concrete, and is complemented by brick, as this is the material that the building was constructed from. The form is intended to remind the local community what the building looked like in its first version and what history it represents through "break ups" and asymmetry. Adjacent to the building is an attached staircase that further "breaks up" the western facade (Fig. 20).

Significant changes are proposed by the author inside the existing building to restore the original layout of the building. The ceiling that made up the +1 floor and the mezzanine at the +0.5 level have been

eliminated. As a result of these changes, a mezzanine floor was created on the +1 level. The staircase from the vestibule is moved to the southern annex, and an elevator is placed in the vestibule, connecting all floors. The floor level was leveled all the way from the entrance to the main hall, to provide free access to the entire building for people with disabilities.

In the former synagogue building, the former main hall will host exhibitions and vernissages on the history of the site and Kielce. Other rooms in the building will be used for administrative, technical and sanitary functions. The new staircase connects the existing building to the newly designed underground part of the building (Figs. 21, 22).

Looking at the definition of revitalization and components thereof (community, space and infrastructure, economy), it can be seen that the proposed changes fit into this concept. Through the extensive process of area revitalization, we are able to change local environments, not only in a visual way, but we can also influence education and change the mindset of the people affected. The project responds to all these problematic issues. Through the development of the former synagogue building, which will be restored to its former life, it will be possible to remind current and future generations of past events

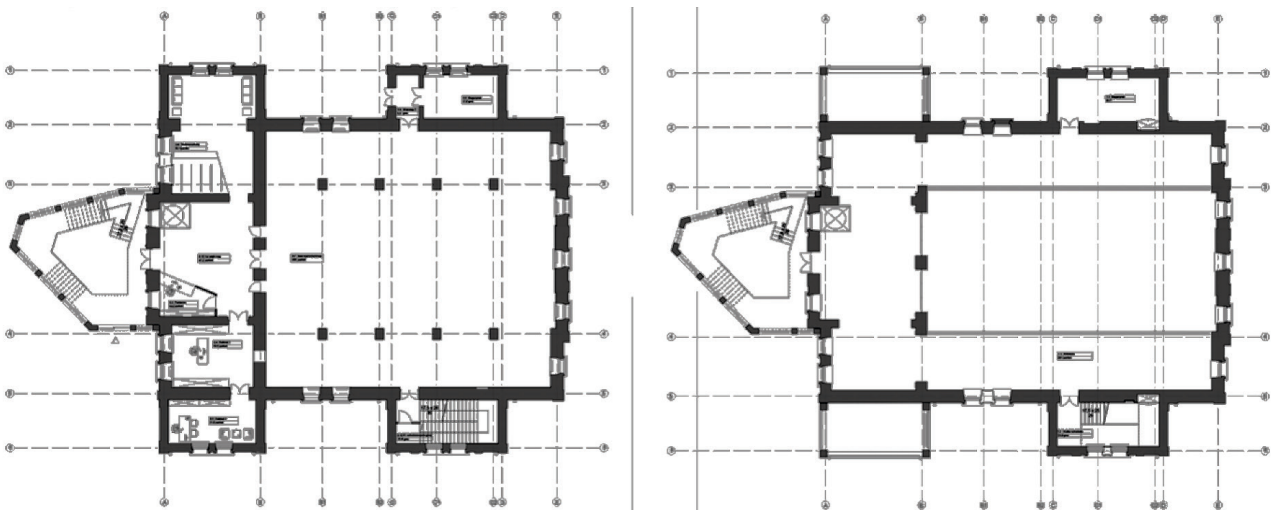


Fig. 21. Synagogue in Kielce. Design. Drawings of individual floor plans of the building (ground floor, first floor) – design [24]

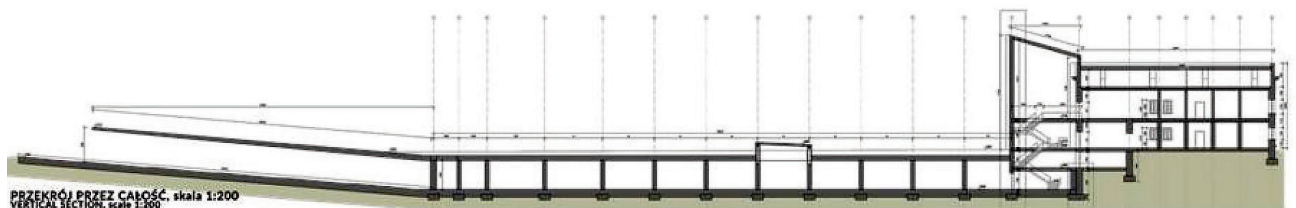


Fig. 22. Synagogue in Kielce. Design. Cross-section through the adapted and newly designed building [24]

and give the synagogue and the culture it represents due tribute. Through expansion of its functions and creation of a Multicultural Center, this place will have an impact on the local community.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Adaptation aims to save the historic building by adapting it to serve a new function or restore the original one, bringing it up to current technical conditions and meeting the needs of modern users, while preserving its most important values. These activities should be preceded by historical, architectural and conservation studies, taking into account the existing condition and historic values, which will help in making the right decisions in the selection of functions and related steps. The adaptation process should bring out all the historic values of the building, strive to preserve the authenticity and integrity of the monument when introducing a new function, both in the strict senses and in the largo sense. Sacred architecture holds significant historical and cultural value, both tangible and intangible, and the inherent sacral value [25]. The adaptation of historic religious buildings, including synagogues, has been the subject of much discussion for a long time. However, despite the often many doubts surrounding adaptation work on this type of buildings, preservation is what ultimately justifies their adaptation. A particularly appropriate and most commonly introduced function is the cultural, museum one [26], but they are increasingly being adapted to other functions, especially in Western European countries [27].

The paradox of the building of former Kielce synagogue is that despite its history and the importance it has not only for the Jewish community, but also for the city of Kielce, it is now an abandoned place. Despite the many ideas for the adaptation of this monument, none have come to fruition. Thus, the building has stood useless for almost two decades.

The concepts created by students of the Architecture Department at the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Kielce University of Technology demonstrate the potential of this building. The presented designs show that the best solution for this former synagogue would be to introduce cultural and scientific functions along with a complementary function for ex. a cafe. Due to the multidimensional significance of the original object, not only sacred, the best concept would be a center of Jewish culture and dialogue with other cultures, where integration through art of the people meeting there would be

possible. The presented projects show that the introduction of a cultural and scientific function along with a complementary function – a café – is considered most appropriate. The concepts shown are an attempt to answer the problematic issues, taking into account the history of the site and preserving the current form of the building with reference to the original façade of the building and to the contemporary architecture surrounding the synagogue. A common factor in the projects is the improvement of transportation aspects given the difficult location of the plot in the median strip of high-traffic streets, the landscaping of the space around the building through numerous, orderly green plantings, and the establishment of paths inviting to the site and the building, especially on the west side. A positive proposal is to connect this place with Kozia Street through an underground passage that could connect with Targowa Street. On the other hand, when it comes to the building interiors, the authors of the solutions shown propose to restore the original appearance of a large room with mezzanine floors open at the height of two floors (the former main hall with a choir and women’s galleries) and to adapt the building in accordance with current guidelines.

It would be advisable to discuss design concepts among the inhabitants of Kielce. Conducting public consultations would allow for listening to their voices on this subject and for the active participation of the local community and other users (Jewish community) in shaping an important place for Kielce and changing the functioning of the former synagogue facility. Solutions developed together with the residents would complement the process of shaping the new space, fully revealing the potential of both the place and the people. In the processes of revitalization of city areas and adaptation of facilities to a new function, the participation of residents is particularly important and should play an important role at the design stage. Architecture is created for people for their use, so it would be good for the future adaptation of the synagogue to also meet their expectations and needs.

Creative solutions to the presented requirements and assumptions, as well as student insights, show new possibilities and solutions for the analyzed building and site. The projects presented include a variety of solutions, which gives a choice for the investor interested in adapting this structure. By implementing the project of adapting this building along with its surroundings, the site’s appeal would be enhanced, and the potential of this exceptional place in Kielce could be fully exploited.

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