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**The alderman's seat in Głuchołazy  
and its transformations from the 14<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning  
of the 19<sup>th</sup> century\***

*Abstract.* The article presents the history of the creation and transformation of the building complex of the alderman's seat in Głuchołazy from the 14<sup>th</sup> century to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the introduction, a description of the alderman's building complex, chronicle information, and current literature is presented. On the basis of architectural research, the phases of the building's transformations were distinguished. It was assumed that it first served as a defence complex, probably built in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and was connected to the city wall. Its expansion, which involved the construction of the southern and western wings, took place after the destruction of Głuchołazy by the Hussites in 1428 and 1432. The Renaissance reconstruction was carried out in 1603 by the alderman Henrich Adelsbach. In 1623, the Jesuit Order acquired the building and transformed it into a school, and after 1786, it was partially dismantled. In 1834, the building burned down and was rebuilt to serve as a secondary school.

*Keywords:* Silesia, Głuchołazy, architecture, alderman's seat, city palace, Middle Ages, Renaissance.

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### Introduction

Głuchołazy (in German – *Ziegenhals*) lies in the southern part of Silesia on the border with the Czech Republic. The city was founded on a trade route connecting Wrocław and Olomouc. The building of the former alderman's seat is located in the eastern part of an area distinguished in the city charter, in the vicinity of the city walls. It was erected at the northern border of the now non-existent cemetery, which surrounded the parish church of St. Lawrence (Fig. 1) (Legendziewicz 2017).

The building is arranged around a trapezoidal courtyard, with its eastern border marked by the city wall. Its southern and western wings have been preserved, whereas the outline of the northern wing is exposed in the form of low walls. The three-story southern wing has a one-and-a-half-section interior layout, and the two-story western wing has a single-section layout. The facades have modest

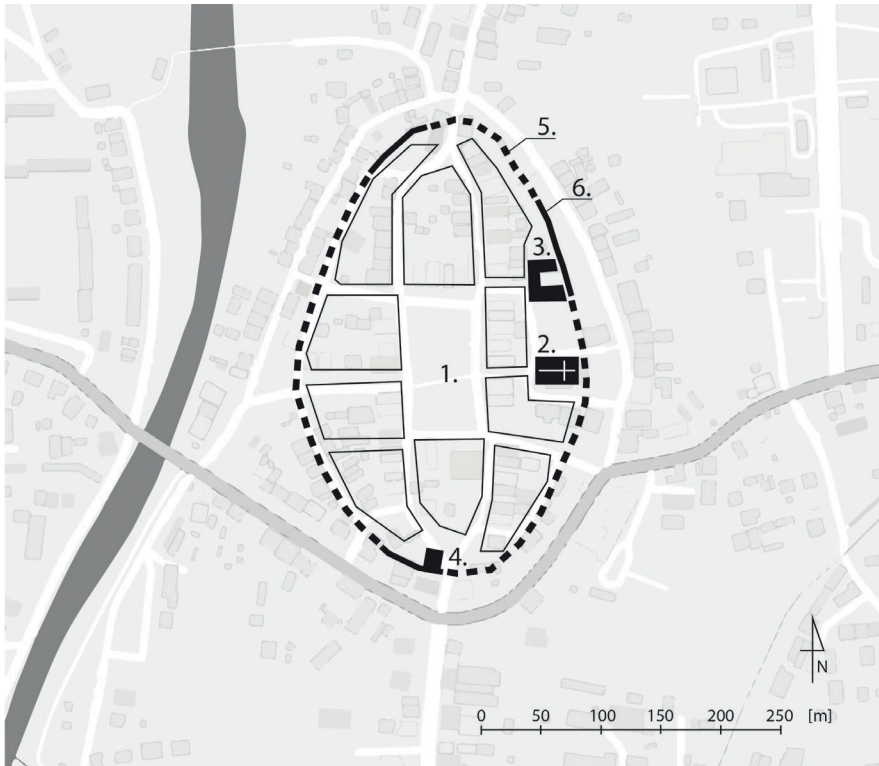


Fig. 1. Map of Poland with the location of Głuchołazy, and a schematic plan of the city with the indication of the alderman's seat. Key: 1 – market square, 2 – parish church, 3 – Upper Gate tower, 4 – the alderman's seat (developed by A. Legendziewicz, E. Grodzka, D. Dobrasiak)

neo-style detail in the form of window bands and profiled crowning cornices. In the western wing there is a passage gate covered with a barrel vault with lunettes, which is placed almost on the axis of the street coming from the north-eastern corner of the market square (in German – *Vogteigasse*). In the archival photos documenting the condition from before the last renovation works, which were carried out in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, traces of six semi-circular arcades (later re-walled) can be seen on the northern facade of the southern wing. The existing wings are covered with gable roofs.

### *Sources and the state of research*

The first mention of Głucholazy (*Cynghals*) comes from a document issued on October 21, 1249 in Wrocław in the office of the Wrocław bishop Thomas I (SUB. 1977, no. 380). The act contains information about the transfer of the rights to a forest near the village of *Cynghals* to the knight Smilo. The name of the city (*civitas*) *Cigenals* appears in a document written on 31 August 1263 in the office of the bishop of Wrocław, Thomas, in which there is a description of him adjudicating in a dispute between brothers Vitigo and Dietrich (SUB. 1984, no. 449). The alderman of Głucholazy, Reymbold, is mentioned for the first time in the act of 28 April 1268, issued in Trzebnica by Duke Władysław, who was the Archbishop of Salzburg (SUB. 1998, no. 57). From this document, it can be seen that one-third of the court cases in the town and in the aforementioned villages, which were under the duke's jurisdiction, were transferred to the alderman. The staroste of Nysa and the alderman of Głucholazy, Jan de Waldow, are mentioned in 1347 in the documents of the office of Bishop Przeclaw from Pogorzela (CDS 1933, no. 21). The alderman's seat is first described in a document from 20 March 1428, which accounts the destruction of the town as a result of the Hussite invasion (Kutzer 1932, pp. 45–36). Four years later, there is the next mention that informs about another burning of the alderman's seat by the Hussite army (Grunhagen 1872, p. 264).

In the existing literature, the subject of the buildings of the alderman's seat is discussed rather modestly and briefly. The first to address this topic was local chronicler Paul Kutzer (Kutzer 1928). Based on the 17<sup>th</sup>-century city plan, he described the complex as a building with extensive functions. He listed and showed on a schematic plan the individual rooms: the tower, kitchen, chambers, a large hall with a poured floor (*Estrich*), vaulted rooms, warehouses, a wood shed, and a garden adjacent to the complex (Kutzer 1928, p. 131).

In post-war publications, Tadeusz Chrzanowski and Marian Kornecki took up the topic of the alderman's seat (*Katalog* 1963, p. 22). They presented its history since its destruction in 1428 during the Hussite Wars. The construction of the tower was assumed to be in 1474. They mention that the alderman's seat belonged

to the Jesuits between the years 1622–1728, and that in 1815 it was acquired by the city. In the years 1729 and 1832 it was destroyed by fires. After the last fire, it was rebuilt for the purpose of a school, and then in 1880 it was rebuilt again. During these works, the tower was dismantled. Jerzy Pilch repeated the above findings, but omitted the demolition of the tower (Pilch 2008, p. 63). Rafał Eysymont, on the basis of literature, briefly described the layout of the complex in its most magnificent 17<sup>th</sup>-century form when discussing the urban planning of the city (Eysymontt 2009, p. 305). In turn, Maria Legut-Pintal overviewed the history of the aldermn's seat in a very general way by quoting and summarizing the findings of earlier researchers (Legut-Pintal 2017, p. 106).

### *Methodology and the scope of research*

The considerations presented below are a summary of field research carried out in recent years (Legendziewicz 2010a; 2011; 2014; 2015; Krawczyk 2014). Archaeological excavations were conducted within the area of the courtyard and the non-existent northern wing (Krawczyk 2014)<sup>1</sup>. The excavations revealed fragments of the main walls and vaults in the dismantled part of the complex. In the courtyard there are relics of a well, a stone pavement, and the pillars of the arcades located along the western and northern wings.

Architectural research was carried out within the ground floor and attic of the southern and partly western wing (Legendziewicz 2010a; 2011; 2014; 2015). The studies covered the city wall that closes the courtyard from the east, as well as the walls exposed in the archaeological excavations.

The aim of the archaeological and architectural research was to identify the form of the layout of the building complex and the shape of its ground floor around the inner courtyard. The results of the research were the basis for the conservation conclusions formulated for the purpose of the design of the arrangement of the space of the former courtyard. The results of the architectural research were used to develop guidelines for the renovation and reconstruction of the southern wing. The architectural research was based on the analysis of the building material, technological and material differences, and the modest detail of the building complex. Based on the above analyses, it was possible to isolate and discuss the subsequent phases of the formation of the alderman's seat in Głuchołazy.

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<sup>1</sup> The archaeological research was conducted by Mariusz Krawczyk of Pracownia Archeologiczno-Konserwatorska "Era" on behalf of the Głuchołazy Municipal Office. In the courtyard, 11 test pits were delineated, with a total area of 1.2 acres.

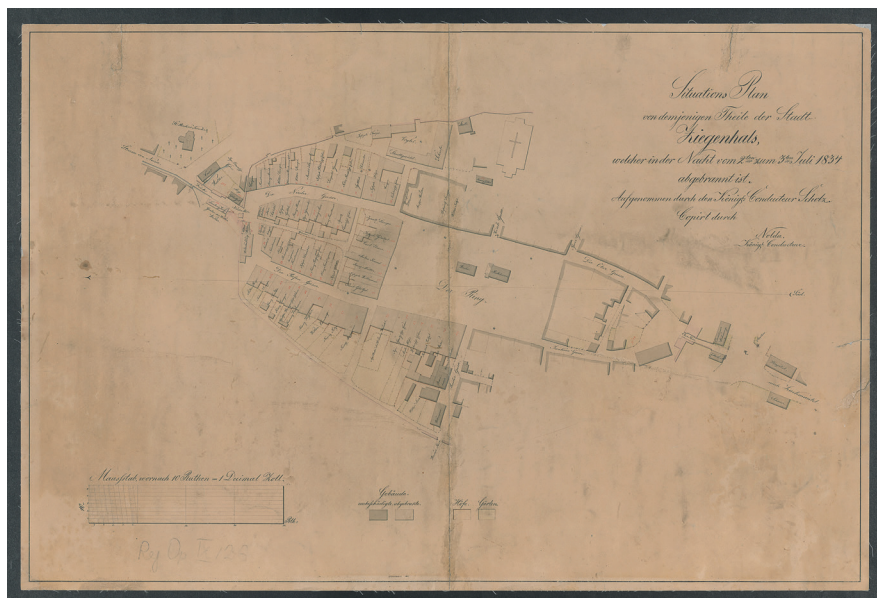


Fig. 2. Głucholazy, plan of the town after the fire on the night of 2–3 June, 1834. The alderman's seat is described as *Vogtej* (courtyard), *Stadtgericht* (west wings) and *Schule* (south wing) (AP Opole, file no. Op. IX/26)

The archival iconography was also analysed, which consists of: a lost picture of the view of the city from 1634, a painting depicting the city fire of July 1834 – in the collection of the Museum in Nysa, and a plan of the city after the fire on the night of 2–3 July 1834 (Fig. 2) (AP Opole, file no. Op. IX/26).

### *Results of the research*

The building complex of the former alderman's seat was erected at the same time as the city's defensive wall, probably in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Legendziewicz 2010b, p. 111)<sup>2</sup>. It was located north of the parish cemetery, in a strip of land between the perimeter defensive wall and the present Magistracka Street. The former building complex, the outline of which is consistent with the current one, was erected on a plan similar to a trapezoid with dimensions of 34.2 by 42.9 m. The entrance to its courtyard was located from the west through an opening, which was 2.2 m wide and placed on the axis of the street running from the north-eastern corner of

<sup>2</sup> The oldest mention about the walls and the Upper Gate comes from a document from 1315 (CDS 1892, no. 3473).

1.2 to 1.4 m from them. At the bottom of the walls, arcades were introduced: from the south – six, from the west – four, and probably five from the north. They were probably semicircular arcades that opened onto a cobbled courtyard. Their shape is known from the ones that have been preserved in the southern wing. Evidence of the others are their foundation walls. Archivolts, with a span of about 3 m and edges decorated with bands, were supported on rectangular pillars with cubic impostes. The arcade in the southern wing, and probably in the others wings, was covered with a beam ceiling (Fig. 6).

The layout of the northern wing underwent some changes, the scope of which is only partially known. Probably due to its poor condition, its rear wall was demolished and moved slightly to the north. In the rear section of the basement, a new barrel vault was made on the east–west axis. Its impost was found in an excavation in the north-west corner of the room. The vault was built with the use of stone voussoirs. The architectural design of the facade was probably also changed, with cube frames being placed around the window openings. Fragments of two such elements were found within the area of the northern wing and were later exposed on the perimeter wall.

Changes in the medieval layout of the interior of the southern wing are known at the ground level. On the axis of the gothic doorway, a corridor measuring 7.00 by 2.55 m, and containing stairs, was introduced. This is indicated by marks on the walls and the location of the steps between the first and second floors. There were entrances to two rooms from the corridor. On the eastern side, there was one of them, which had a rectangular shape and measured 24.2 by 6.8 m, and on the western side, there was the second one, almost square, measuring 8.1 by 7.1 m. The first room was accessed by two doors: one from the side of the arcade – a gothic entrance with a changed semi-circular arch, and the second one from the staircase. The interior of the room was illuminated by five windows from the south, and at least three from the side of the courtyard. In turn, the entrance to the smaller room was placed in the wall adjacent to the staircase (under the upper flight of stairs). Light entered its interior through three windows: two from the west (from the side of the street), and one from the south. The window frames were made of granite, and the edges were decorated with a simple bevel cut. The best window frames that have been preserved to this day are three on the north side and two on the south side, which are currently exposed. The location of the other windows is known from the traces of their jambs. The layout of the rooms and the lack of chimney ducts indicate that the ground floor of the southern wing served as a warehouse.

The scope of the transformations in the west wing remains unknown. An analogous arcade as in the southern wing was added to the side of the courtyard. In the northern part, there was a vestibule covered with a groin vault. On its axis from the side of the courtyard, an arcade wider than the other ones was built, measuring

the market square. The complex was surrounded by stone walls connected to the city wall (Figs. 3, 4).

The northern part of the courtyard included a wing, which probably had a residential function, and which measured about  $28.4 \times 10.4$  m. It had a two-section layout that can partially be seen at the basement level. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a fire-fighting water tank was introduced in the central part of the basement. The front section of the building was 2.5 m wide, and the rear section was 5.5 m wide. On the eastern side of the tank, there were at least two chambers in each section of the wing. They were covered with barrel vaults placed along the east–west axis. In turn, in the west, there were two chambers in each of the two sections of the building. The interiors of the first pair of chambers were probably also covered with barrel vaults, the lower parts of which have been preserved until now. They were built with the use of stone voussoirs laid on wooden ridges. Traces of formwork are imprinted in the excess mortar that had flowed out from between the stones. The range of the most outer bay of the wing is marked by a wall that is the eastern wall of the present western wing.

The perimeter walls of the medieval complex were made of local broken stone interspersed with fragments of bricks. The texture of the stone surface was created by 0.6 to 0.8 m high layers, which had visible alignment lines created by the use of graphite slate.

It is probably after the destruction and burning of Głucholazy during the Husite raids in the years 1428 (Kutzer 1932, pp. 45–46) and 1432 (Grünhagen 1872, p. 264) that the alderman's seat was rebuilt and enlarged with two new wings added into the outline of the walls from the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In the southern part of the courtyard, a building that had at least two storeys was located. The second wing was built on the western side along the present Magistracka Street. In its northern corner, a porch with a passage was constructed. Parallel to the southern wall, a different wall was erected, which separated the interior that had dimensions of about 6.8 by 32.5 m. This wall was added to the existing city perimeter walls and to the western wall of the alderman's seat (on the side of Magistracka Street). The ground floor was probably covered with a ceiling. The entrance to it led from the side of the courtyard through two openings. The first opening – gateway, which had an unknown shape and which was about 1.8 m wide, was located 9.2 m from the city's defensive wall. The second opening – a door, which was 1 meter wide and had a rectangular shape, was placed about 9.6 m from the western wall of the complex. The passage opening was probably enclosed in a stone frame, evidence of which are the preserved recesses. The present stone frames were made in the Baroque period.

Inside the ground floor, no relics of transverse walls were found, which may suggest that it was a single-space interior that served as a warehouse. The walls from the inside were covered with a thin-layer of plaster and were whitewashed in

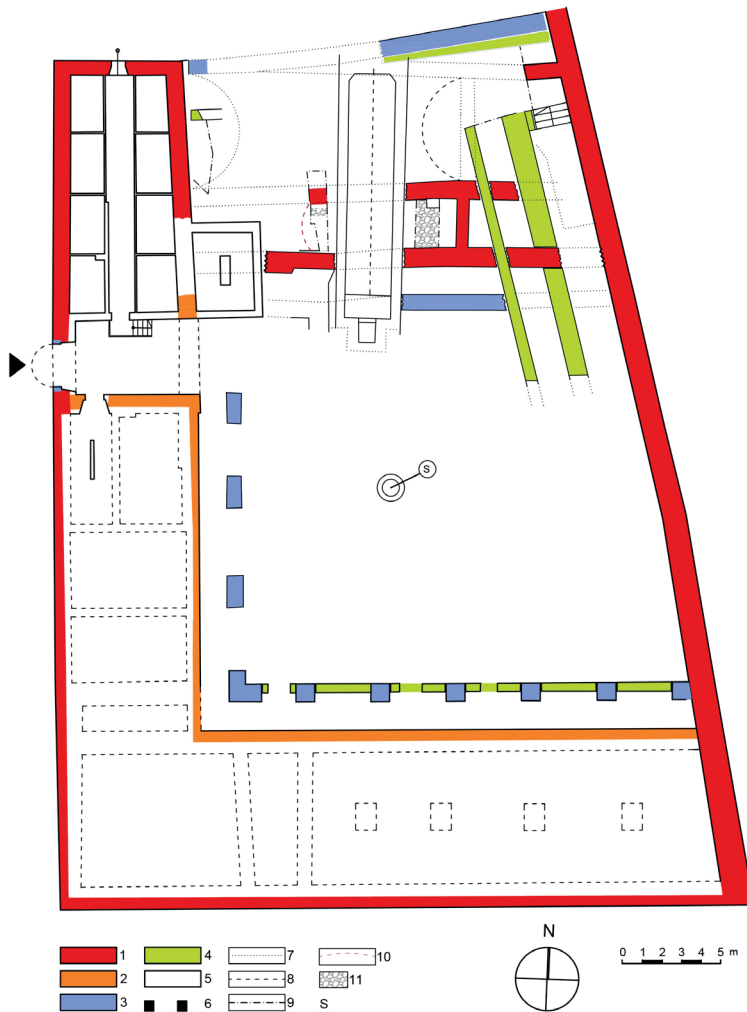


Fig. 3. Głucholazy, the alderman's seat, plan of the basements with chronological stratification of the walls. Key: 1 – first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, 2 – around the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, 3 – around 1603, 4 – the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, 5 – 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, and also unrecognized walls, 6 – stone frames, 7 – reconstruction lines (walls and vaults – hypothetical), 8 – reconstruction lines (walls and vaults), 9 – borders of inspection excavations; 10 – reconstruction lines of gothic vaults, 11 – stone pavement, S – well (developed by A. Legendziewicz, E. Grodzka, D. Dobrasiak)



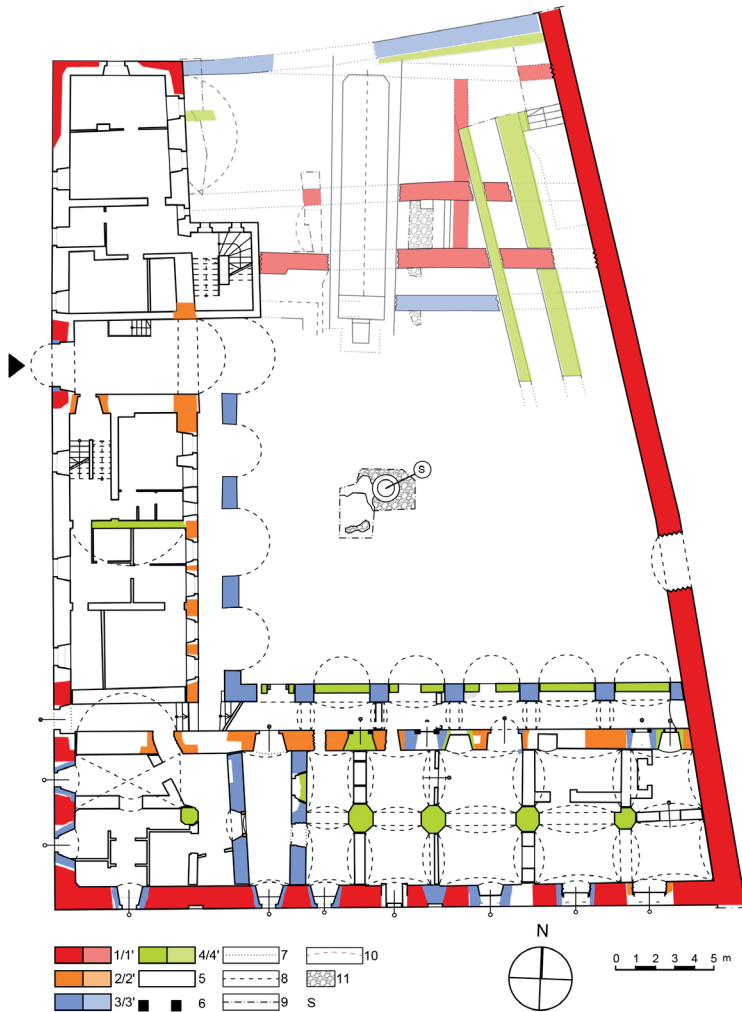


Fig. 4. Głucholazy, the alderman's seat, ground floor plan with chronological stratification of the walls. Key: 1/1' – first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (basement and ground floor walls), 2/2' – around the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (basement and ground floor walls), 3/3' – around 1603 (basement and ground floor walls), 4/4' – the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (basement and ground floor walls), 5/5' – 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, and also unrecognized walls, 6/6' – stone frames, 7/7' – reconstruction lines (walls and vaults (hypothetical), 8/8' – existing vaults and arches, 9/9' – borders of inspection excavations, 10/10' – reconstruction lines of gothic vaults, 11/11' – stone pavement, S – well (developed by A. Legendziewicz, E. Grodzka, D. Dobrasiak)



Fig. 5. Głucholaży, the alderman's seat, details of the Renaissance décor: a – elements of the stone framing – probably from the northern wing (currently exposed on the wall), b – the lower part of the pillar of the arcade made of reused Gothic stone framing (photo by A. Legendziewicz)

the colour of natural lime. They were built of crushed stone that was laid in layers with a height of 0.6 to 0.7 m. The stone material was bound with a lime-sand mortar, which was medium-hard, a yellowish-sandy colour, and which had lime fractions (ranging from particles to lumps of 10 to 30 mm).

It seems likely that along with the expansion of the complex, a well was dug in the middle of the courtyard. It had a shape that was similar to a circle with a diameter of about 1.2 m, and had a depth of 3.5 m. The well's lining and walls was made of broken stones with mortar that was analogous to the one that was used in the walls of the building.

The Renaissance reconstruction carried out by the alderman Henrich Adelsbach was probably carried out in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Kutzer 1928, pp. 131–134). The form of the building after these works is known from a lost picture of the view of the city from 1635. It shows a three-winged, three-story building arranged around a courtyard. The eight-axis front facade is decorated with a two-storey attic ridge. Its crest consisted of nine elements, behind which there was probably a butterfly roof. During the excavations in the courtyard, fragments of slate slabs were discovered, which may indicate that they could have been used as a roof covering. On the ground floor of the western facade, there was a semicircular gate opening leading to the courtyard, which was framed with stone blocks (Figs. 3–5).

Significant changes mainly took place with regards to the layout of the courtyard. Walls were erected in front of the existing three gothic wings at a distance of

4.1 m in width. In a picture of the view from 1635, it can be seen that at least one window illuminated the interior from the west. From the side of the courtyard and the porch on the ground floor, no other door openings were found, apart from the Gothic ones. It can be assumed that the interiors of the western wing had a similar function as the interiors in the southern one.

The colour scheme of the facade of the courtyard was formed in accordance with the rules in force during the Renaissance in Silesia, as well as analogously to other buildings funded by bishops in the cities of the Duchy of Nysa (Chorowska, Legendziewicz 2023, pp. 165–166). The stone detail was painted grey and black, and it stood out against the smoothed background plaster, which was whitewashed in the colour of Roman white. In addition to the new colours, a stone pavement was also laid 283.54 m above sea level in the courtyard. The floor was introduced under the arcade, in the passage hall, and around the well in the middle of the courtyard (Fig. 6).

The walls and vaults of the Renaissance phase were made of broken stones and bricks of various firing colours (from orange-red to cherry red), the dimensions of which were 7.5–8.5 by 12.0–13.0 by 26.0–27.0 cm. They were bound with a lime-sand mortar in a dark yellow colour, which had lumps of unslaked lime visible in

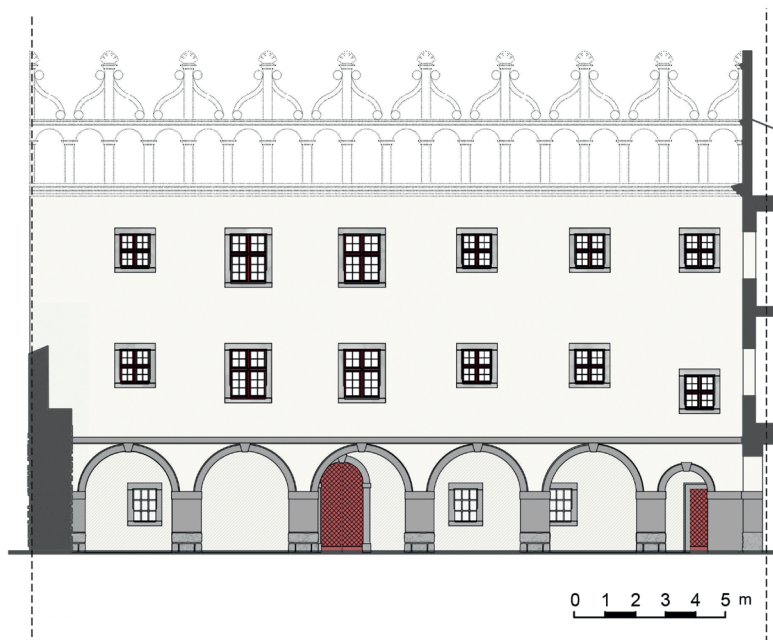


Fig. 6. Głucholazy, the alderman's seat, reconstruction of the colours of the northern facade of the southern wing (the form of the attic – hypothetical) (developed by A. Legendziewicz, E. Grodzka, D. Dobrasiak)

its structure. Reused gothic stone frames with a bevel cut were used to build the lower parts of the arcade pillars.

In 1623, the Jesuit Order purchased the buildings of the alderman's seat from the city (Kutzer 1928, pp. 131–134). Adaptation works for the needs of the functioning of the school were probably carried out in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, after the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648.

The reconstruction carried out by the Jesuit Order introduced significant changes in the facades and interiors of all the wings. The basement's chambers in the northern wing were probably divided into smaller ones, which is indicated by the preserved fragment of the wall in their rear section. The Renaissance arcade surrounding the courtyard was transformed into a corridor by bricking up the arcades. In the southern wing, the corridor was covered with a sail vault that was based on arches supported in the axes of the pillars. An analogous solution was probably used along the other wings, as can be assumed by the traces of the vault in the arcade adjacent to the west wing in the south-western corner of the courtyard.

On the ground floor of the southern wing, in its northern wall, all the windows were walled up and replaced by corridor lighting recesses. Fragments of Renaissance stone frames were used as lintels. Communication between the corridor and the interior of the southern wing was ensured by two new door openings: the first by the eastern wall, and the second in the axis of the fourth Renaissance pillar from the east – located at a distance of about 1 meter from the original Gothic entrance. Both had a rectangular shape and were covered with segmental arches (1.5 bricks thick). The location of the entrance from the side of the staircase was also changed. A new opening with a sectional pattern and a width of 1.2 m was pierced almost on the axis of the Renaissance one leading to a small room. The opening was enclosed in a Baroque stone frame, from which both posts have been preserved, and it was covered with a segmental arch (1.5 bricks thick).

The Renaissance layout of the interior remained almost unchanged. In the eastern room, a two-nave, five-bay layout was introduced by erecting four octagonal pillars. Between them, arches and fields of sail vaults were stretched. Illumination was provided by five window openings that were formed by enlarging the renaissance ones. An octagonal pillar was also introduced in the small room. Four arches were placed on it, and the fields between them were filled with groin vaults. In this room, the Renaissance windows have also been left, and only their stone frames were replaced.

As with the southern wing, reconstruction was also carried out in the western wing. Both entrances leading from the porch and from the courtyard have been left. The interior was covered with a barrel vault, probably with lunettes, stretched across the entire width of the wing. The thickness of the vault (with an almost semi-circular shape) was one brick.

The colour scheme of the facade referred to the Renaissance solution. The detail was painted in light grey, and the facade background was whitewashed in the colour of natural lime. In the corridor, the lighting recesses were painted light grey, and the walls and vaults were whitewashed (Legendziewicz 2010a, pp. 8–9).

The walls and vaults, which were made during the Baroque reconstruction, were built of bricks of various firing colours (from orange to cherry-red) and had dimensions of 7.0–7.5 by 13.0–14.0 by 29.0–30.5 cm. The ceramic material, laid in a double stretcher pattern, was bound with a rather weak lime-sand mortar of a yellowish-sand colour, which had particles and small lumps of unslaked lime visible in its structure.

After the dissolution of the Jesuit Order in 1786, the building complex of the alderman's seat was taken over by the Prussian state. At that time, probably due to the poor state of preservation, the northern wing was demolished. In its place, a farm building was erected adjacent to the medieval city wall. The remains of this building are two foundation footings located parallel to the city wall. Two almost parallel walls were recorded in the excavations. The first – 1,0 to 1,2 m wide – was located about 2.2 m from the wall, and the second (parallel to it) – about 0.5 m wide – was erected at a distance of 2.8 m from the first one.

Both walls were made with the use of broken stones from the demolition, which were laid quite carelessly. The binder was a weak lime-sand mortar that was sandy-white in colour (Fig. 7).

The building complex of the alderman's seat was partially destroyed as a result of a fire that broke out on the night of 2–3 July, 1834 (Fig. 2) (AP Opole, file no. Op. IX/26).



Fig. 7. Głucholazy, the alderman's seat, general view of the courtyard towards the north-east (photo by A. Legendziewicz)

*Summary*

The alderman's seat in Głuchołazy, which was probably erected in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, is an interesting example of a medieval town residence. In comparison to other well-known seats, it shows closer ties with ducal palaces that have an inner courtyard, which are known from cities in Western Europe or Silesia. This type of building can be seen in, e.g., the Wrocław city courts of the Opole dukes (later Brzeg dukes) – in the quarter between Szewska, Uniwersytecka, Kuźnicza and Igielna streets; and the Oleśnica dukes – at Wita Stwosza Street, at Bishop Matthias Street (later the abbots of Kamieniec) and at Nankera Square (Chorowska 2003, pp. 194–202).

Model solutions of Renaissance urban residences probably came to Silesia from the south of Europe through the Czech Republic and Poland. The layout of inner courtyards surrounded by arcades or cloisters is known from residences in Prague (Fucikova 2018) or Kraków (Kozakiewicz, Kozakiewicz 1987). Such a layout was used in Prague in the “house under the Golden Tree”. The Renaissance residence was built after the reconstruction by Waclaw Krocin of two Gothic tenement houses in the years 1586–1608 (Fucikova 2018, p. 150). Among the residences in Kraków, this type of courtyard solution can be seen in the house of canon priest Stanisław Skarszewski at Kanonicza 21. In the years 1582–1592, he transformed a Gothic residential building into one of the most representative examples of a town house, which had elements of Renaissance residential architecture (Kozakiewicz, Kozakiewicz 1987, p. 196). The layout of the residence around the inner courtyard is mainly known in Silesia from defensive complexes. Such a layout was applied for the castle in Prószków, which was erected in the years 1563–1571 by Baron George Prószkowski (Legendziewicz, Marcinów 2021, pp. 1–24). In the Duchy of Nysa, the palace in Siostrzechowice, built in 1592–1594 by Andrew von Jerin, the nephew of Bishop Andrew von Jerin, also had a similar layout (Legendziewicz 2019, pp. 17–29).

Regarding the above, the alderman's seat, regardless of its combined residential and warehouse function, follows the trends that are characteristic for the architecture of the Central European Renaissance. Despite its partial state of preservation, the building complex is an example of unique architecture, which has been strongly obliterated as a result of history. Moreover, it is a valuable building due to the fact that it is one of the two (including the alderman's tower in Bystrzyca Kłodzka) preserved alderman seats in Silesia.

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