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Protection of Authenticity in the Process of Historic Sacral Site Adaptation. Contemporary Interior Decoration in Renovation Design

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Abstract. The article presents the ways of adapting antique sacral objects from various regions of Europe and also one from Asia. The introduction cites the post-war and contemporary conservatory doctrine, which extensively impacted the range of conservatory interference on specific objects. The examples of adaptations are historicist shapes and interiors of buildings or integration of the historical sacral building with contemporary architecture that uses modern material solutions and technologies which clearly contrast with the authentic pieces of the object. Contemporary arrangements in conservatory design are described based on the realization of two engineer's theses involving issues of conservation, revalorisation, and adaptation of churches in Wrocław. The first work made by Eng. Arch. Ewelina Szczepańska titled "Attic and inter-tower spaces adaptation of Wrocław Archicathedral." included revalorisation of cathedral's attic and spaces located above the northern nave and its adaptation into expository functions. In the second work created by Eng. Arch. Karolina Bazan considered the topic of "The Attic adaption of Collegiate Church of the Holy Cross in Wrocław.". In conservatory practice, the definition of authenticity and its interpretation has still got essential importance. Considering the primacy of authenticity's value as leading in the way of revalorisation of the specific object and to keep the identity of the place. It is possible to analyse local traditions in the adaptation of antique objects. The value of authenticity in sacral objects cannot be just limited to material heritage, for which it consists of such obvious values as: form, function, construction of architectural object, material and detail, but also the value of the nonmaterial sphere, such as sacrum, symbol, memory and historical and social issues should be considered.

1. Introduction

In principle adaptation of historic sites aims at aligning a building with its new function, which is the fundamental condition for preservation of a historic site in terms of economics. Preservation of authenticity in terms of value in the process of historic site adaptation is complex, since it is connected with numerous technical, economic, legal and social issues. In effect each site is individually addressed due to the values that it represents, technical state, functional adaptation planning but it also needs to comply with technical requirements in terms of contemporary public utility purposes. Standardisation is normally out of question, so in consequence adaptation is a compromise arrived at by the team of stakeholders involved in the undertaking and the historic site renovator who defines the extent and delimitation of renovation works in the case of a historic site.



The lack of the relevant standardisation policy of renovation design to the extent of adaptation and modernisation of historic sites is still questionable. There is no appropriate method of building valorisation. It is very difficult to define but it could be very helpful in the decision process for conservators, [1,2].

The definition of authenticity and related interpretation is still significant in the renovation process. Taking into account the priority of authenticity in the renovation design of a specific site and preservation of identity, local historic site adaptation traditions may be analysed. For the purpose of this article, a number of sacral sites in various regions of Europe and one site in the USA have been analysed by means of comparison of diverse *in situ* authentic texture procedures.

The final section describes students' conceptual designs of contemporary adaptation of two attics in two churches: The Collegiate Church of the Holy Cross in Wrocław and the Saint John the Baptist Archicathedral in Wrocław.

2. European Examples of Historic Site Renovations

Authenticity in renovation theory and practice has been perceived diversely throughout the years. However, it has been most often defined as the original historic architectural texture solely limited to the original construction materials and the form of a specific building, as all and any reconstruction and style modification have been of secondary importance. Preservation of authenticity has taken the form of a sustainable ruin displayed anew against the background of the landscape (e.g., England, Italy, Spain).

The Hamar Cathedral relics, that currently constitute a part of the *Hedmarksmuseet* Museum, exemplify contemporary creation of ruins. The Cathedral was originally erected in the Roman style and at the beginning of the 13th Century it was reconstructed according to the Gothic style. At that time it was one of the two largest Roman Cathedrals in Norway (apart from the Cathedral in Oslo)¹. It was destroyed by the Sweden Military Forces during the First Northern War in 1567. In 1998 the preserved arcades (Figure 1) were covered by the glass and steel construction designed by Architect Kjell Lund, that was to serve the encapsulation purposes and provide for continuation of archaeological studies in that area (Figure 2).



Figure 1. The Fragment of the Hamar Cathedral Ruins before renovation (photograph by E. Cisek)



Figure 2. The Hamar Cathedral after renovation (photograph by E. Cisek)

¹ Cisek E., *Norweskie katedry jako przykład na nowo konstruowanej przestrzeni sacrum*, [in:] „Czasopismo Techniczne” vol. 14. Architektura z. 4-A2, Kraków, p. 74-79.

The Architect's major concept was to create cohesion of the interior with the surroundings, making the impression of the cathedral interior continuity². That was the reason for concealing the steel construction elements that could contrast with the surroundings. The advanced and constantly monitored heat distribution system provided for optimal conditions for visitors and efficient maintenance, inter alia: prevention of wall cracking in result of low ambient temperature as well as the Cathedral relics desiccation³.

St Michael's Cathedral in Coventry, that is the Anglican Cathedral erected at the turn of the 14th and the 15th century and destroyed in 1940 during the German bombing offensive, is another example of post-war renovation measures. The outer walls, the crypt, and the 90 metre tower were the only fragments to have remained intact. The Cathedral has never been reconstructed and its ruins have become the symbol of the German bombing offensives in England during the World War II. Inside the ruins, the blackened wooden cross was placed by the fire fighters, after the fire in 1949. After the war, in the 50s a new modernistic cathedral designed by Sir Basil Spence was erected next to the ruins. That design was selected out of over two hundred designs that were competing in the contest (Figure 3).



Figure 3. St Michael's Cathedral in Coventry. The Medieval fragment is on the left-hand side, and the contemporary fragment - on the right-hand side

Frauenkirche in Dresden, erected in the years 1726–1743, exemplifies anostosis. That building was destroyed during the World War II, during the night of February 13 and 14, 1945, in effect of the bombing by the Allied forces, during which it was seriously damaged and was demolished in the morning on February 15, 1945. At the time of the German Democratic Republic the ruins remained to become the symbol of the war atrocities. As late as in 1985 it was decided to reconstruct the church, however, the reconstruction works were commenced in 1989 after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Dresdner Bank, the city supporter societies or associations and individual donors from all over the world co-financed reconstruction works in the years 1994–2005. St Mary's Church was deconsecrated on 30 October 2005 and opened for worshippers and tourists. The war monument was transformed into the symbol of reunion.

The presented examples represent diverse extents of renovation and procedures of renovation and transformation of a historic site. Sustainable ruins have many times changed the functional dimension of a specific site perceived as material heritage, assigning symbolic importance to it (non-material heritage).

² Krupa M., *Rewaloryzacja katedry w Hamar jako przykład współczesnej kreacji ruin obiektu zabytkowego*, [in:] „Czasopismo Techniczne”, vol. 13, 3-A/2009, Kraków 2009, p. 104.

³ Nils M., *Hamar Cathedral ruins and the protective structure*, Oslo 2001, p. 13-17.

Churches in Lisboa are fine examples of authentic texture protection measures. The 15th century and the 16th century is the time of prosperity in Lisboa, which is connected with the Great Geographical Discoveries, inter alia, such as: the sea route to India discovered by Vasco da Gama, which accounted for the inflow of merchants from Europe, who were trading spices, silk, jewellery, and gold. That is also the time when the building industry was developing in Lisboa to a great extent, when the architectural icons of the city were erected to be cherished until today - e.g., the Jeronimos Monastery or Torre de Belem. Traumatic events had an impact upon the urban and architectural texture. On 1 November 1755 Lisboa was affected by the largest ever earthquake in Europe, that was accompanied by tsunami, and the rest of the buildings were destroyed in fire.



Figure 4. The Church of Carmelitas in Lisboa (photograph by B. Pierścioneck)



Figure 5. The Interior of the Church preserved in the form of sustainable ruins, the current state of the ruins (photograph by B. Pierścioneck)

The Convent and Church of Carmelitas (Convento do Carmo and **Igreja do Carmo**, Figure 4, 5) was one of the sacral sites destroyed at that time. That was a fairly significant building since the Convent Library kept approximately 5000 tomes in its custody. After the tragic earthquake during the reign of the Queen D. Maria I de Portugal, the reconstruction works of the Convent were commenced and later ceased in 1834 in result of the dissolution of Convents. At that time the Convent buildings were taken over by the Army to be administered as the Military Headquarters by the Army. Then it was decided to reconstruct some of the buildings but the Church Igreja do Carmo was neither repaired or restored. In 1864 the Church was transferred to the Association of Portuguese Archaeologists who transformed its ruins into the archaeological museum. Until now the Church has been preserved in the form of sustainable ruins and has been available for sightseeing. The original outer walls, interior pillars and acute arch pillars, stone vault stiffeners are the only fragments to have been preserved whereas the vaults have not actually survived the destruction.



Figure 6. St Dominic's Church in Lisboa, the western facade (photograph by B. Pierścioneck)



Figure 7. The Church Interior after renovation, the current state of the Church (photograph by B. Pierścioneck)

St Dominic's Church (**Igreja de São Domingos**, Il 6, 7) is still another interesting example of renovation in Lisboa. It was erected as a single-aisle church on the Latin cross plan in the middle of the 13th century. It was reconstructed many times and after the aforementioned earthquake in 1755 it was reconstructed as a Baroque church. The fire in 1959 affected the church to the greatest extent as it destroyed its interior. Then the whole of the barrel vault collapsed and the walls were destroyed by the fire. Renovation of the church emphasised the value of the authenticity of the destroyed architectural texture because the church walls were restored to its original shape, the barrel vault was reconstructed and painted red that symbolised the fire that had burnt down the church.

Bagrati Cathedral in Georgia represents one of the most interesting and controversial adaptations of sacral sites that have been realised in recent years. That is the centuries-old Cathedral erected in 1003 at the time of the „Golden Age” of the Georgian culture during the reign of King Bagrat III. For centuries it was recognised as the symbol of the state power and national unity. It was destroyed by the end of the 17th century during the raid of the Ottoman Turks and later bombed by the Russians in 1770. For over 300 years it was falling into ruin as it was deprived of ceilings, the dome, columns, and windows. Its reconstruction works were commenced in 1952, however, in 1994 the reconstruction process was paradoxically hampered in result of having made the entry of the Bagrati Cathedral onto the UNESCO List of World Heritage Sites. UNESCO and ICOMOS raised serious objections against completion of the construction works executed by the Georgians in 2008. Those organisations most of all requested for maintenance of „the historic authenticity of the site” by means of preserving the structure of the original foundations and the Cathedral as a whole in the form of the sustainable ruins.



Figure 8. The Fragment of the Bagrati Cathedral, the western facade with the built-on elevator shaft, [3]

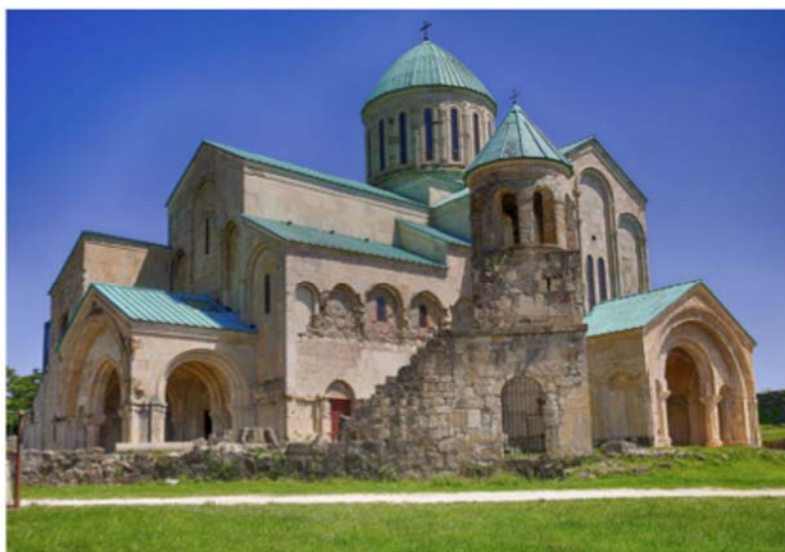


Figure 9. The Bagrati Cathedral after the renovation works, the current state of the Cathedral, [4]

Those requests were tabled in the course of the Cathedral renovation works, which is why in 2010 UNESCO put the Cathedral on the List of Endangered World Heritage Sites and in 2011 the Georgian Government was even requested to undo the effects of the reconstruction works. The final phase of the reconstruction works commenced in 2010 and carried out according to the design by Italian Architect Andrea Bruno was completed and the final outcome was rewarded by the Georgian Government and the University of Ferrara (Domus International Prize for Restoration and Conservation). The design displayed and exposed the historic texture of the Cathedral but modern materials were also added

mainly in the Cathedral Interior. The built-on modern elevator shaft by the entrance, connected with the terrace, is the most controversial element (II.8).



Figure 10, 11, 12. The Bagrati Cathedral Interior View after the renovation works, the current state of the Cathedral, [5]

Notwithstanding the harmonious connection of the authentic structure of the Cathedral with cohesively integrated contemporary architecture, and taking into consideration the doctrinal clear depiction of renovation outcome, the Cathedral was deleted from the prestigious UNESCO List of World Heritage Sites in 2017.

3. Post-war Renovation Trends in the Polish Architecture and Reconstruction of Cities

Destruction of the urban tissue after the World War II revised the renovation practices defined in the theoretically rooted Athens Charter in 1931. In Poland in the course of the post-war reconstruction it was impossible to abide by the rules contained in the universalistic doctrine due to the immensity of wartime destruction of cultural resources accounting for approximately 93 percent of the national cultural heritage. Retroversion, that mainly referred to restoration of historic centres in the forms corresponding to the ones destroyed in the war time, was the attempt to restore the structure of destroyed cities by means of contemporary architectural measures.

At that time two renovation approaches were discussed. One of them promoted by Antoni Karczewski, that arose from the inter-war renovation doctrine based on the authenticity of historic tissue as the fundamental indicator of the renovation idea, came forward with the reconstruction of architecture exclusively in the contemporary form. Fragments of ruins that remain, effectively protected, were to merely be the commemoration symbol, and all and any reconstructions needed to be limited to buildings significant for culture and heritage, exclusively if scientific arguments supported that approach. The other approach was promoted by Professor Jan Zachwatowicz. It arose from the idea of total reconstruction of a destroyed site on the grounds of available iconographic sources presenting the architectural form and site details. In that case the renovation principles were of secondary importance because it was more important to maintain the national and social awareness in view of the immensity of war destruction of historic tissue⁴. One of the key post-war historic site protection measures was the reconstruction of St John's Cathedral in Warszawa, in the case of which the Baryczka Chapel was preserved. Its reconstruction planning was vested in the Department of Polish Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology headed by Jan Zachwatowicz at that time.

The conceptual framework by Zachwatowicz came forward with the restoration of the cathedral to its original shape of the Masovian Gothic, with the unsophisticated facade crowned by the triangular apex with brick pinnacles. It was somewhat alike the Silesian Gothic buildings. According to serious

⁴ Kadłuczka A., *Ochrona zabytków architektury*, V. 1 Rozwój doktryn i teorii, Kraków 2000, p. 68-69.

sources of information, the Warsaw Cathedral was erected by the Wrocław Church creators. Therefore, the western facade as well as the interior of the Cathedral is totally different from its state before the war broke out. Laying of the cornerstone ceremony took place on 24 June 1947.

Although the above mentioned two renovation approaches referred to the reconstruction of a city as a whole or a part of it in urban terms, the said trend-derived measures are clearly visible in urban terms, at least when it comes to the conceptual framework of the reconstruction of the Wrocław Cathedral. Since the immensity of the war destruction reached 70% of the authentic tissue of the building, it was considered whether to restore the former shape of the Cathedral or to reconstruct all of its details or whether it would have been better to erect a Cathedral anew. The Polish aspect turned out to be decisive in that respect because the first Wrocław Cathedral was erected by the Piast Dynasty. Therefore, the then Ordinary Mitrato Karol Malik uttered: „ (...) in order to breathe the Polish spirit into these Piast Walls anew (...)”. In 1946 it was cleared of debris and its reconstruction works were commenced.

4. Contemporary Renovation Design Exemplified by Adaptation of the Cathedral Attic in Wrocław and the Collegiate Church of the Holy Cross in Wrocław

In 2017 within the framework of the Faculty of Building Engineering and Architecture at the Opole University of Technology, two conceptual design civil engineering master theses were developed to refer to contemporary European renovation design trends. The conceptual designs suggest the optimal use of innovative materials and technologies that incorporate themselves into the historic architecture, [6, 7]. Both theses considering the issue of renovation of Wrocław churches were developed through contribution of the author of this article, who acted in her capacity as a promoter of those conceptual designs. One of the theses was developed by Engineer and Architect Ewelina Szczepańska under the title „*Adaptation of the attic and spaces between the towers of Cathedral in Wrocław*” and covered the renovation of the cathedral attic and the interior space above the northern aisle and their adaptation to become exhibition space. The other thesis was developed by Engineer and Architect Karolina Bazan under the title „*Adaptation of the attic of Collegiate Church of the Holy Cross in Wrocław*”. Below the two conceptual designs are elaborated upon.

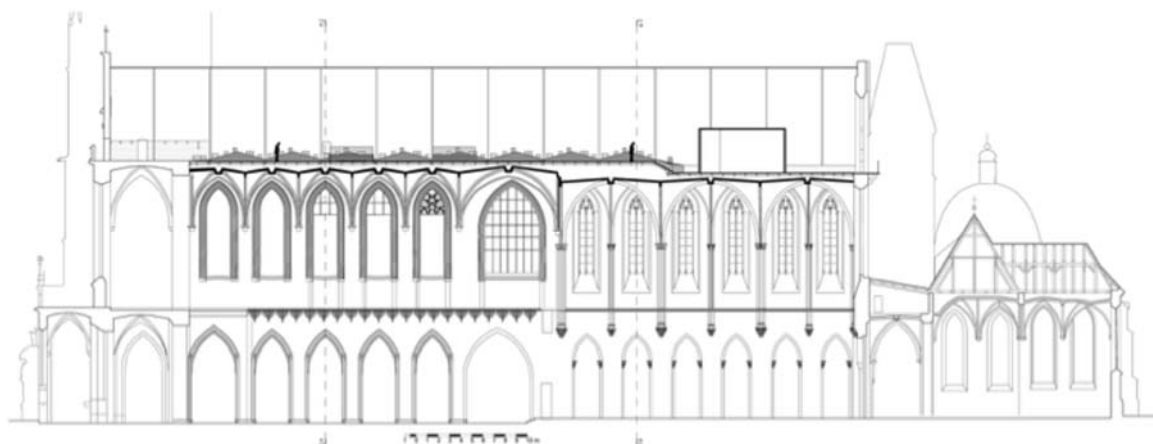


Figure 13. Longitudinal section with exhibition space in the Cathedral Attic (1st option-dark)
(drawing by E. Szczepańska)

Saint John the Baptist Cathedral and the Collegiate Church of the Holy Cross constitute two most significant sacral sites in Wrocław both in terms of history, religion and architecture. Both buildings are located in the vicinity of Ostrów Tumski. The Cathedral had been the principal seat of bishops since the year 1000, the time of erection of Wrocław Diocese, the second-ranked diocese in Poland (following the Gniezno Diocese). King Bolesław Chrobry is recognised as the initiator and founder of

the Cathedral. The existing Cathedral is the fourth cathedral subsequently erected on the place of the former three churches and is considered to be the first totally Gothic Cathedral in Poland because its main architectural form was shaped at the turn of the 13th century and 14th century. As it has already been mentioned, the Cathedral was considerably affected by the war atrocities of the World War II, however, it was reconstructed in the way that allowed for preservation of its former original historic shape in compliance with the then prevailing renovation doctrine and determination of the society.

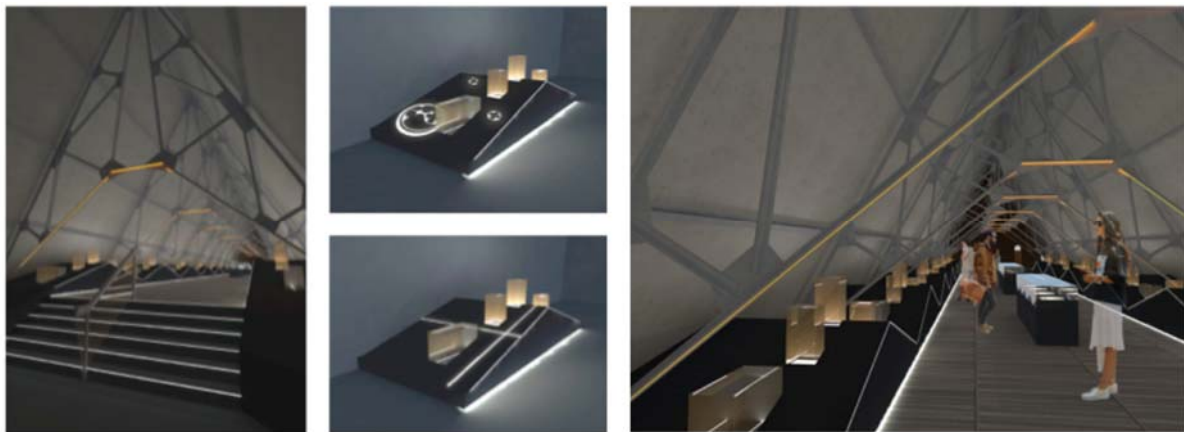


Figure 14. Visualisation of 1st option of the Attic conceptual design (dark) with exhibition sub-spaces (designed by E. Szczepańska)

Due to the fact that the attic space is the part of the building reconstruction of the war destruction, the conceptual design coming forward with the use of contemporary materials could be significant. The steel truss roof structure of the Cathedral was preserved and displayed and exposed. The author developed two conceptual designs complying with the exhibit space-related requirements (Figure 14, 15), taking into consideration insufficiency of natural light in the attic, the exhibition space of items requiring low energy consumption, which was the case with historic items (paper, historic fabric) was well and effectively designed. In the modern display cabinets above the presbytery, liturgical vestments were proposed to be displayed too.

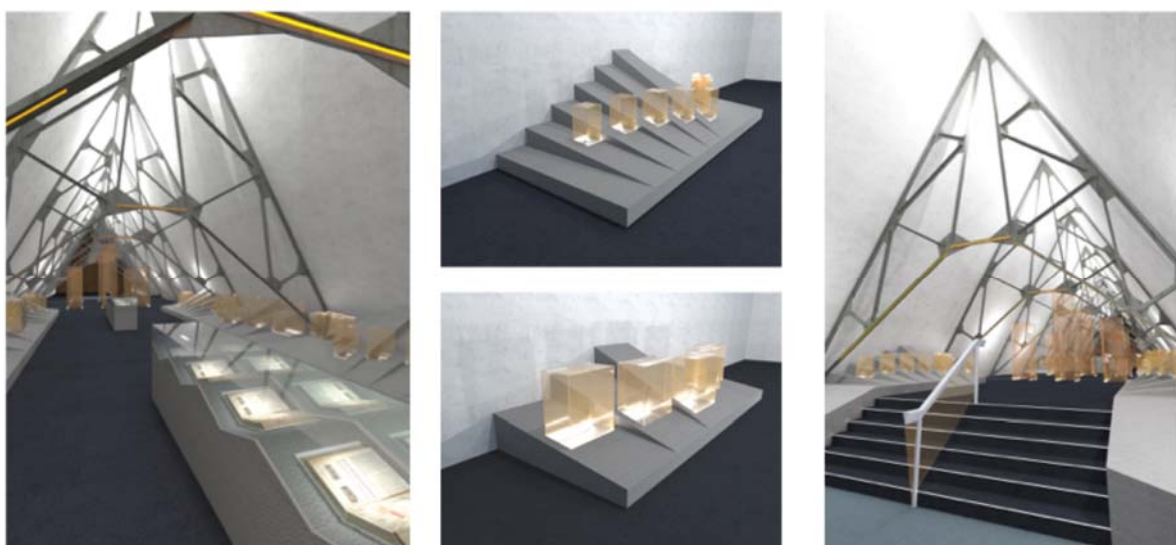


Figure 15. Visualisation of 2nd option of the Attic conceptual design (light) with exhibition sub-spaces (designed by E. Szczepańska)

A part of the conceptual design of the space above the northern aisle came forward with the modernisation of the existing exhibition space, [8, 9]. It was proposed to redesign it into the minimalistic interior space emphasising the brick texture of the Cathedral walls and elements of the wooden construction supporting the northern aisle roof. Glass display cabinets of unsophisticated cubic forms were incorporated into the walls to display: chalices, cans, custodies, monstrances, crosses, and enshrines (Figure 16).

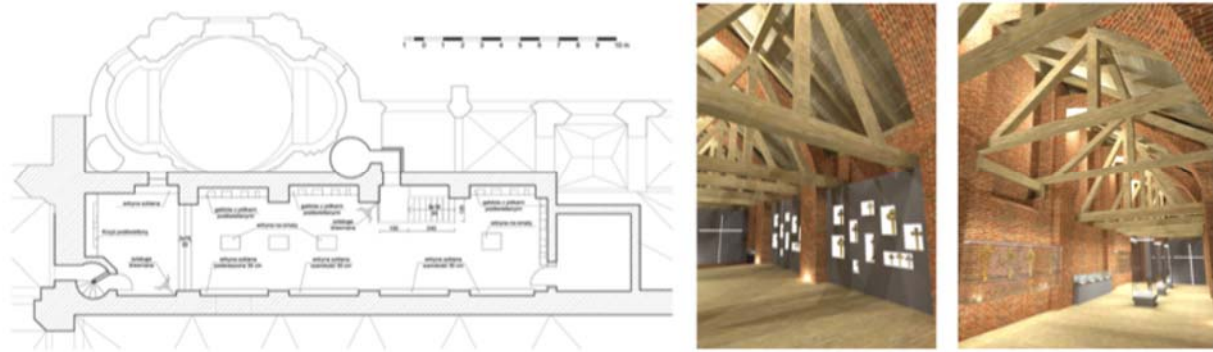


Figure 16. Exhibit space view above the northern aisle in the Wrocław Cathedral and design visualisation (designed by E. Szczepańska)

The thesis covering the adaptation of the attic in the Collegiate Church of the Holy Cross had to represent a different approach although it had the subject matter similar to the conceptual design of the Cathedral. The degree of redesigning the structure of the Church was much more limited because the original Gothic rafter framing had to be preserved and displayed and exposed. Historic sacral attics are still rarely available for sightseeing, which accounted for the additional advantage of the conceptual design - *in situ* preserved original authentic tissue to be displayed and exposed. In the attic of the Collegiate Church the exhibit space was designed to be available for both permanent exhibits above the presbytery and temporary exhibits. In the space above the northern and southern transept wing, the multimedia display and exhibition space was designed and in the space above the main nave and side aisles, the temporary exhibition space was designed (Figure 17, 18).

The Wrocław Cathedral and Collegiate Church were presented in the design by means of the common visual identification mark corresponding with the Gothic tracery, three education paths were also designed to promote the churches under consideration and local historic sites in Ostrów Tumski. The existing communication between the two sites was used for these purposes (Katedralna Street-the Church Square- Św. Idziego Street- Kapitulna Street- the Cathedral Square).

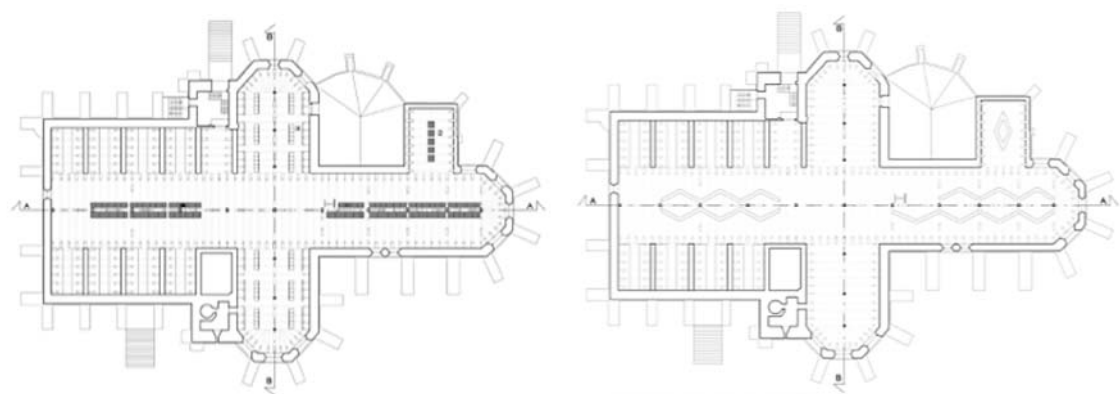


Figure 17. Attic views in the Collegiate Church of the Holy Cross presenting two exhibit space conceptual designs (designed by K.Bazan)

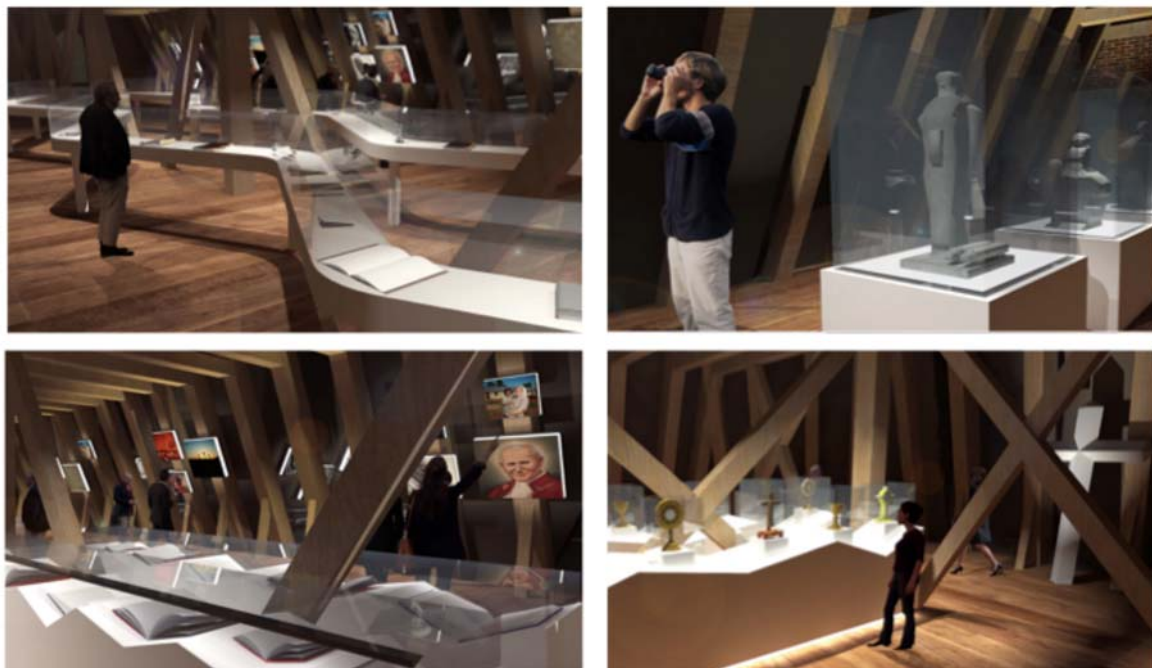


Figure 18. Visualisation of the Attic conceptual design including the exhibition sub-spaces (designed by K. Bazan)

5. Conclusions

The value of authenticity in sacral sites cannot be only limited to the material heritage that comprises obvious values: architectural site, used material, detail, form or construction. The value of authenticity must also be considered in the field of non-material heritage: sacrum, notion of commemoration symbol and sustainability as well as in the historical and social context.

Reconstruction or even adaptation of sacral sites are sometimes referred to as „the attempt to falsify history” and writing history anew. It is many times the case with renovation creation resembling the return to purism. Renovation of sacral sites often constitutes a good strategy to boost economic processes, brand creation processes and development of local tourism. However, it is most of all the effort of many to save the material and non-material value of cultural heritage handed over to us by the former generations and the endeavour to use this potential currently in the best way ever.

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