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Towers – the element of Jutrosin’s spatial composition (Greater Poland Province)

Introduction

Dwelling and farm buildings along with greenery are the elements that for centuries to a large extent have formed and arranged space. The tallest or the biggest of them dominate the whole composition. These include primarily town halls and churches with their spacious interiors and distinctive functions as well as high towers which are the main architectural landmarks. These buildings also often have exquisitely rich architectural forms as well as sculptural and painting decorations which greatly affect the perception of landscapes or skylines of selected settlements. The town halls and temples create specific architectural landmarks of the cities and thus diversify their spatial composition.

It is worth emphasizing that it was the buildings and spatial composition that significantly influenced the diversity and architectural design of a town; those factors determined the harmonious adjustment to the neighboring landscape. As a rule the closer to the center (market square), the buildings are higher and higher. The architectural landmarks, which would be vertical elements, located over a larger area significantly influence the architectural diversity of a town. The fundamental element in the process of architectural development

of settlements and their landscape was their geographical location. Making the most of the landscape features enhances and facilitates the artistic perception of town skylines [8].

The issues indicated above will be exemplified by Jutrosin – a town in Greater Poland. Although it is not a huge and popular center, its historical and urban growth is as interesting and fascinating as that of its selected historical buildings.

Jutrosin¹ is a small town located in Greater Poland Lowland whose characteristic features include significantly undulating landscape, absence of lakes, gravel and sand hills as well as two wide-bottomed valleys of small rivers: Orla and Radęca. This is because of dangerous and regular overflows of Orla river and its tributaries that Jutrosin was located on a little hill, which makes its skyline clearly visible from anywhere around it [4].

¹ The town is located 25 km in a straight line to the east of the main national road between Wrocław and Poznań; from an administrative point of view it belongs to Greater Poland Province. It is located in the center of district (*gmina*) that in the south borders on Lower Silesia Province.

History of Jutrosin

The first mention of Jutrosin comes from 1281, however, it is believed that the town was founded much earlier. At that time Poland was divided into regions. The town certainly belonged to Greater Poland and it was part of Dubin Castellany [10]. The first written mention of the

town comes from 1395 and the church in Jutrosin was first mentioned in 1420 [6].

It is known that in the 16th century Jutrosin had the privilege of organizing general assemblies² and it is repeated in written accounts that there was a castle whose

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² This privilege was granted to such cities as Warsaw, Malbork or Bydgoszcz.



Fig. 1. The layout of Jutrosin (by Janusz Gubański):
 A – town hall, B – St. Elizabeth's Church, C – former Evangelical Church, D – Holy Cross Church, E – belfry; 1 – rectory, 2 – former Catholic school, 3 – restaurant, 4 – post office, 5 – former pastor's house and Evangelical school, 6 – cemetery, 7 – Sacred Heart Statue, 8 – kindergarten, 9 – St. Hedwig nuns' house

location has not been determined so far (it is believed that so called „Górzysko” is the place where it that castle stood) [4].

In 1532, one of the biggest fires broke out in the town and it destroyed the oldest documents, including those regarding its incorporation³ and providing the obligations as well as privileges of the townsmen. Already in 1533, the town's owners issued a new document with the rights and obligations granted to the inhabitants of Jutrosin. The first mention of the Holy Cross Church comes from 1557 and of the Evangelical school from 1573. The settlement grew dynamically in the 16th century as it was located on the trade route leading from Poland to Silesia and to Saxony [2].

³ Presumably, Jutrosin was granted a charter before 1281 (after: [10]).

In 1642, the then owner of Jutrosin – Prokop Stanisław Kołaczkowski granted a privilege to the immigrants from Silesia which guaranteed the newcomers their own authorities and freedom to practice religion. It is known that in the first half of the 17th century, apart from Polish and German religious communities there was also a Jewish community in Jutrosin. Crafts developed more and more in the town too. Already in the second half of the 17th century, selected guilds were granted charters. During that period there was a growing unrest between individual religious groups (and consequently – national). In the 18th century, these relations grew much worse. In the second half of the 18th century, the political situation improved and crafts as well as trade continued to flourish and that contributed to further beneficial changes in the development of the town [4].

Over the centuries Jutrosin has had numerous owners until 1841 when Duke Adam Czartoryski purchased

the holdings from Count Potulicki from Wielki Bór [10]. The Czartoryski family managed the holdings until World War II.

After liberation of Jutrosin in 1945, the German origin population left the town. During the years immediately after the war there was a slight revival of trade and culture. When in June 1945 Leszno Province was established, the town and district (*gmina*) belonged to that province [4].

In general it can be said that until the 1990s the town declined and its economic, social as well as cultural life fell into stagnation. Only after 1990, after implementation

of some necessary organizational and financial changes in local authorities, did the town grow. It was evident in the area of construction (a new district of single-family houses), necessary investments (e.g. water supply or sewer systems), and first of all improvement of the town general beauty (new sidewalks, repair or in some cases even conversion of public utility buildings to serve new functions, renovation of elevations of most residential buildings). Due to efforts of both local authorities and the residents themselves the image of this Greater Poland town improved considerably over the last few years.

*Spatial development*⁴

At present it is very difficult to unambiguously determine the course of history of the oldest settlement in Jutrosin because so far no source materials have been found. It is believed that Jutrosin developed from an old early medieval settlement. July 15, 1281 is the officially recognized date of the town location. For centuries the town was always owned by private people and it was a knight's town.

The plan of Jutrosin (Fig. 1) indicates that Dworcowa Street is the oldest street in town as its location diagonally disturbs its regular medieval layout. One can risk a statement that it dates from before the town location and the market square of the original settlement was probably within the boundaries of the present Market.

The medieval layout of the town is relatively well visible in the development of its spatial composition⁵. The trapezoid market is in its center. Its irregular line, with the main road (Wrocław – Krotoszyn) going along it, is from the west. Perpendicular streets go from each of the corners of the square (with the exception of the corner from which Dworcowa Street goes⁶). Around the market there are residential quarters with rather irregular shape. At the end of the street going off the south-east corner of the square there is a Catholic parish church. The Holy Cross Church was built for the immigrants from Silesia by the road going in the direction of Wrocław. The location of this small church on the axis of that street indicates the first deliberate attempts at urban planning. The life of the settlement intensified after 1642 when the then squire of Jutrosin granted privileges to the immigrants from Silesia. Those newcomers settled along present Wrocławska Street (so called Silesian Route). The present Garncarska Street is the old 17th century potters' outskirts.

One of the characteristic features of the town was so called trade roads located on the fields' side along which the townsmen–farmers built numerous barns. The build-

ings were constructed as timber-framed structures which gave the town a special character and appearance.

In 1859, after the most disastrous fire in the history of Jutrosin the rebuilding of the town began. Among others two new schools were built: Evangelical one at Wrocławska Street and Catholic one at Szkolna Street. In the first half of the 19th century, a new town hall was built on the market. In the years 1862–1863, on one of the parcels at Wrocławska Street, in the place of earlier Evangelical church, a new Evangelical church was built in the immediate neighborhood of the school of the same denomination.

For dozens of years, Jutrosin was a multinational town. The abandoned cemeteries: Evangelical one at Ogrodowa Street and Jewish one by the road leading to the village of Nadstawem are the remains of that religious diversity⁷.

The contemporary plan of Jutrosin Market resembles a square (150×150m), although five streets still go off of it⁸. The Market is a location of a bank and offices as well as numerous stores; there is a restaurant at the corner of the Market and Wrocławska Street. In the very center of the square there is the town hall building from the middle of the 19th century. At present most buildings around the Market as well as beyond it are historical buildings. The houses around the Market are mainly two-storied buildings, whereas those beyond it are usually single-storied buildings with their roof ridges parallel to the street.

Near the Market, close to its south-east corner, there is a great Neo-Romanesque St. Elizabeth's Church with a rectory and elementary school⁹.

The main and at the same time most representative street of the town is the old Silesian Road – at present Wrocławska Street. The most important buildings such as former Evangelical church with adjacent pastor's house and former Evangelical school¹⁰, post office, culture cent-

⁴ The spatial development of Jutrosin was described on the basis of the following publications: [3], [4], [5], [10].

⁵ It is important that the town in question has never had defensive walls or any other kind of fortifications.

⁶ As the name suggests the street led to the railroad station about 2 km away (to the north) from the town buildings.

⁷ Almost impossible to find in the contemporary spatial structure of the town.

⁸ They include: Wrocławska, Dworcowa, Chłodna, Dolna and Kościuszkzi Streets.

⁹ The building of former Catholic school; over the last few years extended and modernized.

¹⁰ At present these buildings belong to the Elementary School in Jutrosin.

er, Holy Cross Church, belfry and parish cemetery are located by that street. The buildings of vocational and secondary schools are located at the corner of Wrocławska and Mickiewicza Streets. The kindergarten, St. Hedwig nuns' house, Sacred Heart Statue, outpatient clinic as well as police station are located at Mickiewicza Street which is an exit road from the town in the direction of Wrocław. At the end of that street, in the place where once there was an impressive wooden trestle type windmill, there is a relatively new development of single-family houses. The main industrial facilities in the town are located along Polna Street, parallel to Wrocławska Street

(on the opposite side of the cemetery)¹¹. The old dairy and the butcher's shop are located by the town's north border.

To the south of the town, beyond its borders, there are areas for mining natural aggregate. As a result there are numerous post-mining gravel pits there. One of them was filled with water and developed as a recreational area to accommodate summer holidaymakers.

¹¹ For instance sawmill, concrete products manufacturer, Christmas decorations factory, power facility.

Towers in Jutrosin



Fig. 2. Town Hall.
Photo by R. Gubańska, 2005

One does need to be an observant visitor to notice, when approaching Jutrosin, from far away four prominent towers: one – of the town hall and three others – of the churches. These vertical elements of the town absolutely dominate the skyline of both residential and farm buildings as well as the green belt. The town is well visible due to its exceptional location – on a small hill.

One of the four main landmarks is the tower of the town hall in Jutrosin (Fig. 2). The town hall dates back to the middle of the 19th century and it is located in the center of the Market, which is in compliance with the town composition principles applied in the Middle Ages [1, 9]. The building was built on a square plan. Its three-storied, cubic building is covered by a pyramid hip roof. Two extensions and a facilities building were annexed to the town hall main building from the east. The main entrance to the building is on the opposite side – from the west. A kind of gravity and grandeur of the building was emphasized by the rhythmicity of its elevations and excellent application of architectural details.

It should be emphasized that the octagonal tower with a clock on top of the town hall is especially worth noting¹². There is a beautiful balustrade above the clock. The proper tower is covered by a lantern with a spire. That tower with a metal rooster weathervane¹³ [4] is one of the major landmarks of that town.

As mentioned earlier, at the end of the scenic axis of the street going off the south-east corner of the Market, a quarter was assigned for building of a Catholic church. Probably the first church was built of wood; later it was replaced by a masonry structure which burned down at the beginning of the 19th century. This way the town did not have a parish church for almost 100 years¹⁴. Only in

¹² The date 1882 is visible on the clock as well as the words: *A. Winkler Breslau* (name of the company, after: [4]).

¹³ The rooster is the only preserved element of former town hall (after: [4]).

¹⁴ During that time the small Holy Cross Church located at the outskirts of the town served as a parish church (after: [4]).



Fig. 3. St. Elizabeth’s Church – view from Kościuszki Street.
Photo by R. Gubańska, 2005



Fig. 4. Former Evangelical Church, Wrocławska Street.
Photo by R. Gubańska, 2005

the years 1900–1902, on the initiative of Duke Zdzisław Czartoryski, was the present church built. Its main architect was Tomasz Pajzderski whose architectural design of the building referred directly to the Romanesque cathedrals in Speyer and Mainz [4].

St. Elizabeth’s Church (Fig. 3), as a free-standing building, was built on the assigned square which was surrounded by a decorative brick wall. The church combines simplicity and moderation and it has a high gable roof. Its facades, which are made of ceramic bricks, are covered with plaster from the outside. The architectural brick details have exquisite forms and proportions. The 47 m tall tower which is also a belfry adds to the building’s austerity and grandeur. The bell tower, which is a component element of the west elevation of the parish church, utterly dominates the whole structure. Just like in the case of the main body of the building, the tower’s decorative details are moderate and simple. Its brick elevations are not covered with plaster. The only exception is a group of windows with brick frames located in a relatively ‘shallow recess’ which is covered with plaster. In the corners of upper section – lesenes connected by an arcade frieze at each stage. The elevation walls are crowned with triangular gables decorated with a staircase frieze, eaves-cornice and centrally located small blank window in the form of a clover leaf. The whole helm is covered with picturesque rhomboid roof planes. It should be remembered that the tower of Jutrosin church is not only a great architectural landmark but also, or maybe first of all, an interesting scenic closure of both streets located on the extension of the main axis of the church.

From the east, there are two small towers with a semi-circular altar apse between them. In the immediate neighborhood, from the south, there is a rectory and the former Catholic school. At present the rectory buildings are surrounded by a beautiful garden with select plants which is cared for with utter meticulousness.

It should be stressed that the church building with a dominating tower creates an interesting closure not only of the street but also a scenic axis of both Kościuszki Street (going directly from the Market) and Garncarska Street (former potters’ outskirts).

The building of the former Evangelical church dating from the years 1862–1863, that was built in the place of an earlier church, which had burned down [4, 10], is equally interesting. The free-standing building is located in some distance from the Market (about 200 m) at Wrocławska Street (old Silesian Road). It was built on a square plan which from the side of the main road is separated by a historical brick wall; from the north it adjoins the buildings of former pastor’s house and the Evangelical school (Fig. 4).

The former Evangelical church is designed on the plan of an elongated rectangular. The single-storied main body of the building has no basement. On the west side there are three polygonal apses. The whole structure is covered with a tall gable roof. The base walls look like *rough rubble walls*, whereas the upper sections were built from solid ceramic bricks and they were not covered with plaster on the outside.

The five-stage tower, which is an interesting landmark of the street as well as of the town, clearly stands out



Fig. 5. Holy Cross Church and belfry. Photo by R. Gubańska, 2005

against the east elevation of the church. The three-axis elevation of that tower can be divided into three stages: ground level with the front door with a semicircular lintel; upper levels with rectangular semicircular-headed windows and the third level which is the fourth stage with paired windows. The brick walls of the tower have triangular gables with varied architectural details: ornamented staircase frieze, eaves-cornice, centrally located round blank window. The tower is covered with a brick helm roof. On the sides of the main elevation there are pinnacles. The architecture of the church is a combination of styles with references to the Middle Ages that is Neo-Romanesque and Neo-Gothic [4].

After World War II, due to political and economic situation, nobody needed the Evangelical church so the building was neglected. For dozens of years it was abandoned and unused which resulted in its gradual fall into ruin. A few years ago the conversion and repair works were completed. The interior of the former Evangelical church was converted into a hall for sports and other events mainly for children and youth. Although the decision to change the function of the building from a church to a gym was and still is a little controversial, it seems rational and above all beneficial for the building itself as well as for the whole town because that church building – which is one of the town's architectural landmarks – maintained its position in the spatial layout of the town. Its five-stage tower with a high helm roof built in the form of a pyramid dominates not only the main body of the building but it also stands out against the skyline of the town and it is one of four characteristic architectural features of the town which is being renovated.

The last tower which dominates the town's skyline is a small cupola of the Holy Cross church (Fig. 5). That church is located about 500 m to the south of the Market (at the end of Wrocławska Street) on the cemetery. The

lot of the cemetery, which is trapezoid, is surrounded by a plastered brick wall with prominent posts. Originally the building had a beautiful timber-framed construction¹⁵ on the Greek cruciform plan. Its central part is covered with a pyramid hip roof crowned with a lantern and an onion dome and each arm of the cross with a gable roof. The roof planes are covered with wood shingles. The cupola which is located on top in the middle section of the roof is made of wood and it is covered with zinc sheets. On the very top of the picturesque late Baroque onion dome there is a metal ball and a cross [4, 10]. This interesting structure is a great closure of the scenic axis of the main street of the town. The beauty of that small architectural landmark is especially well visible on sunny days when the sunrays reflecting in the surface of the cupola emerging from the green belt can be seen from as far away as a dozen or so kilometers.

From the north, in the direct neighborhood of the church cemetery, there is a wooden belfry with two bells. Its pyramid hip roof, which is also covered with wood shingles, is crowned with a simple tower covered with a small pyramid hip roof with a metal ball and a cross. That belfry is not only a picturesque structure beautifully integrated into the town skyline but at present also one of the most interesting examples of wooden architecture in Greater Poland.

The four towers described above – which are characteristic architectural landmarks of Jutrosin landscape – undoubtedly affect its dynamics and attractiveness. Figure 6 shows a typical view of Jutrosin (regardless of geographical direction, in this case from direction of Sielec

¹⁵ A dozen or so years ago some repair works were conducted in the building during which the historical timber-framed construction was replaced by brick walls with wooden boards nailed to them only imitating the timbers on elevations.



Fig. 6. Panorama of the town viewed from Solec Stary. Photo by J. Gubański, 2005



Fig. 7. Panorama of the town viewed from Pawłowo. Photo by R. Gubańska, 2010

Stary). In the foreground there are arable fields and the shimmering surface of the river. Only in some distance can one notice the residential and farm buildings with outstanding towers: on the left – the one a little shorter of the town hall and on the right – the other three ones of the local churches: from the left – the parish St. Elizabeth's church, in the middle – former Evangelical church, and a little further to the right – the Holy Cross church. The blue sky is the landscape's closure and at the same time its background. It is a perfect example of towers being both architectural and urban landmarks.

Figure 7 shows the totally opposite sequence of the towers set in the urban design of the town, namely from the left there is the former Evangelical church or actually

its tower, then the tower of the parish church and finally the tower of the town hall. Unfortunately, the view of the Holy Cross church – both its building and its tower – is totally blocked by the trees surrounding it. The other buildings in the town create a consistent kind of background of Jutrosin skyline because the foreground is still filled with arable fields which surround the town from all sides.

It should be remembered that it is the very towers being vertical elements that in fact define landscape, which is indeed one of the most fundamental elements of the environment around us. Landscape is a material asset inherited from our ancestors. Due to the respect for past generations and events we should preserve the cultural heritage left for us [7].

Conclusions

The above indicates that there are some relations between buildings which are determined by their form, shapes and spatial composition. They are especially evident when we are dealing directly with buildings dominating by their height and size as well as function. Towers, which are the vertical elements shaping landscape, not only serve as architectural landmarks because of their height; often they are integral parts of buildings which are functional landmarks, obviously due to the way in which they are used, for instance churches, squares, town halls.

It should be remembered that towers were first noticed and deliberately used to shape landscape already in the 16th century [8, 9]. This type of landmarks became the

foundation for landscape composition, a kind of urban factor which is perfectly exemplified by Jutrosin. The towers in Jutrosin not only form a very interesting skyline, which makes the town much more attractive, but they also are perfect streets' closures (or more specifically – their scenic axes). Those vertical elements are clearly visible from far away and virtually from anywhere around the town, which is the result of its location on a hill.

There is one more function of the tower that needs to be mentioned – the symbolic one – that of a sign-post. When approaching a place one can correctly guess from far away that it is a town; the emerging shapes of the towers perfectly specify the buildings' character of a small town.

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Wieża elementem kompozycji przestrzennej Jutrosina (woj. wielkopolskie)

Od wieków elementami kształtującymi i porządkującymi przestrzeń były i są nadal zabudowania mieszkalne, gospodarcze oraz towarzysząca im zielen. Bardzo często jednak pojawiają się akcenty wertykalne, które nie tylko wpływają na zróżnicowanie kompozycji przestrzennej, ale także tworzą malownicze zespoły widokowe. To przede wszystkim kościoły wraz z wysokimi wieżami stanowiły główne dominanty architektoniczne. Podobnie wyróżniającymi się elementami były ratusze, nierzadko konkurujące z kościołami. Należy podkreślić, że na różnorodność i interesujący kształt sylwetki miasta duży wpływ miała kompozycja przestrzenna oraz układ zabudowy.

Key words: Jutrosin, towers, spatial composition

Zasygnalizowane zagadnienia zostaną przedstawione na przykładzie Jutrosina, miasteczka zlokalizowanego na Nizinie Wielkopolskiej. Jutrosińskie wieże nie tylko w interesujący sposób kształtują panoramę miasta, czyniąc tym samym jego sylwetkę znacznie ciekawszą, stanowią również wspaniałe zamknięcia ulic, a uściślając – ich osi widokowych.

Na podkreślenie zasługuje jeszcze jedna funkcja wieży – symboliczna, a mianowicie drogowskazu. Zbliżając się do wybranej miejscowości, już z daleka możemy określić, czy mamy do czynienia ze wsią czy miastem. Zarysowujące się sylwetki występujących tam wież doskonale określały i określały nadal charakter zabudowy.

Słowa kluczowe: Jutrosin, wieże, kompozycja przestrzenna