

PALACE AT ŻYROWA. TRANSFORMATIONS FROM THE 15TH TO EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

Andrzej LEGENDZIEWICZ ^a; Aleksandra MARCINÓW ^b

^a Associated Prof., DSc PhD Eng. Arch.; Wrocław University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Architecture, ul. Prusa 53/55, 50–317 Wrocław, Poland

*E-mail address: andrzej.legendziewicz@pwr.edu.pl

^b PhD Eng. Arch.; Wrocław University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Architecture, ul. Prusa 53/55, 50–317 Wrocław, Poland

*E-mail address: aleksandra.marcinow@pwr.edu.pl

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Abstract

The paper presents the results of research carried out in the palace at Żyrowa. The introduction discusses the architecture of the palace, analyses source references to the site and identifies successive owners. The architectural research into technology, building material and architectural detail, as well as iconographic studies were the basis for the considerations. They gave grounds for the identification of the oldest building that dates back to the Gothic period and of the scope of the Mannerist expansion that was carried out in 1631–44 by Count Melchior Ferdinand de Gaschin. The scope of the Baroque and new-style transformations in the early 20th century is also discussed. The summary emphasizes the uniqueness of the layout which stands out from other Silesian residences in terms of size, programme and architecture.

Keywords: Architecture; Silesia; Mannerism; the Baroque; Palace; Żyrowa.

1. INTRODUCTION

The palace is situated in the middle of the village of Żyrowa. Close to the residence there are a garden with pool form the south and west, the farm complexes from the north, and from the east a park. From the south it adheres to the cemetery that surrounds St. Nicolas church, a filial church. The residence that is unique in form to Silesia was built in the years 1631–44 by count Melchior Ferdinand de Gaschin. It has been very superficially discussed in literature. The objective of the authors' research was to identify its original Mannerist form and the chronology of transformations. An attempt was made to identify and present the form and architecture of the palace as well as the transformations introduced during two building actions: in Baroque style in 1781 and in Neo-Baroque style from 1905 to 1911.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE LAYOUT

The residence was built around two courtyards: a stately west courtyard and a garden (now utility) east courtyard. The first one is square in plan and surrounded by a four-wing palace, with a stately three-storey north wing, two-storey west and south wings, which are linked with a gallery, and an east wing with an open cloister on the first floor. A gateway is situated in the basement of the south wing. The interiors are arranged in two longitudinal sections and many crosswise sections, except for the east wing where there is one shield-like section. It houses a passageway to the garden courtyard which is surrounded by two-storey buildings. The east and north wings are built as one-sectional, and the south wing, which is the continuation of the stately part, contains two longitudinal sections. The north wing forms part of



Figure 1.
Żyrowa, the palace, stately (west) courtyard, north wing, south elevation (photo by Authors)



Figure 2.
Żyrowa, the palace, stately (west) courtyard, west wing, east elevation (photo by Authors)



Figure 3.
Żyrowa, the palace, stately (west) courtyard, east wing, west elevation (photo by Authors)



Figure 4.
Żyrowa, the palace, stately (west) courtyard, south wing, north elevation (photo by Authors)

the gallery that links the palace with the nearby St. Nicolas church. The stately three-storey wing is covered with a mansard roof with dormer windows; the other wings are covered with gable roofs. Polygonal towers are covered with onion-shaped lantern cupolas, and the former semi-circular bastion is covered with a tent roof. (Fig. 1–4).

The south elevation of the stately wing has ten window axes on the ground and first floors and above the side-wings roofs it has sixteen window axes. It is composed of box-type arcades that are supported by pilasters, and of windows fringed with Baroque trimming between the pilasters. Over the first floor openings there are rosettes, over the second floor openings there are zoomorphic elements: lions, peacocks. Below, there are balustrade strips; they are decorated with a truss that is split with rusticated plinths. The wall is topped with a prominent, profiled cornice

beneath which there is a frieze with an ogee motive. The entrance with jewellery-decorated portals in the door heads is along the 4th and 7th easternmost window axes. The six-axis east elevation is composed similarly to the south one. In the panel in the southernmost 3rd axis, there are two coats of arms of the von Gaschin and von Francken-Sierstorpff families and between them there is a cartouche with a conch motive and two mascarons. The west elevation consists of three asymmetrically spaced window axes. In the basement there are openings with semi-circular arches, and above them, the openings are rectangular. The north elevation has fourteen window axes and a terrace with a gallery in front. It is decorated with Baroque window trimming and a prominent profiled cornice. A circular small tower with an onion-shaped lantern cupola is situated between the 3rd and 4th window axes. (Fig. 1).



Figure 5.
Żyrowa, the palace, south wing, south elevation (photo by the Authors)



Figure 6.
Żyrowa, the palace, garden (east) courtyard, east wing, west elevation (photo by Authors)



Figure 7.
Żyrowa, the palace, garden (east) courtyard, north wing – gallery, south elevation (photo by Authors)

The courtyard elevation of the two-storey west wing is arranged similarly to that described above; there are high rectangular windows with rosettes in box-like arcades. The window openings in the external elevation are arranged irregularly, along eight window axes, and are fringed with Baroque trimming. The southwest corner is emphasised with a tower, whose five storeys are separated with cornices. The composition of the three lower storeys is similar to that on the courtyard elevation, the fourth storey has alternately arranged elliptical windows and recesses and the fifth storey has a frieze panel. (Fig. 2)

The east wing elevation from the courtyard side repeats the north wing arrangement and additionally it has a gallery under the first six arches. The external elevation with five window axes on the first floor, with box-type arch arcades supported by pilasters and with rectangular openings has a gateway decorated with a shallow avant-corps and a passageway between the courtyards. The nine-axis north elevation of the south wing is arranged similarly to that described above. A gateway is built along the axis in the basement. The external elevation is composed of twelve window axes and consists of an undecorated basement and the first storey with arcades that are supported by

pilasters. The main axis is emphasised by an unbroken head portal that is supported by pairs of pilasters and a low tower with a cupola (Fig. 3, 4).

The extension to the south wing eastwards formed the garden courtyard closure. The composition of the nine-axis north elevation repeated the arrangement that was applied to the stately courtyard elevation; the only difference lies in three patches where there were no windows and in two artificial stone-framed entrances in the basement. In the south elevation, the window openings are irregularly spaced along the axes and framed with Baroque trimming. The east wing has two storeys, too, and very moderate decorations such as profiled frames of the windows, which are rectangular in the basement and elliptical on the first floor and which are arranged along six window axes from the courtyard side and nine window axes on the external elevation. A gateway is built in the third northernmost axis. The north wing is formed by an eight-arch gallery, which is built of box-type arcades supported by massive pilasters, with an undecorated wall as the base (Fig. 5, 6, 7).

The stately wing interiors are arranged in two longitudinal sections and in nine crosswise sections of diversified width. The hall is situated in the 4th easternmost crosswise section, along the entrance axis. It has an elongated plan which is wider at the front and narrower in the back longitudinal section. The main staircase is built in the southwest corner and decorated with floral motives at the flight bottoms. The corridor that links the north wing with the west wing is built by the staircase perpendicularly to the flights. There are mainly sail and barrel vaults or barrel vaults with transverse lunettes in the basement rooms. The first floor, *piano nobile*, contains four crosswise sections and two longitudinal sections. There are three spacious enfiladed rooms at the front. In the east part of the crosswise section in the north longitudinal section, there is a room that is divided with a flattened arcade. From the arcade, there are entries to a spiral staircase and to the gallery that leads to the church. The west room is adjacent to another room that links with a corridor near the staircase. The vaults of the first floor rooms are decorated with stuccos with floral motives, regency (ribbon and V-shape) ornaments and rocaille. The second floor layout is based on two longitudinal sections, two crosswise sections in the north and five crosswise sections in the south. The wooden, spiral stairs to the attic are situated in the southwest corner. There are no decorations in the rooms on that floor.

The shield-like east wing consists of one longitudinal section; on the ground floor there are six crosswise sections and a passageway in the 2nd northernmost crosswise section. In the last crosswise section, there is a chamber where there is an entrance to a room in a polygonal tower. The room is covered with an octagonal cloister vault. The basement rooms are covered with barrel vaults. Above the rooms, on the first floor, there is an open gallery that links the north wing with the east and south wings within both of the courtyards. The two-sectional west wing contains three crosswise sections and a corridor from the courtyard side. In the basement, in the west longitudinal section, there is a six-arch room covered with a barrel vault with transverse lunettes and transverse arches; there is a stone fireplace in the room. The corridor that runs along the room is covered with a similar vault. The room that is situated in the middle crosswise section (the 2nd northernmost) is covered with a sail vault that is based on transverse arches. In the south crosswise section, there is a room with an entrance to the polygonal tower in the southwest corner.

The rooms in that part of the wing are covered with sail and barrel vaults that are decorated with stucco-work with wreath and ivy-like motives. The layout of the first-floor rooms is similar to that described above, and only the west section has one crosswise section more than the aforementioned. Decoration motives are also repeated in the interior. The south wing is built of two sections, six crosswise sections with a cloister from the courtyard side. There is a passageway on the middle axis. A round-shaped staircase with cast iron stairs adheres to it from the west. The ground floor rooms are covered with barrel vaults with lunettes. The arcade and the first floor rooms are covered with stucco-decorated vaults. The layout of the first floor rooms is similar to that on the ground floor. The extension to the wing that closes the garden courtyard in the south consists of two sections and many crosswise sections, and of a courtyard-facing corridor. The ground floor rooms are covered with barrel vaults with lunettes, and the first floor rooms are covered with ceilings. The two-flight staircase is located on the entrance axis in the 3rd easternmost crosswise section. The east wing at the garden courtyard is built of one longitudinal section, four crosswise sections and a passageway in the 2nd northernmost crosswise section. The basement rooms are covered with barrel vaults with lunettes; the first floor consists of a single-span room. The entrance to the corner tower is situated in the southeast corner of the south crosswise-section room.

3. ANALYSIS OF SOURCES AND STATE OF RESEARCH

The first reference to the village of Żyrowa appeared in the bull issued by pope Boniface VIII on 16 February 1302 to make endowments for the Monastery in Jemielnica [1]. The property and the owners are mentioned in 17th-century chronicles [2], 18th-century chronicles [3] and 19th-century chronicles [4]. A description of the palace and the history of the estate was also published by R. Weber. [5]. The latter researcher found out that Żyrowa had been part of the Emperor's fiefdom and in 1529 it had been given to knight Żyrowski for his military service. In 1629 the estate was confiscated by emperor Frederic II, and two years later, on 13 March 1631, the estate was purchased by count Melchior Ferdinand von Gaschin. In 1852 the palace and estate were acquired from Leopold von Gaschin by count Maximilian Friedrich Carl Franz von Hatzfeld-Schönstein and general count August Ferdinand von Nostitz. In 1864 they became the property of brothers Goedecke, and four years later they were owned by Edward Guradze. In 1899 the palace was acquired by count Johann von Francken-Sierstorpf. Ernst Königer discussed the palace and published the first floor plan [6]. Based on the findings published by R. Weber and the dates given on the coats of arms on the east elevation in the north wing he determined the times when consecutive alterations were carried out. While discussing the palace, he emphasized its architecture, the symmetry of the front, south elevation that was flanked with two towers as well as the symmetrical arrangement of the layout. In his paper on St. Matthias Gymnasium in Wrocław, W. Thunk mentioned the architectural analogies between the palace at Żyrowa and the castle at Niemodlin [7]. M. Morelowski presented the opinion that the palace had a Polonized form that resembled French and Italian solutions and also a thesis about the probable architects [8].

The palace, or rather its part limited to the buildings around the west courtyard, was discussed most precisely by F. Stolot [9]. The author summarised the then-current state of research into, and the history of, the palace and based on the identification of part of the buildings during repair work, he made an attempt to restore the palace's original form that had been erected in the years from 1631 to 44 by Melchior Ferdinand von Gaschin. Mr Stolot found out that the east and west wings were covered with gable or flat roofs and were lower than the three-storey north wing whose windows overlooked the aforementioned

roof slopes. There was a cloister supported by stone columns on the first floor of the west and east wings from the courtyards side and there was no gallery from the south. The author also presented the thesis that the layout of the rooms on two lower floors in the north wing dated back to before 1631. He was of the opinion that the last floor in that wing and the courtyard elevation were built after that date. He pointed to a probable location of the stairs in the west wing and the location of two spiral staircases by the tower over the gateway. In his opinion the second passageway was the one that had survived in the east wing. Having studied the four-wing layout, he concluded that it could have been surrounded by external fortifications. He compared the architecture of the palace to that of Renaissance Italian residences by G. Alessi, *inter alia* to villa Sauli that was built in Genova in 1555–56.

The residence was discussed very succinctly by T. Chrzanowski and M. Kornecki [10]. The authors gave a brief history and a detailed description of the elevations of each of the buildings. They raised the issue of the palace in the context of the development of architecture at the turn of the Mannerism and the Baroque, perceiving it as a traditional residence that originated from Medieval concepts [11]. They also confirmed that it was unique work of architecture, one of the leaders of the era in Silesia, firmly rooted in Mannerist traditions at the same time.

The palace was also mentioned by K. Kalinowski in the context of Baroque architecture in Silesia in the 2nd half of the 17th century [12]. The author was of the opinion that the 17th-century conversion involved the introduction of a two-flight staircase in the west crosswise section of the north wing. Having studied the composition and architecture of the layout, he concluded that it was the outcome of conceptual plans of French origin, which were affected by the forms used in Austria and Poland. In his opinion, the palace might have been designed by an architect of Italian origin, who was active in Poland as well as in Austria or Germany. Such theses were also repeated by K. Kalinowski in his paper on Baroque architecture in Silesia [13].

The palace was the subject of a study by Z. Bandurska [14]. The study presented both the history of the estate and of the palace based on the information that had been published by R. Weber, and the analysis of transformations based on a paper by F. Stolot.

The development of the architecture of the palace was discussed by S. Brzezicki, Ch. Nielsen, G.

Grajewski and D. Popp [15] in their joint paper. The authors considered the residence as an early Baroque structure that might have been built in place of a former residence. They were of the opinion that a four-wing palace built around the west courtyard had been the oldest fragment of the present palace. The palace architecture had been impacted by the works of North Italian artists.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The authors of the papers that have been published so far have not made any attempt to determine the extent and form of the original palace that had been erected in the years from 1631 to as 44 by Melchior Ferdinand von Gaschin. Their findings outlined the Mannerist residence generally and very imprecisely, indicated the extent of the 1781 Baroque conversion to a small degree and did not explain the issue of new-style transformations that had been made in the years from 1905 to 1911. Therefore, architectural research was required to identify the Mannerist palace and precisely describe the conversions to which the palace had been subjected. An opportunity to carry out the research opened up before the authors of this paper when construction work on the palace started [20]. Consecutive construction phases were identified based on the examination of the spots where new and old structural elements met. The

scope of the identification was based on the analyses of construction technologies, building materials and mortars, architectural details and also source references and archival iconography. The results of the research offered the authors the possibility of arguing for or against the theses that had been presented till then. They also were the basis for a profound discussion on residence history and transformations.

Iconography has significantly contributed to considerations of the palace architecture. The oldest view of the structure, showing its Mannerist form dates back to about the middle of the 17th century [16] (Fig. 8). The gouache shows a Mannerist residence that is built around two courtyards: a stately west courtyard and an east, garden courtyard (with the plots arranged geometrically). The first courtyard is surrounded by a three-storey north wing, a two-storey west wing, a two-storey east (shield) wing with towers and a single-storey south wing; around the second courtyard there are single-storey east and south wings and a gallery that links the palace with a church. The buildings are covered with flat roofs that are hardly seen from behind a parapet that was probably decorated with vases and, in the corners by the towers, with figural sculptures. The oldest photographs taken in the early 20th century were published by R. Weber [17]. They show the palace from before the 1905–11 repair work. One can see the south elevation, the southwest courtyard corner and



Figure 8.
Żyrowa, the palace, view from the south in the second half of the 17th century, gouache [16]



Figure 9a. Żyrowa, the palace, ground floor plan with chronological stratification of walls. Legend: A – Gothic (the 15th century); B – Mannerism (1631–1644) (walls: found, presumed, foundation benches); C – Baroque (1781); D – approx. 1899; E – 1905–1911; F – walls unknown and from the 20th century; RC – stately courtyard; GC – garden courtyard (edited by Authors)



Figure 9b. Żyrowa, the palace, first floor plan with chronological stratification of walls. Legend: A – Gothic (the 15th century); B – Mannerism (1631–1644); C – Baroque (1781); D – approx. 1899; E – 1905–1911; F – walls unknown and from the 20th century; RC – stately courtyard; GC – garden courtyard; G – Gallery second level; S – shed; (edited by Authors)



Figure 10.
Żyrowa, the palace, ground floor, Gothic hall – interior
(photo by Authors)

also the stately rooms situated on the first floor in the north wing and the corridor in the west wing. The condition of the south elevation of the north wing and of the north elevation of the south wing, where the window joinery had been partly replaced, was depicted by R. Konwiarz [18]. The palace views as of the early 20th century is documented on a few post-cards and photographs that are available on websites [www.polska-org.pl; www.fotopolska.eu, access: 30.09.2019].

5. RESULTS OF RESEARCH

The range of the occurrence of the oldest relics has been determined by the walls that were built of field stones arranged in layers. They were found in the northeast corner of the north wing, in the back longitudinal section of the easternmost crosswise section. They form the outline of a structure that might have had at least two storeys, been in the shape of a tower (?) and built on about 8.00 metres by 9.7 metres rectangle-like plan. The building can probably be identified as the residence of the Żyrowski family, which possessed it over the period from 1447 to 1631 [21] (Fig. 9a, 10).

The north part (crosswise section) was filled up with an east-west barrel-vaulted room. The vault was built of broken stones that were laid on wooden centring. The track of the centring was imprinted in the excessive mortar that flew out of centring elements and has remained in places, where the barrel contacts with the stiffening walls. The vault was based on foundation offsets and on stiffening walls buttresses which were formed while the walls were constructed. The room was probably lit from the west via an opening of an



Figure 11.
Żyrowa, the palace, west wing, attic, Mannerist chimney decoration (a); vase found in the stately courtyard probably from the attic surrounding the roofs (b) (photo by Authors)

unknown shape but framed with embrasure. It was probably accessible from the east. Another room of

unknown plan might have adhered to it from the south. The layout was expanded and the palace of the size similar to the present one was built by count Melchior Ferdinand de Gaschin in the years from 1631 to 1644 [22]. The residence was laid out around two courtyards: a stately west courtyard, square in plan, with a side length of about 27.5 metres and a garden (now utility) east courtyard, trapezoidal in plan, whose dimensions were about 40.6 metres by 43.2 metres. The first courtyard was framed with four palace wings: a three-storey north wing, a two-storey west wing, a two-storey east wing with an arcade gallery and a one-storey south wing flanked by two polygonal towers. The second courtyard was determined by three wings: two one-storey wings from the east and south and a one-storey wing with a cloister from the west. The north boundary limit was formed by means of the escarpment of the hill on which St. Nicolas church was located and by about 26 metres-long gallery that linked the church with the palace's north wing (Fig. 9a, 9b).

The layout, and partly the style of the elevations, of the buildings are known from a view painted in about the 2nd half of the 17th century. The north wing was a dominant element. Its south elevation had a fourteen-axis composition (the gouache view shows 13 axes) at the second floor level and the nine-axis composition at the ground floor and first floor levels (three axes were obscured by the west wing and one was obscured by the east wing). The windows were arranged regularly in arcade recesses at three levels. There was a flat elevation band with a simple cornice and elliptical oculi above the windows; the number of oculi does not correspond to the number of axes below. The flat roof was surrounded with an attic, probably in the form of a balustrade with vases and figures on the corner tops. There was an octagonal belvedere with a dome that was covered with metal sheet.

The successive floor levels were emphasised with cornices, which continued on the side wings. The cornice at the base of the second floor formed part of the attic that ran along the side wing roofs, above which there were polygonal tower cores. A similar elevation composition was applied to the north wing, where the balustrade corners were emphasised with what might have been vases and figures (Fig. 11b).

The south elevation of the south wing and the elevations of the wings around the garden courtyard and of the cylindrical bastion in the southwest corner were undecorated and had rectangular window openings. The entrance to the courtyard was made along the axis of the first of the aforementioned wings. It had a

semi-circular frame and above, there was a belvedere with a tiled roof lantern dome. The walls were topped with attic in the form of a low balustrade.

The three-storey north wing had a 43.2 metres by 16.0 metres rectangle-like plan. Its layout consisting of two longitudinal sections and many crosswise sections is well preserved in the basement but fairly blurred on the first and second floors. The hall was located along the axis of the south entrance to the stately courtyard, in the third easternmost crosswise section.

The entrance to the hall was surrounded by a rectangular simple trim that was decorated with jewellery ornaments in the doorhead such as a diamond in the scrollwork and flanking cabochons, which were simply framed following Netherlands Mannerism (Fig. 12).



Figure 12. Żyrowa, the palace, north wing, ground floor, main Mannerist portal (photo by Authors)

The hall resembled the letter “L” in plan. The front section was separated with a semi-circular arcade which was 1 brick thick and 5 metres in span. In the wall between two sections, there must have been an entrance to back-section rooms. The stairs up to the first floor were probably built along the hall's east wall, to which the arrangement of the door openings points. The hall was covered with a beam-framed

floor, which was built between the opposite walls of the crosswise section, and was illuminated through three south-facing windows, of which one also provided light to the arcaded area (Fig. 9a, 9b).

The front-section rooms were enfiladed, with the doors almost aligned with the wall axes. There were two rooms in the west, of which the bigger one, situated near the hall, had two windows and the smaller one had one window. The smaller room was connected with a vaulted room, which probably was covered with a barrel with five transverse lunettes; relicts of two lunettes have survived. The vaulted room was lit through a north-facing window. It stretched out to the courtyard-facing corridor in the west wing. The last room had a rectangular plan and two west-facing windows. East of the hall, there was a room with two windows and a gallery-like corridor that ran along the garden-facing elevation.

The layout of the back section was slightly different. West of the hall, there was a small room with one window. It was linked with a big room where there were two north-facing windows. The west wall of that big room contained two recesses whose shape is unknown now. The bigger recess was made along the wall axis and the smaller one was in the south corner. In the northwest corner of the palace, there was another room that was probably accessible from the vaulted corridor; the corridor had two west-facing windows and one north-facing window. The basements of a Medieval dwelling tower had remained east of the hall.

A small tower and (service (?)) spiral staircase were built by the north wall at the height of the former tower. East of it, there was a rectangular annexe and stairs to a two-storey gallery that led to the filial church (that is discussed further in this paper).

The layout of the first floor interior was subjected to profound transformations. Small stretches of the wall between two crosswise sections, together with a door opening by the east elevation and of one transverse wall in the back longitudinal section have survived. The layout of the part that covers two west crosswise sections, where the background layout (a corridor running through two sections) is followed, and two rooms along the west elevation is clear. There is no vault in the corridor.

The second floor looks similar to the first floor. Two rooms only have survived in two west crosswise sections there. The arrangement of door openings in two walls suggests that the doors were in line with each other. In the east part, relicts of a wall between longitudinal sections, of an entrance and of the core of

an octagonal chimney have survived.

The east wing had two storeys and a plan that resembled the litter "L". It was 37.2 metres long, in the north part it was built as a five-arch cloister that was open at the west side and was 4.6 metres wide; in the south part it had a 12.4 metres by 12.2 metres trapezoidal plan and an octagonal tower with a side length of 3 metres in the southeast corner.

The two-storey east wing has a corridor-based structure, with a 5-arch cloister, of which the middle one was a passageway between the two courtyards. There probably were four rooms at the south end of the wing. Two rectangular rooms were presumably in the east. One of them must have been illuminated through two east and north-facing windows, and the other one was illuminated from the east. The entrances to the rooms were probably built in a small vestibule along the corridor axis, between two west-facing windows. The last room was in the basement of the octagonal tower. It was lit through three south-facing windows.

On the ground floor, there was an open gallery with six arches that were supported by columns at the stately courtyard side and by pillars at the utility courtyard side. The layout of the south part on the first floor was presumably similar to that on the ground floor, with a polygonal rooms in the tower.

From the west, the courtyard was also closed with a two-storey wing with eight window axes on longer elevations and two window axes from the south. The wing was built on a 10.8 metres by 33 metres rectangular plan. An octagonal tower, with a side length of 3 metres, rising up one storey above the roof level was erected in its southwest corner.

A diversified layout was applied to the interior; there were two sections in the north, a corridor-like gallery at the courtyard side and a single section in the south part. A six-arch gallery (cloister?) covered with a barrel vault with transverse lunettes along the arch axes was built in line with the north wing corridor. West of it, there was a big room that was covered with a barrel vault with six pairs of lunettes whose axes were in line with the axes of the west-facing window openings. A room adhered to the gallery and the big room from the south. There were two west-facing and two east facing windows in the room. The room was adjacent to two other rooms, a corner room with two south and west-facing windows, and a room with one south-facing window. In the tower basement, there was a cylindrical room that had at least three windows and was covered with a cloister vault. The layout of the first-floor rooms was similar to the afore-

mentioned. The gallery at the courtyard side consisted probably of six arches and a colonnade. It led to rooms in the south part of the wing: two rectangular rooms and one octagonal room (a secret study (?)) and to two rooms that were located above the big, vaulted room. The former rooms were illuminated through a pair of east and west-facing windows, the latter – through two south-facing windows and one west-facing window, and the tower room was illuminated through three windows that faced various directions. The two rooms adjacent to the cloister had two or three windows. The door opening relicts that have survived indicate that the doors were enfiladed.

The wing was covered with a small-slope gable roof. Chimneys were erected above the roof slopes, of which the south one has survived. The chimney was decorated with plaster rustication at the corners. The chimney core was decorated with a moulded cornice, whose lower part has survived (Fig. 11a).

In the south, the courtyard was closed with a single-storey, single-section wing. The wing had a 6.2 metres by 27.5 metres rectangular plan. A barrel-vaulted passageway was built along the wing axis. There probably were three rooms west of the passageway; east of the passageway, there were two small rooms accessible from the courtyard.

Two one-storey wings were built around the garden courtyard. The south wing was the continuation of the wing discussed above. It was built on a 32.8 metres by 10.5 metres “C” plan, with two north-facing avant-corpses. In the west avant-corps, there was a big square room with a vestibule from the north and accessible from the courtyard. The east avant-corps consisted of an vestibule with an entrance from the courtyard and of two rooms: an almost square room in the south and a rectangular room in the east end. Between the avant-corpses, there were two smaller, rectangular rooms with the entrances in the north wall (Fig. 9a, 9b).

The garden courtyard was closed from the east with a wing and a circular bastion in the southeast corner. The wing had a 38.3 metres by 9.8 metres rectangular plan. It probably consisted of one room that was covered with a floor, and it had two entrances from the west. There was a door to the tower in the south east corner of the room.

The north closure of the garden courtyard comprised a gallery that linked the northeast corner of the palace’s north wing with a church. The gallery had an “L”-like plan and consisted of two segments: a south one that has survived and a perpendicular one that

had been removed. The two distinguished elevation areas were separated with a cornice, which marked the line between the floors and ran eastwards, showing the walkway level. In the basement, there were two rectangular windows, and above them, there were eight segmental arcades that rested on pilaster strips. The structure was covered with a tiled gable roof.

The palace was converted in Baroque style in approx. 1781, which is shown in the inscription “RENOVATUM 1781” in the wreath above the coat of arms on the east elevation of the north wing. The palace roofs were rearranged, the polygonal towers were raised and received new cupolas, the interior was converted and the south wing was expanded (Fig 9a, 9b).

The stately courtyard elevations were given a homogeneous architectural design. Arcades consisted of box-type arches that were supported by pilasters. The pilasters fringed the Baroque trimming of sill-less windows. Cloisters were built on the first floors of the south and west wings, and windows were put on the cornice at the balustrade level. The arrangement was repeated on the first floor of the south and east external elevations. The basement elevations were undecorated and had Baroque window trims. So were the north elevation of the north wing and the west elevation of the west wing. Each of them was topped with a prominent profiled cornice. The entryway to the stately courtyard was emphasised with a portal along the south wing axis. The portal consisted of a pair of pilasters that flanked a semi-circular gateway and supported a gaped head (Fig. 1–5).

The garden courtyard elevations were arranged similarly to the above in the south wing only, where an arcaded cloister was built on smooth plinths. Its south wall had rectangular windows with Baroque trimming. The east wing had east-facing square and west-facing rectangular windows in the basement and elliptical and similarly framed on the first floor. The elevations of both of the wings and of the corner bastion were topped with a profiled cornice (Fig. 6, 7).

The alterations in the north wing were compelled by the relocation of the staircase from the hall to the westernmost crosswise section in the front longitudinal section. The new staircase had two flights of stairs, masonry balustrades and an entrance directly from the landing to a room on the first floor in the west wing. (Fig. 13). The former hall was then divided into smaller rooms and a passage along its axis. A small vestibule was partitioned off in its west part; there were probably stairs, too, as the relict of a tunnel with a vault ascending northwards may suggest. In



Figure 13.
Żyrowa, the palace, north wing, Baroque staircase (photo by Authors)

its east part, three rooms in a row were arranged. Each of them received a sail vault that was based on arches, and these were supported by pilaster strips in the passage. In the back longitudinal section, in the crosswise section adjacent to the former hall, the room was divided into two smaller ones. The big room with recesses that adhered to the north stretch of a Mannerist corridor (gallery) was also divided into two rooms. The west room was covered with a barrel vault with an arch, and a window was made in its north wall. The east room was covered with sail vaults that were split with an arch into two rectangular patches (Fig. 9a, 9b).

The layouts of the first and second floors, which were in Baroque style, were blurred to a significant degree due to conversions made in the years from 1904 to 1911. The date of the conversion can be seen above the coat of arms of Johann von Francken-Sierptorpf on the east elevation in the north wing. An analysis of the relicts of inner walls and enclosures that have survived confirms that at the end of the 18th century the wall between the sections was strengthened and the door opening in the easternmost crosswise section was relocated. The entrance to the staircase in the northeast corner was relocated towards the east elevation. The window openings on the first floor were enlarged when the window arch supports were raised by 120 cm. On the second floor, the upper parts of the walls were re-built, the chimneys were raised and became octagonal in shape and a profiled top cornice was built. These conversions resulted from the construction of a new mansard roof. The spiral staircase was raised and topped with a slender onion-shaped lantern cupola at the same time.

The east wing was subjected to minor alterations.



Figure 14.
Żyrowa, the palace, west wing, Baroque hall (photo by Authors)

The construction of an additional floor in the building around the garden courtyard, the east-facing windows near the tower were bricked up. The tower core increased as a top cornice was added, and the tower was covered with an onion-shaped lantern cupola.

The west wing was subjected to definitely more extensive transformations. Wide arcades were built in the basement to link the cloister with the big room, and a small vestibule was partitioned off near the entrance to the cloister in the south part of one of the rooms (Fig. 14). Changes were introduced to the tower, where three wide windows were made and the entrance opening was widened. Window openings were built in the enclosure walls on both of the storeys. They have survived till today in their original layout and size. Moreover, six arcades were built on the first floor elevation from the courtyard side and a niche was built in the wall in the south crosswise-section room. The structure was covered with a tiled gable roof, and the tower was shaped similarly to that in the east wing closure.

The most extensive alterations were made in the south wing of the stately courtyard. A nine-arch arcade with a cloister was added. The middle arch was built along the gateway axis and was wider than the other arches. One storey was added to the wing. Two spiral staircases were introduced in the basement, west and east of the passageway. A row of five enfiladed rooms was built on the first floor between the side wings' top storeys. Three of them were available not only via the staircases, but from the cloister, as well. A tower, square in plan, was built along the wing axis to emphasise the passageway to the stately courtyard. The tower was topped with a polygonal, slightly squat, onion-shaped lantern cupola.

The south wing, which adheres to the garden courtyard, was also converted. One storey was added to the wing and the space between avant-corpses was removed. Some of the inner walls were removed and a vaulted corridor was built along the north wall. A staircase with two flights of stairs was built in the middle of the south section. A cellar was built east of the staircase below ground level. The ground floor was divided into five rooms: two square rooms and one smaller room were west of the staircase and two rectangular rooms were east of the staircase, of which the outermost retained a Mannerist size. Each of the rooms was covered with a barrel vault with transverse lunettes and 1/2 brick-thick squinches. An eleven-arch arcade cloister was built on the first floor above the corridor. The layout of the first floor rooms was probably determined by the basement walls layout.

A floor was also added to the east wing. A gateway was built in the basement, and thereby the interior was divided into two rooms: a bigger south room and a smaller north room. The bigger room was covered with a north-south barrel vault along the axis, and there were six pairs of lunettes in the bigger one and two lunettes in the smaller one. The vault was supported by pilasters that were built into the enclosures. The entrance to the corner tower was bricked up. The passageway was covered with a barrel vault that rested on the newly constructed walls. It was emphasised with a portal with undecorated reveals and a triangular tympanum. The west passageway opening received a segmental arch. The building was covered with a multi-pitched roof whose ridge was parallel to the longer walls. The semi-circular bastion in the southeast corner of the palace was raised and covered with a tent roof. The entrance to it was made on the first floor level in the east wing.

The palace layout was subjected to small transformations in the late 19th century. A grange consisting of two farm buildings and a shed, which adhered to the gallery that led to a church, was built northwest of the palace in Neo-Baroque style. The west gables of the grange buildings were framed with volute curves, the east gables were triangular and had an architectural detail that referred to the palace building (Fig. 9b).

The shed that adhered to the gallery from the north was accessible from the gallery via a door that was built on either of the two levels. The shed basement was connected with the first floor of the palace owing to a level difference. It consisted of four rooms. It was illuminated through semi-circular, irregularly arranged east-facing windows (6 in number) and west-facing windows (9 in number). The entrance was

built from the west, from the grange side, and it was preceded by a six-arch arcade that was supported by square pillars. The building had a gable roof that was covered with ceramic tiles and a north gable with a truncated gable head.

External stairs and an external corridor were built parallel to the north elevation in the north wing and they led to a Mannerist spiral staircase. Two semi-circular recesses were built at the stairs base.

Extensive construction work was performed in the years 1905–11 on the palace wings and first of all on the palace interiors that were redecorated in Neo-Baroque style. At that time window reveals were made in the first and second floor elevations and the cloister arcades of the west and south Baroque wings in the stately courtyard and of the south wing in the garden courtyard were bricked up. Windows with the so called “winter glazing”, which are quoted in the archival iconography, were then introduced. A gallery with an open terrace was added from the north and the terrace was linked with the north wing interior and with the staircase in the northeast corner. A diagonal cloister arch was added to the southwest corner of the stately courtyard. The balustrades and the bands below the sills on the first and second floors were decorated with brick trusses while the aforementioned work was performed. A similar motive was added to frame the butterfly roof over the gallery that led to the church (Fig. 9a, 9b).

The north wing interior was re-arranged and the applied layout has survived till today. Pairs of columns were added to the staircase in the basement and on the first floor and stucco decoration was added to the vaults over the flights of stairs. A vaulted room was added to the former Medieval tower in the south. A new entrance to the room from the courtyard was built and decorated with a Mannerist-like artificial stone portal. Enfilades of three big rooms in the front longitudinal section and of two big rooms in the back section were arranged on the first floor. Neo-Baroque stucco details and panelling were added to the walls and ceilings. The front-section decoration has survived only. Decorative ceiling roses were made on ceilings: an elliptical one in the rectangular room and a round one in the square room; frame decorations were made on the walls. Two fireplaces have also survived, one by the wall between the longitudinal sections in the first room and one in a corner in the second room. Cornices and rectangular patches were moulded on the ceilings in the back section rooms – they can be seen in archival photographs.



Figure 15.
Żyrowa, the palace, north wing, first floor, ceremonial room
in frontal longitudinal section (photo by Authors)



Figure 16.
Żyrowa, the palace, south wing, first floor, ceremonial room
in frontal longitudinal section (photo by Authors)

The vaulted rooms in the west wing were also decorated in Neo-Baroque style. The big room received a Neo-Baroque ceiling and a decorative fireplace was built in the north wall. The newly made vault in the room that adhered to the abovementioned from the south was also lavishly decorated (Fig. 15). The walls and ceilings of all rooms and of the first floor gallery were decorated similarly to the north wing. The third (northernmost) room was built after the Mannerist wall had been removed and half-timbered construction applied to the gallery wall extension. It formed an enfilade with the southernmost room, where an entrance to a secrete study in the tower was made left of the fireplace. The study was also decorated in the new style.

The enfiladed rooms in the south wings of both of the courtyards were similarly decorated (Fig. 16). Only two easternmost rooms in the garden courtyard wing were linked with the corridor. Two artificial stone portals were built in the basement to match the Mannerist framing of the main entrance, where there were jewellery ornaments in the doorhead, with a diamond in the scrollwork and flanking cabochons.

6. SUMMARY

Residences in Silesia were built around one courtyard as a new complex or using the walls of a medieval castle. The first group is represented by the palace in Płakowice near Lwówek Śląski, which was erected in the years 1550–1563 [23] and the palace at Siestrzchowice near Nysa which was built between 1592 and 1594 [23]. Both are uniform in style, on a rectangular plan around a single arcaded courtyard [24]. The second group contains the most important princely residences. In Brzeg the arcaded courtyard

was realized by dukes Frederick II and George II in the years 1547–1560 [25] and in Oleśnica a duke Charles II with Podiebradu in the years 1569–1602 [26]. A similar solution was introduced in the castle in Niemodlin between 1573 and 1610 [27].

The Medieval castle at Liegnitz was subjected to conversions by George Rudolf, duke of Liegnitz-Wohlau in the years from 1618 to 1653, when modern arrangements were made in the courtyard and in the wings [28]. The castle at Głogówek has a size similar to the palace in Żyrowa, was built in stages; a three-wing upper castle was erected in the years from 1561 to 1571, in the years from 1584 to 1606 corner towers were added, between 1606 and 1618 the north wing of the lower castle was built, and in the years from 1645 to 1668 the south and east wings were added, together with a chapel [29]. The palace at Żyrowa is one of the greatest Mannerist residences in Silesia. None of the known late 16th-century and early 17th century residences measures up to it in terms of size and scale.

The researchers into the architecture of the palace have not identified the palace's original form. Having based their studies on the findings presented by F. Stolorz in his paper, they restricted themselves only to a discussion of the buildings that had been erected around the west courtyard and completely neglected those erected around the east courtyard. The architectural research and the analysis of a gouache image that shows the palace as of the 2nd half of the 17th century have enabled the authors to identify the entire Mannerist structure that had been laid out around two courtyards, a stately (west) courtyard and a garden (east) courtyard. Moreover, the flat roofs of the buildings in all wings and the open parapet in the

form of a balustrade around the roofs, which can be seen in the gouache, find their confirmation in the relicts that have been discovered by the authors in the west wing attic. Relicts of a tower structure, which might have come from the 15th century (?) and could be recognized as the residence of the Żyrowski family, were also discovered in the northeast corner of the north wing during the research work. The extent of the Baroque transformations that had been carried out about 1781 and of the new-style conversions that had been carried out between 1905 and 1911 has also been determined. The results of the research work clearly demonstrate that the residence that was erected by count Melchior Ferdinand von Gaschin at Żyrowa in the years from 1631 to 1644 is one of the most outstanding Silesian palaces not only in terms of size but first of all, owing to its unique architectural concept and layout.

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