

## The Assumption of Mary Church in Haczów

The Assumption of Mary Church in Haczów was built of fir wood with a log frame structure in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century. This historical building is unique for many reasons. Certainly, its size is one of the most important ones as this is the largest wooden Gothic church in Europe. The total length of the nave and the chancel is 25 metres. The nave is 12 metres wide and the chancel – narrower by 3.5 m. Along with a tower attached to the western wall, the whole body of the church is 35 metres long. The northern wall borders with the sacristy near the chancel, and the nave borders with the Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel. It is there that the church is at its broadest, its width being 19 metres. The steep roof is 18.8 metres high. On the roof, above the border between the nave and the chancel, is a ridge turret – a small tower with a cross on top. It is 8 m high. The church is encircled by arcades. The roof, the walls above the arcades and their roof are covered with shingles. Shingles are also on the walls of the steeple, except for its upper section. The shingles have a grey shade on the roof and a brown one on the walls. From the north-west, the shingles have a green overcast. Under the arcade roof, the walls of the church are just bare 30-cm fir beams arranged on a stone base.

On the northern and eastern sides, the nave is broader than the chancel. It is covered with a dedicated roof. It is parallel to the line of the main roof. It starts right below it and drops at a certain angle. This architectural solution is called a mono-pitched roof. The northern wall of the nave has the Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel attached to it. The chapel borders with it along its shorter side, nearly 5 metres long. The longer walls are six metres long. The Chapel is covered by a gable roof, with an edge perpendicular to the church wall.

The longer walls of the chapel include rectangular windows.

The chancel is ended semi-hexagonally. All of the walls, except for the northern one, have rectangular windows. The northern wall has a sacristy attached to it. It borders with the longer 11-metre side. The northern side of the sacristy has two windows. A mono-pitched roof covers the sacristy. The roof above the arcades starts at the height of 1.6 m. It is supported by beams that are 1.7 m high. The outer edge of the arcades is lined with a wooden plank balustrade.

The 25-metre tower is pyramid-shaped. Under the very finial is the part covered with vertical planks. In the lower section, there are leaf-shaped cut-out decorations. The finial of the pyramid-shaped steeple is ended with a sheet-tin arcade with a cross.

Under the roof are short vertical beams arranged at 1.2 m intervals. These are the connectors that secure the structure of the roof framework. They also play a special decorative role in the body of the Haczów church. Four of them, located in the southern wall of the chancel, are special. This is because of the outlines of human faces carved in those beams. The researchers have not yet established the cause or the context of this ornamentation. Was it just the imagination of some mediaeval carpenter or did these decorative elements have some profound significance? The artist's intentions were lost centuries ago.

Another invaluable element of the original body of the church is the portal and the door in the southern wall. The portal is made of fir wood and is topped with a steep arch. The single-wing door made of three planks of deciduous wood shows the traces of 5 centuries. The door is decorated with iron ferrules in the shape of leaves and scout badges.