

Saints Philip and James Church, Sękowa

Saints Philip and James Church in Sękowa was built of larch logs around 1520 and has a log frame structure. Its history is rich and tragic, and the way it looks is truly unique. This is why it is referred to as the 'Pearl of Beskid Niski'. The church is small. The nave along with the chancel is 16 m long. The nave is almost 8 m wide, and the chancel is narrower by 1.25 m on each side. The chancel has a sacristy attached to it. The very steep gable roof is 14 m high. The body also contains a 20-metre tower, which borders with the western wall of the church.

The whole church is surrounded by arcades, the so-called *soboty*. Their roof starts very high, right at the upper edge of the walls. This roof has a smaller inclination angle and makes the body of the church uniquely charming. It seems that the roof flows down and encircles the church body like a coat. These surfaces are covered in shingles. The ends of the arcade roof are supported by thick vertical beams distributed a few metres apart. They are 1.70 m. Only in the section with the sacristy does the roof not go down so low. There, the supporting beams are 2.30 m high. The foundation of the arcades is made of irregular slabs. This pavement is 2 m wide. Its perimeter is marked by beams lying on the ground, each 20 cm thick.

The church walls consist of bare beams of the log frame structure. They are 20 cm wide. Over the centuries, the wood has taken on a dark-brown shade. The southern wall includes 4 rectangular windows. The panes are divided with wooden planks into several small squares. The eastern wall, which closes the chancel, is three-sided in shape. The rectangular window is located only in the central element of the wall. The sacristy borders with the northern wall of the chancel. It is three metres wide and 5.5 m long. The sacristy has its entrance on the eastern side. On the northern wall are two windows.

The main entrance to the church is located in the western wall. The Late Gothic portal in the upper section shows smooth fanciful lines that render the shapes of leaves.

The western wall has a 20-metre tower attached to it. The lower section has no sidewalls. This space is protected only by the arcade roof. The tower is devoid of

horizontal ceilings. As a result, a structure composed of a system of vertical, horizontal and diagonal beams is visible. This is the so-called timber framing structure. The space under the tower is shaped as a square with seven-metre sides. The perimeter of this space is defined by beams that are 40 cm thick and arranged on a foundation. Within the limits of those beams are foundations, six in each of the rows. The tower is 20 m high. Above the roof of the arcades, the tower is prism-shaped. It is covered by a dome-shaped steeple with a cross on top.

The church was severely damaged during World War I. Some of its wooden structure was used to build trenches... Luckily, it was reconstructed, starting in 1918. Its charming body and the beautiful landscape around it were depicted by many eminent artists, such as Stanisław Wyspiański, Józef Mehoffer, Teodor Axentowicz and Włodzimierz Tetmajer.