



fig. 1 Königshotel. Photo: M. Markowska, 2020, after: *Prospekt von Schreiberhau im Riesengebirge mit Wohnungs-Verzeichnis, Herausgegeben vom Verkehrs-Ausschußder Gemeinde Schreiberhau*, wyd. 24, [s.l.] 1913, p. 46, Wrocław University Library

The Karkonosze House at the Lower Silesian Crafts and Industry Exhibition in 1905

The Search for a Regional Form of Architecture around 1900

Marta Ostrowska-Bies

University of Silesia

...a rich city dweller has the right to build a holiday residence in a village of the Karkonosze that corresponds to his preferences and requirements, i.e. with living rooms, dining rooms, study rooms, guest rooms, children's rooms and bedrooms, with bathrooms, servants' rooms, basements, gazebos, verandas, etc.

The above quotation, despite its laconic nature, reflects the essence of the problem that appeared with the increasing popularity of mountain tourism in the Karkonosze Mountains in the last quarter of the 19th century, when old agricultural or metallurgical settlements were transformed into fashionable climatic resorts (*klimatische Luftkurort*). Initially, excursions to the mountains enriched patients' time spent in numerous Sudeten resorts (e.g. Cieplice Śląskie [*Bad Warmbrunn*], Duszniki [*Bad Reinerz*], Jedlina [*Bad Charlottenbrunn*], Szczawno Zdrój [*Bad Salzbrunn*] or Świeradów Zdrój [*Bad Flinsberg*]), or were connected with the pilgrims' movement whose goal was the Chapel of St. Lawrence existing on Śnieżka Mountain since 1681. A significant increase in the interest in tourism in the Karkonosze Mountains, and thus in local villages, took place in the second half of the 19th century with the popularization of innovative treatment of lung diseases based on mountain air (*Freiluft-Liegekuhr*), developed by Dr. Hermann Brehmer. After the end of treatment at the *Brehmersche Heilanstalt für Lungenkranke*, founded in 1854 in Sokołowsko (*Görbersdorf*), Dr. Brehmer recommended his patients to move to the mountains, or to make frequent visits there in order to prevent relapses. Brehmer especially recommended Szklarska Poręba (*Schreiberhau*) among Karkonosze villages. His advice was followed, among others, by Dr. Richard Kloid, who, after completing his therapy in Sokołowsko, moved to Szklarska Poręba and, as a physician practicing there, promoted the advantages of this climatic resort in his guides¹.

¹ R. Kloidt, *Schreiberhau im Riesengebirge. Sommerfrische, klimatischer und Terrain-Kurort*, Breslau 1893, p. 9.

In the 1870s, Szklarska Poręba became an informal capital of tourism in the Western Sudetes, and consequently, from a former smelting settlement² it turned into a fashionable *Luftkurort*. A further increase in the number of tourists in the Karkonosze Mountains in the last decade of the 19th century was driven by the introduction of transport facilities, including the development of the network of the Silesian Mountain Railway (*Schlesische Gebirgsbahn*)³. This process is perfectly illustrated by the statistics of tourist traffic published in subsequent editions of the Winkler's guide. And so, in 1874, 220 summer vacationers were recorded in Szklarska Poręba, in 1877 – twice as many, in 1886 – already six times as many, in 1895, up to 5417 registered for summer residence, i.e. more than the permanent residents of Szklarska Poręba⁴. A further growth in the number of tourists, especially those arriving for a short stay (from one to three days) was brought about by the opening of the Pieszyce-Szklarska Poręba railway line in 1902⁵. The second most popular summer resort in the Silesian part of the Karkonosze Mountains has become Karpacz. Certainly, apart from its climatic and sightseeing qualities, it was due to the good communication with Wrocław and Berlin thanks to the railway line connected to the town already in 1895.

The intensification of tourist traffic in the Karkonosze Mountains was accompanied by the development of tourist infrastructure – marking and construction of mountain trails, construction of mountain shelters, which was carried out, among others, by the Karkonosze Society (*Riesengebirgsverein*)⁶, and creation of accommodation of various standards⁷. Initially, the summer vacationers found accommodation in hotels (the first – Königshotel was built in Szklarska Poręba in 1869) and private houses adapted for guest rooms⁸. Over time, the lodging offer expanded to include guest houses, villas with guest rooms and single-family holiday homes. In 1894, Winkler mentioned 18 guest houses with 320 rooms and 123 private houses with 555 guest rooms in Szklarska Poręba. For comparison, five years earlier, there were only 14 guest houses with 130 rooms and 28 private houses with 105 rooms for rent⁹. Certainly the difference between the number of houses in 1889 and 1894 includes not only newly erected buildings, but also adapted and expanded existing ones, but it gives an idea of the increased construction activity that tried to satisfy the demand for tourist accommodation.

This type of situation, when the supply of facilities tries to catch up with the demand, generates numerous problems related to the quality of new, hastily built architecture and its inclusion in the local natural and cultural landscape. Hotels, guest houses and villas have started to mushroom up next to old and traditional country cottages. Most of them were significantly different in scale from the previous Karkonosze buildings, and their style usually imitated contemporary urban or suburban architecture, drawing on a rich repertoire of historical forms and details. Even if vernacular patterns were sometimes used, it was usually not those of the Sudetes, but Swiss, Tyrolean or English, while traditional construction techniques (e.g. wattle and daub construction) were usually chosen merely for their aesthetic values. Two guest houses, the Gasthof zum Zackenfall¹⁰ and the Königshotel¹¹, can serve as an example of this type of mismatched architecture built at the turn of the third and fourth quarters of the 19th century.

² The beginnings of settlement in the area of today's Szklarska Poręba date back to the early Middle Ages and are connected with the exploitation of metal and precious stone deposits occurring there. However, as early as in the 14th century the existence of the first glassworks was recorded. Until the growth of tourism, Szklarska Poręba developed on the basis of glass production.

³ In the travel guides from that period, tourists arriving in Szklarska Poręba were recommended the railway connection to Piechowice, launched in 1891. See R. Kloidt, *Schreiberhau im Riesengebirge. Sommerfrische, klimatischer und Terrain-Kurort*, Breslau 1893, p. 17.

⁴ See W. Winkler, *Schreiberhau und seine Geschichte, Natur und Beschreibung nebst seinen Kolonien und Partien*, Schreiberhau 1898, p. 116.

⁵ See *Prospekt von Schreiberhau im Riesengebirge mit Wohnungs-Verzeichniss, Herausgegeben vom Verkehrs-Ausschuß der Gemeinde Schreiberhau. 24. Auflage*, 1913, p. 24.

⁶ See *Bericht über die zwanzigjährige Thätigkeit der Riesengebirgsverein-Ostgruppe Hirschberg 1880-1899 nebst Mitglieder-Verzeichniss zur Beginn des Jahres 1900*, [s.l.a.], p. 3 ff.

⁷ See W. Winkler, *Schreiberhau und seine Geschichte, Natur und Beschreibung nebst seinen Kolonien und Partien*, Schreiberhau 1884, p. 67.

⁸ See I. Laborewicz, P. Wiater, *Szklarska Poręba. Monografia historyczna*, Szklarska Poręba 2011, p. 112.

⁹ See W. Winkler, *Schreiberhau und seine Geschichte, Natur und Beschreibung nebst seinen Kolonien und Partien*, Schreiberhau 1894, p. 93.

¹⁰ Currently, out of use building at 21 Jedności Narodowej Street.

¹¹ Currently, out of use building at 2 Gen. Władysława Sikorskiego Street.

Both these buildings have been built in Marysin (Marienthal), a picturesque part of Szklarska Poręba, which until the 1870s was a poorly populated rural settlement. The massive bodies of these guest houses (the Königshotel, three-storey with a 12-axis facade and the Gasthof zum Zackenfall, four-storey with a 7-axis facade), covered by a gable roof with small sloping roofs, trendy around the middle of the 19th century, have stood in the immediate vicinity of the traditional Karkonosze cottages, which further emphasized their incompatibility with the local landscape. The negative impression could not be erased either by the style used in the construction of rural villas around 1860 inspired by Italian Renaissance villas (Königshotel), or by superficial references to local architecture in the form of the wooden cladding of the upper two storeys and the wooden structure of the balconies, a distant echo of the post frame construction, where advertising panels (Gasthof zum Zackenfall) have appeared instead of the traditional balustrades with fretwork decoration.

These tendencies to erect overscaled objects dressed in a fig leaf of wooden details were present not only at the beginning of the development of tourism in Szklarska Poręba, but can also be observed at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. An example of this can be in Marysin a tenement building called Kaufhaus, built around 1900 in the *Wohn- und Geschäftshaus* type, which dominates the landscape¹². This building, housing the commercial functions on the high ground floor and rooms for rent on the next three floors, with a 7-axis facade, is a bizarre hybrid. Its body and the first three storeys of the facade, with their articulation and historicising detail, bring to mind an urban tenement house, while the wattle and daub structure of the residential attic, simple wooden structures of the loggia and balconies, balustrades with fretwork decoration and woodcarving forms within the roof allude to regional architecture, trying to fit this overscaled building into the local natural and cultural landscape¹³.

Together with the tourist interest in the Karkonosze Mountains, their sightseeing and scientific exploration has begun. Gathered in numerous societies, including the already mentioned the Karkonosze Society, the publishers of the magazine *Der Wanderer im Riesengebirge*, from which the quote given at the beginning of this text comes from, have traversed the Karkonosze Mountains, documenting the local fauna, flora, traditions, customs, crafts, ornamental motifs and construction. The crowning achievement of the sightseeing interest was the establishment of the Karkonosze Museum (*Riesengebirgsmuseum*, now the Karkonosze Museum in Jelenia Góra) in 1888, which in 1914 moved its collection of *regionalia* to a building erected for this purpose in Jelenia Góra by an architect Karl Grosser¹⁴. At the request of the



fig. 2 Advertisement of Gasthof zum Zackenfall, photo: M. Markowska, 2020, after: *Prospekt von Schreiberhau im Riesengebirge mit Wohnungs-Verzeichnis*, Herausgegeben vom Verkehrs-Ausschuß der Gemeinde Schreiberhau, wyd. 24, [s.l.] 1913, p. 49, Wrocław University Library

¹² The building has been preserved, currently at 1 Gen. Władysława Sikorskiego Street.

¹³ The problem of style mismatch and overscaling up of the first guest houses in the Karkonosze Mountains was also raised by G. Grundmann in his article summarizing the construction activity in the area in the last 50 years: *Die bauliche Entwicklung im Riesengebirge in den letzten fünfzig Jahren*, "Der Wanderer im Riesengebirge" 1930, no. 6, p. 88.

¹⁴ On the origin and history of the construction of the Karkonosze Museum see in: M. Ostrowska-Bies, *Karl Grosser. Śląski architekt (1850-1918)*, Wrocław 2017, p. 115 ff.



fig. 3 Village cottage from the Karkonosze region, designed by Schurek, 1930s. Photo: collection of the Karkonosze Museum in Jelenia Góra

director of the institution, a lawyer Hugo Seydel, the museum's offer was extended by two exhibition pavilions built on the garden side: in the form of a patrician house and an post frame log village cottage¹⁵. These were buildings erected in a one-to-one scale, modelled on the typical 18th century architecture of the Karkonosze region. The patrician house was a compilation of two houses situated at the Jelenia Góra Market Square. Whereas in the case of the rural cottage, they rejected the idea already known at that time and used by open-air museums, concept of relocation of an existing building, but the building was erected entirely from scratch according to the design by the architect Karl (?) Schurek, employed in Grosser's office. He used as a model the sketches created during field research in the Karkonosze villages and the documentation of regional construction, made by the aforementioned director of the Museum Seydel and the author of the quote opening this text, a physician Oswald Baer¹⁶.

The awareness of the architectural uniqueness of the Karkonosze region existed not only in the circles of dilettantes, gathered in regional societies, but above all among practitioners – local craftsmen and architects. It was in this circle that the idea of creating a model villa following the Karkonosze building traditions and Karkonosze landscape emerged, which in the form of a Karkonosze House (*Riesengebirgshaus*) was presented to a wider audience at the Lower Silesian Craft and Industry Exhibition (*Niederschlesische Gewerbe- und Industrieausstellung*) in Zgorzelec (*Görlitz*) in 1905. The originator of this undertaking was a Jelenia Góra-based master carpenter Wilhelm Rudolph, and the implementers and designers of not only the building but also its equipment were the brothers Karl and Otto Albert from Jelenia Góra who co-founded the architectural company¹⁷.

The background to this idea is unknown, the question has not been clarified in a query conducted in the Jelenia Góra branch of the State Archive in Wrocław or in the local press. However, the motivations that could have been behind this initiative were explained in the above quoted article by Baer, where not only did he describe the Karkonosze House, but also devoted a lot of consideration to a critical analysis of the residential architecture built in the villages of the Karkonosze region at that time, especially blatant, in his opinion, aesthetically and in terms of size, *Logierhaus* type villas. In order to provide as many rooms as possible and maximize the profit from renting, they often took bizarre forms, strongly dismembered by numerous balconies, loggias and viewing towers, devoid of proportions and beauty. The author contrasts these buildings with elegant single-family villas, belonging to wealthy townsmen. Of course, the division into good and bad architecture, based on only one criterion, which is the type of building, seems to be undue and too far-reaching generalization, but Baer raises here the important issue of architecture that does not fit into the cultural landscape of Karkonosze villages. He is struck not only by the violation of natural and scenic values, but also by the aesthetic maladjustment to traditional local buildings¹⁸. In his opinion, such a situation was an impulse for the craftsmen and architects of Jelenia Góra to create a model house, which, according to its creators, drew on local traditions, and at the same time created conditions for city dwellers, accustomed to comfort, and appropriate to their lifestyle and living standards. Apart from the analysis of the contemporary construction activity, Baer's article includes quite a detailed analysis of the traditional residential building development of the Karkonosze villages and describes the

¹⁵ A log cottage with a post frame construction in the form of an arcade, where the posts set on a granite plinth supported the roof.

¹⁶ H. Seydel, *Wspomnienia tajnego radcy prawnego doktora H. C. Seydela z jego działalności w Towarzystwie Karkonoskim. / Lebenserinnerungen des Geheimen-Justitzrat Dr. H. C. Seydel in Hirschberg aus seiner Tätigkeit im Riesengebirgsverein*, Jelenia Góra 2008, p. 55.

¹⁷ Zob. D., *Die Görlitzer Ausstellung 1905. III Das Riesengebirgshaus*, "Bote aus dem Riesengebirge" 1905, no. 147.

¹⁸ In his article, Baer does not mention yet another possibility of coping with two seemingly contradictory challenges in one building – creating a traditional house in form and detail, at the same time providing affluent bourgeoisie with a repertoire of rooms appropriate to their habits by adapting and modernizing old Karkonosze cottages. Positive examples of the marriage of these two principles in an architecturally successful whole could be observed by the author on the example of the houses of the artistic colony centred around the brothers C. and G. Hauptmann, who settled in Szklarska Poręba in 1890. Perhaps this phenomenon was so marginal that the Baer consciously omitted it in his deliberations. More about the houses of the artistic colony in: J. Ilkosz, B. Störkuhl, *Od zagrody chłopskiej do willi. Architektura kolonii artystycznej w Karkonoszach*, [in:] *Wspaniały krajobraz. Artyści i kolonie artystyczne w Karkonoszach w XX wieku = Die Imposante Landschaft. Künstler und Künstlerkolonien im Riesengebirge im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. K. Bździach, Jelenia Góra – Berlin 1999.

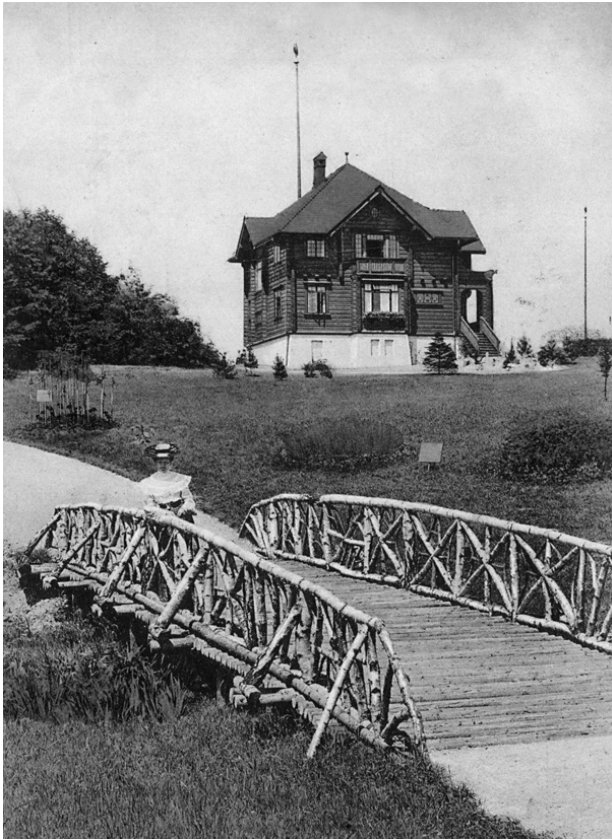


fig. 4 The Karkonosze House, view of the side facade, postcard 1905, Rats- und Stadtsarchiv Görlitz

characteristics of a homestead cottage typical for this region. It was a building erected on a rectangular plan, with a foundation made of unworked granite stones, covered with a shingle gable roof. The building was divided functionally into two areas, similar in surface area – residential and utility, where animals were kept. The walls of the livestock section were made of stone, the walls of the residential section were made using a wooden log structure in the ground floor reinforced with a post frame structure. The attic had a functional character – storage and residential. Another distinguishing feature of the regional architecture was the top wall’s wooden cladding, which, like the elements of the post frame construction, was covered with woodcarving decorations typical of the Karkonosze Mountains. Although no exemplary illustration appeared in Baer’s article, the already mentioned cottage, made as part of the exhibition in the Karkonosze Museum, can be used as an example, which only confirms that the reception of regional Karkonosze architecture at that time was quite coherent. The characteristics of a typical house of the Karkonosze region described by Baer is confirmed by the present findings of researchers. Elżbieta Trocka-Leszczyńska, in her monograph *Wiejska zabudowa mieszkaniowa w regionie sudeckim* [*Rural Housing in the Sudetes Region*], states that in the 19th century, the residential part of the Sudeten homestead two-storey cottages was still built in wooden construction, and the utility section was mostly made of brick or stone, and according to a survey of settlements and villages carried out in 1845, a significant number of houses were still covered with shingles¹⁹.

Whether and in which way the Karkonosze House presented at the exhibition in Zgorzelec can be regarded as a model implementation of traditional construction in the Karkonosze region? First of all, although – like a typical Sudetes cottage – it was a residential building, its body and interior layout was completely different from the vernacular buildings of Karkonosze villages. Unlike the model proposed by Baer, the Karkonosze House was a three-storey building with a functional attic, partly covered with hipped roofs, partly with gabled roofs, erected on a plan similar in shape to a rectangle with three avant-corpses, i. e. a protruding two-storey one at the front, with a porch, on the ground floor, an entrance hall and part of a dressing room; a balcony one at the side of the garden; and a small one at the side of one of the shorter sides, enlarging the living room²⁰. A building shaped in this way is not only far from the traditional Karkonosze cottage, but also fits perfectly into the scheme of a comfortable, open to the surroundings, designed according to the then popular principle “from the inside outside” of a suburban villa of the historicist era. The disposition of the interiors of the building seems to be of the same provenance.

¹⁹ E. Trocka-Leszczyńska, *Wiejska zabudowa mieszkaniowa w regionie sudeckim*, Wrocław 1995, p. 120.

²⁰ As this was a model house, not designed for any particular location, the specifications of the side of the world of the facade were intentionally not used.

The two-bay ground floor had clearly marked and logically arranged functional zones. In the entrance space there was a lobby connected with a dressing room and a toilet, and a one-storey hall in the type of a traditional German hall (*deutsche Diele* or *altdeutsche Diele*), i.e. rooms of a residential and communication character, leading to successive interiors of the house – a staircase (to the right), a living room (to the left) and a dining room (in front). The shorter sides of the dining room were adjoined by a corner loggia and a kitchen, which was only connected through a window/lift (?) in a buffet (?). The entrance to the kitchen was located in the staircase. The layout of the second floor was also two-bay. The staircase led to a centrally located corridor. In the garden bay, there was a guest room, a children's room with a balcony and a dressing room connected to it. In the frontal bay there was a corner bathroom, a loggia with a balcony, a maid's room and the largest room – the bedroom of the house' owners with a balcony. On the floor plan we can see also stairs leading to the attic, which, judging by the size of the window openings, did not have a residential function. Only a few elements can be considered a tribute to the Karkonosze tradition. First of all, a log structure of the building, then a high stone plinth, which was designed but not realized in exhibition conditions, and fretwork decoration of balcony and stair balustrades.

From the above description and architectural analysis it follows that the Karkonosze House is in fact a hybrid – a combination of the floor plan, body and interior layout taken from the then urban and suburban villas, combined with the traditional construction technique supplemented with wood carving detail in accordance with regional patterns. Therefore, what, in the opinion of the contemporaries, determined the “familiarity” of this building and allowed it to fit into the natural and historical landscape of Karkonosze villages better than the other summer villas criticised by Baer? In Baer's opinion, the differences between a Karkonosze House and village cottage were the result of a necessary compromise between function and form aimed at providing the conditions required by a well-to-do family from the city, while its basic advantages were the material and construction technique, which resulted as much from tradition as from rationality – adaptation to local climate conditions²¹. Although the size of this model house exceeded the traditional residential construction in the Karkonosze, it was still an alternative to even larger *Logierhaus* villas. Its greatest advantage was the low price of 21–22 000 marks, and in a simplified form even 15 000 marks (while the cost of erecting a villa was 80–100 000 marks)²², and the repeatability of solutions, which meant that a moderately wealthy family, which could not afford to build a brick holiday house of the *Landhaus* type, was not forced to rent a room in guest houses disfiguring the landscape.

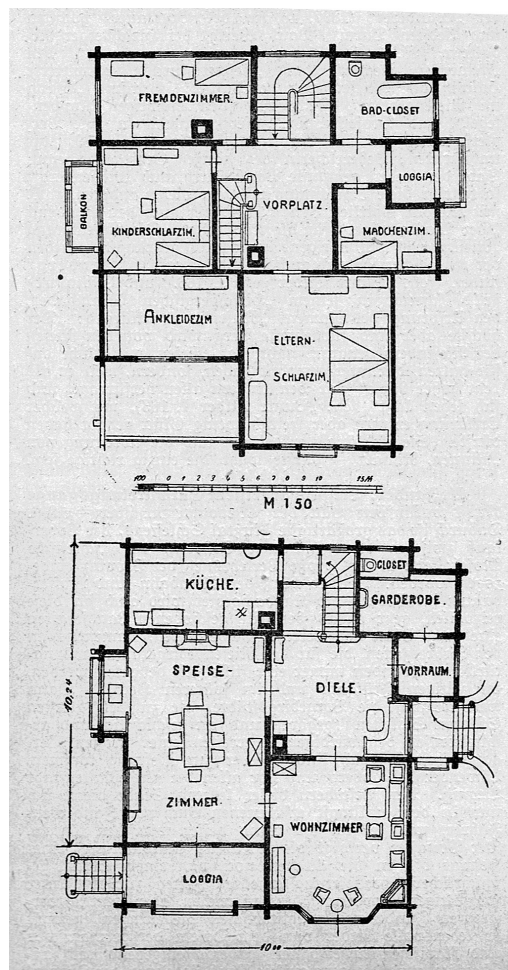


fig. 5 Ground and second floor plan of the Karkonosze House. After: O. Baer, *Das Riesengebirgshaus auf der Görlitzer Ausstellung*, “Der Wanderer im Riesengebirge” 1905, no. 275, p. 171. Scan: Karkonosze Museum in Jelenia Góra

²¹ O. Baer, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

²² See D., *op. cit.*



fig. 6 H. Poelzig, Einfamilienhaus. Photo: M. Markowska, 2020, after: K. Masner, *Das Einfamilienhaus des Kunstgewerbevereins für Breslau und Provinz Schlesien auf der Ausstellung für Handwerk und Kunstgewerbe in Breslau 1904*, Berlin 1905, p. 23

The formal solution used in the Karkonosze House was not an isolated case around 1900. An analogous combination of the modern shape of the body and vernacular patterns in order to fit a residential building in the mountain landscape while providing its inhabitants with the comforts they have been accustomed to in their city homes, appeared, among others, in villas in the Zakopane style, erected according to the designs of Stanisław Witkiewicz in the 1890s. In his intention, they were supposed to be an alternative to the “insipid cosmopolitan houses built in the Swiss style”, which were popular at that time in the Tatra Mountains²³. Of course, in the case of the Villa “Witkiewiczówka”, it was not the only motivation of its author, but in a way a path to the goal, that is to develop, basing on the building and ornamental traditions of the Tatra highlanders, a new national Polish style. Although the originators and authors of the Karkonosze House did not aspire to create a separate style, but only presented their interpretation of a bourgeois villa in a mountain village, their proposal was formally close to the villas of Witkiewicz in Zakopane, but also to other European buildings designed around 1900 that drew on vernacular patterns. As Małgorzata Omilanowska noted, the search for a national style led many artists

²³ See B. Prus, *Lipiec 1883*, [in:] *idem*, *Kroniki*, ed. Z. Szwejkowski, vol. 6, Warszawa 1957; as quot. in: D. Crowley, *Polska odnaleziona w Tatrach – regionalne, narodowe i międzynarodowe cechy stylu zakopiańskiego*, [in:] *Sztuka około 1900 w Europie Środkowej*, ed. P. Krakowski, J. Purchla, Kraków 1997, p. 199.

to surprisingly close formal concepts. The same sources of inspiration, or better, the same ways of using these sources, led to almost identical solutions in countries that had no direct artistic contacts with each other²⁴.

As a proof of this thesis Omilanowska mentions, among others, three buildings – the Villa Pod Jedlami (1897) by Witkiewicz, Dušan Jurkovič's Villa in Rezek (1900–1901), and the William Watts Sherman House (1875) by Henry Hobson Richardson. In all of these examples, as well as in the Karkonosze House, we have a villa with a body and interior scheme typical of the time, made using traditional, vernacular construction techniques and decorated with folk motifs. Thus, one may be tempted to state that in the spirit of 19th century historicism, on the wave of popularity of the idea of vernacularism and the search for national styles, traditional building techniques in connection with regional ornamental motifs were treated by architects as another style costume.

Despite such a far similar interpretation of the theme, i.e. a bourgeois house inscribed in the mountain landscape in the examples mentioned above, it is the Karkonosze House, the youngest of them, that shows a certain departure from the 19th century tradition of villa construction in its interior design. Designed at the end of 1904 or the beginning of 1905²⁵, i.e. just after the publication of Hermann Muthesius' ground-breaking work *Das englische Haus* in 1903, it displays certain features in line with the demands of its author²⁶. However, it is hard to say how much they result from the recreational character of the building, where some compromises were allowed for the "simplification" of the current lifestyle, and how much from the authors' familiarity with the latest trends in single-family house design²⁷. The basic determinant of modernity can be considered to be the location of the kitchen on the ground floor, and not in the basement, as was the case in urban villas of the historicist era, as well as in the aforementioned the Villa Pod Jedlami. Perhaps it is also significant that all known photographs (illustrating press articles and placed on occasional postcards) show the Karkonosze House not from the front, but from the rear facade, the garden one. This kind of appreciation of the previously hidden private zone connecting the house with its green surroundings and total ignoring of the view of the front facade can be a realization of Muthesius' postulates to abandon representation for the sake of functionality and to adapt the house with its surrounding garden to the needs of the inhabitants. It is not certain whether the Albert brothers were familiar with the publication *Das englische Haus*, but they had to have seen a house designed according to the principles propagated by Muthesius, namely the single-family house (*Einfamilienhaus*) by Hans Poelzgie presented at the Exhibition of Crafts and Artisanal Crafts (*Ausstellung für Handwerk und Kunstgewerbe*) in Wrocław (Breslau) in 1904. This building, as one of the two erected as part of the Special Exhibition, enjoyed great interest among visitors and was promoted by the local artistic community²⁸ and widely commented on in the local press. The compact body of a model house, with a brick ground floor

²⁴ M. Omilanowska, *Architektura narodowa czy państwowa?*, [in:] *eadem*, *Kreacja, konstrukcja, rekonstrukcja. Studia z architektury XIX-XX wieku*, Warszawa 2016, p. 35.

²⁵ The first press mention of plans to present the "Jelenia Góra single-family house" at the exhibition in Zgorzelec appeared in December 1904. See *Beratung über das hirschberger Einfamilienhaus*, "Niederschlesische Gewerbe- und Industrie-Zeitung. Ausstellungszeitung" 1904, no. of 25 XII.

²⁶ In his flagship publication *Das englische Haus* (1903), Muthesius, inspired by English residential buildings, encouraged the design of houses whose main features would be: functionality, comfort, customization and opening to the garden. Moreover, he called for a break with the current principle of representativeness and a search for inspiration in traditional folk architecture.

²⁷ The authors of the project – the Albert brothers – were architects at the beginning of their creative work. When the initiative to build a show house appeared in 1904, the older brother Karl was 26 years old. The young age and the lack of long-term professional practice could be conducive to openness to new currents in design. Whether this was the case with the Albert brothers is difficult to say, because in the almost completely preserved design output of the studio, held in the resources of the State Archive in Wrocław, Jelenia Góra branch, there are no analogous villa projects from that period, neither the design of the Karkonosze House itself.

²⁸ It is enough to mention the most important publication devoted to the single-family house by the then director of the Silesian Museum of Artisanal Crafts and Antiquities, K. Masner: *Das Einfamilienhaus des Kunstgewerbevereins für Breslau und Provinz Schlesien auf der Ausstellung für Handwerk und Kunstgewerbe in Bleslau 1904*, Berlin 1905

and a wattle and daub second floor, covered with a low-pitched gable roof, with gable walls clad with tiles at the height of the second floor, with irregularly distributed windows densely divided with astragal bars, was a creative interpretation of the English *Landhaus* propagated by Muthesius, in the spirit of Silesian rural architecture.

Perhaps the model house presented at the Breslau Craft and Artisanal Crafts Exhibition, designed for a family with children from the wealthy middle class living in the suburbs, inspired the Jelenia Góra craftsmen to create a local equivalent in response to local problems, a model holiday home for the lower middle class. They showed their proposal, just like the academic community a year before, in the form of a pavilion at a local exhibition. Addressed to different social groups, responding to slightly different needs, buildings were by no means in competition with each other, as it was presented in one of the articles in the daily newspaper “Bote aus dem Riesengebirge”²⁹. The author noted that Poelzig’s single-family house, although presenting high artistry, as well as the houses presented in Muthesius’ new publication *Das moderne Landhaus und seine innere Ausstattung*, is only within the financial reach of a small group of the most affluent townsmen³⁰. Therefore, the Karkonosze House was presented as a low-budget alternative of a house inscribed in the landscape, which middle-class representatives, including officials, can afford. However, showing both these buildings as competing with each other is improper, as the former was designed as the main residence, while the latter was designed as a year-round residence in a holiday resort for occasional use. It is not disputable, however, that the creators of both buildings, although they were guided by similar ideological goals, i.e. the creation of a modern and functional house, which meets the needs of the inhabitants and is inspired by traditional regional construction, realized them by reaching for extremely different formal and stylistic solutions. While the single-family house from the Wrocław exhibition boldly broke with the 19th century tradition of villa architecture³¹ and, as Maria Zwi-erz noted, “it was at the same time the programme manifesto of Hans Poelzig³², and strongly fitted into the ongoing discussion on residential architecture, especially the reformist ideas of the *Landhaus* associated with Hermann Muthesius”³³, whereas the Karkonosze House should be perceived as a show house of the Jelenia Góra craftsmen’s community³⁴, where local artists could show the artistry of their work based on traditional regional patterns³⁵, and at the same time took part in a discussion about the architectural disfiguration of the Karkonosze landscape, using vernacular inclinations almost like a 19th century style costume. So how to explain the fact that in the case of buildings constructed almost in the same time frame, whose authors were following analogous intentions, they came to such different formal solutions?

²⁹ D., *op. cit.*

³⁰ Interestingly, the accusation of too high a price for a single-family house was raised already in 1904 in “Ostdeutsche Bauzeitung” journal. Neither the promotional materials of the exhibition nor K. Masner’s extensive publication (*op. cit.*) contain information about the construction costs of the building, so the author of the article undertook a calculation according to which he estimated the cost of building this house at 50–55 000 marks. See *Das Einfamilienhaus der Breslauer Ausstellung für Handwerk und Kunstgewerbe*, “Ostdeutsche Bauzeitung” 1904, no. of 24 VIII.

³¹ More about the single-family house, among others: J. Nowosielska-Sobel, *Wystawa Stowarzyszenia Rzemiosła Artystycznego Wrocławia i Prowincji Śląskiej w 1904 r. Dom jednorodzinny projektu Hansa Poelziga – nowe tendencje w architekturze Wrocławia początku XX w.*, “Sobótka” 2001, no. 3.

³² At that time, H. Poelzig was the director of the Royal School of Arts and Crafts (Königliche Kunst- und Kunstgewerbeschule zu Breslau), where he implemented an innovative curriculum based on school workshops, in the spirit of the idea of a renewal of crafts. See P. Łukaszewicz, *Wrocławska Akademia Sztuki i Rzemiosła Artystycznego za dyrekcji Hansa Poelziga*, [in:] *Hans Poelzig we Wrocławiu. Architektura i sztuka 1900–1916*, ed. J. Ilkosz, B. Stoertkuhl, Wrocław 2000.

³³ M. Zwi-erz, *Tradycje wystawiennicze we Wrocławiu w latach 1818–1948*, Wrocław 2016, p. 141.

³⁴ It can be evidenced by the caption of one of the postcards issued on the occasion of the exhibition in Görlitz, depicting the Karkonosze House: “a collective exhibition of united craftsmen from Jelenia Góra and its surroundings [Kollektiv-Ausstellung vereinigter Handwerker aus Hirschberg und Umgebung]”.

³⁵ The interior of the Karkonosze House was fully furnished with craft products – furniture, equipment, cloth, glassware, etc. Moreover, there were wooden elements with woodcarving decoration, stained glass and paintings by artists associated with the Karkonosze Mountains – G. Staats, A. Stenzel, W. Aulich, H. Weider and G. Wichmann. For a description of the interior of the Karkonosze House with a list of creators of its individual elements see: J. Klose, *Rundgang durch die Ausstellung. 31. Gruppe VII: Haus- und Zimmereinrichtungen. Das Riesengebirgshaus. III*, “Niederschlesische Gewerbe- und Industrie-Zeitung. Ausstellungszeitung” 1904, no. of 13 VII; D., *op. cit.*



fig. 7 S. Witkiewicz, Villa Koliba, view of the facade. Photo: M. Ostrowska-Bies, 2007

Of course, the following factors played an important role here: the centre and the periphery, the academic environment and the craftsmen's environment supported by local architects, modernity and anchoring in tradition. Interesting also seems to be the interpretation related to the co-occurrence of two vernacular traditions in the first years of the 20th century described by Stephan Muthesius – vernacularism originating from 19th century Romanticism, the search for national identity and the movement of revival of crafts, as well as neo-vernacularism in the spirit of early modernism, which in Germany was closely linked to the idea of the *Heimatschutz* movement³⁶. Although these two vernacular traditions coexisted around the middle of the first decade of the 20th century, and the architecture created in their spirit found its admirers (the Karkonosze House presented at the exhibition was sold, as well as its simplified version, the interior furnishings, and its five copies were ordered), it was the end of the 19th century historicism tradition. Therefore, despite its temporary popularity, in the long terms, the Karkonosze House has not become a standard for single-family buildings in the region, giving way to architecture in the spirit of the *Heimatschutz*.

³⁶ S. Muthesius, *Neovernakularyzm około roku 1900 – historyczny czy odrodzeniowy, tradycyjnystyczny czy modernistyczny*, [in:] *Sztuka około 1900...*, p. 189 ff.

* * *

The local press often took up the topic of the Karkonosze House, providing numerous and detailed descriptions. After the end of the exhibition, information about the sale and dismantling of the building appeared. Unfortunately, the then newspapers silent about the identity of its purchaser. Therefore, it is not known whether and where the building was reassembled or whether it has been preserved to the present day.

Słowa kluczowe

architektura regionalna, wernakularyzm, XIX/XX wiek, Karkonosze, Dolny Śląsk

Keywords

regional architecture, vernacularism, 19th/20th century, Karkonosze, Lower Silesia

References

1. **Baer Oswald**, *Das Riesengebirgshaus auf der Görlitzer Ausstellung*, "Der Wanderer im Riesengebirge" 1905, no. 275.
2. **D.**, *Die Görlitzer Ausstellung 1905. III Das Riesengebirgshaus*, "Bote aus dem Riesengebirge" 1905, no. of 25 VI.
3. **Kloidt Richard**, *Schreiberhau im Riesengebirge. Sommerfrische, klimatischer und Terrain-Kurort*, Breslau 1903.
4. **Trocka-Leszczyńska Elżbieta**, *Wiejska zabudowa mieszkaniowa w regionie sudeckim*, Wrocław 1995.
5. **Winkler Wilhelm**, *Schreiberhau und seine Geschichte, Natur und Beschreibung nebst seinen Kolonien und Partien*, Schreiberhau 1898.

PhD Marta Ostrowska-Bies, marta.ostrowska-bies@us.edu.pl, ORCID: 0000-0002-4648-0463

Art historian, Germanist. She works at the University of Silesia at the Institute of Art Sciences. She focuses on Silesian architecture of the 19th and early 20th century.

Summary

MARTA OSTROWSKA-BIES (University of Silesia) / The Karkonosze House at the Lower Silesian Crafts and Industry Exhibition in 1905. The Search for a Regional Form of Architecture around 1900

The development of tourism in the Karkonosze Mountains in the last quarter of the nineteenth century caused that the mountain villages turned into fashionable holiday resorts. The need to provide accommodation for more and more summer holidaymakers resulted in increased construction activity. Most of the new buildings did not fit into the natural and cultural landscape of the mountains, which caused increasing discontent among enthusiasts and experts of the Karkonosze Mountains. Attempts to solve this unfavourable situation were made by Jelenia Góra craftsmen, who proposed to create a model Karkonosze House, which as a cheap and aesthetic solution could be replicated by middle-aged townsmen willing to establish their own summer resort in the mountains. Designed by the Jelenia Góra company, the Albert Brothers, the house was presented at the Lower Silesian Exhibition of Crafts and Industry in Zgorzelec (Görlitz) in 1905 and gained great recognition.