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Picturesquely designed architecture of the complex of buildings of the former Construction Crafts School and Higher School of Machine Building at Bolesław Prus Street is recognised as one of the best examples of Wrocław Art Nouveau.

The school edifice, a residential house for headmasters, sanitary facilities and a machine laboratory were built in the years 1901–1907<sup>2</sup>. Along with St. Michael Church (designed by Alexis Langer, 1862–1871) and the folk schools complex in memorial of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (designed by Hermann Froböse, Heinrich Bleß under the guidance of Richard Plüddemann, 1898–1902), they became part of this romantic composition arranged together with Tołpa Park (formerly Waschteichpark) which was completed in 1907.

The design and execution of the school buildings complex were carried out by the city construction administration which was directed by the city architect Richard Plüddemann. The design and the whole investment work were entrusted to the municipal architect Karl Klimm. The construction work was supervised by Gustav Haase – an architect and a masonry master. The school was opened on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1904, followed by the machine laboratory which was completed in 1907.

There were two vocational schools in the edifice at Prus Street – Construction Crafts School with the Civil Engineering and City Engineering Departments (with the department of land measuring technicians since 1922) and the Higher School of Machine Building. Both schools originated from the Industrial School founded in 1875. In

the former, future masters and technicians of private and public building service were educated; graduates from the latter were machine technicians and electricians.

The western wing of the main building belonged to the Construction Crafts School, while the eastern one – to the School of Machine Building. Along each of the wings there was a straight corridor with classrooms, exhibition rooms and teaching staff rooms on both sides. Drawing classrooms (22 classrooms in both schools) were situated mostly in the northern part. Apart from them, there were also classrooms for natural science classes connected with rooms where physics and chemistry classes were prepared, a library, modeller's rooms and laboratories. The corridor in the wing which was used by the construction school was wider on each storey; in the neighbourhood of the hall it formed a well illuminated exhibition area (Fig. 2). Some technical and utility rooms as well as the auditorium were the only rooms which were used by both schools. The machine laboratory building, which was situated in the rear part of the building at Chemistry Street, was used by students of the School of Machine Building. In this laboratory, workshop classes with the use of such devices as machine tools, lathes and milling machines with steam drive were run. The building consisted of some irregularly arranged structures which were different as regards size, shape and function such as a pumping station with a water tower, machine hall, steam boiler room and machine tools hall. There were also flats for employees in the buildings of the school complex. A two-storey residential house for headmasters, which was built in the south-west part of the property at Rozbrat Street, was designed 'not as a palace but as a cosy middle-class house' [7]. Identical, comfortable flats as well as gardens and garden verandas were prepared for use by the residents. A mechanic's flat was arranged in the attic of the machine laboratory, while in the basements of the main school edifice – flats for the stoker and two caretakers.

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<sup>2</sup> Other publications of the author concerning this subject: *Baugewerk- und höhere Maschinenbauschule* [2], [3] [4].



Fig. 1. Main Edifice of Construction Crafts School and Higher School of Machine Building. View of north-eastern side in 1904 (photo: E. van Delden, H. Götz [University Library 'Na Piasku' in Wrocław, Graphic Collections Department (OZGBU), File No 1163])

Il. 1. Budynek główny Szkoły Rzemiosł Budowlanych i Wyższej Szkoły Budowy Maszyn. Widok od strony północno-wschodniej w 1904 roku (fot. E. van Delden, H. Götz [Biblioteka Uniwersytecka na Piasku we Wrocławiu, Oddział Zbiorów Graficznych (OZGBU), sygn. 1163])

An enormous clock tower along with the entrance leading to both schools connected two wings of the edifice, which were dislocated towards each other and at the same time, it emphasised its internal division into two institutions (Fig. 1). The structure of the school building, which was adorned with plenty of sculptures, delighted everyone at that time. Its unique structure was discussed in the Wrocław papers in 1904, [...] *it particularly*

*enchants the viewer's eye who is captivated by its austere beauty and great nobleness* [1]. It was the consequence of both rigorist norms regarding illumination of classrooms from the northern side as well as the location of the building on the curve of the street.

There were virtually no ornaments on the facades. Only portals, friezes under the eaves, the top and the tower were ornamented. The relief on the front façade presented specialties of schools and their location in the building. The building top, which was in the neighbourhood of the entrance to the School of Machine Building, was finished with the James Watt speed governor fixed in the gear wheel. The relief, which was sculptured below among the leaves of ivy and horse chestnut, represented symbols of crafts connected with machine building – locksmithing (a hammer, a pair of pincers and a key) and blacksmithing (a big hammer, an anvil and pliers) as well as measuring tools indispensable for these professions (a form tracer, a triangle and a gauge). The top above the entrance to the building was surmounted by intermingled school symbols: a pair of compasses, protractor and T-square. Below, above the window of the auditorium, symbols of bricklayer (a brick hammer, trowel and level) and carpenter (a saw, axe, angle and plumb-bob) professions were presented. These tools as well as the other ones connected with building such as trowels, hammers, mallets, chisels, tooth axes and pointed chisels were placed among pine twigs and they can be found in the friezes under the cornice in the western part of the building. The inscription *Ohn' Fleiss kein Preis* over the portal (the entrance

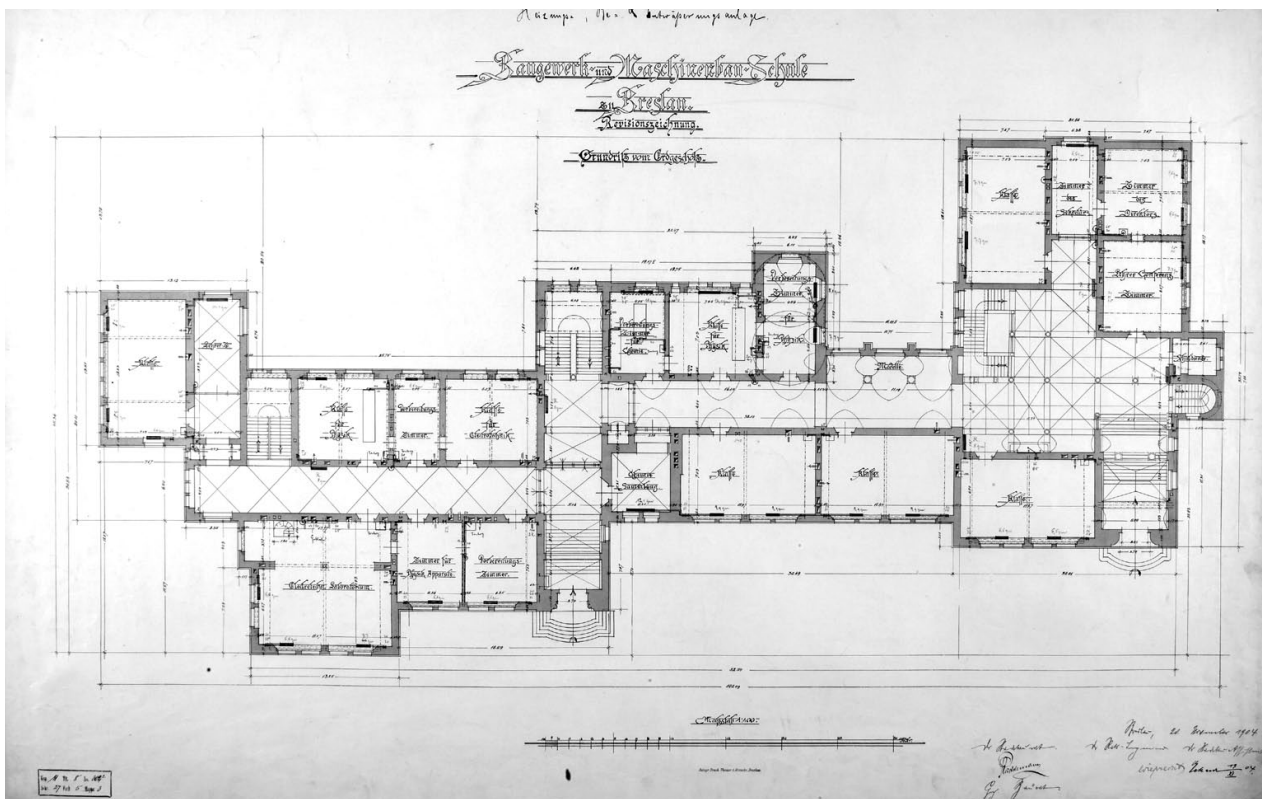


Fig. 2. Projection of the main building ground floor. As-built drawing, 20.11.1904 [Building Archives of Wrocław (ABMW), TP 174]

Il. 2. Rzut parteru głównego budynku. Rysunek powykonawczy, 20.11.1904 [Archiwum Budowlane Miasta Wrocławia (ABMW), TP 174]





Fig. 3. Woodpecker on the keystone of the old portal leading to the former Construction Crafts School. Contemporary photograph.

Il. 3. Dzieciół na zworniku dawnego portalu prowadzącego do dawniej Szkoły Rzemiosł Budowlanych. Fot. współczesna.

is bricked up at present) and a sculptured ‘hard-working’ woodpecker on the keystone were to motivate students to learn more diligently (Fig. 3). The northern part of the clock tower which dominates the building was adorned by the five-field Wrocław coat of arms and the national emblem – Prussian eagle with royal insignia. The southern façade was built in a more modest way. The sculptured ornaments appeared on the façade in the form of several wild flowers on the bay window and a simple motive over the window of the staircase in the shape of an entangled ribbon inspired by Henry van de Velde’s ornaments. In the corners, tops of the buildings had decorative stone pinnacles of different forms, for instance, with ends in the form of a cone-bud growing from opening leaves of the horse chestnut. Similar, however, simpler ornaments were made on the facades of the headmaster’s houses (Fig. 4). On tops, we can see such motives as garden flowers (e.g. roses and pelargonium) and twigs of pine and horse chestnut trees.

The school buildings were built of bricks and stones. The facades were covered with ‘Czech’ limestone plaster with striped texture resembling cut stones and the pedestals of the building were faced with stones and bricks. High roofs were covered with red-brown glazed roofing-tiles, glass roofing-tiles and glass; a small area of two shed roofs was also covered with roofing paper, wood cement and copper. Among homogeneously designed architecture of the complex, one small build-



Fig. 4. View of the main building fragment and residential house of the school from the south-western side in circa 1904 (photo: E. van Delden, H. Götz [University Library ‘Na Piasku’ in Wrocław, Graphic Collections Department (OZGBU), File No 1167])

Il. 4. Widok fragmentu budynku głównego i domu mieszkalnego szkoły od strony południowo-zachodniej około 1904 roku (fot. E. van Delden, H. Götz [Biblioteka Uniwersytecka na Piasku we Wrocławiu, Oddział Zbiorów Graficznych (OZGBU), sygn. 1167])

ing of sanitary utilities stood out; its façade was faced with red bricks and the top walls along with the veranda were built of wooden skeleton construction.

Such differentiation in the choice of building materials constituted the implementation of the idea – imposed by Richard Plüddemann – of building a school as a great didactic help for future construction masters and technicians [7]. The quality of the executed works can also be viewed as exemplary. The building administration tried to complete all the work in the most purposeful way in order not to make the impression of luxury by ‘adjusting the form to the construction, the nature of materials and functions’ [7]. Karl Klimm chose the most diverse construction methods and materials which were most frequently used but also the most modern ones, taking into account ‘the rapid development’ [6] in the scope of building techniques at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This rule referred to the construction and finishing of walls, roof covering, vaults, ceilings, pillars and columns, stairs and finishing materials (Figs 5, 6). At the building school authorities’ request, the following different forms of vaults over corridors and collection rooms were built as examples for students: segmental barrel vaults (‘Prussian vault’), cross vaults, stellar vaults, domes (‘Czech vault’), cloister vaults, barrel vaults with telescopes [lunettes, fanlights] and without as well as dome vaults. The vaults were built of bricks and reinforced concrete. Above the big rooms of the depth of seven meters, girder and rein-



Fig. 5. Main Edifice of Construction Crafts School and Higher School of Machine Building. The hall and staircase on the ground floor near the entrance to the Construction Crafts School in circa 1904 (photo: E. van Delden, H. Götz. [University Library 'Na Piasku' in Wrocław, Graphic Collections Department (OZGBU), File No 1171])

Il. 5. Budynek główny Szkoły Rzemiosł Budowlanych i Wyższej Szkoły Budowy Maszyn. Hol i klatka schodowa na parterze przy wejściu do Szkoły Rzemiosł Budowlanych około 1904 roku (fot. E. van Delden, H. Götz. [Biblioteka Uniwersytecka na Piasku we Wrocławiu, Oddział Zbiorów Graficznych, sygn. 1171])



Fig. 6. Main Edifice of Construction Crafts School and Higher School of Machine Building. The hall interior with the main staircase on the second floor in circa 1904 (photo: E. van Delden, H. Götz. [University Library 'Na Piasku' in Wrocław, Graphic Collections Department (OZGBU), File No 1170])

Il. 6. Budynek główny Szkoły Rzemiosł Budowlanych i Wyższej Szkoły Budowy Maszyn. Wnętrze holu z główną klatką schodową na II piętrze około 1904 roku. (fot. E. van Delden, H. Götz. [Biblioteka Uniwersytecka na Piasku we Wrocławiu, Oddział Zbiorów Graficznych, sygn. 1170])

forced concrete ceilings of type *Koenen* were built. Ceilings over the cellars and at the attic were built in the form of flat and brick Klein ceilings. Even the roof boarding of the truss construction of the roof, which was executed with the use of batten plates made of wood in many patterns and forms applied in skeleton constructions, also constituted a didactic help. Bearings which supported the ceilings and vaults are as follows: granite cluster pillars and columns made of red and white sandstone as well as cast iron in different forms. The constructions of stairs were also differentiated. They were made of granite as prefabricated with strings of sandstone or with steps fixed in the wall by means of cantilevers and compacted with reinforced concrete and magnesia binder lining, forged iron with oak stair treads. The floors in the vestibules and interior corridors were made of terrazzo, while the floors of classrooms were made of 'American wood', i.e. the so called yellow pine. The floor in the pattern-shop for carpenters was wooden so as not to damage the tools which often fell onto the floor; in the stone pattern-shop the floor was massive and moisture-proof. Other types of floors that were used there: ceramic tiles, cement and asphalt slabs, cement coat, linoleum, magnesite floors. The stone facing with different types of rustication on the pedestal of the western wall of the water tower near the laboratory building fulfilled also the role of an exhibition for students. The following elements constituted also a "teaching aid": wall panel coats, glazing, hand-rails, metal bars, fencing, pavements, the courtyard and garden and even installation systems.

The school building was equipped with the central low-compression steam heating and ventilation system. The atmospheric air was introduced to the building by means of channels which were situated under the tile floors straight to the heating chambers in the cellar, in

which it was heated and then delivered in vertical channels to the particular classrooms. The power to the building was supplied from the main city power station situated at Łowiecka Street, which started its activity in 1901. The electric light in classrooms was of the arc type. In all other small rooms where classes were held and the remaining rooms there was incandescent light in the form of multi-arm chandeliers, hanging lamps and wall lamps. An electric freight lift, which was installed at the clock tower, was used for transporting heavy elements. In the halls on each storey of the Construction Crafts School there were large bowls made of grey terrazzo for washing drawing boards. With great variety of the materials employed, their colours and textures as well as construction methods, the architects managed to maintain the uniform character of the structure without turning it into a template.

Among the contractors there were well-known Wrocław companies. Starting from 1904 the brickwork was conducted by the company of Hermann Fleck – an architect and masonry master. Reinforced concrete constructions were made by Gebrüder Huber Company. Wilhelm Künzel, Carl Hiller, Paul Franke were the authors of sculpture ornaments, while painters and interior decorators Edmund Görtz and Hans Rumsch were the authors of painting ornaments. Some of the other contractors were the following: a carpenter master Hugo Baum, carpenter companies Gebrüder Bauer and J.[ulius] Glier, firms executing blacksmithing and locksmithing works „Fenk & Halfpaap”, „Gustav Trelenberg” and „A. G. Meinecke”. In addition to this, sculpture ornaments of headmasters' houses were made by the firm „Zeidler & Wimmel” from Bolesławiec. The tile floors and terrazzo wall facings are the work of Giacomo de Michiel Company from Dresden. The stained glass in the audito-



rium was created in the workshop of Professor Alexander Linnemann, architect and glass painter from Frankfurt am Main.

The architecture of the vocational school edifice with carefully designed ornaments of façades and interior decorations as well as reserved Art Nouveau sculptural and painting ornaments became an example of introducing ideas which were propagated by the authors of native culture protection movement and supporters of artistic education of youth in Germany at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They aimed at the idea that various classes of the society should associate with art so that the artistic sensitivity of students developed in this way would allow the future craftsman to perform his profession with 'taste and understanding' [8]. The school interiors were not arranged in a specific way for historicism which demonstrated the review of different styles and motives characteristic of them. The intention of the edifice designers was to avoid 'if possible any archaic imitation of any former epoch' [7]. Sculptural and painting ornaments referred to the issue connected with the state, city, craftsmanship and lecture subjects both on facades and in the interiors [7]. It also had a moralistic and didactic implication; it included simple symbolism connected with the educational function of the building.

Sculptural ornaments of the Construction Crafts School interiors were connected with the symbolism of construction craftsmanship. On the stone cantilevers of corridors' vaults the following tools were sculptured: a stone-mason's (tooth axe, mallet, angle), a bricklayer's (brick hammer, trowel, brush), a joiner's (plane and laying out tools), a carpenter's (axe, chisel, angle), a tin man's (rasp, hammer and pincers) and a roofer's (crossed point chisels – slate roof hammers) among leaves and fruits of oak, horse chestnut, beech and pine. A desire for novelty, revolt against the antique cult and the love of native nature – characteristic of *Jugendstil* – were expressed, similarly to the Middle Ages, in form of searching for ornamental motives in native nature [9]. The capitals of stone pillars and columns with Roman and Art Nouveau shapes had different ornaments among which we can recognize slightly stylized native flora and fauna. Among the motives we can find thistles, long-eared owls, leaves and fruits of the horse chestnut, flowers resembling ranunculus arvensis; ravens and wild roses, carlina acaulis, pine needles and cones, flowers of wild roses. Such motives appeared at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in other schools as well and their symbolism, which epitomized worthy aims, virtues and vices of students, had some educational meaning. We can recognize here the symbols of wisdom, science, knowledge (raven, owl), power, health, endurance, virtue (oak, pine), 'flowers and thorns' of the school life (flowers of wild roses, thistle, carlina acaulis). Reliefs – covered with plaster – with watchwords in rolls of Art Nouveau ribbons, which motivated students to learn, similarly to the symbolism of ornaments, survived till the present day in the corridors.



Fig. 7. Main Edifice of Construction Crafts School and Higher School of Machine Building. The auditorium interior in circa 1904. Painting ornaments by Hans Rumsch (photo: E. van Delden, H. Götz. [University Library 'Na Piasku' in Wrocław, Graphic Collections Department (OZGBU), File No 1173, 1174])

Il. 7. Budynek główny Szkoły Rzemiosł Budowlanych i Wyższej Szkoły Budowy Maszyn. Wnętrze auli około 1904. Dekoracje malarzkie Hansa Rumscha (fot. Ed van Delden, H. Götz. [Biblioteka Uniwersytecka na Piasku we Wrocławiu, Oddział Zbiorów Graficznych, sygn. 1173, 1174])

The walls and ceilings of corridors, halls and staircases were painted in light colours which harmonized with the colours of sandstone, granite and coloured terrazzo (shades of toned down white, ivory colours, beige, olive and green, blade pink) used in the interiors. Multicoloured strips of frieze above the dark dado, which were painted according to patterns and represented simplified motives of flora, formed a colourful accent against the light-coloured walls.

The auditorium (Fig. 7), which was situated on the highest floor under the exhibited truss construction of the roof, had the richest interior decoration. Apart from the auditorium of St. Elizabeth Grammar School from 1903, it was one of the few complementary works of Art Nouveau architecture in Wrocław. By contemporary people it was defined as *elegant – with the simple form and equipment at the same time* [6]. Wooden elements of the interior decoration survived till the present day: roof boarding, wall facings, door woodwork. At the foundation of the ceiling construction there are high cantilevers on which we can see symbols of building professions, among others: of a bricklayer, joiner, roofer and carpenter. There were sculptured ravens at the foundation of the stone consoles. Panels of the walls wooden facing were filled with Art Nouveau ornaments in the form of braided and permeated plant twigs (leaves or grass). The painter Hans Rumsch used the same motif in the polychrome frieze at the foundation of the ceiling. The walls over the wooden facing were painted a light violet colour<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Examinations of the original colours of halls, corridors and auditorium were made in April and May 2009 by Agnieszka Witkowska.



Fig. 8. Machine Laboratory of the Higher School of Machine Building, 2 Chemiczna Street. The view of the building from the south-western side in circa 1907. In the background – a fragment of the top wall of the building of sanitary utilities and southern façade of the school building [University Library ‘Na Piasku’ in Wrocław, Graphic Collections Department (OZGBU), File No 818]

Il. 8. Laboratorium maszynowe Wyższej Szkoły Budowy Maszyn, ul. Chemiczna 2. Widok budynku od południowego zachodu około 1907 roku. W tle widoczny fragment ściany szczytowej budynku sanitariatów oraz południowej elewacji budynku szkoły [Biblioteka Uniwersytecka na Piasku we Wrocławiu, Oddział Zbiorów Graficznych, sygn. 818]

Multicoloured stained glass windows of the auditorium were sponsored by Wrocław guilds of bricklayers, stonemasons and carpenters, the master builder Oscar Stürtzmann, municipal council and former students of Construction Crafts School. The stained glass windows were embellished with symbols of both schools and building guilds in the surroundings of plants braiding and wreaths of red blooming roses. The interior decoration was completed by the portrait of Heinrich Fiedler – the former headmaster of the school as well as the portrait of Emperor Wilhelm II. In the hall in front of the entrance to the auditorium a relief symbolising building art survived – a cast of classicistic decorations with antique stylised figures<sup>4</sup>.

The complex of buildings of Construction Crafts School and Higher School of Machine Building was one of the most prestigious city investments in Wrocław at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Among the buildings of both Wrocław and German schools, this complex was distinguished by richness of forms and decoration symbolism as well as by a unique scale of the structures designed in a medieval style.

During the war in 1945 in the complex of buildings of the former school at Prusa Street, the machine laboratory was damaged in the most severe way (Fig. 8). The engine room and boiler room along with the chimney were destroyed,

<sup>4</sup> Frieze taken from the wall of the building at Ruska Street 62 before it was demolished [7].



Fig. 9. View of the building of the former school from the south-eastern side in circa 1946–1947 (photo: B. Kupiec. [National Institute in memorial of Ossolińscy, „Dział Życia Społecznego” [Social Life Section], File No F–2476])

Il. 9. Widok budynku dawnej szkoły od strony południowo-wschodniej około 1946–1947 (fot. B. Kupiec. [Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, „Dział Życia Społecznego”, sygn. F–2476])

while the pumping station and the water tower were damaged. After the war, the buildings were used by the Botanic Institute of Wrocław University (Fig. 9). In 1949 in the main building, after executing indispensable repairs, the Electric Faculty of the united Wrocław University and Wrocław University of Technology started its activity; in 1951 – the Faculty of Communication which, in 1968, was changed to the Faculty of Electronics of Wrocław University of Technology. In the 1960s the ruins of the former machine laboratory were converted into the workshops of precision engineering. The building of sanitary utilities was also pulled down at that time. In 1974 Namysłów Pavilion (E4) was built at that place. A similar pavilion was built two years earlier in the eastern part of the property (E2). In the years 1968–1970 the Faculty of Architecture was transferred there from the main edifice (A1). At present, the main building of the complex (E1) is the seat of the Faculty of Architecture and the Department of Electronic and Photonic Metrology of the Faculty of Electronics of Wrocław University of Technology. The former headmaster’s house, which was used by the Botanic Institute of the Agricultural University till 2006, now constitutes the property of Wrocław University of Technology.

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### Wydział Architektury Politechniki Wrocławskiej w dawnej siedzibie Szkoły Rzemiosł Budowlanych i Wyższej Szkoły Budowy Maszyn

Zespół budynków dawnej Szkoły Rzemiosł Budowlanych i Wyższej Szkoły Budowy Maszyn (gmach szkoły, dom dyrektorów, budynek sanitariatów) powstał według projektu Karla Klimma, pod kierunkiem Richarda Plüddemanna, w latach 1901–1904, a laboratorium maszynowe – 1905–1907. Po 1945 roku budynki były użytkowane przez Uniwersytet i Politechnikę Wrocławską, od 1951 przez Politechnikę Wrocławską.

Gmach szkoły został ukształtowany na sposób średniowieczny – urozmaicony ryzalitami, szczytami i wieżami. Otrzymał on romanizujące wnętrza i secesyjną dekorację. Architektura budynku, w którym kształcono przyszłych mistrzów i techników budowlanych, służyła

celom dydaktycznym, prezentując różnorodne materiały budowlane oraz systemy konstrukcyjne. Zasada ta dotyczyła m.in.: dachów, stropów, sklepień, filarów i kolumn, schodów, materiałów wykończeniowych. Formy kamiennych dekoracji elewacji i wnętrz wiązały się z symboliką państwa, miasta i przedmiotów wykładowych lub miały wydźwięk moralizatorsko-dydaktyczny. Dekoracje rzeźbiarskie i kamienne detale architektoniczne szkoły wykonała wrocławska firma Künzel & Hiller, a elewacji domu dyrektorów – Zeidler & Wimmel z Bolesławca. Autorem polichromii ścian auli był Hans Rumsch. Aula z oryginalnym wystrojem snycerskim, wieszarową konstrukcją dachu, jest najcenniejszym zachowanym wnętrzem.

**Key words:** Wrocław, architecture of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, secession, construction crafts school, Karl Klimm

**Słowa kluczowe:** Wrocław, architektura XIX–XX w., secesja, szkoła rzemiosł budowlanych, Karl Klimm

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