



The historic Main Post Office - a hotel with an idea and background full of history

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The former Main Post Office in the centre of Kraków, a beautiful and iconic building standing vacant for years, will soon gain a new life and become a hotel. There are also plans to open the hotel to residents and tourists, for example through a public observation deck on the roof, an open bar, a restaurant, a post office history corner, and concert and conference rooms.

The monumental building of the Main Post Office in Kraków is a significant urban and landscape accent, located in the city centre in the vicinity of Planty Park. The building is the cradle of Kraków's history and culture, one of the characteristic elements of the city, which finds expression in such customs as the habit of arranging meetings 'at the Post Office'. For many years, part of the building served as the office of the Orange Company - until 2019, when Zeitgeist Asset Management purchased the historic property to restore it to its former glory and make it available to the city's residents.

The investor wants the building transformed into a hotel and to become an open and friendly place for residents. He plans to create a new internal courtyard and a stylish bar and restaurant on the ground floor. Talks are being held on launching an exhibition and museum section devoted to the history of the Polish Post. The second floor will have spaces that could be used, e.g., as conference rooms or rooms for chamber concerts or exhibitions. There are also plans to restore the observation deck, formerly located in place of the current dome. The 5* hotel will have approximately 130 rooms. A team of architects from the BE DDJM Architekci Company, in cooperation with outstanding specialists in urban planning and monument conservation, supervises all works, including the protection of the historic fabric and the revitalisation of the building.

Adaptation respecting the historical legacy

The historical structure of the Post Office is to be maintained and strengthened. Specialist stratigraphic and opencast research was carried out in the building. The new owner's plans include the reproduction of original plasters, which will restore the historical appearance of the building, which has faded over the course of recent renovations. Relics of noble plasters with mica found on the front facades, terrazzo plaster (used to make decorative casts of cornices and plinths), and the remains of rustic stone, i.e., rectangular slabs on the facade and decorating corners and spaces between windows, will be restored. The hall of the building will also regain its former glory. The remaining rooms with historical elements will be preserved and restored. The real gem among them is the room on the second floor, which had a representative character, and this is where the telephone operators used to work.

An extraordinary story

The Main Post Office building is significant in historic Kraków. It was built in 1887-1889, under the design of Franz Setz and Tadeusz Stryjeński in the Viennese Neo-Renaissance style - the so-called north renaissance. Franz Setz became famous for creating the architecture of post office buildings in Lviv, Bielsko-Biała and Trieste, which became the flagship buildings for subsequent post offices of this type. In 1909, Almon Strowger's system was installed in



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Wielopole, which turned the facility into the first automatic telephone exchange.

The building changed its functions over time and was rebuilt many times in response to changing functional needs and telecommunications technologies. The facade, finished initially with noble plaster, was covered with other materials. In the 1930s, the post office was renovated and expanded by the design of Fryderyk Tadanier, a Kraków architect of the modernist school. The neo-Renaissance decor and the dome were removed, two storeys and an outbuilding with the function of a parcel department were added, and the façade in the modernist style of 'Great Kraków' was decorated with crystal-ornamented stucco. In the People's Republic of Poland era, in the 1980s, interior decorations were created to refer to the crystal decorations on the post office facade on the 3rd and 4th floor, and in the next decade, the dome of the main building was added. These and subsequent reconstructions destroyed many elements of the former architecture.