



## Świdermajers – the wooden villas of Otwock

ROUTE PL 5

### Presentation of the route

This route follows the traces of disappearing wooden architecture, typical of small holiday resorts in the vicinity of Warsaw. Świdermajer define the architectural style of the health resorts outside Warsaw.

Świdermajer is an architectural style whose creator was Michael Andriolli. Wooden architecture inspired by the architecture of mountain areas is characteristic of the buildings on the right bank of the Vistula River from Nałęczów to Warsaw. Few of them are in good shape, but walking around Otwock, we can feel their former glory.

Spa and summer resort - is the result of "benevolent army Otwock pines", which widely branched canopies secrete essential oils and produce a large amount of chlorophyll, but also the location of the city on the highest terrace in the sandy area.

Before World War II, there were hundreds wooden villas, but fairy-tale houses with wooden porches and openwork balustrades are slowly disappearing from the map of Otwock. Local architects moved styles from all over the world to Otwock on the Świder River. They looked at the beautiful, richly decorated mansions in the Swiss Alps, as well as at the huts of Tsarist Russia. And so, at the end of the 19th century, richly decorated houses began to be built in the pine forests by the Świder river.

We start our walk at the newly renovated Sanatorium Abram Gurewicz, the largest wooden building in Poland, and maybe even in Europe. The trip towards Świder ends at the oldest and most representative street in Otwock.



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Train stop	Otwock railway station - beginning of the route
	

Waypoint	Abram Gurewicz's Health Resort — 8 Armii Krajowej Street
	<p>Abram Gurewicz's Health Resort is a flagship in Otwock and one of the biggest wooden buildings of this kind in Poland, with significant historical, architectural and artistic elements of great value. It was erected on a 3 hectare plot. Built in stages, between 1906 and 1921, it was initially known as Villa Gurewiczanka – a small residence of the Gurewicz family. Later on, it was converted into a beautiful Spa called Gurewicz's Guest-house which, in the late 1930s was known as Gurewicz Healing Centre. In the final stage the structure was given a polygonal shape, consisting of seven adjacent wings. To the east and south, the building was surrounded by rest rooms, glazed verandas, and three open terraces. The perfectly equipped Spa had a sewage system, running water, electricity and telephones. There was also an elegant lounge for patients, a reading room, a parlour, a dining room, and a concert hall with a piano. These rooms were further embellished by a famous graphic artist Tom Joseph, who painted decorations with dominating gold, blue, and red colours. The Spa was surrounded by a professionally arranged park with a variety of exotic plants. The centre didn't have the status of a sanatorium or hospital. It accepted only convalescents and people seeking peace. During the war, the building was taken over by the Nazis, then in July 1944 it became the Training Centre of the Ministry of Education. In 1948, the ancestors of Roman Gurewicz, his brother Ignatius and their aunt Ida Grynszpan (née Gurewicz) sold the property to the Municipal Government of Warsaw which, in the same year, resold it to the Ministry of Education. On 3 June 1997 it was sold to the Polish Alzheimer Foundation, which established the Alzheimer Centre there, still named as Gurewicz Guesthouse. The building was enlisted into the National Monuments Register on 31 January 1979 (entry no. 937).</p>

Waypoint	The property of the Bador family – between Warszawska, Willowa, Kościuszki and Żeromskiego Streets
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The pre-war property of the Badior family was located between today's Warszawska, Willowa, Kościuszki and Żeromskiego streets. The Guesthouse of the Nausbaum Brothers was opened in 1910 in the one of the five two-storey, wooden buildings. After 1930 F. Cukierman bought the property and changed its name to Polonia Palace. After the war it became a council house. It was destroyed in a fire on the night of 23rd/24th December 1998. Only two buildings survived till modern times, not in very good shape, however, the architectural elements showing the splendour of Otwock's wooden villas can still be admired. The magnificent, two-storey building in Willowa Street (painted in blue) is characterized by beautiful porches with semi-circular windows; during the Nazi occupation the Military Commander's Office was located there. Deep in the yard, there is the old Much Zygmunt Badior villa from the beginning of the 20th century. The current owner put it for sale, it supervised by the town renovator.

### Waypoint

### The Rose Villa – 32 Tadeusza Kościuszki Street



The wooden Villa Rose, owned by the Jabłoński family, is a two-storey, wooden building located on a hillside. It is preserved in an excellent condition, with a wonderful porch upstairs, decorated by open-worked details. In the 1920s, the Lithuanian Talmudist Jabłoński arranged a private house of prayer there- The Small Synagogue- which was open until the war. During the war the mayor of Otwock, Stanisław Łowiecki lived in this building. He performed the function of mayor from December 1943, till October 1944.

### Waypoint

### The pharmacy and the colonial shop – 16 Stefana Żeromskiego Street



Czerniawski and Rotsztein owned two buildings, one of them was a very stylish pharmacy since 1933. At present it houses a Public Library. In the second building, closer to B. Prusa Street, Edmund Budkowski's Colonial Grocery Shop was established. Unfortunately, the stylish porches decorating both buildings, did not survive till our times. Andrzej Wajda shot a few scenes to the movie "The Ring with a Crowned Eagle" there.

### Waypoint

### The house of Julia Klauzinska one of the first Polish female doctors – 7 Hipolita Cybulskiego Street



Most likely the house at number 7 belonged to one of the first Polish female doctors, Julia Klauzinska (1858–1928). She was awarded the doctor’s diploma in 1885 by the Medical Institute for Women in Petersburg. In 1904 she bought the property at 13 Wolczanska Street (nowadays H. Cybulskiego) and she lived there with her brother’s children. She worked as a doctor in a Warsaw secondary school for girls. During World War I she arranged and ran field hospitals, among others in Smolensk. After WWI, she started her gynaecologic training in Otwock, and she also worked as paediatrician. She died on 9 September 1928. She was buried in Warsaw on the Evangelical-Augsburg cemetery. Julia Klauzinska’s house nowadays is located on the territory of a hospital.

**Waypoint**

**The Orphanage at 7 Boleslaw Prusa Street**



It is a wooden house from the beginning of 20th century with glazed covered porches, surrounded by old trees, It is the former guesthouse of the Golebowski Family, donated to nuns for an orphanage.

**Waypoint**

**Kasperowiczowka – 13 Bolesława Prusa Street**



It is a beautifully renovated house, a masterpiece of Swidermajer style, with porches, a balcony on the first floor, many openwork wooden decorations, and a turret with windows. Edmund Kasperowicz lived there before the war, a well-known social worker, the secretary of Association of Otwock’s Friends, the president of the Association of Radio Enthusiasts, the editor and publisher of Otwock- a Resort magazine. He designed the first coat of arms for Otwock. Thanks to his initiative in 1921 the clerical colony- Soplicowo (nowadays, a district of Otwock) was established. The archbishop Stanislaw Gall used to go there to rest.

**Waypoint**

**The Eden Guesthouse – 12/14 Maria Konopnicka Street**



It is a wooden three storey house built in the 1920s on the plot of Stefan and Stanislaw Jankowski. The Eden Guesthouse was established in 1925 by Zofia Ajzensztadt, then in the 1930s, the new owner J. Rubin called it the Atlantic Guesthouse. Nowadays it is a nuns residence.

**Waypoint**

**The Kahan Villa – 7 Maria Konopnicka Street**



There are two houses on the pre-war property of M. Kahan. The first one, still in good shape, is a mysterious, two storey wooden house with openwork wooden details decorating balconies and glazed porches, very characteristic for the Nadswidrzanski style in architecture. Not without a reason, Dorota Kedzierzawska chose this exact house as the set for her film "Time to Die" with Danuta Szaflarska as a protagonist. The second house is a large, two storey, wooden renovated building.

### Waypoint

### Villa „Lala” – Reymontowka – 29 Reymonta Street



The three wooden, one-storey holiday houses located in Aleksandrowka, the oldest part of Otwock, are perfect examples of the "Swidermajer" style from the end of 19th century. They have beautiful porches and hand-made wooden decorations, especially the one with the board placed in 2001 by the Association of Otwock's Friends, saying: "This is the house where Stanislaw Reymont lived and wrote "The Peasants" between 1908 and 1918. He received the Nobel Prize for that novel in 1924. In the beginning of the 20th century the property was owned by Jakub Schatzschneider, the father of Aurelia, Władysław Reymont's wife. The buildings are supervised by the town renovator.

### Waypoint

### The Podole Villa with the pharmacy – 11 Tadeusza Kosciuszki Street



One of the most representative "Swidermajer" style buildings in Otwock is the wooden one-storey building at the corner of Kosciuszki and Koscielna streets. The Podole Villa was built in 1895 by a pharmacist, Franciszek Podolski and till 8 January 1951 was owned by his descendants. Then the pharmacy was nationalized and functioned until the 1990s. During the war it was a place where the underground press and conspiracy contacts were exchanged. The villa was surrounded by a beautiful garden made designed by a Warsaw pianist Michał Nagay. The descendants of F. Podolski are trying to keep the house and a garden in a very good shape, and they are very successful in it. The Podole villa from its very beginning is a flagship of Otwock.