



A probe in the chapel interior revealed the original brick flooring and the stone foundation of the altar mensa.

Reconstruction and the museum

The result and aim of the investigation work not only included detailed documentation regarding the chapel and improving our knowledge of it, but also, mainly, an attempt to gain the maximum amount of information that can be used to prepare project documentation for the top-rate and delicate reconstruction of this structure. The comprehensive nature of the study and the efforts to take utmost care in reconstructing an important historic building fall among the exemplary and above-standard examples of monument care in practice, and of the preservation of our cultural heritage. The exemplary reconstruction of the building, initiated by the Town Office of Praha - Přední Kopanina, was financed by donations from Letiště Praha, a.s. and grants provided by the City of Prague. Part of the preparations for the project also involved the design and concept of the manner in which the uncovered altar foundation will be presented, designs for façade repair (including its colouring), a design for the interior (renewal of the niches, flooring, colouring and museum exhibits), designs for the repair and reconstruction of the roof truss and wooden ceiling, new roof tiling, and a new door and windows which would correspond to the original baroque form. This difficult task was taken on by Martin and Patrik Líbal, who prepared the reconstruction project and acted as supervisors. The building modifications and repairs, as such, were conducted under the restoration supervision of Oldřich and Tomáš Hejtmánek. Miroslav Stropnický created the interior furnishings, and the windows and the door were constructed by the company HN&T under the supervision of Karel Bělohradský. The exhibition libretto was prepared by Vojtěch Kašpar, with the assistance of Petr Vokáč and Miroslav Novotný. Graphic work for the exhibition was conducted by the graphic studio Citadela. More than a year of efforts by the Town Office of Praha - Přední Kopanina, headed by mayor Milan Hofman and secretary Petr Vokáč, together with the team of reconstruction workers, have resulted in the rescue of one of the most important monuments of Přední Kopanina. The rescued building not only regained its original baroque appearance, but was also given new significance and meaning as the new venue of a permanent exhibition featuring the history of this part of the city.



Photograph of the Chapel of Saints Ludmila and Martha and the Rotunda of Saint Mary Magdalene, taken in 1911.

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Text, photo work and drawings by Vojtěch Kašpar
Design and production by the graphic studio Citadela

 **muzeum**
Přední Kopanina

in the Chapel
of Saints Ludmila and Martha



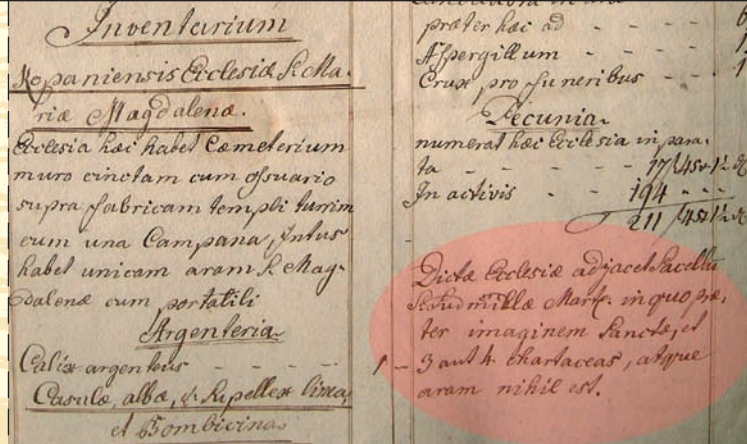
GPS coordinates for the chapel: 14.2968678°E, 50.1172911°N
Further information on Tel.: +420 220 950 701
www.prednikopanina.cz

History of the building

On the initiative of the Jesuit Order, the six-sided chapel was most probably founded between 1712 and 1714, along the peripheral wall of a farmstead. According to written sources, it cannot be ruled out that the chapel was preceded by an outdoor altar that served for mass and for sermons. The chapel served as a votive place of worship, primarily during assemblies of the people that were accompanied by sermons. Walls were later added to the original six-sided layout of the chapel at the enclosure wall of the farmstead; this layout remains today with its rectangular nave and polygonal end at the entrance. After the termination of the Jesuit Order in 1773, the chapel asset records listed a painting of a female saint and three or four smaller pictures. A further inventory from 1798 mentions an altar with a painting of St Mary Magdalene and several pictures on paper. Church accounts referring to St Mary Magdalene from 1826 mentioned mass given in a small chapel, as only a tower remains of the church. After the reconstruction of the rotunda, the local municipality purchased the chapel in 1867 and turned it into a morgue. During the reconstruction of the Jesuit court by the then owner, Václav Šraj, the chapel was repaired in the 1940s. The last modifications of the chapel took place in 1966–1971, when a branch of a nearby century-old linden tree fell through its roof. In 1971, the chapel was modified into a columbarium; this function was taken over in 2010 by a newly built building to the west of the chapel.

In Kopanina Sacellum S. Ludmilla erectum. Hocq; sub Kopanina cap. Templum.
Hocq; facta parochia novitas instructa, parochia reparata, in Villa n. facta.
Libochovici et Tuchomericij parochia eligunt sibi arduosulam implant.

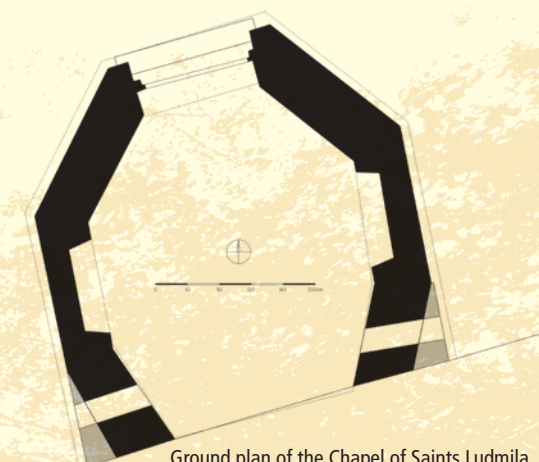
A record of the building of the Chapel of Saint Ludmila in 1712 entered in the Commemorative Book of the Jesuit residence in Tuchoměřice – detail: "In Kopanina Sacellum S: Ludmilla erectum."



Church inventories and congregations in Tuchoměřice, in Kopanina, Čičovice and Okoř dating to the beginning of the last quarter of the 18th century – Church of Saint Mary Magdalene – detail: "... Dicta Ecclesia adjacet Sacellum S. Ludmilla Marth. in quo prater imaginem Sanctae, et 3 aut 4 chartaceas, atque aram nihil est."

The chapel reveals its secrets

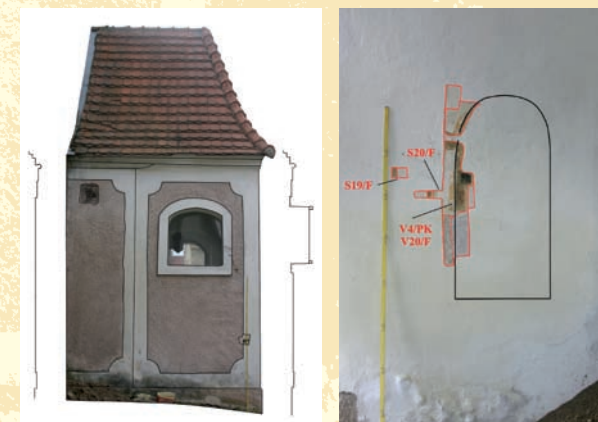
Preparations for the reconstruction of the baroque Chapel of Saints Ludmila and Martha, included a detailed and comprehensive study of the chapel conducted during August and September 2011 (under the supervision of Vojtěch Kašpar), the results of which were to serve for the first-rate reconstruction and tasteful presentation of this important sacral monument. A detailed geodetic survey was conducted as part of the historical building examination, as was a description of the building and a recording of the interior, external façades and roof truss (including a mycological study). The study of the chapel also included an examination of the remaining plaster (by David Zeman), which revealed not only an earlier phase of painting of the chapel interior, but also four (three semi-circular and one rectangular) interior niches in the chapel walls. The niches were walled-in and covered with plaster. The examinations of the exterior plastering revealed that, during the reconstruction of the façade in the Second World War, the earlier plaster was chipped away in its entirety, right down to the core of the wall, and a new outer shell was cast onto the outside chapel walls. An archaeological excavation of the chapel interior found an earlier brick floor below the existing cement floor, and a stone foundation of the altar mensa which was built (like the entire chapel itself) onto the periphery walls of the neighbouring building - a former granary. The level below the brick floor featured a clayey layer, with fragments of marlstone and pottery from the 12th century, which apparently represents the original historical terrain corresponding to the period when the local Roman rotunda was built. A trench outside the chapel uncovered a wall, the end of which was attached to the periphery wall of the granary, which demonstrated that the chapel originally featured a six-sided ground plan, and only afterwards were more walls added, after which it took on the appearance of a rectangular nave with the three-sided end it has today. The study of the chapel itself also included archive research, and examinations of document facsimiles and period iconography,



Ground plan of the Chapel of Saints Ludmila and Martha. Black indicates the earlier masonry of the six-sided Chapel, grey the more recent masonry of the nave.



View of the chapel roof truss.



Pictured to the left: record of the state of one of the exterior façades before reconstruction. On the right: tests in the chapel interior uncovered defunct semi-circular niches in the walls.