

The model of Matthias Church, created by Frigyes Schulek, and its role in the design

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Lilla Farbaky Deklava

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Abstract

The medieval building of the Church of Our Lady in Buda was converted to be the coronation church between 1872-96, with the design and guidance of Frigyes Schulek, student of Friedrich Schmidt from Vienna. The story of the building model, prepared during the construction, sheds light on the design process. The model was created in the sculptor's workshop of the construction office from 1877-1884, undergoing several conversions just for the purpose of testing the different design versions. This work was carried out in parallel with the construction until 1884. From analysing the resources, it could be concluded that Schulek designed the facade with two towers of different sizes: a lower neo-Romanesque north tower and another one reconstructed from the existing south tower. In this design, Imre Henszlmann, the instructor of the Temporary Committee of Monuments, played a major role; in his expert report, published in 1874, he suggested building the towers following the supposed invention of the first builders. Schulek realized this suggestion on the model. Although he had submitted the plan with two different towers to a design judgement, the discussion never took place, since the minister, Ágoston Trefort, withdrew the construction of the neo-Romanesque north tower from the building programme in 1884, referring to financial difficulties. So this design stage was only discovered during the research of the model.

Keywords

architectural maquette · architectural model · architectural design · 19th century · historicism · monument protection · architectural research

Lilla Farbaky Deklava

Institute of Art History, Research Centre for the Humanities,
Hungarian Academy of Sciences
Országház u. 30., H-1014 Budapest, Hungary
e-mail: deklava.lilla@btk.mta.hu

When the preparation research and design of the current ongoing restoration of the Church of Our Lady (= Matthias Church; in Hungarian: Mátyás-templom) started in 2004, I also participated as a researcher. In 2005, whilst on a construction visit with architect Zoltán Deák and some colleagues, we noticed some dirty debris, full of cobwebs. The finding proved to be parts of the plaster model of Matthias Church, although some details were different from the actual building and, unfortunately, several building parts were completely missing. At that time, they were only photographed and then moved because of the start of the works; no extra attention was paid to them due to other pressing agenda. The examination of the model and uncovering the circumstances of its creation was only started a few years later.

Creating a building model, as a supplementary methodology of the architectural design process, was not a new phenomenon in the second half of the 19th century. Models were already in use in ancient times, and their practice was further developed in the Middle Ages, especially in the Renaissance. It is a well-known phenomenon that the model is the best tool to help the architect test and express his ideas in three dimensions. [5]

In the period of dualism, the Gründerzeit, from the start of the great constructions in the capital, the preparation of architectural models also received new impetus. [2 p. 54, 117, pp. 146-147.] [7 pp. 232-234. p. 241] One of the first examples was the model of Matthias Church, which was created during the reconstruction works of the church between 1872-1896, designed and managed by Frigyes Schulek. Although the literature dealing with one of the most important, and probably the best-known churches of Hungary is enough for a complete library, its plaster model was unknown to the literature. In contrast, since the discovery of the forgotten model in 2005, the author has uncovered considerable information from various sources. In the documents of the Building Committee of Budavár Diocese (In Hungarian: Budavári Főegyház Építési



Fig. 1. The rests of the south tower of the model.
Photo by Lilla Farbaky Deklava, 2008.



Fig. 2. The Matthias church, view from the South-West.
Photo by Mór Erdélyi, 1896. Budapest History Museum, Kiscell Museum, Photo Collection, inv. no. 107/92.

Bizottsága, hereinafter BFÉB)¹ Frigyes Schulek mentioned the model – referring to it with a 19th century Hungarian word “főszminta” as the synonym of the plaster model – in his subsequent letter as follows:

*“To the worshipful Sir Bálint Kuzsins[.]ky Dr
Budapest*

Dear Sir;

In response to your questions on the subject of the gypsum model of Budavár Diocese, I am honoured to hereby inform you about the following.

During the construction works of the church, from the year of 1878, the mentioned gypsum model has been prepared, following my plans, in the modelling studio under my personal leadership. It did not aim for the plastic presentation of the final design, but it was rather a completion of my special artistic studies. This

was the reason why it did not match either the reality, or my first draft serving as a basis for the restoration works.

The completion of the model could be dated to the year of 1885, though I’ve done some less major changes from then on.

The material part of the implementation was executed by Ferencz Rózsa sculptor. – Its estimated cost is 8-10,000 Forints.

*Respectfully and sincerely yours,
Frigyes Schulek”²*

The letter was written on 15th April as a response to Bálint Kuzsinszky, who finally acquired the model for the “Metropolitan Museum” collection, which was just in the process of being organized. When the rooms of the building office – previously moved to the parish building in Országház Street – finally had to be emptied in 1899, the Building Committee offered the plaster model to the museum along with other items. The model was already partly incomplete at this time;

¹ The building documents can be found in the MOB documents of Forster Központ Tudományos Irattára [Scientific Archive of Forster Center], (hereinafter: FK TI MOB, BFÉB)

² BTM Vármúzeum [Budapest History Museum, Castle Museum], Archaeological repository, invt. No. 129.

its transportation and restoration was carried out by Hahn J. and Brother Company.³ The result of this can be seen on the photograph taken around 1902, showing the model together with some others, placed in the middle cross wing of Budapest Town Hall, in the space under the vault of the former chapel, and operating as the repository of the Metropolitan Museum.⁴ The Metropolitan Museum, the predecessor of today's BHM (Budapest History Museum) was opened in 1907, in one of the pavilions of Városliget. In room No. XII, the plans and architectural models were displayed, which presented the public construction projects in Budapest, although the model of the Matthias Church was not listed in the catalogue as it was not displayed at the exhibition. [4 pp. 130-136] Only the model of the Basilica, made by Hild, can be seen on the photo taken in the rooms.⁵ According to a note in 1945, the model registered in the inventory book of BHM as item No. 645, was unfortunately destroyed in the Central City Hall, along with several other similar artefacts.⁶ Its latter fate is still not precisely known; the remaining fragments were likely to have been returned to the parish after the war, presumably this was how it reached the upper floor of the southern tower.

Comparing the content of the letter written to Bálint Kuzsinszky with other resources, some inconsistencies can be pointed out. The aged master, Schulek, did not remember everything exactly: the sculptors started work on the main sanctuary not in 1878 but already in 1877. Pál Lers, the excellent professional, delegated to the building committee by the Ministry of Religion and Public Education, was assigned with technical supervision; he already from August 1877 reported on the preparation of the "főszminta" (plaster model) in his regular monthly report. The date is not accidental; this was when the first plans were accepted – more precisely, the Ministry required only minor changes – that related to the sanctuary and cross nave that were to be newly built. Lers mentioned two sculptors, sometimes image-carvers; they were Ferenc Rózsa and his son.⁷

The beginning of the reconstruction

The early work of the reconstruction goes back much earlier in time. It is known that the research work had already started in 1872 as is evidenced by the dated drawings and manuals in addition to the scarce written sources. In that year,



Fig. 3. The model in the background of the store of the Metropolitan Museum at the Town Hall. Photo by Ernő Gerey, around 1902. Budapest History Museum, Kiscell Museum, Photo Collection, inv. no. 21972.14.

Schulek, commissioned by the Ministry of Religion and Public Education, carried out the research work with three of his students from the School of Decorative Arts: namely with Gyula Csapó, József Mayer and Lipót Hoppé.⁸ The design of the western facade was created following their work, for which plan "the Minister remitted 300 Forints to the bank account 31,959 on 19th December 1873 for the first plans of the Parish Church of Budavár."⁹ The design was first published by Dénes Komárik in the study he wrote on the Matthias Church plan designed by Hugó Máltás. [3 p.123]. In Schulek's drawing, the north tower is only a mechanical flip of the south tower, inasmuch as he mirrored even the stair tower for the sake of symmetry. Although the central part of the main facade has three stories, it is one floor higher than the final version as defined by the researchers. This is, in reality, a newly designed neo-Gothic building part, and neither its interior scales match that of the realized facade. A typical feature was the arcade corridor running along the south side, which provided a passage to the Ministry building, and at the same time it indicated the intention of Schulek to unfold the church from its enclosed situation.¹⁰

At the end of 1873, a new impetus was given to the restoration issue as Emperor Franz Joseph ordered the 'stylish' reconstruction of the tower and donated 100,000 Forints for this purpose.¹¹ A special committee then examined the tower.

⁴ BHM, Museum of Kiscell, Photography Archives, invt. No. 21972.14. photograph of Ernő Gerey, around 1902

⁵ BHM, Museum of Kiscell, Photography Archives, invt. No. 14513.9. Room No. XII. in the Metropol Museum, plans, 1912, photograph of Gyula Nok

⁶ First inventory book of BHM, place of preservation: BHM, Museum of Kiscell.

⁷ FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1877/83. Report of Pál Lers in August 1877..

⁸ Examples for the drawings: BHM, Museum of Kiscell, Architectural Collection, VI/6. 52.41.120., Folder I, 52.41.103., 52.41.105., 52.41.154., 52.41.2139., 52.41.126., 52.41.127., 52.41.97., 52.41.96., 52.41.166., 52.41.160. VI/6. Folder V, 52.41.305., 52.41.317., 52.41.313., 52.41.345.1., VI/3. 63.25.4.

⁹ BHM, Museum of Kiscell, Archives of maps, manuscripts and printed matter, Box No. 149, invt. No. 52.41.2759.1.

¹⁰ BHM, Museum of Kiscell, Architectural Collection, invt. No. VI/1. 52.41.6.

¹¹ FK TI MOB, 1873/112.



Fig. 4. Schulek's first plan for the Western facade of the church, 1873. Budapest History Museum, Kiscell Museum, Collection of Architecture, inv. no. VI/1. 52.41.6

According to the minutes recorded at the visit, the temporary committee decided on the demolition and rebuilding of the tower because of its life-threatening condition: "it should be rebuilt keeping the remaining ornaments and coat-of-arms as it was in the era of King Matthias...". They also stated that, prior to the demolition, the tower had to be measured and photographed, and the foundations had to be examined.¹² Two days later, at its extraordinary meeting on 19th January 1874, the Temporary Commission of Monuments (hereinafter TCM) accepted the recommendations of the inquiring committee and gave the design commission to Frigyes Schulek, the inside man of TCM, ignoring any public tender. This dispensing with the tender was reasoned by the fact that no new construction would be done –the demolition and rebuilding in the same form were considered as restoration – which also reflects the approach of

¹² FK TI MOB, 1874/1. minutes on the tower's examination on 14th January 1874. Members of the special committee: Ágoston Szalay chairman, Abbot József Ráth, parson of Budavár, Henrik Jeney, chief engineer of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Hugó Máltás and Frigyes Feszl architects on behalf of the city, Imre Henszlmann, instructor of the TCM and Imre Steindl and Frigyes Schulek, the architects of TCM.

the time. To commit to Schulek was even more obvious as by that time he had already dealt with the church for two years, and the previous surveys were at his disposal.

This session was also a 'stress test'; they decided to reconstruct it to its former state, from the period of Matthias, by rebuilding it from the rectangular part and using the old stone elements. According to the proposal, the ornaments that decorate the wall panels above the window lintels would also be newly carved in an unchanged form.¹³ However, Imre Henszlmann, as a member of TCM, also participated in the work of the special committee examining the tower; he handed in a minority report as an instructor and also published this opinion in the *Archaeological Bulletin*. Henszlmann formulated a different policy regarding the restoration of the tower as, based on the style-evolution concept, he considered the Matthias era, during which the tower was constructed, as a decline. He wished instead to "re-dream" the unknown conditions from the 13th century.

As a response to the TCM members, who warned him to show reverence for King Matthias, he stated: "... would it not be a higher degree of reverence if we considered our historical monuments not in a distorted condition but instead with a styl-ish appearance that should be developed from their first design, and renewed them this way. [...] would not be possible to deny its disproportion to the church that should be increased even more if the northern tower would be built in the manner of the southern one...". [1 pp.43-44]

Eventually, the debate was decided by Ágoston Trefort, Minister of Religion and Public Education, in his Ministerial Announcement, referring to the royal decision: "...the reconstruction of this building in its current form should be taken as a base in the development of the plans and budget." Namely, the tower has to be reconstructed in its form from the period of Matthias, but prior to it "the current shape, dimensions and decoration of the tower should be photographed and drawn with the highest accuracy..." He ordered that the roofing should be solved with a metal clad pointed spire that could be seen in the representation of the siege of 1541. This cover meant a timber structured tower closure, so the idea of a stone spire had not yet arisen. In his ministerial announcement, Trefort also ordered the restoration plan of the western facade.¹⁴

The examinations, research, surveys and meetings revealed other problems of the church in addition to the poor condition of the tower. The reconstruction was finally started with three sections of the south wall as its condition was also classified

¹³ FK TI MOB, 1874/5.

¹⁴ FK TI MOB, 1874/37. In our opinion, the cited representation is identical with the engraving of Erhard Schön, on which the castle can be seen from west. About the engraving, see: [6 pp.37-38. Table III].

as life-threatening due to the wall buckling that resulted from the previously demolished buttresses.¹⁵ Here, the works already started in 1874, affected three parts, the 2nd, 3rd and 4th sections, next to the Ministry of Finance building that attached to the western end of the southern wall.¹⁶

The design package as of 1875

During the design, Schulek providently treated the building uniformly and submitted plans for the reconstruction of the whole church, although his commission was temporarily subject only to the southern tower, the western wall and three sections of the southern wall. The design package consisted of 25 drawings and four written documents, and it was negotiated at the enlarged meeting of TCM on 18th February 1875.

In the attached technical description, Schulek asked the committee not to deal with an analysis of details but to ensure that the plan as a whole, as well as the basic concept, would be subjected to rigorous criticism. He indicated two significant aspects to be taken into consideration: the construction history that can be concluded from the analysis of the building structures, as well as the political will. Regarding the latter, he writes as follows: “..at the same time, feeling encouraged by the general public interest for this monument, appearing in the widest circles, I was intent not only on completely fulfilling the conditions set by the highest government but also on executing the reconstruction of this work of art, the proud tower of the glorious historical past, in respect of its memorial dignity.”¹⁷

Schulek started from the layout and mass-arrangement of the church at that time; he preserved the polygonal sanctuaries, but again raised the idea of releasing the church by significantly dismantling the block of the Baroque seminary building on the south side. He obviously found this important for the dismantling and reconstruction of the largely walled Mary Portal.

The most striking features of the concept are the two western towers, built in all their glory, designed without novelty and following the facade plan from 1873. He placed the two joining stair towers one floor lower, and also slightly modified the closure of the spire. Both towers were the reconstructive realizations of the Matthias-period condition of the southern tower,

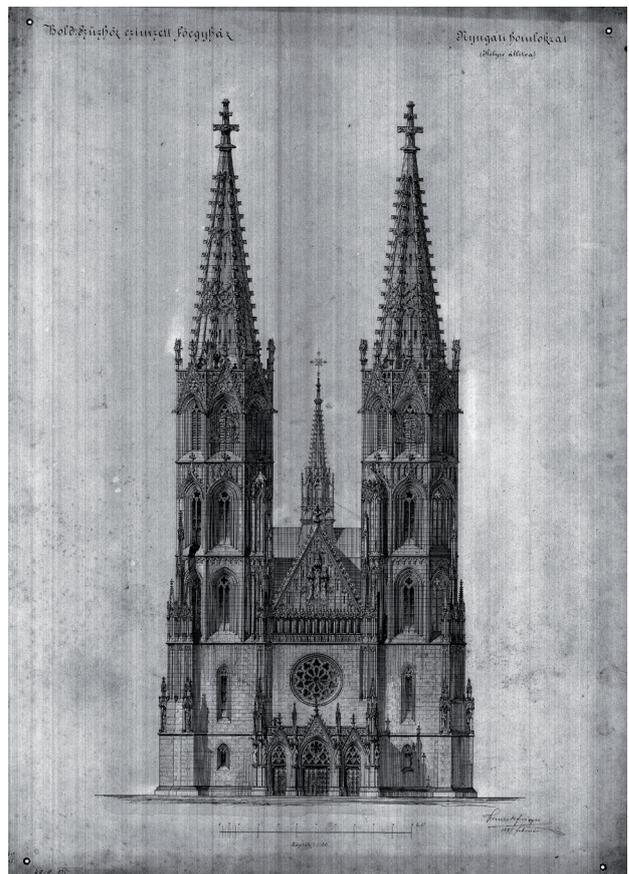


Fig. 5. Schulek’s plan for the Western facade of the church, 1875. Budapest History Museum, Kiscell Museum, Collection of Architecture, inv. no. FIII/7. 63.21.698.1

striving for authenticity in all details except the closure.¹⁸ Of course, this solution is only hypothetical for the northern tower, not even based on assumptions. The design of this building part originates from the Historicism-rooted monument protection, just like the neo-Gothic design of the middle tract of the west facade. On the north side, because of the Ministry of Finance building nearby, Schulek was forced to keep the row of Baroque chapels. Though the committee praised the concept of Schulek, it still clearly rejected it. However, the committee drew his attention to a serious structural problem of the south wall; therefore they primarily expected him to provide the detailed plans and construction budget of that part.¹⁹ (They claimed this

¹⁵ Already the 14th January inquiry had drawn the attention to the poor condition of the south wall but the degree of risk became obvious during the wall probing, which was summarized also by Schulek in his report. FK TI MOB, 1874/73.

¹⁶ Forster Center, Plan Archives, The side view of the Parish Church of Budavár offered to the Blessed Virgin. Frigyes Schulek, 12th Jun 1874., inventory No. 10357, The floor plan of the south side of the Parish Church of Budavár offered to the Blessed Virgin. Frigyes Schulek, 12th Jun 1874., inventory No. 16369. The first data about the stone transportation is from October 1874: FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1877/96.

¹⁷ FK TI MOB, 1875/14.

¹⁸ It is an interesting feature that together with this design package, Schulek submitted also his previous facade drawing from February 1873, maybe due to the similarity of the tower design. An attached file identical with the drawings from 1875 is registered on the drawing from 1873.

¹⁹ FK TI MOB, 1875/15. The minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Temporary Committee of Hungarian Monuments held on 18th February 1875. The text shows the handwriting of Henszlmann.

when the construction of the south side had long been going on with the contribution of the contractor Lajos Hofhauser.)²⁰

In the spring of 1875, Ágoston Trefort established the Building Committee of Budavár Main Church to make the management and organization of the works smoother. The committee consisted of the representatives of the Temporary Commission of Monuments as the organization responsible for the monuments, the capital as patron, the Ministry as the supervisory authority and the representatives of the parish.²¹ Another important participant arrived in 1876: Trefort delegated a control chief engineer to the committee, Pál Lers, who undertook the technical supervision.²²

Meanwhile, under the direction of Schulek, extensive research and measurements were being carried out, and the excavations had also been started, involving an increasing and wider area in the examination. This process led to the closure of the church in 1876. The escalation of the intervention proved to be inevitable; serious structural problems were discovered in different parts of the church, which put into question not only the safe operation, but also the survival of the building. In case of the sanctuaries and the related sacristy, this created a particularly acute situation, which finally led to the dismantling of the eastern parts in 1878.²³

During this period, Schulek prepared several plans in order to thoroughly elaborate his ideas. A typical group of these plans consists of the drawings that represent two western towers of different sizes and styles. For this version, plenty of facade drawings not only about the western but also about the other facades survived. With the help of minor differences that are recognizable on the drawings, the floor plans can also be assigned to them. Although these plans were not judged by the committee, they are still good examples of the design phases, of the even richer results of the research and, last but not least, of the contribution of Friedrich Schmidt, a Dombaumeister from Vienna, who was employed as a consultant.²⁴ Ultimately, these drawings show a close relationship with the model of church.²⁵

The “főszminta” (plaster model) of the church

Frigyes Schulek had already raised the topic of the model in 1875, at the BFÉB meeting held on 27th August. According to the record “*not only the public but also the experts watch the restoration of the church with interest, for this reason he (=Schulek) would consider it desirable to prepare a “főszminta” (plaster model) on the basis of the elaborated drawings to represent the church partly to enhance public interest, and partly as guidance to the people involved in the construction works.*” The proposal was accepted by the committee; therefore they requested a report and a budget from Schulek in relation to the model.²⁶ The committee found the bid, submitted by the sculptor, János Lack, on 2nd December, too expensive, so Schulek requested quotes from a wider range, from three sculptors.²⁷ In addition to János Lack, the two other bidders were: Vince Kramarsch and Vilmos Marchenke. In the end, the quote of Vince Kramarsch was accepted, who undertook the preparation of a 1:33 scale model for 1800 Forints. The committee chose to introduce this quote to the ministry; this model would have been smaller than the finally realized one since it was prepared on a 1:20 scale.²⁸ However, instead of approving it, the ministry announced that there would be a decision about the model only when a plan related to the church had been accepted. This could also be justified by the report written on 15th January 1876 that pointed out that the substantial structural problems on the north and south side would also have a significant influence on the final form of the design.²⁹

Eventually, Ferenc Rózsa and his son were charged with the creation of the model; they were unofficially involved in the construction as there is no trace of any bid prepared by them nor any committee discussions. Schulek announced at the extraordinary meeting of the building committee, held on 16th August 1876, that he had employed the sculptor, Ferenc Rózsa, initially on probation, then laid off the previously employed Ferenc Dinnert, being dissatisfied with his work.³⁰ In 1884, when Schulek actually fired the old Ferenc Rózsa and his son,

²⁰ FK TI MOB, 1875/69. The inaugural session of BFÉB (=BCBMC, e.g. Building Committee of Budavár Main Church).

²¹ FK TI MOB, 1875/34., 1875/41., 1875/57.

²² FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1876/33., 1876/43., 1876/46. The tasks of Pál Lers were defined on basis of the job description of Béla Lukse-Fábry, the technical supervisor of the basilica in Lipótváros

²³ FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1878/106. Annual report of Frigyes Schulek

²⁴ For the invitation of the Ministry of Religion and Public Education, Friedrich Schmidt visited the church first on 17th April 1876. His report: FK TI MOB, 1876/34., BFÉB 1876/20. It is known that he visited the church again at the end of 1876 (FK TI MOB 1876/103.). He came again on 9-10th May 1877, when he contributed in the static reinforcement matter of the E-E pillars.

²⁵ These plans are preserved in BHM, Museum of Kiscell, Architectural Collection.

²⁶ FK TI MOB, 1875/108. Minutes of the BFÉB meeting on 27th August 1875, Point No. 6.

²⁷ FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1875/24, BFÉB 1875/26. Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of BFÉB, held on 2nd December 1875, Point No. 6.

²⁸ FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1875/33., BFÉB 1875/34. The minutes of the BFÉB meeting held on 28th December 1875, Point No. 4. BFÉB 1876/3. Report on the operation of BFÉB in year 1875.

²⁹ FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1876/9. The letter of the Ministry on the delay regarding the issue of the model. BFÉB 1876/12. The minutes of the BFÉB meeting held on 18th March 1876. BFÉB 1876/3. BFÉB report on the site visit of the church.

³⁰ FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1876/29.

after a rather nasty quarrel, Rózsa mentioned in his complaint letter, written to the committee, that he was appointed to the sculptor work on the recommendation of Friedrich Schmidt, which task he always perfectly fulfilled. It is likely that these were the actual circumstances, which would also explain the missing resources (bid, contract etc.) In addition, the name of Rózsa first appeared in the reports of Pál Lers and in the notes of Schulek after the first visit of Schmidt, who had come to see his student's work on the invitation of the minister.³¹

The preparation of the model finally started in August 1877, as Schulek submitted the plans of the east parts to be demolished during this month. In these drawings, the polygonal main sanctuary is surrounded by two-sided sanctuaries with a straight ending. On the north side of the main sanctuary, there is the central-columned, four vaulted eastern sacristy. In the extension of the north row of chapels, there is the northern sacristy, the royal staircase and the Gara-chapel, which was re-designed following the discovery of its foundations. This plan considered the demolition of the Ministry of Finance building already as a fact.³²

Although the approval of the ministry had not yet arrived, and Schulek had travelled abroad, the two sculptors employed in the workshop started work on the main sanctuary, the design of which (as it followed the outline of the existing building part), promised to be straightforward.³³ The main sanctuary had already been finished by September 1877. From this time, we know that the model was not made with the originally planned scale of 1:30, but in a larger scale of 1:20.³⁴ After this, part of the main sanctuary facing west was implemented, which probably meant only the vaults of the main sanctuary and not the cross nave.³⁵ Finally, the plans were approved in November 1877 after a slight modification, so the demolition works could be started. The preparation of the model also gained new impetus; this work lasted to 1884 with some breaks. (Additionally, the sculptors also made models on a 1:1 scale for the stonecutters, specifically of the more complicated pieces that would normally have been sculptors tasks, like the capitals, keystones gargoyles etc.) The units of the model were not fixed to each other; they were movable for better illustration. Finally, in 1879, for the construction that gradually grew to weigh several

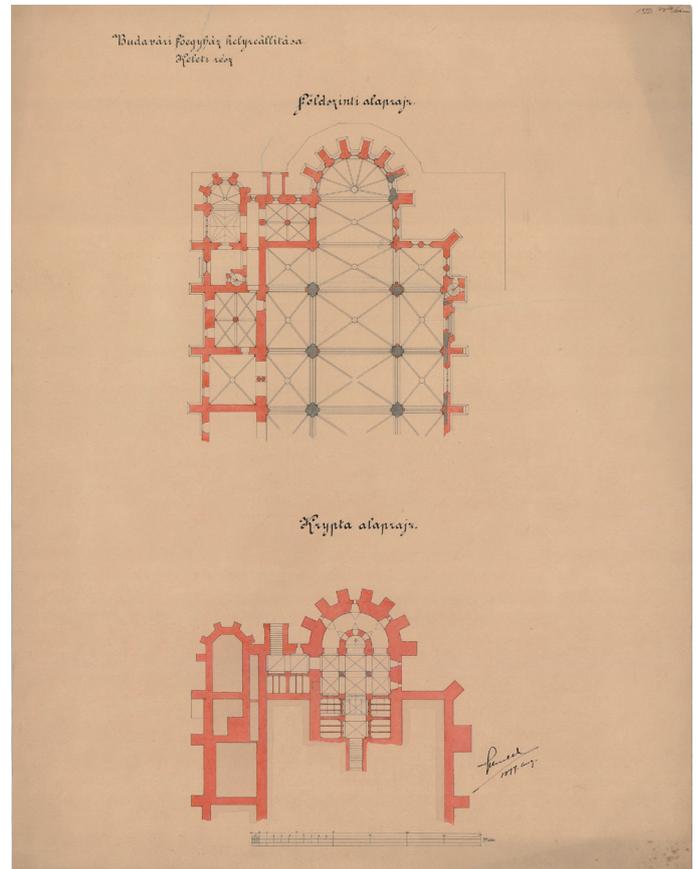


Fig. 6. Schulek's accepted groundplans for the Eastern part of the church, August of 1877. Budapest History Museum, Kiscell Museum, Collection of Architecture, inv. no. VI/3. 52.41.35

quintals (1 quintal = 100kg), a turning-sliding table was produced in the Ganz Factory, with the help of which the model could be opened at the middle and also in sections.³⁶ It also allowed the interiors to be visible, which were elaborated in a detailed way similar to the exterior.

The role of the model

The question arises as to what role the model played during the construction works of Matthias Church besides the initially assigned two targets; the satisfaction of public interest and information for the participants of the implementation. The eight years of preparation time is much longer than that justified by the size and the amount of work.

In the comparison of written sources, invoices and the detailed design documentation, it appears that the model worked much more as a planning guide, and as such, it could be considered not an incidental, but the central element of the design process. For the standards of 19th century design technologies, this provided the possibility of 3D testing, and illustrating in space

31 FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1884/49. In their submission, Ferenc Rózsa and István Rózsa gave an itemized list about their works completed during the eight years. On the note of Schulek: BHM, Museum of Kiscell, Archives of maps, manuscripts and printed matter, Box No. 149. invt. No. 52.41.2759.3. '16th August 1876 ... Ferencz Rozsa sculptor in probation'

32 BHM, Museum of Kiscell, Architectural Collection, invt. No. VI/3. 52.41.35.

33 FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1877/83. August 1877 report of Pál Lers.

34 FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1877/87. September 1877 report of Pál Lers.

35 FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1877/94. October 1877 report of Pál Lers.

36 FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1879/35., 1879/47..

or even rejecting the ideas in order to apply the final version to the building. The workshop of the two sculptors located next to the construction office provided a permanent opportunity for Schulek to analyse the given results.³⁷ The minutes of the building committee never mentioned any occasion when the model played any role during the committee design presentations, often held in the office, although this seems to be obvious. Rather, it functioned as a means in Schulek's own work, completing his special artistic studies as he wrote in his letter to Bálint Kuzsinszky. This is clearly justified by the fact that Schulek changed the details of the plans several times during the design and implementation process, and in these cases, he also had the already completed elements of the model converted in order to try his new ideas. The same happened when he created the triforium built in the first section of the main sanctuary and in the eastern wall of the cross nave.³⁸ He also experimented with the exact proportions of the buttresses through alterations to the model. The buttresses are wider, having different proportions on the eastern-facade design submitted in August 1877 than the ones on the plan illustrating the northern facade in 1883. This latter drawing has the most in common with the remaining parts of the model.³⁹ Changes were also made in the design of the north wall, but its nature is not known as yet; unfortunately, the resource does not indicate the building part more precisely. This happened in 1884, by which time, the demolition of the Ministry of Finance wing joining the north-eastern part of the church had occurred, and the construction has already started. In any case, the conversion of the model was made following the realized building.⁴⁰

The issue of the west towers

As an obvious solution, the design of the model's south tower was based on the tower of the church that could be reconstructed from preserved and fragmentary ornaments. However, its closure differs from that of the realized Matthias-tower. The level of the closed balcony is missing, though it is a notable element of the tower today. The spire of the model refers to the planned stone spire. A typical element of it is the church clock

that is found in the finally built tower, according to an archive photograph.⁴¹ On the pillars of the parapet that encircled the third octagonal floor of the model, there were small statues of angels playing the trombone.⁴² Compared to the church, the south tower of the model is lower than that of the realized building.

Only two floors, the first and the third story of the model's north tower survived, but on the basis of their characteristics it can be accurately defined which plans can be identified with this part of the building.⁴³ On the drawings and, as much as is visible, on the photo of the city hall, the stocky, five-story Romanesque tower is lower than the southern one; there are three octagonal floors above the three rectangular stories, closed with an octagonal pyramid spire. Octagonal corner towers are attached to the corners of the octagonal floors, and these corner towers, at the level of the fifth floor, are closed with small spires copying the form of the central one. The question arises as to what led Schulek to use this form. It is known that during his surveys he found the octagonal starting point on the remaining part of the tower; however, this would not have justified such a large-scale deployment. It can only be an opinion, but the superstructure of the north tower could be interpreted primarily as a gesture to Imre Henszlmann, since, in his minority report, he suggested reconstructing the tower in just this way, following the innovations of the first builders. In addition, Schulek carefully avoided the development of the same level heights, which also was resented by Henszlmann in case of the south tower. He was of the view that applying the same level heights for the tower would not have enlightened its appearance but, on the contrary, would have made it ponderous and heavy. Henszlmann also found the south tower too high compared to the mass of the church. [1 p. 43, 44] Similarly, Schulek tried to find a solution for the lower dimension of the north tower.

Ultimately, the minister, Ágoston Trefort, permanently cancelled the construction of the north tower from the building programme of 1884, referring to difficult financial circumstances.⁴⁴ However, this does not mean that there had been any previously accepted plans for the tower. The concept of the north tower – due to other urgent drawing tasks – never reached the stage of design judgement, though several drawings survived on which the Romanesque north tower, albeit with slight differences, appears.

The question arises as to why it was left intact on the model if the aspiration for making a model identical with the church under construction was constantly present until 1884. Schulek

³⁷ FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1877/77. On the conversion of the oratorio above the northern row of chapels. BHM, Museum of Kiscell, Archives of maps, manuscripts and printed matter, Box No. 149. The plans and technical description of the construction offices.

³⁸ FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1879/16. February 1879 report of Pál Lers.

³⁹ FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1879/21. March 1879 report of Pál Lers mentioned that the outer buttresses were narrowed and their height proportions were also changed. The August 1877 plan of the east facade: BHM, Museum of Kiscell, Architectural Collection, invt. No. VI/9. 52.41.22. The 1883 plan of the north facade: BHM, Museum of Kiscell, Architectural Collection, invt. No. FIII/7. 63.21.709.9.

⁴⁰ FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1883/36. The annual report of BFÉB in 1883. BFÉB 1884/38. Szeptember 1884 report of Pál Lers

⁴¹ BHM, Museum of Kiscell, Photography Archives, invt. No. F.87.1457. Photograph by László Müller, around 1897.

⁴² FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1880/1. December 1879 report of Pál Lers.

⁴³ BHM, Museum of Kiscell, Architectural Collection, for the east facade: invt. No. FIII/7. 63.21.699.2., for the north facade: invt. No. FIII/7. 63.21.703.9.

⁴⁴ FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1882/12.

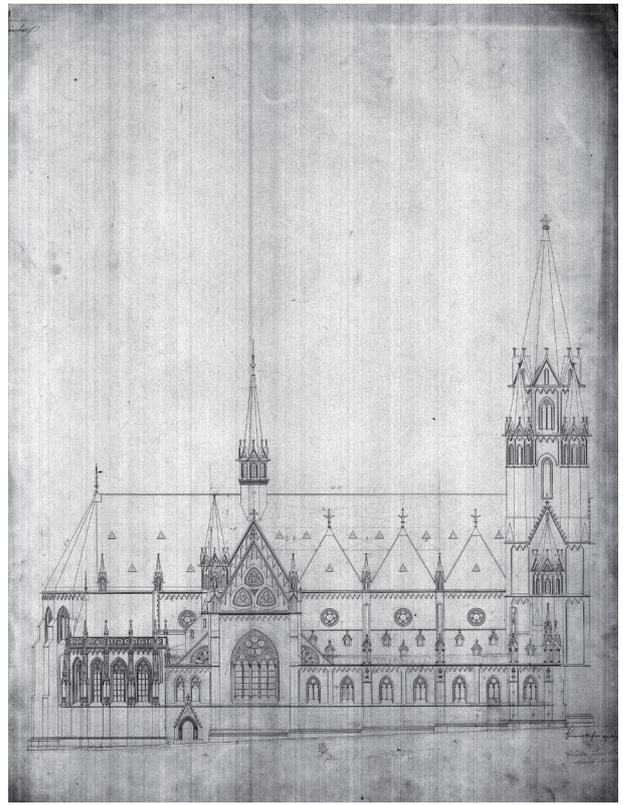
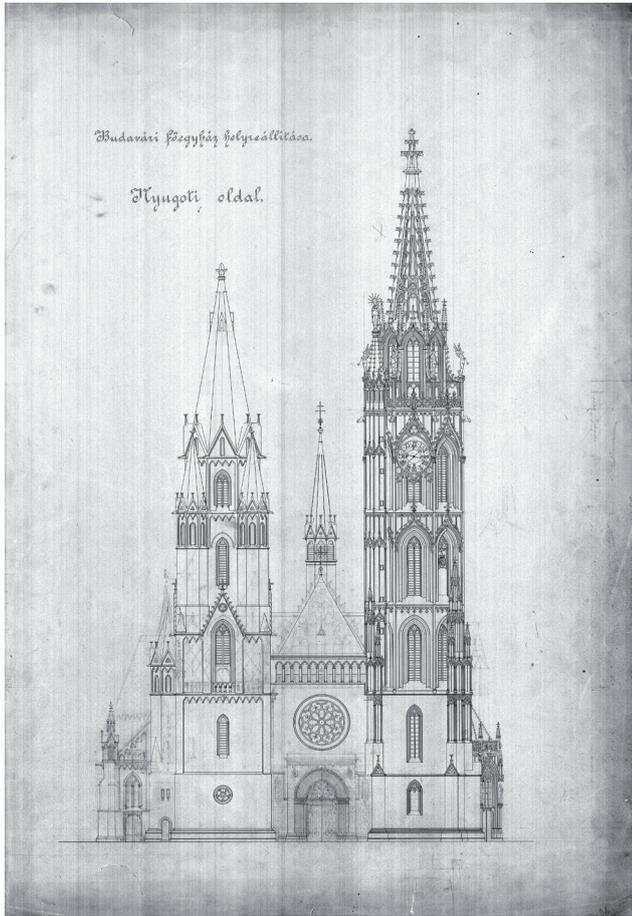


Fig. 7. The Schulek's plan for the Western facade, 1883. Budapest History Museum, Kiscell Museum, Collection of Architecture, inv. no. III/7. 63.21.698.2

Fig. 8. The Schulek's plan for the North facade, 1883. Budapest History Museum, Kiscell Museum, Collection of Architecture, inv. no. III/7. 63.21.703.9

felt ownership over the Romanesque tower design inasmuch as he had presented a similar tower already on the plans of the north-eastern and north façade, submitted in 1883. However, at that time these parts of the plan had not yet been evaluated, the main task was the construction of the north side-sanctuary, the sacristies, the north cross-nave and the royal staircase. When Trefort required the plans of the west facade and the north-western parts in 1884, Schulek did not say by accident that he had already submitted them; obviously he thought about the façade drawings from 1883. There is no file number on the west facade drawings belonging to these plans, so it is not known whether Schulek had submitted them or not. It is certain that he intended to build the north side of the church in the form that can be seen on the model and that he did not want to give up the construction of the north tower either.⁴⁵

In 1884, after a major disagreement, Schulek sent the two sculptors, Ferenc Rózsa and his son, away. From the report of Pál Lers, it reveals that complaints were raised against them just during a change to the model. However, in his annual report, Lers only wrote that they could not be given further work, which is why they were both laid off. This means that the model had been finished by this time.⁴⁶ Since 1884, Schulek had neither people nor time to continue the work with the model within the reconstruction. Under pressure from the constant urging of the ministry, the reconstruction works, accelerating from 1883, posed a serious task for him. Besides the long-awaited demolition of the ministry buildings, managing the construction, the large amount of the stone- and layer-drawings to be prepared, also the survey and documentation of the building parts, which became accessible through the demolitions, had to be carried out with the help of the newly employed specialists, Sándor Aigner and László Gyalus.

⁴⁵ see Note No. 42, FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1884/53..

⁴⁶ FK TI MOB, BFÉB 1884/49. Complaint letter of Ferenc Rózsa. BFÉB 1884/52. October report of Pál Lers, BFÉB 1884/58. 1884 annual report of Pál Lers.

It is not known exactly what details Schulek changed on the model later as he referred to it in the letter written to Kuzsinszky. Anyhow, these changes were not made within the construction works; it could not even have been possible with the strict accounts audited many times.

It can be concluded that the model was left a torso in several terms: on one hand it did not follow the whole design and creative process that lasted until 1893, but remained at the level of the plans and concepts valid until 1884. On the other hand, it remained a torso also materially, given that, due to the war

damage, it survived in an extremely fragmentary state. Only the end of the main sanctuary, the Gara-chapel, the mass of the royal staircase, the north chapel row, two levels of the Béla-tower, fragments of the western main portal and the Matthias-tower (without spire) remained. At present, the stone sculptor-conservator artist, Péter Módy, is working on the model's restoration. On its completion, it will be presented to the Budapest History Museum, the successor of the Metropolitan Museum for which it was originally requested.

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