

ŠTÁFL COTTAGE

Late mediaeval house No. 2015 named Štáfl's Cottage in Havlíčkův Brod is situated at the crossroads of the main street leading from Havlíčkovo náměstí square in the direction towards Prague, and the turning street Barbory Kobzinové. It gives a surprising impression of a house from some authentic film scenery of a mediaeval village and is remarkable especially in contraposition to the neighbouring monument – a building of the former Augustinian Monastery Church with an extension of a stone Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, over which the house rises as a marked view point.

This situation endangered the house two hundred and fifty years ago, because the monastery found a small house (where a Latin school was most probably temporarily allocated from 1735 to 1741) closely neighbouring to it highly inconvenient. That is why the monastery bought the house from the municipality in the year 1745, with a view to demolish it. Luckily, it did not happen, the house was finally sold to a private person and since the second half of the 18th century its owners have been known.

Until the recent past, the house had belonged to the inheritance of the Štáfl's Family (hence the common name), influential far beyond the Czech border. This family's branch from Havlíčkův Brod became known by artwork by the painter Arnošt (Ára) Štáfl who lived in the ancient house during the war, as well as by the creation of Otakar Štáfl, a graphic artist and painter engaged in Prague who also painted number of pictures inspired by the old Brod and its characteristic architecture. The Štáfl's



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Family were remarkable supporters of Scout Movement. After the World War II (1945) one room of the cottage was converted to a scout clubroom.

The town bought the house from the original owners in 1992. A year later the edificial and historical research confirmed that the house is an absolutely unique and valuable monument within the Czech lands, a so called mediaeval type of a wooden house. Financially demanding reconstruction was carried out from 1996 to 1999, supported by Havlíčkův Brod District Authority, Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic and Cultural Heritage Institute Pardubice, and resulted in an almost original appearance of the house.

It is especially the transection disposition that provides the house with an ancient impression – the living room block in the front part of the house is so high that it conforms to a double floor design of the middle and the rear part of the house. The roof, descending over the second wing on the reverse side, has got a special coherence with the front room, as usual with the oldest village buildings in the Vysočina region – the room is straddled by a massive trestle structure at its front, so the roof's gravity does not load it.



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The front room is framed under the clay smearing, with high segments of walls above windows. This abnormality was clarified during research when a retaining wall of a third window was discovered on the side wall towards the street in the middle above both windows. This always signifies extreme old age of the building because arrangement with an upper window indicates construction of the room even in the style of a high mediaeval "dymna jizba" (chimney parlour) where the upper window served as a smoke vent. Rooms equipped this way had occurred until the second half of the 16th century at the latest, so the house, more precisely its oldest preserved part, suddenly ranked among a group of the few oldest preserved mediaeval residential buildings.

Efforts to verify this hypothesis, proving the type of the original heating system in a detailed archaeological research, were not successful though – sterile surface of soil without any building interventions was found right under the floor in the concerned corner of the living room. It means that no heavy stove (chimney heating) stood here, but most probably just a light tile stove was here from the beginning, handled from the adjacent "black kitchen". The variance can be explained by possible connection of the old, traditional way of disposition of the room, still usual in village neighbourhood of that time, with a more advanced way of heating, common already in towns.

The oldest late Gothic house had surely already had a triplicate ground plan and thus a size similar



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to the today's one, but, except the aforementioned front room, it was rebuilt during the later centuries. Re-walling of the remaining part of the ground floor main wing, timbering of the floor above, roof and the above mentioned trestle structure straddling the old front room are undoubtedly baroque, from the 18th century. Walled form of the rear extension of the house downstairs, possibly including the final shape of both black kitchens can be even younger. However, kitchens cannot come from earlier times than the first half of the 19th century, when traditional indirect way of heating with opened chimneys below was coming to an end, and direct handling of kitchen stoves started, where closing the draught chimneys below was necessary.

Picture 1: Copy art correspondence card by K. Šimůnek

Picture 2: View of the black kitchen (chimney)

Picture 3: Chimney parlour



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The newest interventions trying to hide and put down as much as possible from the old building character, were removed during the last reconstruction. And so especially the oldest living room appeared again in its ancient condition.


Obr. 4: Permanent exposition of Scouting


Obr. 5: Attic space (roof detail)




GROUND FLOOR PLAN of the house in colour evaluation of the building historical research:

 In blue - walls and area of the living room, apparently from the 16th century

 In brown - walls and area of the baroque reconstruction from the 18th century

 In green - conversions from the 1st half of the 19th century

 In yellow - modern conversions from the 20th century

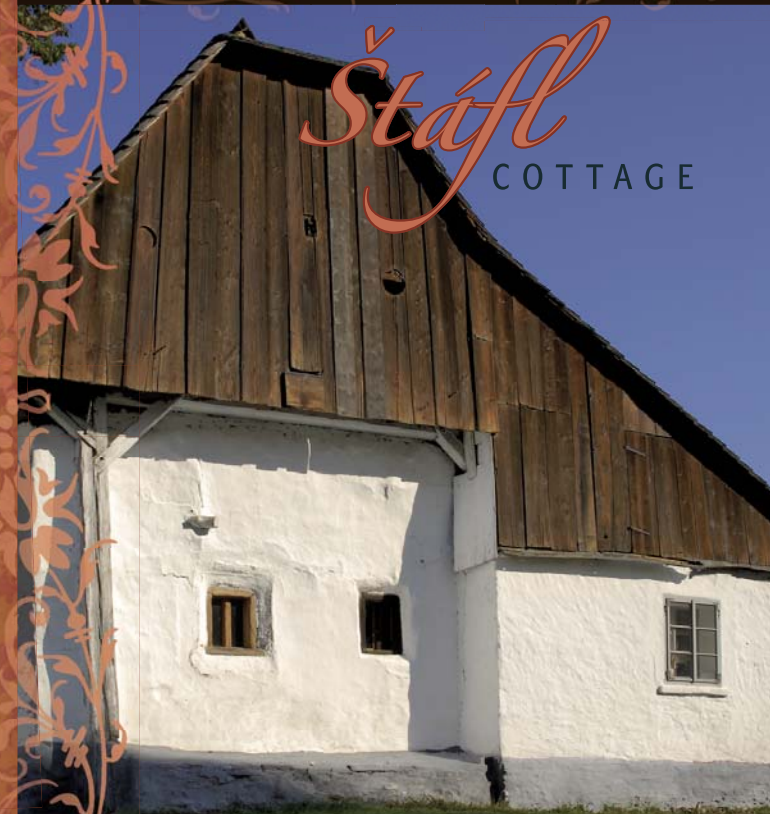
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HAVLÍČKŮV BROD

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NATIONAL CULTURAL MONUMENT

