

PRELIMINARY STUDY FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE TOWER HELMET OF ST. LUKE'S CHURCH IN DRESDEN

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SUMMARY

The present condition of the St. Luke's Church in Dresden, Germany is still marked by the wounds of the Second World War. The main tower, originally 83 metres high, has been cut to almost half its height. There is hardly anything left of the former, sky pointing character. The building looks now for many years in such a way incompletely over the city of Dresden. In preparation for the 100th anniversary of the consecration of the St. Luke's Church, in 2000 the parishioners of the St. Luke's Church had the idea to rebuild the tower helmet of the main tower and the eastern side tower of the St. Luke's Church. This paper describes a feasibility study for the reconstruction of the St. Luke's church tower. Because all construction plans were burned during the war, the original dimensions of the tower's helmet had to be determined first by means of an elaborate geometric reconstruction. Based on these dimensions a new steel construction was designed and a proposal for the on-site assembly was worked out.

Keywords: *Church Tower, Helmet, Reconstruction, Rebuilt.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the middle of the front, the tower rises, only a little out of the building, rising strongly upwards, resting on strong walls, from the pedestal to the top 83 m high. ... The finely carved helmet, with a gallery and a long tip, is constructed in iron and covered with copper; it has four stone gables with dials and a 1.40 m high gilded cock on its tip. – With these words the Chief Consistorial Counsellor Pastor D. Kühn proudly described the main tower of the St. Luke's Church in Dresden, Germany on the occasion of its consecration in 1904 [1].

Unfortunately there is hardly anything left of this impression today. The air raids on Dresden in the night between 13th and 14th February 1945 almost completely destroyed the slim, sky-high tower helmet. The present condition of the St. Luke's Church is still marked by the wounds of the Second World War. Only the hanging spire remained of the tower after the destruction (Fig. 2), which had been striving for heights in the past. Only 19 years after the end of the war it was possible to protect the destroyed main tower and the eastern side tower, which had also been damaged, from further weather influences by means of a makeshift roof covering. Meanwhile provided with a makeshift canopy, the helmetless brick shaft has been in existence for many decades now.

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the St. Luke's Church in 2003, the image of the destruction caused by the Second World War will soon be finally removed and the tower helmet in its outer form will be produced in the near future. Because all construction plans were burned during the war, the original dimensions of the tower's dome had to be determined first by means of an elaborate geometric reconstruction on the basis of an existing photograph (see Fig. 1). Using these dimensions, a possible supporting structure, which will be executed as a new steel structure, was projected and pre-dimensioned and a proposal for the on-site assembly was worked out. Thereby, the concern of the protection of historical monuments had to be taken into account.