

History of the construction of the main worship edifices of the town of Orhei in the 17th - 20th centuries in published sources and archival documents

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Rezumat

Istoria construcției principalelor edificii de cult din orașul Orhei în secolele XVII – XX în sursele publicate și documentele de arhivă

După anul 1812, în Basarabia anexată de Imperiul Rus construcția bisericilor și a altor edificii de cult a început să fie efectuată cu respectarea regulilor speciale consemnate în Statutul de Construcții al Imperiului. Din anii 30 ai secolului al XVII-lea în orașul Orhei se înălța biserica ortodoxă Sfântul Dimitrie, construită de domnul Țării Moldovei, Vasile Lupu. Potrivit registrelor bisericești, o altă biserică ortodoxă din Orhei, biserica Sfântul Nicolae a fost edificată în anul 1793. Din 1830, construcția bisericilor altor confesiuni s-a realizat conform planurilor și devizelor aprobate de Comisiile locale de Drumuri și Construcții, ghidate fiind de regulile generale specifice arhitecturii civile. Astfel, la Orhei au apărut biserica armeană și biserica lipovenească. Din 1835, autoritățile au dat permisiunea pentru construcția de case de rugăciune evreiești. Totodată, la Orhei, casele de rugăciune: „Râjinski”, „Leib Reznik”, „A bazarului”, „A târgoveților” ș.a. au fost construite după planuri aprobate, la depărtare de bisericile creștine, ținând cont de disponibilitatea donațiilor voluntare colectate de societatea evreiască. În 1914, a fost finalizată pentru persoanele de credință romano-catolică, construcția Bisericii Catolice din Orhei. Istoria construcției tuturor acestor edificii de cult este reflectată în numeroase documente de arhivă, precum și în surse publicate.

Cuvinte cheie: arhitectura religioasă, edificii de cult din Orhei, catolice, lipovenești, case de rugăciuni evreiești.

Summary

History of the construction of the main worship edifices of the town of Orhei in the 17th - 20th centuries in published sources and archival documents

After 1812, in Bessarabia annexed by the Russian Empire, the construction of churches and other religious buildings were guided by special rules that were noted in the Construction Regulations of the Russian Empire. For the 30s of the 17th century, the Orthodox church of Saint Dimitrie was erected in the small town of Orhei, built by the ruler of Moldavia, Vasile Lupu. According to church registers, another Orthodox church in Orhei, the church of Saint Nicholas, was built in 1793. Since 1830, the construction of churches of other confessions was carried out according to plans and estimates approved by local Road and Construction Commissions, guided by the general rules of civil architecture. Thus, the Armenian and the Old Believers (Lipovan) churches appeared in Orhei. Since 1835, the authorities had to give permission for the construction of Jewish synagogues and prayer schools. At the same time, in Orhei, the prayer houses: „Râjinski”, „Leib Reznik”, „Bazarny”, „Traders” and others were built according to approved plans far from Christian churches, taking into account the presence of voluntary donations collected by the Jewish community. For persons of the Roman Catholic faith, the construction of the Orhei Catholic Church was completed in 1914. The history of the construction of all these edifices of worship is reflected in numerous archival documents and other published sources.

Keywords: religious architecture, religious buildings in Orhei, Catholic, Old Believers, Jewish prayer houses.

After the eastern part of the Moldovan Principality (later called Bessarabia) became the part of the Russian Empire in 1812, legislation in the field of construction and architecture began to extend here as well. [25, f. 58-68].

In the 19th century, the Construction Regulations based on the laws of His Imperial Majesty or the Code of Laws of the Russian Empire, first published in 1832 were in effect in Russia. It was revised and supplemented in 1842 and 1857 and was reissued annually without changes until the end of the 19th century. Beginning in 1816, the Main Directorate of Communications and Public Buildings annually allocated so-called construction capital for the construction and repair of government buildings, which were built according to approved plans, facades and estimates [18].

To facilitate construction work, the government created model drawings that were sent to all provinces so that “they would serve as a guide not only in the construction of new buildings, but also in the reconstruction of old ones.” [25, f. 27].

“Model” projects were published as separate albums and in appendices to the Complete Collection of Laws. Thus, in 1803, “model” projects of government buildings were issued, in 1809 – “model projects” of residential building facades, in 1819 – projects of station houses, in 1824 – churches, in 1828 – prison buildings, government offices and vice-governor’s houses, in 1830 – projects for the arrangement of villages and in 1831 – projects of post houses.

If building plans drawn up with deviations from the model and were intended to be erected near squares and on the main streets of the city, they were submitted for the Highest approval. Since 1829, model drawings were kept in the Construction and Road Committees. When drawing up such projects for government buildings, it was necessary to present plans for the location of the proposed building with a description of the street section, square, or block, in order to correctly take into account the façade. Moreover, since 1831, a figure of a man of two arshins eight vershoks high or 5 feet and 10 inches of English measure was depicted as a scale on the drawing of the building façade. With this, it was possible to judge the height of the proposed building. Also, on each drawing, in addition to the signature of the compiler, there was a year, month, and date. Since 1803, in the provinces, when drawing up

estimates for new government buildings, utilizing stone in the construction of buildings was taken into account. This law concerned wooden buildings erected on a stone foundation. Particularly important projects that required significant investment were submitted to the Governor for the Highest Approval. Architects and those who prepared estimates had to be guided by a special Time Code issued in 1843. In the event of a deviation from the rules established for the preparation and verification of estimates, they were subject to measures in accordance with the Penal Code.

Special rules were followed when constructing churches and other prayer buildings, which were also noted in the Construction Charter. Thus, Orthodox churches were built with the “knowledge of the local diocesan authorities and with the permission of either the Holy Synod or the diocesan authorities themselves” [25, f. 47]. The diocesan authorities provided the Holy Synod with plans and facades for the construction of churches in cities and city cemeteries, reviewed by the Construction and Road Commissions. At the same time, it was strictly forbidden to destroy ancient churches without a good reason. In the event of the need to construct a new church building on the site of a dilapidated one, it was necessary to explain the entire history of the given monument with the attachment of its plan and facades. But “the ancient, both external and internal appearance of churches must be carefully preserved, and no arbitrary amendments or changes without the knowledge of the highest spiritual authority” were permitted. Diocesan bishops had to ensure that no ancient church had any corrections, renovation of paintings or other antiques, preferably observing the Byzantine style with the preservation of the facades to the original appearance. The Holy Synod had to give permission for all changes. New churches in monasteries were usually built by their own efforts, while the diocesan authorities provided plans and facades for consideration by the Synod.

Beginning from 1800, stone churches were predominantly built in the provinces. The designs for Orthodox churches drawn up by Professor of Architecture Konstantin Ton served as models. But wooden churches were allowed to be built everywhere. As a rule, this happened where there were no necessary materials for constructing stone buildings, and where parishioners did not have sufficient funds to erect stone churches. Gover-

nors tried to allow the most convenient and decent places to be allocated for the construction of new church buildings. Bishops usually determined the type of building needed: cathedral, smaller church building, cemetery, monastery, including the number of chapels and bells within based on, how many people the church in the city or village was designed for. Unlike the construction of wooden churches, supervision of the construction of stone churches was entrusted only to architects.

In those dioceses where parishes were located over vast areas and parishioners could not attend the parish church, beginning in 1841 the diocesan authorities allowed the construction of prayer houses. But these houses were assigned to the local parish church, both for conducting church services and for monitoring order and compliance with the charter of the Orthodox Church. In the archival fund of the Chancellery of the Bessarabian Governor, in correspondence with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Bessarabian Region, there is information about the receipt in 1825 of the book "Collection of profiles, plans, facades for the construction of stone churches" [1]. Skilled artists presented 31 church projects, with profiles and templates of different parts of each facade. There was also a detailed description: how to correctly lay foundations, build walls, arches, pillars, domes and roofs, perform various roofing and other works with a detailed appendix of the most important parts of the building on 14 drawings with rules, how to draw up an estimate, a sample of which according to the plan, facade and profile was also presented here [2]. Three copies of this book were offered to the provincial architect as a guide for drawing up projects and estimates for the construction of city and village churches, as well as to landowners, city and ecclesiastical authorities of the Bessarabian region, who could also be engaged in the construction of churches. This archival file contains a letter from the Chisinau and Hotin Archbishop Dimitry Sulima, who willingly took one copy of the book containing the basic rules for the construction of stone churches.

The National Archival Agency holds numerous documents related to the history of Orhei houses of worship of different faiths in the 19th-20th centuries. We have discovered early archival documents on the existence of the so-called shtetl in the Bessarabian region in the first half of the 19th century, namely the case of Metropoli-

tan Gabriel Banulescu Bodoni on the improper transfer of the Church of St. Demetrius into other hands in the shtetl of Orhei in March 1814 [3]. But according to some surviving sources, this Church of the Holy Great Martyr Demetrius (Fig. 1) was built between May 10, 1632 and May 10, 1635 by the Moldovan ruler Vasile Lupu, who ruled for 20 years from 1634 to 1654 [23, f.1092]. The original description of this church has been preserved, the construction of which was "in the ancient form, oblong, with a semicircle to the east, where the altar is located; about 12 meters long, 3 fathoms 1 arshin wide and 3 fathoms 1 arshin high. The middle of the church is somewhat semicircular, for the spaciousness of the right and left choirs. In the narthex in the right corner there is a round staircase leading to the bell tower" [23, f.1090-1091]. Later, the altar part was supported by two pillars and an extension was made, violating the character of the ancient church architecture. Above the western door of the church, on a quadrangular stone board, an ancient inscription was made, consisting of 6 lines and being an amazing monument, as it is written in the church Slavonic language: "By the will of the father and with the haste of the son and the fulfillment of the Holy Spirit, I began and built a temple in the name of the holy great martyr myrrh-streaming Demetrius, the miracle worker Io Vasile Voivode, by the Grace of God, the Lord of the Land of Moldova, his Lady Todosia and their children Ioan Voivode" [23, f. 1091]. At that time, the church Slavonic language, which was used to write this inscription, was the official language of the Moldovan Principality.

The history of this church was described in most detail by Valentin Golub [20], including strong documentary evidence about the later extensions of the church: "the vestibule with the bell tower, the sexton's room and the buttresses made to strengthen the altar walls" [21, f. 692], and emphasizing that the remaining body was the main and most ancient structure. "The niches in the side walls of the central part of the church, where the windows were made, gave the church the appearance of a cross from the inside, but from the outside this cruciform shape of the church is barely noticeable, since the external cruciform projection is only half an arshin long, while the depth of the niches inside the church is over half a fathom" [21, f. 692]. Among the Cathedral's attractions,

there is information about a “wooden linden cross with an image of the Savior in a crown of thorns with radiance and a stone measure” [22, f. 84]. A legend about a miraculous salvation thanks to the cross has been preserved. “Local legend says that during the Tatar attack on Orhei, the city’s residents took refuge in the cathedral. The Tatars surrounded the temple, began shooting at the windows and shot through the aforementioned cross, which was at that time located at the top of the canvas iconostasis, in four places: above the face of the Savior, under the left eye, in the right side and in the chest of the Savior” [22, f. 84-85]. And the stone measure at the church of St. Demetrius is, against the background of the image of the head of a bull, adopted for the coat of arms of Moldova, an inscription carved into the stone about the need for the secular population to give the clergy a tenth of their harvest. The text of this inscription was deciphered by the teacher of the Chisinau Theological Seminary E. Mikhailovich [22, f. 85]. Of the ancient icons of the Orhei church of St. Demetrius, the icon of the Mother of God was known. On the neck of the image of the Mother of God was “made a metal frame and in it two circles of ancient enamel were preserved (the other three fell out)” [22, f. 85].

According to statistical data compiled in 1839, in Orhei there were 2 stone churches and 1 wooden one, as well as 1 Jewish synagogue [4, f. 28 v.].

The Clergy Lists of the city of Orhei and the Orhei district have been preserved for 1863. Thus, we found lists of the Church of St. Demetrius, which belonged to the landowner Princess Hangerli-Ghica, who died during the specified period. [5, f. 1] The church building is described as “strong stone, with the same bell tower and porch, covered with shingle, but there is a crack in the vaults from the earthquake” [5, f. 1], which passed through both arches and domes, as well as through the entire wall in the altar. Since 1860, the Church of the Holy Great Martyr Demetrius was allocated land for arable farming, namely 33 tithes from the Chishmia estate, belonging to the same landowner, Hangerli-Ghica, and 33 tithes from the Mitoc estate, belonging to the Neamț Monastery abroad” [5, f. 1]. The plans and survey books were kept in the church sacristy and belonged to the clergy of this church. From the register of the St. Nicholas Church for 1876 (Fig. 2), also owned by the landowner Princess Elena

Hangerli, we learn that the temple was built “in 1793, through the efforts of the deceased Gheorghe Erhan of noble rank as mazil, the nobleman Gheorghe Serghi (șatrari) and the merchant Arghirie Grecul” [5, f. 13]. Initially, the building of the temple was wooden, but “in 1832, with the permission of the then Diocesan Bishop, it was rebuilt with a structure in place of the dilapidated wooden, new stone walls with an extension on the side of the altar of the sexton, and on the left sacristy, on the right stone above the narthex of the bell tower” [5, f. 13]. It was covered with shingle, which had already become quite dilapidated. There was one altar in the temple, in the name of St. Nicholas. Since 1860, there were 33 dessiatines of land for arable farming from the Chishmia patrimony, which were also in the possession of Princess Hangerli-Ghica. The church owned two wooden houses with shops, which were dilapidated and in 1857, due to a fire, one burned down, turning into ruins, and the other, rented out in 1853, was also significantly damaged during the same fire. The plan and boundary books, as well as copies of the registers of births from 1819 and confessional signatures from 1822 were kept in the church, being its property. The church service was conducted in Romanian and Russian.

Also, since 1841, both ancient chapels built in honor of ancestors, some holy icons and special historical or church events, and new ones, which were built according to plans and facades in accordance with the permissions of the diocesan authorities, were preserved.

Since 1830, the construction of churches of other confessions was carried out according to plans and estimates approved by local Road and Construction Commissions, guided by the general rules of civil architecture. In 1832, from the city of Odessa, from the Office of the Novorossian and Bessarabian Governor General, a report was received in the name of Mr. Bessarabian Civil Governor that the Old Believers of the town of Orhei complained that the local police forbade them to conduct religious services in the house of Orhei resident Nikifor Chimenco, “in which they had long conducted religious services according to the rite” [6, f. 13]. The so-called chapel sect started this back in 1829.

On April 5, 1834, “the residents of the town of Orhei, having made some fortifications in the local Armenian church (Fig. 3), turned to the Ar-

menian Bishop with a request to allow them to open the shrine for the performance of Christian rites, during the upcoming holidays” [7, f. 1]. Such a report was submitted to the Bessarabian Governor and the acting Bessarabian regional architect. The architect, Lieutenant Colonel Gleinig, the head of the Orhei police department, allowed the Armenian church to be opened for worship, but for a short time, “keeping, however, strict surveillance over security” [7, f. 4].

When drawing up plans for churches of the Protestant faith, builders took into account that the shape of the building was square, cruciform or some other, that the altar was on the eastern side, that there was no special luxury inside, that all parts of the building were well lit, and there was enough space in the middle of the church, etc.

Since 1835, the Provincial Administration had to give permission for the construction of Jewish synagogues and prayer schools. At the same time, according to the rules, buildings had to be built away from Christian churches. New similar buildings were erected according to approved plans and facades, taking into account the availability of voluntary donations collected by the Jewish community. In a city where there were no more than 30 Jewish houses, there was supposed to be one prayer school, or one synagogue was built for every eighty Jewish houses.

According to the certificate of August 8, 1877, the Orhei Jewish artisans were allowed to hold services in the Prayer House, which was provided by its owners Moshco Averbukh and Leizer Cotlevsky. The stone building was located on Telegrafnaya and Glukhaya streets, and was built according to a plan approved by the Construction Department of the Bessarabian Provincial Government on August 12, 1876 [8, f. 85].

The Bessarabian Provincial Government fund contains correspondence on the approval of the estimate and project for the reconstruction of the prayer house called “Bazarny” in the city of Orhei in the period from 1891 to 1893 [9]. According to the petition of the mayor Berko Blushtein, this prayer house served for the worship of the Orhei Jews, starting from June 30, 1877. The new project of the prayer house “Bazarny” with a stone staircase, covered with tiles, on Shebekovskaya Street was reviewed and approved by the Construction Department of the Bessarabian Provincial Government on the basis of protocol No. 123 of July 31, 1892 [9] (Fig. 4).

In 1902, there was one synagogue and 10 prayer houses in Orhei [10, f. 6]. From July 4, 1902 to September 11, 1906, the Bes Hamedriș prayer house was built in Orhei on Syrnaya Street, number 541, or it is also called the Shoe and Shoe Prayer House. The plan for the renovation of the Jewish prayer house Talner Klouz Shmil Goykhman was approved from April 10, 1905 to May 28, 1908 [11]. There is a decision to allow the renovation of the Jewish prayer house in Orhei according to the protocol of the construction department No. 30 dated April 13, 1906 [11].

On May 6, 1909, the Jews of Orhei wrote a petition to the Bessarabian Provincial Board for Construction, in which they asked for permission to build a “Merchants’ prayer house” on Pochtovaya (Gostinnaya) Street, “on an empty site, acquired from Ghetsel Sorotsky under No. 403, stone, covered with a tile” [12, f. 1], having received the corresponding certificate for this. According to the presented project (Fig. 5), after its approval on July 15, 1909, the construction of the prayer house was completed by November 1914, when the Jews of Orhei asked for permission to hold religious services “in the said “Merchants’ prayer house”, having made the corresponding order to elect the spiritual board of this prayer house” [12, f. 15].

On December 6, 1912, Jewish residents of Orhei wrote a petition to the Construction Department of the Bessarabian Provincial Government asking for permission to open a prayer house called “Ryzhinsky” on Upper Ivanos (Ivanos Mahala) in a stone house built according to a plan, covered with shingle and donated by Iosya Mudrean [13, f. 1]. The Construction Department’s report, compiled on May 7, 1913, confirmed that the stone and shingle building of the prayer house was located in the center, on Ivanovskaya Street, at the permitted distance from the nearest building and the Orthodox church, and that at that time in Orhei there were “about 800 Jewish houses, 9 prayer houses and one synagogue” [13, f. 13], so the Provincial Government did not interfere with the holding of services in the “Ryzhinsky” prayer house.

On August 18, 1913, the Jews of Orhei wrote a petition to the Bessarabian Provincial Government asking for permission to “build and open a Jewish prayer house called ‘Leiba Reznik’ in Orhei on Sennaya Square, on an estate donated for this purpose by the late merchant Leiba Reznik, whose

heirs (the undersigned) assumed the costs of the construction and the building itself” [14, f. 1]. The residents of Orhei explained in the petition that there were not enough prayer houses in comparison with the size of the Jewish population, especially on holidays, when the buildings were overcrowded, and also about the need to have a place for worship for those Jews who lived far from the center, while presenting a plan and a copy of the prayer house (Fig. 6).

Churches of the Roman Catholic, Armenian Gregorian and Protestant confessions tried to build on stone foundations with the permission of the Department of Spiritual Affairs of Foreign Confessions. In 1904, the Catholics of Orhei appealed to the Bessarabian governor with a petition [15, f. 3-3v.] to allow them to build a Roman Catholic church, which was signed by a nobleman, state councilor Bronislav Yanushevich, among more than 140 believers. In 1897, he lived in Chisinau on the corner of Nemetskaya and Kievskaya streets, 9 [16, f. 887-889]. The fund of the Chisinau Spiritual Consistory contains a file on the construction of a prayer house in the city for persons of the Roman Catholic faith in the period from September 6, 1904 to July 7, 1908 [15, f. 3-3v.]

On September 21, 1904, the Tiraspol Consistory notified the Bessarabian Provincial Government that based on the decision of September 6 of the same year, No. 1118, “there are no obstacles on the part of the Consistory to the construction of a Roman Catholic prayer house in the city of Orhei” [17, f. 4].

On July 21, 1911, the Catholic community of Orhei was allocated a plot of land between Gogolevskaya and Aleksandrovskaya streets for the construction of a chapel [17, f. 49] (Fig. 7).

The neo-Gothic construction of the Catholic church “was carried out according to a project agreed upon with the provincial engineer A.S. Asvadurov and the provincial architect M.S. Serotsinsky” [24, f. 241] and was completed by 1914 [19] (Fig. 8). “The donor of the Orhei Catholic Church was Cesarina Fominicena Bocharaskaya (1841-1924), the wife of Gregory Onufrievich Dolivo-Dobrovolsky, the mother of Roman Grigorievich Dolivo-Dobrovolsky, the leader of the Orhei nobility and the last leader of the Bessarabian nobility, who donated significant funds for the construction of the church in Orhei” [24, f. 241-242].

Thus, preliminary research has shown that in the 19th – first third of the 20th centuries, In the so-called town, which later became the city of Orhei, a significant number of churches were built, including Orthodox, Old Believer, Catholic and other faiths, as well as several Jewish prayer houses.

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Fig. 1. The Church of St. Demetrius in the town of Orhei
(https://www.facebook.com/orhei.streetsandfaces/?locale=mt_MT).

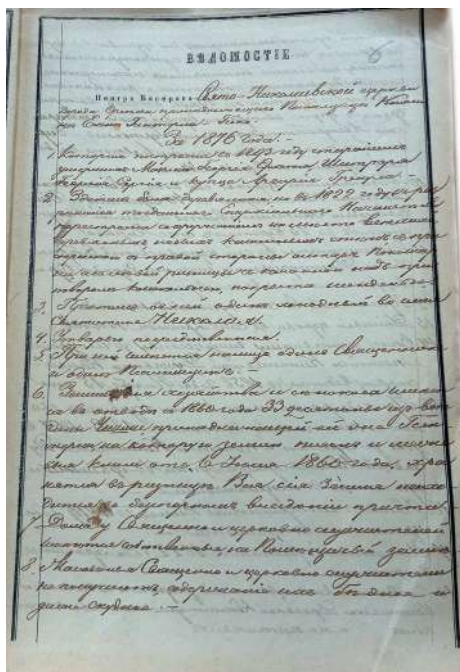


Fig. 2. From the register of the St. Nicholas for 1876
(ANA).



Fig. 3. The Armenian church in Orhei.
Photo of the author.

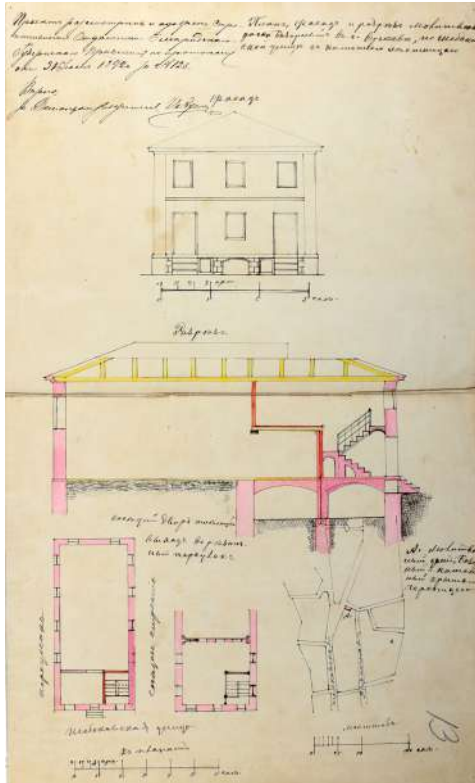


Fig. 4. Project for the construction of the prayer house “Bazarny” with a stone staircase in Orhei (ANA).

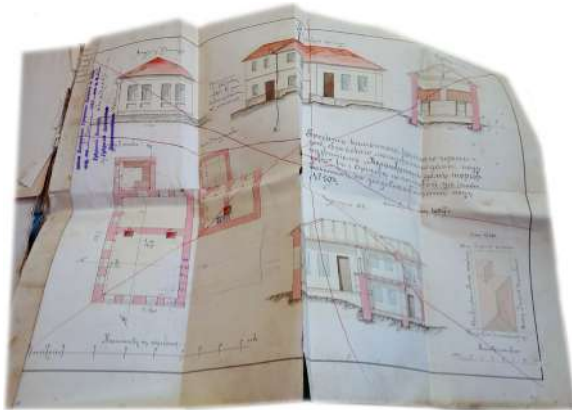


Fig. 5. Project for the construction of the “Merchants’ prayer house” in Orhei (ANA).



Fig. 6. The building of the prayer house called “Leiba Reznik” in Orhei.

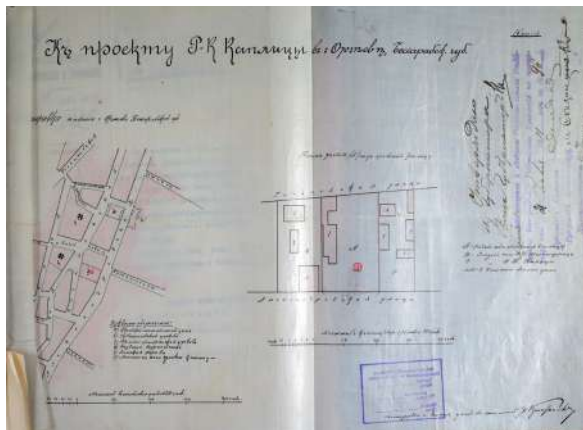


Fig. 7. An extract from the plan of the town of Orhei indicating the construction site of the Orhei Catholic Church, compiled in 1911 (ANA).



Fig. 8. The building of the Catholic Church in Orhei.
Photo of the author.