

## 7 The Former Military Hospital

The two-story epidemic military hospital was built in 1830 and was strategically placed at the Zator Guesthouse, far from the town's main buildings, to ensure sanitary and epidemiological safety.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, hospital staff were often on the front lines in the battle against rampant epidemics such as cholera, typhoid, dysentery, and the Spanish flu.

Dr. Samuel Taub (1869–1933), a medical and military doctor, was the first Jewish physician in the town and operated his practice at this hospital. During World War I, he served in the 20th National Defence Regiment of Stanisławów, which was stationed in Wadowice as an auxiliary unit. After the war, he remained in Wadowice with his family. Taub was a benefactor of the Wadowice association *Bikur Cholim*, whose members organised free medical assistance for the Jewish poor.



Photo: Former military epidemic hospital, Archives of the Municipal Office in Wadowice

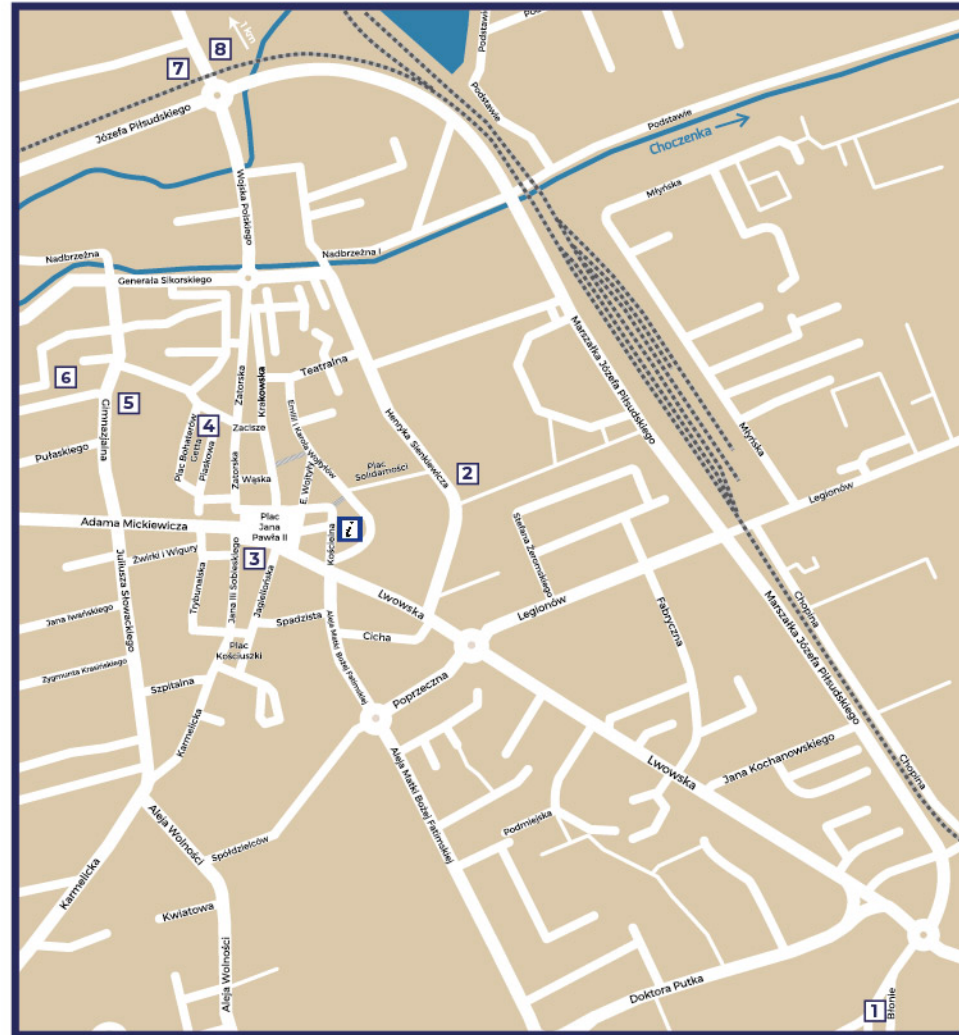
## 8 Jewish cemetery

Efforts to establish a cemetery for the Wadowice Jewish Community began as early as 1876. Finally, in 1892, land was purchased for this purpose, located just behind the military cemetery. At the entrance gate to the cemetery stood the *Beit Tahara* (house of purification) pre-burial house. Across from it was the caretaker's house. The Wadowice religious brotherhood, *Chevra Kadisha*, handled burial matters. Soldiers of the Jewish faith who served in the local garrison or passed away in nearby hospitals were also buried in the cemetery, along with the inhabitants of Wadowice and the surrounding villages. During the Great War, 42 soldiers – mainly from Austrian regiments of the Hungarian Home Defence – were laid to rest here. Between 1919 and 1920, another 11 people – mostly from the Bolshevik army – were also buried. The cemetery remained nearly intact throughout the German occupation.

After 1945, the cemetery was restored by the Kraków Jewish community. Currently, it is managed by the Jewish Religious Community in Bielsko-Biała. The last burial took place in 1990.



Photo: Jewish Cemetery in Wadowice, Archives of the Municipal Office in Wadowice



1. Old synagogue in the former mayor's office 'Mikołaj' (corner of ul. Polna and ul. Błonie)
2. Hotel Hassa (ul. Sienkiewicza 24)
3. Kluger's tenement house (Plac Jana Pawła II 8)
4. Former ghetto (Plac Bohaterów Getta)
5. Wadowice Synagogue (ul. Gimnazjalna 10)
6. Former mikveh (ul. Barska 12)
7. Former military hospital (ul. Wojska Polskiego 17)
8. Jewish cemetery (ul. Wojska Polskiego 52)

On main card: fot. Wadowice Synagogue, The Zapalowicz family album from the collection of the Wadowice Public Library

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# Following the footsteps of the Jewish community - a City Walk

#WalkInWadowice



Just before the outbreak of World War II, the Jewish population in Wadowice numbered around 2,000. In our walking tour, you'll discover fascinating places, people, and stories that together create a compelling picture of a community that was devastated during the Nazi Germany occupation.

**Discover  
the history  
of Wadowice.  
Join us for  
a walk!**





## 1 The old synagogue in the former ‘Mikołaj’ village

Due to the ban on Jewish settlement within the town, which was in force until the second half of the 19th century, the Jewish population initially lived in the areas surrounding Wadowice. One such place during that time was the ‘Mikołaj’ village, situated in the southeastern outskirts of Wadowice. It was here that a wooden synagogue was built near the local manor house in 1830. We know what it looked like thanks to a drawing by Wadowice artist Wincenty Bałys. Unfortunately, there are no records of how long the synagogue was in use or what eventually happened to it.

At the ‘Mikołaj’ Ignacy Krieger (1820-1889) was born. He was one of the pioneers of photography in Poland, the owner of a photographic workshop in Kraków, and the creator of numerous photographs of the city’s monuments.

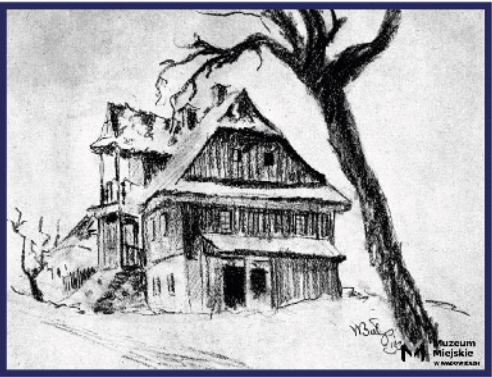


Photo: Wooden synagogue in the ‘Mikołaj’ village on the Groble. Drawing by Wincenty Bałys from J. Putek’s book, *O zbudjnickich zamkach heretyckich zborach i oświęcimskiej Jerozolimie* [Kraków, 1938], from the collection of the Town Museum in Wadowice

## 2 Hass' Hotel

The hotel building, constructed around 1900, belonged to Wiktor Hass – a town councillor, restaurateur, and hotelier. In 1938, the *Bet Yaakov* religious school for girls opened in this building. Its aim was to supplement general education by providing knowledge about Jewish history and culture. The students also staged Yiddish plays.

During the Nazi Germany occupation, Hass operated a canteen for Jews who had been resettled to the ghetto established by the Germans in Wadowice. After the war, only a small number of former Jewish residents returned to Wadowice. The first to return found refuge in Wiktor Hass’ hotel, but eventually left the town. One of those who remained was restaurateur Adolf Ebel, who reopened his establishment. He eventually went into exile in Morocco in 1949. Only one Jew was to remain permanently in Wadowice: Jakub Szancer.



Photo: the building that housed the Hass' Hotel, Archives of the Municipal Office in Wadowice

## 3 The Kluger Tenement House

The Kluger House is one of the grand tenement houses situated on the Wadowice market square. This corner building was constructed around 1830, and from the mid-19th century, it belonged to the prominent Kluger family. On the ground floor was Zachariasz Kluger’s clothing shop, a merchant and president of the Jewish Community. Upstairs, his son Wilhelm Kluger, the last president of the Kehillah (Jewish Community), operated a law firm. As a Polish soldier, he fought in both World War I and the Polish-Bolshevik War. During World War II, he and his son Jerzy, who was a friend of Karol Wojtyła, were exiled to Siberia. In the USSR, they both joined the Second Polish Corps of General Władysław Anders. After the war, Wilhelm Kluger did not return to Wadowice. Almost his entire family – his wife Rozalia, mother-in-law Anna, and daughter Tesia – perished in the German Nazi extermination camps. Wilhelm eventually settled in London, where he obtained a British barrister’s license and returned to his pre-war profession.



Photo: tenement house on the corner of main Market Square and Jagiellońska Street, formerly owned by the Kluger family, from the collection of the Town Museum in Wadowice

## 4 Former Wadowice Ghetto

The outbreak of World War II marked the beginning of the decline of the Jewish Community in Wadowice. After the Germans entered the town, efforts were made to send young people to labour camps (1940-41). Before the ghetto was established in the town, all the Jews from Kęty, Sucha, Zator, and the surrounding villages were brought there. The first mass deportation of Jews from Wadowice took place in July 1942, during which they were divided into three groups. Those able to work were sent to labour in the sheds, while individuals with specific professions were sent to the labour camp in Sosnowiec. The elderly, disabled, and children were deported to the extermination camp in Belżec. Those who remained in Wadowice were confined to a ghetto encompassing Mydlarska, Kręta, Piaskowa, and the left side of Zatorska streets. The entire area was enclosed by a wall topped with barbed wire. The space was too small for the large number of people – approximately 1,400 – so a shift system was organized: one-half of the population worked while the others slept. In May 1943, another operation was carried out, during which 100 girls were sent to forced labour in Germany. Almost all of them survived. In August of that year, the ghetto was liquidated, and its inhabitants were deported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau German Nazi concentration and extermination camp. The liquidation of the Wadowice ghetto took place on 10 August 1943, at which point some Jews managed to escape. A few were rescued by Poles who, despite the threat of death, helped the Jews by hiding them and guiding them across the Skawa River to the General Government. Some of Wadowice’s Jews survived the war in forced labour camps in the Third Reich and in Siberia, where they had been deported after the Soviet Union occupied the eastern territories of the Republic of Poland. After the war, a negligible number of former Jewish inhabitants returned to Wadowice. There is now a market square on the site of the former ghetto, called Pl. Bohaterów Getta (Ghetto Heroes Square).

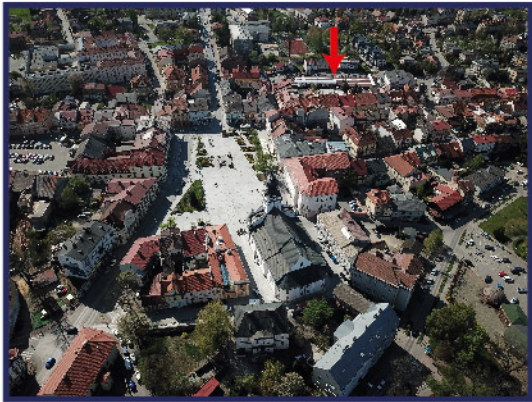


Photo: in the background on the right is Ghetto Heroes Square, the site of the former Wadowice ghetto, Archives of the Municipal Office in Wadowice

## 5 Wadowice synagogue

The Wadowice synagogue, built between 1885 and 1889, followed the style of modern Western synagogues and was designed by architect Karol Korn from Bielsko. It was a tall building in an eclectic style, featuring high, semi-circular windows. It was built on a T-shaped plan and topped by a dome, which was adorned with panels representing the Ten Commandments. The interior decoration was simple and elegant, without wall paintings, only the ceiling was adorned with stars. Next to the *Aron ha-kodesh* stood a marble and ebony *bimah*. In 1937, the synagogue hosted a concert by the renowned cantor David Kusewicz, attended by the young Karol Wojtyła. This was likely the first time the future Pope stepped inside a temple of a different faith. In 1939, the Germans burned down the synagogue. Its ruins were later blown up in 1940, and the remains of the building were demolished. In the 1950s, a kindergarten was built on the site of the pre-war synagogue. In 1989, a Polish-Hebrew plaque commemorating the Wadowice Jewish community, who were murdered by the Germans during the war, was placed on its wall.



Photo: Wadowice Synagogue, from the Archives of the Town Museum in Wadowice

## 6 The Former Mikveh

In the early days of the Wadowice Jewish community, the *mikveh*\* belonged to Isaac Marek and was located on what is now Zatorka Street. Due to budgetary constraints, after constructing two houses of worship and a cemetery, the kahal handed the bathhouse over to private ownership, but it remained under rabbinical supervision. After World War I, it was sold to a non-Jewish buyer who was fine with the rabbinical inspections. However, he increased the usage fees, restricted the opening hours, and opened it at inconvenient times for the users. As a result, the Jews protested, but the Jewish Community, concerned about incurring new debts, chose not to intervene in the situation. Eventually, during Chiel Balamuth’s presidency, a loan was secured to construct a new bathhouse not far from the synagogue at today’s Barska Street. The old mikveh was converted into flats.

\*In Judaism, a mikveh is a basin or pool of running water that is used for individuals and vessels to attain ritual purity. This ritual washing is performed through total immersion in the water.