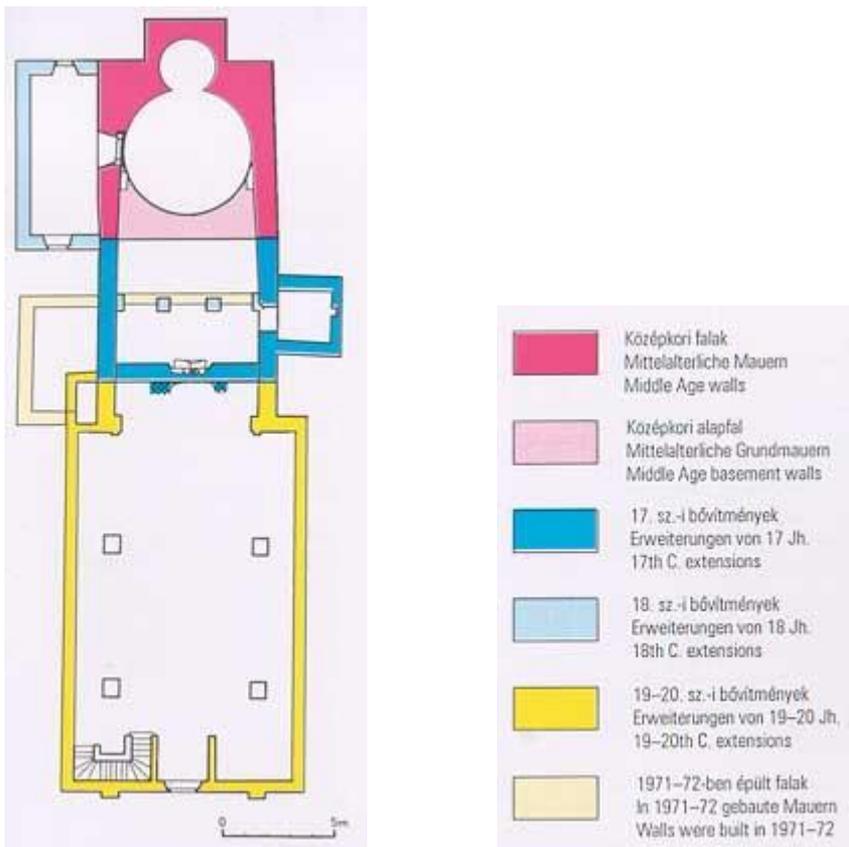


Architectural history of St Andrew's church, Hidegség



The oldest part of the church dates to the second half of the 12th century or possibly to the early 13th century.

It was a rotunda (a circular church) consisting of a domed nave that was square-shaped on the outside but circular on the inside and a domed chancel (sanctuary) that was rectangular on the outside but horseshoe-shaped on the inside. The walls were made of carved ashlar blocks of stone.

The chancel, which was somewhat lower than the nave, was lit by an east-facing window, while the nave had two small arched south-facing windows, one above the other. The entrance to the church opened to the west.

The floor was covered with stone slabs laid during construction. The chancel and perhaps the nave itself may originally have had a pitched roof. Tombstones from an earlier cemetery were used in construction. Even today several of them are still visible in the original masonry.

In the 1240s, alterations were made to the interior of the church. In the dome, Christ the Judge on the Throne of Majesty is depicted in a mandorla, in an almond-shaped orb of light. He is surrounded by

symbols of the four evangelists (Matthew being represented by the face of a man/angel; Mark by a lion; Luke by a bull; and John by an eagle).

The lower rim of the dome is ornamented with garlands and palmettes. Under these semi-circular rows are the figures of the Apostles, who are standing in arcades symbolizing Heavenly Jerusalem and decorated with towers. The painter even included the names of the Apostles and Evangelists on the picture. The triumphal arch was framed by a band decorated with heart-shaped palmettes. The author of the Late Romanesque mural adhered to the style of South German painting of the period.

The village name is first mentioned in a written source in 1274. At that time it was written as “Hydegysyd”, meaning Hidegséd, or “cold stream”.

Around that time the nave of the rotunda was painted.

Above the painted drapery adorning the plinth, there were scenes from the Passion of Christ. Among the various Byzantine-style murals the only one visible in its original location is the scene on the Mount of Olives. One of the other scenes was detached from the wall in 1949 and replaced with a copy.

In the latter half of the 16th century, the church came into the possession of Protestants. It was probably then that the medieval frescoes were whitewashed. The church later suffered fire damage and required repair.

The Catholics regained possession at some point before 1638, at which time the church interior was repainted. The paintings of the Apostles date to this period. After 1659 the western half of the rotunda nave was demolished. A new main altar was installed, which required the removal of the two corners of the Romanesque apse and the repositioning of the Gothic sanctuary to the southern side.

The medieval and 17th-century murals were discovered by Ferenc Stornó in the early 1860s.

In 1949, the whitewashed medieval frescoes were discovered and then restored. Archaeological excavations were undertaken between 1969 and 1972, resulting in the subsequent reconstruction of the medieval rotunda and its separation from the rest of the church according to plans by the architect János Sedlmayr. The frescoes were restored to their original splendour.