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Contemporary problems of historical parks in Lublin Province

Abstract

Historic parks form a space with huge cultural, natural and functional potential, affecting to the functioning of agglomerations and little towns. In this study we made a penetrating analysis of historical data, and natural, functional, spatial and compositional aspects of parks in Lublin province, indicating to the scope of respect for the place of tradition. Our findings and results may be helpful in the forming of historical parks.

Keywords: *parks, green areas, revaluation, Lublin province*

Introduction

The groups of nature conservators, historic preservation officers, designers, ecologists and users are divided regarding the issues of historic parks and guidelines for their development. Each group defines different aspects of those areas as most valuable, worth conservation, maintaining or introducing [Siewniak & Sikora 2010: 37-39]. It is extremely hard to say which of the intertwined relations shaping the very issue of the place are the most important because each and every park should be analyzed and defined separately [Rylke 1987].

The subject of this article is to diagnose the current condition and problems of the historic parks on Lubelszczyzna. The results of the research were applied to determine the directions of park development taking into account the socio-cultural, environmental and functional aspects.

The substance and methods

The research began in May 2012, was completed in June 2017. 6 parks located in Lublin were analyzed in details: Abramowice, Bronowice, Felin, Rusalka, Saski, Węglin. Another 19 palace areas located in lubelskie province in: Bychawa, Gardzienice, Karczmiska, Kluczkowice, Kock, Kozłówka, Lubartów, Naęczów, Opole Lubelskie, Radzyń Podlaski, Różanka, Sobianowice, Włodawa, Zamość, Zawieprzyce were also analyzed. The selection of researched areas was influenced by their historical and cultural values as well as the presence of aged park greenery.

Following research courses have been conducted:

- cultural aspects and historical analysis (in order to determine the relationship between the present and the past character of the place and the degree of maintenance of valuable forms and spatial divisions);
- sensual analysis (in order to identify the elements of a particular impact on the senses and the sense of security);
- functional and spatial analysis (in order to identify ways of spatial economy and spatial features);
- availability analysis (in order to determine the degree of accessibility for groups such as: users, the degree of risk to users or the area (level of security), animals, handicaps, service area and other public services like police, fire, ambulance);
- compositional and spatial analysis based on the current situation including historical assumptions (in order to determine the current condition of historic items)
- traffic analysis on the area and surroundings (in order to determine the load of pedestrian passageways, roads and cycle paths and to indicate their rank);
- ecological structure analysis and evaluation of the role of greenery as a refuge for animals (in order to determine the ecological relationships between park areas and their neighborhood);
- inventory of built environment based on the elements of small architecture and equipment, infrastructure and types of ground (in order to determine the condition {state of preservation}, stylistic compatibility and quantity of individual objects);
- inventory of the flora and comprehensive documentation of the environment (diagnosis and assessment), distinguishing between the groups: trees, bushes, shrubs, vines, herbaceous-flower beds, rock gardens, lawns;
- identification of the main problems and conflicts in natural areas;
- community interview conducted among parks users on quality assessment of greenery and leisure conditions on the area.

Results of the research and conclusions

The research showed that only two objects – in Różanka and Rusałka do not perform their function properly and are at the stage of revaluation and re-design works. First of this two places – although neglected – still has great natural and landscape value. Abramowice park was pointed out as a very neglected area in use. The list of parks with the largest yet untapped potential include: Kock, Radzyń Podlaski, Zamość, Zawieprzyce and the list of modernized parks include: Bronowice, Ogród Saski, Gardzienice i Opole Lubelskie. The top rated objects are: Kozłowce, Puławy and Lubartów. The other objects can not be clearly classified, due to the disparities in function, space and history. The analyzes identified a number of issues that determine the nature of the parks. Those issues arise from misunderstanding of the nature of the researched areas by land owners, contractors and users. Most of the observations apply to all objects, or those with a similar mode of operation and emerged as the result of specific factors. Going by origins there are 4 major groups of concerns regarding functioning of parks.

The basic problems of the historic parks in Lubelszczyzna when it comes to **historical and cultural value** are:

- not taking into account during the redevelopment of the park historical spatial relations between the architecture and landscape, including the destruction of the historical compositional axes;
- forcing to revive historical compositional axes, in places where the former spatial context has been lost due to changes in development of neighbouring area, especially the introduction of contemporary objects (eg fences, car parks, etc.);
- no emphasizing of local identity based on *genius loci*;
- creating zones which are incompatible with the nature of space and lack of respect for existing contemporary divisions of space;
- significant contribution and impact of contemporary architecture and forms of technical and industrial base;
- no clear signs, commuting, gates or informants, signaling the change in the nature of space;
- solutions were unified and patterns of landscape architecture were duplicated regarding used technologies and functions selection, with no respect to the individual character of the place and the needs of users;
- building modern architectural objects, freestanding facilities, dining and sanitary facilities, building additions;
- building objects of landscape architecture such as modern fencing, lamp-posts and litter bins;
- using construction materials that are not relevant to the history of the place.

The problems when it comes to **using the space** of historic parks are:

- space has been designed exclusively for specific, individual functions, without including the aspect of multifunctionality of the public space;

- mismanagement of objects by taking care only of selected elements such as paving or fencing, not including the need of reconstructing the greenery structure, delineation of zones and functional and spatial division.
- historic buildings were transferred to the institutions that do not have financial support and the possibility of maintenance of these facilities: educational and cultural entities (schools, libraries, community centers), health care and social care (nursing homes, hospitals, clinics) institutions;
- conducting mass events unrelated to the *genius loci* of this facility and with no relation to the style of the area;
- complete freedom for users' actions or very strict regulations of park use;
- no coherent plan for parks usability;
- formal, functional and conceptual distinction of a park, resulting in its program separation from other areas;
- commercialization of the nature of area;
- under-use of strategic importance and prestige of a park, skipping the aspect of tourism;
- a small number of temporary executions;
- degradation due to the use of perishable materials;
- no cyclical revaluation activities.

When it comes to **greenery management and the natural and ecological aspects** of historic parks the problems are:

- lack of forest stand management;
- randomness of revaluation, activities and unjustified plantings;
- randomness of care activities such as unjustified tree fellings and clippings;
- planting species of trees, shrubs and herbaceous unrelated to the historical and natural character of the area;
- planting contrary to the terms of the park habitat (for example, plants that need a strong exposure to the sun, in the shade);
- plantings only exotic plants without trying to use native species in order to reconstruct the ecological structure;
- not including the variability of colors and conformation of plants through the year;
- planting plants with large habitat requirements, without being able to provide them appropriate care;
- not including the needs of wildlife habitat, failing to apply appropriate solutions such as bird bath, sized nest boxes, ecological niches;
- ignoring of the ecological relationships in the parks and their neighborhood by cutting objects from the rest of ecological structures;
- no teaching activities to popularize natural science at parks using information boards, designations of plants and communities as well as informants [Szumacher 2005: 107-120].

In the **social aspects** of the historic parks the problems are:

- low awareness of the history of the place among users and the resulting spatial properties
- lack of understanding and respect for the nature and of the place and its destination;
- poor sense of aesthetics that leads to wrong solutions regarding of park space modification;
- no sense of responsibility for the development of the parks or passive participation in public consultations;
- low awareness of the role of the individual in a participatory process among park users;
- no use of the symbolism of plants, colors, patterns;
- unification and standardization of the design methods and means of expression, passive and literal imitation of old cultural, intellectual and artistic patterns;
- disturbances in the process of participation occurring mainly where dialogue was not preceded by adequate public education, or where the limits of participation have not been clearly signaled;
- vandalism and pathogenic behavior;
- failure to exploit the potential of parks by the owners / managers for the promotional purposes of the city

In the **economic aspects** of the historic parks the problems are:

- lack of sufficient funds to carry out restoration
- high running cost needed to maintain the proper functions of the park;
- decline in the value of land, due to the change of the spatial structure of cities or negative neighborhood;
- lack of skillful management and proper promotion [Zachariasz 2009], [Trzaskowska & Adamiec 2014].

It is important that the carried out analysis and program assumptions for the parks include:

- definition of the park as a specific ecosystem conditioned by historical, cultural, environmental, technological, economic and humanist factors;
- the core idea in developing *genius loci* in its historical, social, environmental, recreational and economic perspective;
- basic recreational comfort factors at the park and other functions related to the purposes of recreation;
- unique character of the entirely park complex adjusted to local and regional natural and cultural features, climate, terrain, water system, soil conditions, plant communities and composition;
- creating an ecosystem of recreational high absorbency, resistance and value which should pave way for a park-based economy;

- adjusting the content and form of architecture, landscape architecture, building materials, communication and other technical equipment according to the nature of space and the needs of users and the terrain;
- creating a system of diverse park interiors related to architecture;
- competent handling of mood, symbol, color, shape, smell and sound;
- creating optimal conditions for the growth and development of fauna and flora that speak of the nature of the space.

Summary

Historical parks as areas with great potential, often determine the value and attractiveness of the city area. Improper use and lack of understanding of the nature of the area reflects in the quality of life of the citizens, economic and natural aspects and leads to history unawareness as well as stops the cultural development.

By identifying the current values of those places and comparing these values against the historical aspects it is possible to enter upon the appropriate courses of action for restoration or preservation. The researches show that it is not always advisable to rebuild the monuments but only mark its presence in the midst of solutions for today's users needs.

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