

Planning protection of Ciechanow castle versus contemporary exposition in the landscape

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Abstract: The castle in Ciechanow is classified as a Gothic castle of the lowland type. The building, which is an example of defensive architecture, is located to the north of the historic urban layout of Ciechanow city centre. At present, the castle is covered by the following forms of protection: protection for the Natural and Landscape Complex “Łydynia River Valley”, provisions of the Local Spatial Development Plan and an entry in the Register of Historic Monuments. The authors of the paper analyse the legal regulations concerning the castle and their impact on the contemporary castle’s exposition in the landscape.

Keywords: cultural landscape, formal and legal protection, exposition, castle

1. Introduction

Poland is a unique European area in terms of its diversity and is a distinctive “open-air museum” of defensive architecture incorporated into the open landscape. The landscape in Poland is almost entirely a cultural landscape, except for small enclaves of primary landscape and natural landscape [1]. Based on the 2003 law, cultural landscape is defined as: “the space perceived by people containing natural elements and products of civilisation historically shaped as a result of natural factors and human activity” [2]. Defensive architecture (the so-called “Ars militaris”) has always been linked to the surrounding landscape, terrain and land cover, thus benefiting from natural elements such as rivers, hills or moors, which have been used as factors to enhance the fortification of the site. “Depending on the complex military function of the object and the possibilities of the builder, as well as the material and technical conditions of the time, the castles took on different shapes and dimensions and underwent successive extensions both in terms of quantity and in terms of function, technology and space. When interpreted subjectively, the castle itself contained something in its external function, i.e.

important communication routes, crossings and strategic points, while when interpreted objectively it contained something inward, i.e. it enclosed, fenced off, guarded and secured the castle users and their external function, i.e. the function of the enclosure” [3]. Castle ruins are therefore one of the groups of defensive structures which are an indispensable element of Polish cultural landscape. Historic defensive works such as castles form a dominant landscape feature and this is the extent to which they are exposed [4]. We can speak of a historic ruin when it is a complete object with a defined technical condition, functionality, legibility and communicability [5]. Most historic ruins are isolated from other buildings and are located on elevated ground in a favourable viewing position [6]. Like any defensive work, they are a kind of document of the era “as a monument of architecture, engineering and techniques”.

The cult of the ruins originated in the second half of the 18th century from romantic motivations, developed through interest in history and stemmed mainly from patriotic motivation of the 19th century [7].

The first attempts to get to know the deteriorating defensive buildings were most intense at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, at a time when they were abandoned and gradually degraded [8]. Identification work shows that the collection of castles in Poland is estimated at 402 objects entered in the register of immovable monuments, which are in a varying degree of preservation [9].

2. Methodology and aim of the work

The aim of this paper is to analyse the formal and legal provisions concerning the protection of the landscape values of the castle in Ciechanow and to try to verify them in situ. For this purpose, the following were performed:

1. an analysis of the legal records concerning the protection of the castle in Ciechanow,
2. study visits were carried out,
3. necessary photographic documentation was made,
4. on the basis of the collected materials, analyses of the exposition of the castle in the panorama were prepared.

3. Castle in Ciechanow

3.1. The history and architectural form

The Castle of the Dukes of Mazovia in Ciechanow is an example of a Gothic, lowland castle. The castle was probably erected in the second half of the 16th century. The founder of the castle is considered to be Janusz I of Warsaw [10]. The idea to build the castle in the floodplains of the Łydynia river was at the time the result of a threat from the Teutonic State, which, after accepting the Zakrzyń Land as a fief, was increasing its territorial scope towards northern Mazovia [11].

Over the years, the castle was repeatedly modernised and rebuilt. Thus, it changed its purely defensive function into one of both residence and defence. The last period of splendour of the whole complex dates back to the times of Queen Bona, then, as a result of the turmoil of wars – specifically the Swedish wars – the castle underwent significant destruction and partial demolition. Repair and partial reconstruction work was undertaken throughout the 20th century. An extensive renovation was carried out in 2013. Currently, the castle in Ciechanow is managed by the Regional Museum, while the castle itself is owned by the Marshal of the

Mazovian Voivodeship [11]. At present, the object is maintained in the form of a so-called “historical ruin”. The form of maintenance and scope of development of the castle is subordinated to the preservation of its historic values.. The current castle development mainly serves the needs of tourist traffic.

The building was founded on a rectangular plan measuring 48x57 metres with a courtyard with a side length of 44 metres. The castle is surrounded by high walls with a crenelation and two cylindrical towers, which frame the southern curtain with a gate in the middle [11]. Visible relics of the gate house (south curtain) and the Big House (north curtain) have survived to the present day in the courtyard space. The main entrance to the castle is located in the western curtain – the western gate, with visible relics of the former drawbridge. The aforementioned elements constitute the landscape value of the castle and its exposure from the town [11]. The castle was built on a stone foundation in a marshy area. Due to the unstable ground, the ground was reinforced by gravel, bricks and oak stumps before construction began. The complex was surrounded by an extensive 18-metre-wide moat, which was quite shallow, as it was up to 1.4 metres deep.

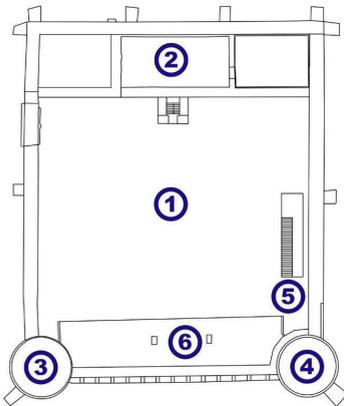


Fig. 1. Plan of the castle in Ciechanów. Legend: 1. the courtyard, 2. the dwelling house, so called. “3. west (arsenal) tower, 4. eastern (prisoner) tower 5. Entry to sanitary supply 6. Small house (new volume), Source: K. Drobek

Fig. 2. Plan of Ciechanow from 1816

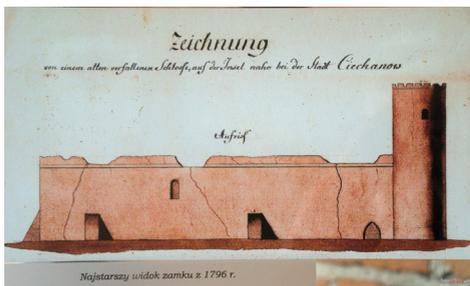


Fig. 3. The oldest view of the castle from 1796

Fig. 4. Photo of Ciechanow castle. Photo: A. Broimska, 1905, postcard

3.2. The viewing relationship of the castle and the city – determinants

The primary aim was therefore to protect the landscape zone, i.e. the scenic links between the castle and the city, in addition to protecting the historic structure of the castle. This is because the castle in Ciechanow is integrally connected with the surrounding riverside landscape. Thus, the “Conditions for the landscape zone of viewing relations of the castle and the city” emphasise the need to create a tourist route highlighting the cultural values of the castle and its surroundings, as well as to build a connection – via a pedestrian route – with the urban system (by combining the functional programme of the market square) with highlighting the historic gate, while preserving the currently existing pedestrian traffic system (western curtain). The elements selected for landscape protection of the entire complex are:

1. the floodplains of the Łydynia river (eastern side of the city of Ciechanow),
2. panorama of the city from the view of the tower, through appropriate composition of buildings in the first line of plots in terms of architectural form, material solutions and scale,
3. protection of the panorama from the side of the city with a line of trees,
4. protection of the Łydynia river landscape,
5. protection of the city panorama from viewpoints and platforms located within the castle.

The recommendations also pointed out the already existing problems in the form of villa developments on the northern side of the castle, which got too close to the viewing foreground of the building, and recommended designing isolating greenery in sensitive points and detailed elaboration of the rules for introducing the developments.

3.3. Formal and legal situation of the castle in Ciechanow

For a long time Ciechanow played a key role in the economic system of Mazovian cities, as well as in the system of defence of Mazovia. The so-called “new town” was founded near the castle itself and right by the river, on a high ground, in the northern – less developed – part of the town. The northern frontage of the market square of the “new town”, due to its looseness in terms of development, allowed the market square to be linked to both the river and the castle located behind it. Without a doubt, according to a 2005 study by Danuta Kłosek-Kozłowska, the scenic compositional link between the market and the castle was provided by the still existing narrow street dividing the northern frontage in half. In addition, along Nadrzeczna Street there were numerous view openings to the castle, which are currently not legible due to the addition of development to the plots and the tall greenery present in them [11].

The castle is located to the north of the historic urban layout of the city centre of Ciechanow. The building is listed in the register of monuments, together with its surroundings within a radius of 200 m. It is located in an open landscape, among meadows, in the floodplain of the Łydynia river.

The great scenic value of the Castle of the Dukes of Mazovia in Ciechanów is influenced by the fact that it is located within the natural and landscape complex “Łydynia River Valley”. Together with its surroundings, it is protected for the Natural and Landscape Complex “Łydynia River Valley”. It is a unique area located in the centre of Ciechanów, characterised by a natural and unaltered landscape of the river valley, with fauna typical of forested areas located away from urban settlements.

In addition, the castle is also the starting point of the route of the Medieval Route of Ciechanów, which covers the area of the historical part of the city together with the oldest sacral buildings located in this area and buildings from the 19th and 20th centuries listed in the register of monuments as a historical urban establishment. The route runs through Wodna Street, Jana Pawła II Square, Warszawska Street, Kościuszki Square, Zielona Street, a path to Farska Góra and through Dąbrowskiego Park and Ściegiennego Street and part of 11 Pułku Ułanów Legionowych Street.



Fig. 5. Location of the castle of the Mazovian princes in Ciechanów, spatial relations, *Source:* K. Drobek

Table 1. The forms of protection of Ciechanow Castle

Form of protection	Content of the record/ Landscape context
Protection for the Nature and Landscape Complex "Łydynia River Valley".	<p>„The specific aim of the protection of the Complex is to preserve fragments of the natural and cultural landscape of the Łydynia river valley, in particular: 1) an area overgrown with a wide range of plant communities constituting a review of plant succession from hay meadows, through tallgrass meadows and herb forests to woody willow-poplar riparian forests; 2) a habitat of several dozen species of breeding birds; 3) an area of great health, climate-forming and recreational importance; 4) the valley of the Łydynia river together with estuarial areas of the watercourses; 5) areas under conservation protection: the bailey of the Castle of the Mazovian Dukes, the Farny Church and the Farska Góra.” [12]</p> <p>“The natural and landscape complex "The Łydynia river Valley" – is an area of 57 hectares, located on the territory of the city of Ciechanów, is a legally protected part of the valley. The protection covers the natural and landscape values of the area and the plant and animal species occurring here, as well as material culture resources – registered monuments: Castle of the Mazovian Dukes, Farny Church, Farska Góra.” [12]</p>

Form of
protection

Content of the record/ Landscape context

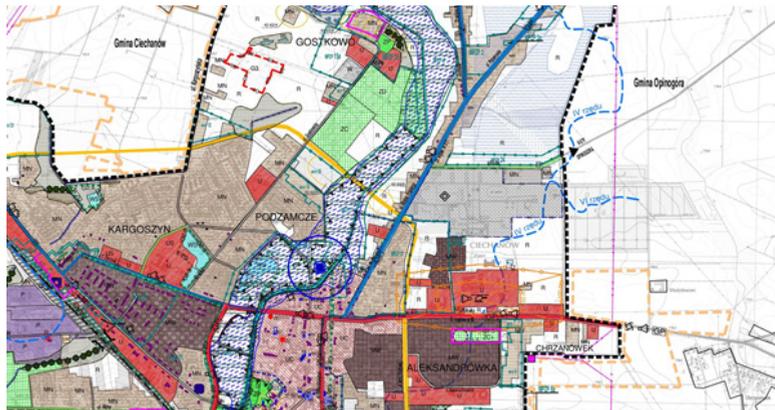
Service area U1, recommendation to preserve naturally low greenery, designation of exposure protection zones in which no development is allowed and land use that could disturb the exposure of the castle and the historic centre [13].

Local Spatial Plan



The need to control changes in land use and development, not allowing elements that disharmonise or overshadow protected sites [14].

Study of conditions and directions of spatial development of the city of Ciechanow



Entry in the register of Historic Monuments

3.4. The castle in Ciechanow – landscape analysis

The Castle of the Mazovian Dukes in Ciechanów is a dominant landscape feature. The foreground of the exposition is the castle's meadows. The Łydynia river is a mirror reflecting in its surface the picturesque surroundings and, above all, the castle itself. Along the axis of the river, as well as along Castle Street, there is a wide view opening onto the castle. Overall, the castle is very well exposed in the landscape, as exemplified by the following photographs. In several places, the view of the stronghold is somewhat shielded by the tall greenery growing along Zamkowa Street at the junction with Kmicica Street and from the north-west from the field areas located behind the castle.



Fig. 6. The View of the Castle of the Dukes of Mazovia in Ciechanów and the Łydynia river from the west, Exposure of the castle in the panorama. View from the intersection of Parkowa and Zielona streets, 2019. *Source:* K. Drobek



Fig. 7. Exposure of the castle in the panorama. View from the junction of Parkowa and Zielona Streets, 2019, *Source:* K. Drobek



Fig. 8. Exposure of the castle in the panorama. View from the intersection of Zamkowa Street, 2019, *Source:* K. Drobek



Fig. 9. Exposure of the castle in the panorama. View of the castle from the north-east from the Łydynia river, *Source:* K. Drobek



Fig. 10. Exposure of the castle in the panorama. View of the castle from the north-east, 2019, *Source:* K. Drobek

The Castle of the Dukes of Mazovia in Ciechanow offers a view of the extremely green surroundings. The two towers and a shooting porch are good observation points. Looking to the north, one can see a fragment of a single-family housing estate and cultivated fields. To the north-east and east, there is a view of fields and the floodplain of the Łydynia river. South of the castle, beyond the river, there are buildings in Nadrzeczna Street and the market square. From the western tower. Looking south-east one can see Wodna Street and the Ciechan Brewery. To the west of the castle are located the meadows with a footbridge.



Fig. 16. Photo View of the surrounding area and the Lydynia river from the shooting porch, 2019, *Source*: K. Drobek



Fig. 17. Photo View from the prison tower to the northeast, 2019, *Source*: K. Drobek



Fig. 18. View from the prison tower to the southeast., 2019, *Source*: K. Drobek

4. Summary

The exposition of the castle in Ciechanow and the legibility of its composition have been preserved to the present day. The work of *Ars militaris* is visible in the landscape of Ciechanow both from the side of the riverside boulevards and the city space with the fact that some of the original views and links with the urban system have been lost through high plantings of greenery (Zamkowa Street) isolating the north-western side. The legibility of the panoramas has also been lost along Nadrzeczna Street as a result of newly developed riverside areas and the tall greenery growing there. It therefore seems crucial that the buildings in the first line of plots are properly composed in terms of architectural form, material solutions and scale, as well as appropriately firm provisions in local plans. Formal and legal protection in the form of an entry in the Register of Historic Monuments, provisions in the Local Spatial Development Plan and protection for the Natural and Landscape Complex of the 'Łydynia River Valley' ensures a high level of protection for the castle's exposure in the landscape. The very fact that the provisions of the Local Spatial Development Plan note and indicate the zone of protection of the exposure of the Masovian Dukes' Castle both from the side of the city of Ciechanow and from the Podzamcze area is noteworthy. Thus, a conclusion is drawn that further model protection of this type of monuments should be detailed in the local plans as it is an act of law compared to the provisions of the study of spatial conditions of the city of Ciechanow.

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