

**THE PALACE AND GARDEN COMPLEX IN WŁODOWICE.
PROSPECTS FOR RESTORATION AGAINST OTHER TOURIST
ATTRACTIONS OF THE KRAKOW-CZESTOCHOWA JURA**

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Abstract. The article analyses potential restoration of a historic park and palace complex in Włodowice. It discusses the pragmatics of preservation in conservation practice. Furthermore, the author suggests possible courses of action designed to bring clarity to the original layout of the complex and popularize the commune as a tourist attraction.

Key words: preservation, restoration, cultural landscape

1. Introduction

Historical family residences, castles, palaces and manors with their immediate surroundings and other distinct cultural elements contribute to shape cultural landscapes of urban areas, small towns or suburbs of major cities. In the 20th century, the gradual and balanced development of all of them, both in aesthetical and social terms, was suddenly interrupted. War activities caused huge devastation in that respect; further damage was the result of the 1944 Polish land reform [2]¹. Often left “at the mercy” of local decision-makers, converted into public institutions or storages, they fell into disrepair in a short time.

Currently, in the second decade of the 21st century, after Poland has regained full independence, it is witnessing of gradual globalization process in our country. This phenomenon can be experienced every day, for example by observing the association of retail outlets, services or restaurants into large networks. The retail is created even in very small towns or villages. Competitiveness of territorial units takes on a new important meaning. It is mainly conditioned by landscape, enriched by historical objects. However, these require constant protection and preservation. Failing that, they must be brought to the state which on the one hand makes it possible to use them and on the other hand confirms the elementary principle of conservation treatment summed up as: *above all, do not harm* [6]².

2. Aim of the study

It is assumed that residence and garden complexes should have a permanent user. Unused buildings deteriorate and are subject to destruction, whilst parks undergo natural secondary succession. When creating a restoration project for particular objects, it is therefore necessary to define the scope of activities and functions that will be feasible and will not harm the complex.

The presented studies will generally illustrate and define the overall condition of the park and palace in Włodowice (village in the Krakow-Czestochowa Jura), which will help to define further research and project activities. This study is especially important for Włodowice as the whole complex is currently in deplorable condition.

¹ Brzoza C. *Reforma rolna w województwie krakowskim (1945–1948)* PAN, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1988.

² Pawłowska K. *Przeciwdziałanie konfliktom wokół ochrony i kształtowania krajobrazu. Partycypacja społeczna, debata publiczna, negocjacje*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Krakowskiej, Kraków 2008, p. 28–32.

3. Methodology of introductory research

Restoration of historical complexes and selection of appropriate solutions in the case of Włodowice. In research methodology, studies leading to the implementation of a restoration plan begin with the definition of the so-called resource. It is, in fact, the action of defining the origin, age and initial appearance of the object as well as its subsequent changes.

The restoration itself, which is the final phase of activities, is described by Bogdanowski as the specialization which developed as a result of progressive degradation and destruction of historical complexes in the second half of the 20th century [1]³.

The preliminary visual examination, study of old maps and related literature show that the park has been an integral part of the studied complex in Włodowice from the very beginning and together with the palace it has created a spatial whole. Particular attention should be drawn to its compositional layout on the slope. It takes advantage of the interesting natural terrain relief consisting of the upper level with the palace and the slope of a Jurassic stone escarpment falling towards the south west. A similar use of the slope in the palace garden can be observed in other similar complexes situated in close proximity to Włodowice, such as Choroń, commune of Żarki [4]⁴.

The chronology of the complex as well as the analysis of the 1853 layout with characteristic proportions allows us to regard this monument as a representative of *entre cour et jardin* [5]⁵.

The post-war period was not merciful to the complex in Włodowice, just as for many similar objects across the country. Sometimes local decision-makers led to (planned) destruction or allowed for significant transformations of former aristocratic residences. On the other hand, it was often the case that the proposed modifications of old forms supposed to restore the objects were developed without proper understanding of their actual form. This could have depleted the original styling and create variants or rather style parodies. It is for these reasons that the doctrines of monument preservation rather discourage measures leading to counterfeiting knowledge about former monuments of architecture. This purist philosophy, sometimes stemming from the lack of sufficient knowledge about the original appearance of the building, makes it impossible to restore ruins. They need to be left as they are, to be a so-called “permanent ruin”, meant for sightseeing [3]⁶.

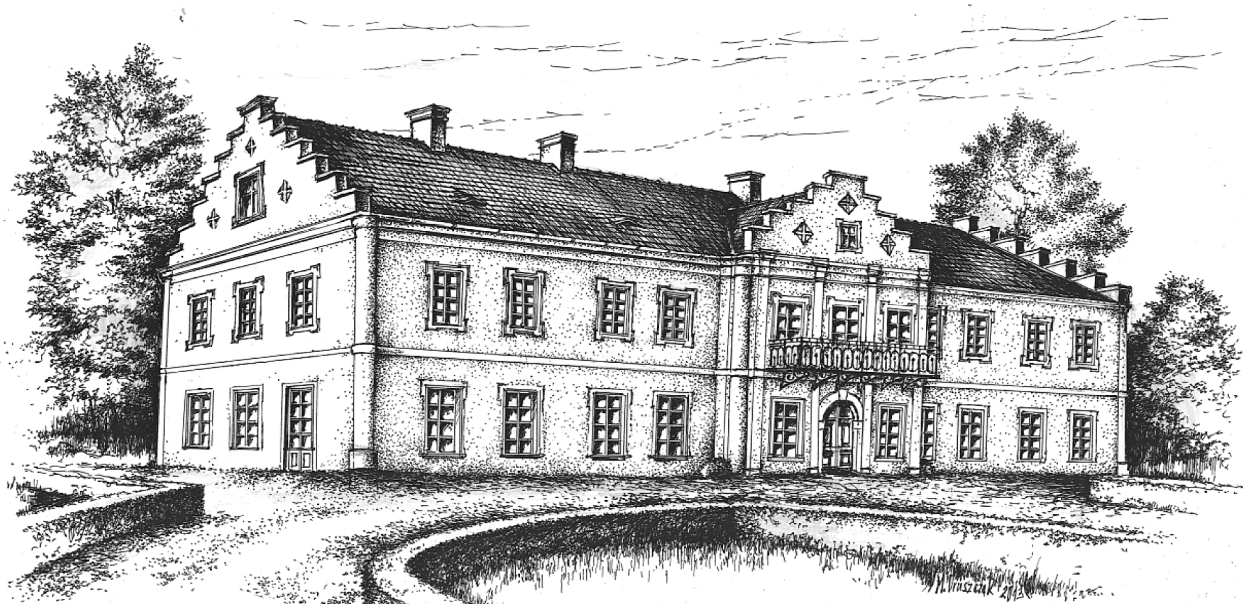


Fig 1. Drawing of the palace

³ Bogdanowski J. *Style, kompozycja i rewaloryzacja w polskiej sztuce ogrodowej* [In:] *Wiadomości Botaniczne* 36 (3/4) 1992. – P. 15.

⁴ Kowalewski L. *Przyroda parków pałacowych, dworskich i miejskich na obszarze woj. Częstochowskiego*, Częstochowa 1990. – S. 41–42.

⁵ Muc A. *Zespół pałacowo-parkowy we Włodowicach* [In:] *Wiadomości konserwatorskie województwa śląskiego*. – Vol. 3, Śląski Wojewódzki Konserwator Zabytków-Śląskie Centrum dziedzictwa kulturowego, Katowice 2011. – P. 217–218.

⁶ Gruszecki A. *Konserwacja ruin w Anglii* [w:] *Ochrona zabytków*, 1958, No. 3. – P. 233.

After the fire in 1956, the complex in Włodowice was enlisted in the monument register, which was supposed to save it from destruction. Restoration activities were supposed to include the palace with outbuildings and the park. These “activities” were so “successful” that in 1989 the palace was removed from the monument register, due to very poor technical condition. The evaluation conducted at that time revealed that the weathering of the walls could be up to 30 cm and the cracks were very numerous⁷. 21 years later, the already non-existent (!) palace outbuildings were also removed from the register. At the moment, the only object under formal protection is the park, which is in deplorable condition just as the palace.

The palace is in the form of ruins with preserved front wall and several rooms on the ground floor. They are all completely demolished, flooded by water and covered with vegetation, which is a serious threat to the ruins. Roots are disintegrating uncovered walls, deteriorating their condition. The fires have completely destroyed wood elements. What can be only seen now are the places they were originally embedded. Out of the four chimneys, two have survived to this day but their top parts have fallen apart. Cast-iron railing on the front wall of the building is the last surviving trace of the old balcony.

As already mentioned, the palace outbuildings have already vanished. A similar thing happened to former inventory buildings, stable, main farm building, barn, and wine cellar.

The park is densely overgrown with self-seeding trees and shrubs. It is impossible to recognize its former terrace layout at first glance or different garden styles.

4. Study results for the park, vegetation inventory

Since there are no maps showing the original layout of vegetation in the park in Włodowice, it was necessary to prepare a general description of the local flora together with a list of species of trees and bushes growing there.

The park surrounds the palace and it was probably established at the same time as the original palace was built. Both are dated back to the 18th century, which leads to the conclusion that the oldest trees in the park are approximately 250–300 years old.

It is difficult to point out a dominating tree species, yet the majority of them are deciduous trees. There are a number of trees typical for historic parks, such as maples, lindens, hornbeams and ashes. These are located closer to the palace, whilst in the lower part of it, fruit trees can be also found: apple, pear and plum trees⁸.

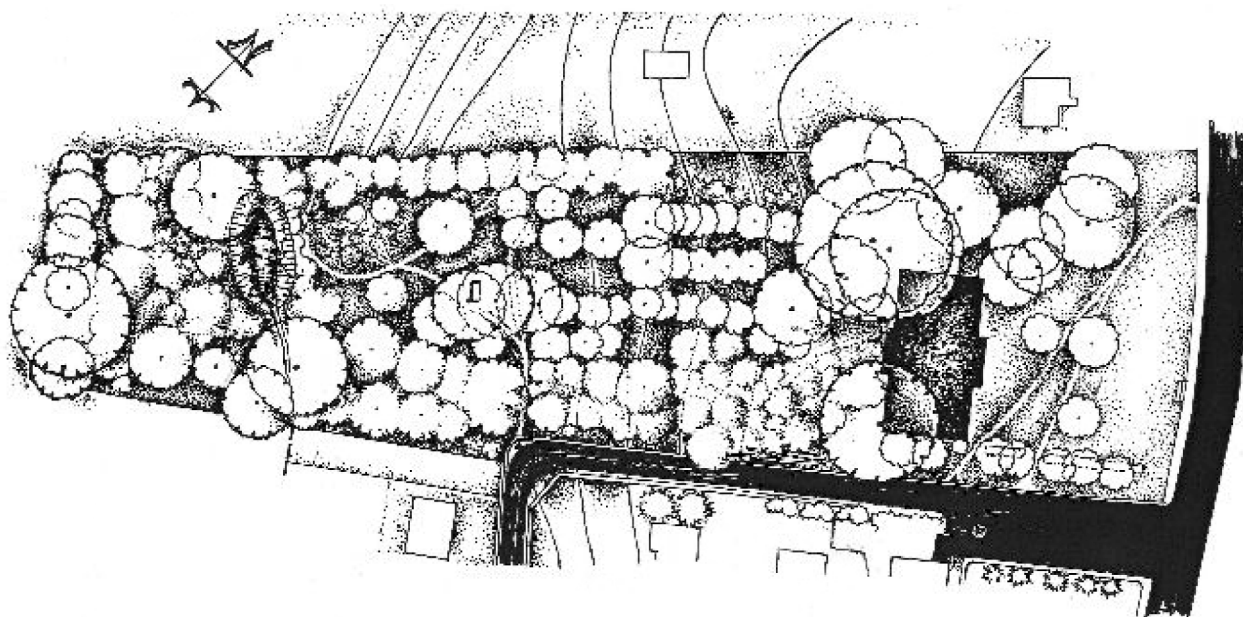


Fig 2. Vegetation scheme of the park

⁷ Muc A. op.cit. – P. 211.

⁸ Kowalewski L. op.cit. – P. 86–87.

The bush layer is represented by jasmines, lilacs, hazels and forsythias. They grow mainly in groups, but are also scattered around the park as a result of chaotic self-seeding. The existence of original hedgerows can be confirmed by the presence of privet. We can assume that the park had flower hedgings. The remnants of hornbeam rows suggest that the park had bosquets [7]⁹.

The current stand of the park not only confirms the fact that the whole object was carefully planned in terms of composition, the choice of tree and bush species was not random as well.

However, without being properly taken care of, the plants almost completely “took control of the park” so that it is sometimes difficult to penetrate the thicket of trees and bushes. This is best seen within several meters from the palace and in the water reservoir situated slightly below the palace. The reservoir is completely shadowed as a result of the expansion of self-seeding vegetation.

5. Conclusions with regards to monument preservation and landscape shaping

Whether or not the palace ruins in Włodowice survive and can be made available to potential visitors depends on undertaking necessary conservation treatment. This, however, cannot interfere with the picturesque landscape; thus all works need to be visually unobtrusive. The necessary works can be divided into four groups, starting from the most essential ones:

1) Structural protection together with supports for slanted walls and vaults. Possibly in some cases, it may be necessary to rebuild the latter.

2) Maintenance of the crenellation, by protecting it against water penetration and filling all cavities to prevent water accumulation. It will be often necessary to rebuild 1–3 layers of bricks in order to introduce horizontal insulation.

3) Restoration of the external face of the wall by repairing joints, filling in deeper cavities and reinforcing the structure. It all requires great care with regards to the final visual result.

4) Implementation of a drainage system, which will increase the stability of the ruins. Rainfall, low temperatures and lying snow have been mainly responsible for wall devastation. Therefore, properly designed drainage with correct gradients and rainwater channelling will slow down the destruction processes.

Further activities include the implementation of an exposition programme so that the complex can fulfil the role of a tourist attraction. To ensure that this function is successful the programme should include the following elements:

1) Properly designed walking paths within the complex. This would make it possible to see only the most interesting ruins and appreciate the surrounding landscape from selected viewpoints.

2) The creation of exposition points and the mentioned viewpoints with particular attention to primordial views of Jura areas, which was planned by former designers of the complex.

3) Making the ruins more “understandable” to the visitors by installing names (descriptions) of selected areas and rooms. Creation of reconstruction boards presenting the palace. To ensure successful “advertising” of the object, it may be useful to create information brochures available in the local council office.

6. Conclusion

For centuries, the palace and park complex in Włodowice has been a stable element of the surrounding Jura landscape and also a precious aristocratic landmark. After suitable restoration, it can surely become an element that would increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of the Włodowice commune against other territorial units in the area, which do not possess similar complexes, but have other valuable monuments. The Włodowice complex is a permanent historical and visual element of the local landscape that can help to build up competitiveness of the village. It can be clearly seen nowadays that various historical ruins are always attractive for tourists and their presence can develop local tourism services in the Jura region. On the other hand, destruction of such tourist attractions seriously reduces the importance and popularity of a given community (for example the medieval castle in nearby Lelów was destroyed in the 19th century in order to create a cemetery) [8]¹⁰.

⁹ Siewniak M., Mitkowska A. *Tezaurus sztuki ogrodowej*, oficyna wydawnicza Rytm. – Warszawa, 1998. – P. 41–42.

¹⁰ Uruszczak M. *Zamki w Lelowie i Żarnowcu-świadkowie rozkwitu i recesji dwóch miast na Prawie Magdeburskim*. [In:] *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne*, Vol. LXI-2009-Book 1. – P. 231–240.

The conducted research and analyses make it possible to conclude that despite very poor technical condition of the complex, it is possible to restore its original character of an aristocratic residence. This needs to be done to make Włodowice more attractive as it is an important commune of the Krakow-Czestochowa Jura.

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Міхал Урущак

ПАЛАЦ І САДОВИЙ КОМПЛЕКС У ВЛОДОВІЦІ. ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ ВІДНОВЛЕННЯ ОБ’ЄКТА ДЛЯ ТУРИСТИЧНОЇ ПРИВАБЛИВОСТІ РАЙОНУ ЮРА КРАКОВО-ЧЕНСТОХОВСЬКОГО

***Анотація.** Подано аналіз можливостей ревалоризації історично сформованого палацово-паркового комплексу у Влодовіці. Обговорюється прагматика дій у практиці консервації. Запропоновано можливі напрями дій з предметного наповнення, спрямовані на прочитання його оригінального планування та популяризації муніципалітету.*

***Ключові слова:** збереження, реставрація, культурний ландшафт.*