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The Future of Planty Park in Cracow Compared to Other Examples of City Walls Being Transformed into Urban Parks

PECHA KUCHA PAPER

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ABSTRACT

From the 18th century on, everywhere in Europe, city walls became obsolete and were in many cases transformed into public parks; these 'ring parks' became an archetype in the urban landscape architecture. In this paper, starting from the case of Planty Park in Cracow, we will compare a number of other cases and investigate differences and similarities between them. The results of this study might give us information, ideas, and experiences that can be of use in the planning and designing for the future development of Planty Park. We will analyse how these types of parks as elements in the urban landscape relate to the context, users, and the society at large.

Research methods comprise: analysis of plans, site analysis, fieldwork, and conceptual development.

We will start with an overview of the plan development, which will be followed by a programme definition based on information from the municipality of Cracow. What do users, the municipality, and other stakeholders have in mind concerning the future of Planty Park? In the second step we will analyse and compare some other cases of parks of a similar type. The analysis comprises an analysis of the site, the design history, the design means, and the future use and users. The results will constitute a

basis for developing a strategy for the landscape development of Planty Park in the long run. In the third part the design principles of this type of parks will be analysed. By comparing these cases we will see if and how these results can be used for the future development of Planty Park. The conclusions focus on different strategies for developing plans concerning the future of parks that have a long design history and a cultural meaning; conservation through development in a contemporary manner. In this type of parks the question how the landscape remains readable as a cultural monument and an icon for the city, while at the same time allowing for its contemporary use, is an important conclusion and point of departure for planning and design.

INTRODUCTION

One of the types of arranged municipal greenery present in European cities are ring parks (Polish: Planty), with the characteristic ring-like layout along the perimeter of demolished fortifications. Their shape depended on the time of construction, and hence they occupied different types of space (Kostof, 1992). Thanks to the application of such compositions, areas located in the vicinity of historical urban structures to this day allow to make good use of them for transport purposes, diversify the urban tissue, create ecological corridors offering numerous natural and scenic values combined with recreational elements (Ostrowski, 2001).

METHOD AND TYPOLOGIES

The research method was based on the comparative analysis of some selected examples of post-fortification rings. The analysis took into consideration the effect of the rings on both the general, municipal scale and on the local one. The conclusions, formed on the basis of this analysis will have the application value for the future development of the Planty Park in Cracow.

Ring parks organised on areas of former fortifications can be divided into three groups:

1. Inner-city rings with closed perimeters. They clearly separate the historical core of the city from its later development, e.g. Muenster, Germany.
2. Open inner-city rings. Physical closure of the park perimeter is impossible due to topographic obstacles, such as watercourses, canals, and water pools, e.g. Fortification Ring, Copenhagen.
3. External rings. Parks which constitute the final limitation for the urban structure of the city, e.g. Naarden, the Netherlands.

A special potential of post-fortification rings developed as public green spaces is seen in their connection with the system of municipal parks. These rings, being one of the core elements of the general municipal structure, become a factor increasing the quality of the historic municipal structures, at the same time, being often the only possibility of introducing a green area into the dense historic city texture, linking it at the same time with extra-urban areas.

Case analysis:

1. Green Ring, Muenster. Post-fortification ring, limiting the historic municipal structure of the city, with both local and supra-local effect. On the local scale, it introduces a high-quality park space into the area of dense architecture of the city centre with accompanying public functions. In the supra-local scale it is a key element in the municipal system of green spaces, opening into seven green corridors, connecting the city centre with an open landscape. The entire system has a concentric- radial character.
2. Fortification Ring, Copenhagen. This post-fortification ring does not make up a continuous system. Its character is determined by the structure of the former fortification system

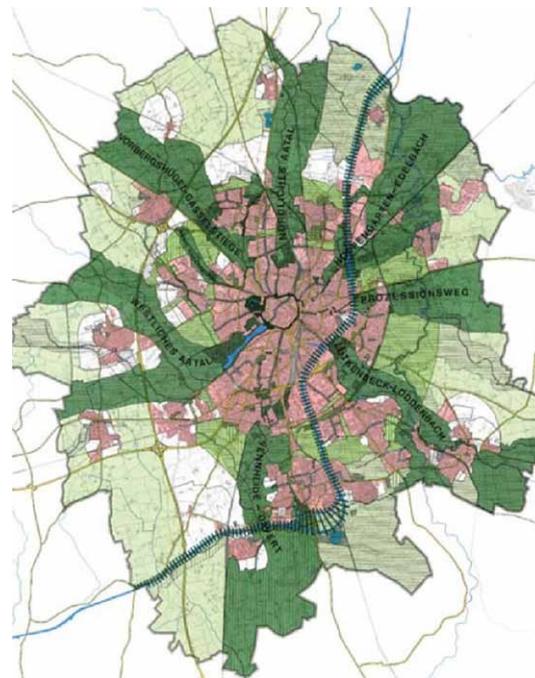


Figure 1a Muenster - Green ring in the context of city green spaces system. Source: Office for Green Spaces and Environmental Protection; Münster City Council. Source: https://gartenpolylog.org/system/files/189/ae506b36-51fa-46f0-ab08-8ca9445e8366/Stos_BAKK.pdf [Accessed 1 Jul. 2018]; Copenhagen – Municipal Planning Strategy 2014. Source: public domain; Green Ring, Vienna, STEP 2015. [Accessed 1 Jul. 2018]. Source: <https://www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/studien/pdf/b008379a.pdf> [Accessed 1 Jul. 2018].

connected significantly with the water supply system. A clear historic structure of the fortifications is completed here with municipal functions making up a core element of the municipal public spaces. The preservation of the clear system of the historic fortification as the carrier of the municipal identity paired with contemporary interventions is of great importance here.

3. Green Ring, Vienna. Green spaces planned within the post-fortification areas, in a form of a wide strip of arterial lines together with a construction of adjacent sequences of representative interiors. The composition is completed with numerous parks enlarging the green belt. In the city, now a 100-years old concept is revived, giving the priority to the system of green spaces consisting of 12 various types and making up a linear and concentric municipal system. Municipal space, shaped in this way,

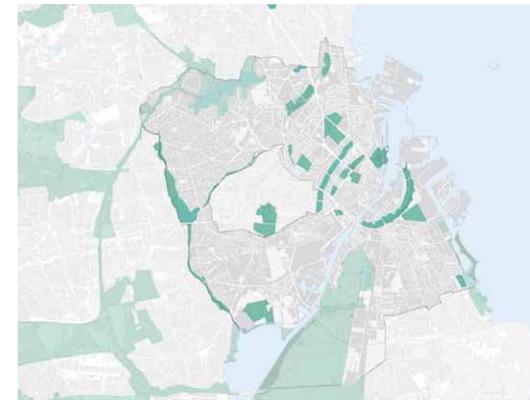


Figure 1b



Figure 1c

affects the functional solutions of these historic green spaces (communication, recreation, leisure, representative function).

THE RESEARCH SUBJECT PLANTY PARK – HISTORY, FUNCTIONS, AND FUTURE

The development of cities in modern times was associated with the need to extend their limits. Planty Park, which is the subject matter of this study, an area of ca. 21 ha, 4 km long, from 40 to 120 metres wide, in the years 1821-1830 became an area of arranged public greenery. In 1976 the territory of the post-fortification park was entered in the register of historic sites and in 1978, along with the historical urban layout of the Old Town and the Wawel Hill, it was included in the UNESCO (Torowska,

2012, Łakomy, 2012).

Based on the analysis of Planty Park in Cracow, the following elements constitute important composition-related factors: function, identity, and the diversity of needs. What is essential for the holistic view of the investigated area is the analysis of:

- Links with other green areas in the city
- Their functions when they were coming into being and today
- Changes in the structure of green areas.

In Cracow, the limits of Planty Park are demarcated by the first ring road, where today traffic is partly limited to privileged vehicles only. The main paths that intersect the park are a continuation of passages of the transport system existing before the elimination of the fortifications. The parallel pathways adjust their route to adapt to compositional changes introduced in different periods: to the classicist, landscape, naturalistic, eclectic layout, as well as to transformations carried out in the spirit of Art Nouveau, and later on of Modernism.

There are numerous landmarks within the perimeter of the park, they all make up the definition of the current programme for the park, locked in conservative frames.

Post-fortification parks, due to their particular location, have become carriers of cultural values, and therefore they are predisposed to becoming certain “urban living rooms”. Thus, structures and functions assigned to them become a reflection of social needs and expectations. Ever since the time Planty Park in Cracow was established, despite its seeming stability, it has been subjected to a continuous process of transformations. Slowly becoming an internal frontage of the city, it assumes functions of city-wide significance, which have a considerable effect upon its identity (Kostof, 1992).

Quite a special case is the building

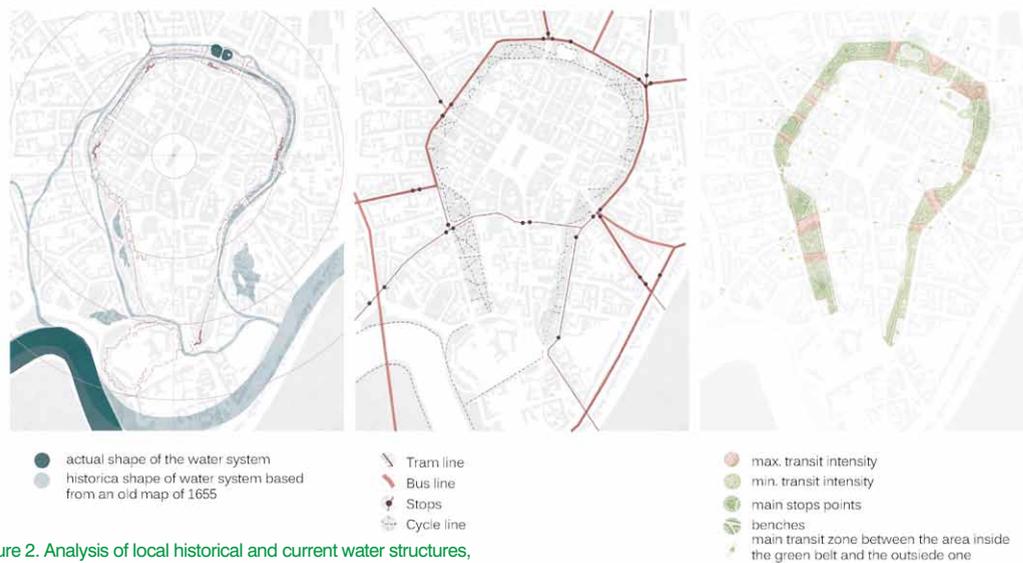


Figure 2. Analysis of local historical and current water structures, traffic system analysis, analysis of the intensity of use. Source: [K. Hodor, P. Careno]

of “Bunkier Sztuki” Contemporary Art Gallery. In 2016 a competition for the development of an architectural concept of the reconstruction, extension, and a superstructure over the edifice of the Gallery was resolved. The winning design by Robert Konieczny and the KWK Promes team decided to hide new exhibition spaces completely underground, so as not to introduce any structures that would alter the character of the park. Simultaneously, it proposed to open up the area in front of the very building to make it become an integral part of the green area along with the view of its underground exhibition space.

SUMMARY

With reference to the typologies presented above it can be stated that Planty Park in Cracow belongs to the type of rings with a closed perimeter (1st typological group) with buildings located along its outer perimeter (1st typological group). The historical analysis of its spatial and functional profile clearly indicates classic zoning of the public space of the park.

The strategies concerning green spaces in Cracow are now in the

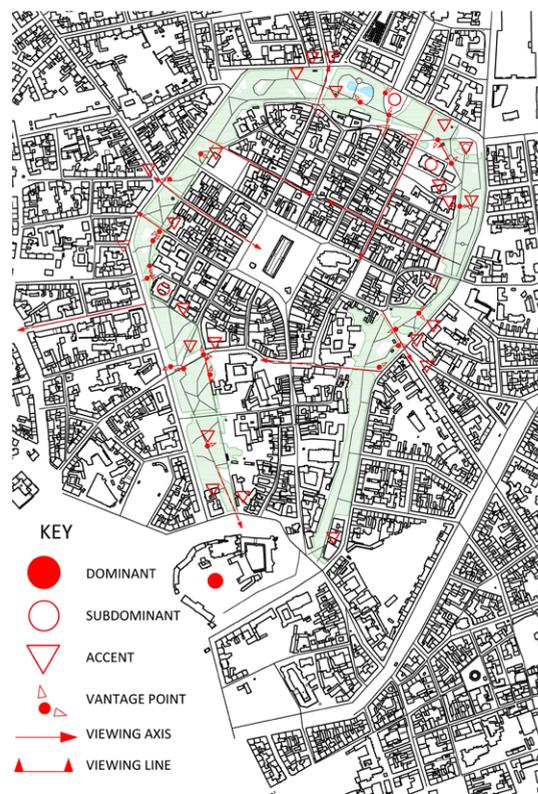


Figure 3a View analysis with marked dominants and view corridors. Source: K. Hodor, P. Careno. Views of the Planty Park. Source: K. Hodor

process of making. “The Directions for the Development and Management of the Green Spaces in Cracow, 2017-2030” defines the principles of harmonious planning and monitoring of green areas, which are meant to be



Figure 3b



Figure 3c

translated onto the improvement of the life quality of city residents. This strategy bears some similarity to the documents introduced in Vienna. It covers an attempt of integrating dispersed green spaces into one system to be furthermore developed.

The correct functioning of Planty Park, as an element of the municipal greenery, is determined by its connection with the green arterial lines joining the city centre and the open landscape (see: Muenster). In consideration of the cultural significance of Planty Park, it is necessary to plan its further development in such a way that emphasises the importance of the historic elements, paired with its adaptation to the contemporary requirements (see: Fortification Ring, Copenhagen).

The analysed examples of strategies point to the concentration

on the entire system of municipal greenery in which the post-fortification rings make up one of the central elements of the system, but without any detailed emphasis on the areas of the historic rings. On the local level they are protected with respect to their special historic and identification character, whilst their value for the shape of the structure is very prominent. It is important to open up the system of connections with other green areas and to specify the adaptation potential depending of the changeable conditions.

The recommendations based on the analysis, in general municipal (1) and local (2) scales:

1. It is necessary to connect Planty Park, currently isolated, with the system of the municipal greenery, and, at the same time, to make the concentric-radial system more visible, as a traditional system illustrating the development of Cracow as a city. The provisions of the city development strategy must be integrated with the documents of the local master plan, which would make it possible to execute all the connections within the city greenery.
2. It is also postulated to introduce new functions and forms of urban planning which are appropriate for the contemporary society so as to obtain the functional continuity of the city within its historic centre. These newly introduced functions should respect the historic values and local identity.