

## REVITALIZATION OF THE COLLEGIUM BROSCIANUM COURTYARD

### Abstract

The revitalization of the Collegium Broscianum, a public space which is an annex to the Royal Way in the center of Kraków, requires conducting research in many fields – from archeological, through iconographic, bibliographic, to dendrological studies. The extant spatial and environmental conditions require a decision to be made as to the form and function of this area. An important part of the problem is the symbolic layer, which takes on a grander meaning in the context of the historical surroundings and the role that this space is to have in the future. Problems related to engineering, such as the access of the surrounding buildings to underground technical infrastructure demand solving. Functional conflicts, such as providing parking spaces versus the ability of fire trucks and municipal service vehicles to access the area further complicate the matter. The neighboring historical church requires a proper handling of the composition of this space – not only of the walkways, driveways and greenery, but also artistic furnishing (sculptures, memorial plaques, gates and entryways), as well as providing proper lighting for the street furniture, greenery and the buildings themselves. The article illustrates the method of research and design that has been undertaken and indicates the possible directions that the revitalization may be taken in.

*Keywords:* Collegium Broscianum courtyard, revitalization

### 1. Introduction

The Royal Way, located in the center of Kraków, is not only a sequence of urban interiors made up of Floriańska Street, the Main Market, Grodzka Street and the forefront of the Wawel Hill. It is supported by a series of side interiors, each with its own individual character,<sup>1</sup> through interiors proper, the elongated, pseudo-interiors, to the open ones, that make up Kraków, as seen from the Wawel Castle Hill. The courtyard of the Collegium Broscianum is one of the larger and more exposed urban interiors, which, in a way, expand the urban interior of Grodzka Street. This interior is particularly valuable due to it being an urban garden, which, truth be told, is not in the best condition. It does, however, fulfill an important function as an urban garden, even if it has been severely limited in this regard. This garden can allow passersby, including tourists, to get some shade. It can especially aid students, who flock to the shaded patches of grass and the few old benches located by the worn out pavements during the summer. Sadly, the traces of the original composition of the space have been erased, and the interior currently functions as a parking lot for the numerous vehicles owned by the employees of the Jagiellonian University and by hotel guests. In a situation, where the historical city center has been placed on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites<sup>2</sup> and has an implemented zoning plan that qualifies the area as a cultural park,<sup>3</sup> the interior of the Collegium Broscianum

requires the undertaking of determined efforts to restore it as a fully-fledged public space and an urban garden.

### 2. State of documentation

The history of the garden and research into its evolution as an urban interior can be found in the *Parki i Ogrody* (Parks and gardens) publication.<sup>4</sup> It also contains the plan of its extant state in the year 1987. The plans of the current state indicated (as shown on Fig. 1) the state of its preservation, as well as new elements and their layout within the interior. The aforementioned plans of the state from 1987 show the division of the interior into two distinct areas, one larger than the other – one is a driveway with a roundabout with a centrally-planted flower pot (absent in 2014), and a lone tree. The second part of the garden was composed in the form of two uneven lawns separated by a gravel walkway, which lead to the roundabout. The trees were arranged in a freeform manner. This state has not been preserved and was rearranged in relation to its XIX original composition. It is currently in an urgent need of revitalization, being one of the more exposed, yet kind of forgotten, urban interiors along the Royal Way. This public space deserves to regain its lost (to being a parking lot, no less) splendor and character as a park.

### 3. Functional and aesthetic issues in the context of the area's historical character

One has to admit that the current owner – the Jagiellonian University – is desperately trying, in proportion to the funds at its disposal, to preserve the technical condition of the interior, even if it amounts only to those elements nearest to the street. One should respect the finishing of the renovation of the fence that was finished in 2013, as well as that of the

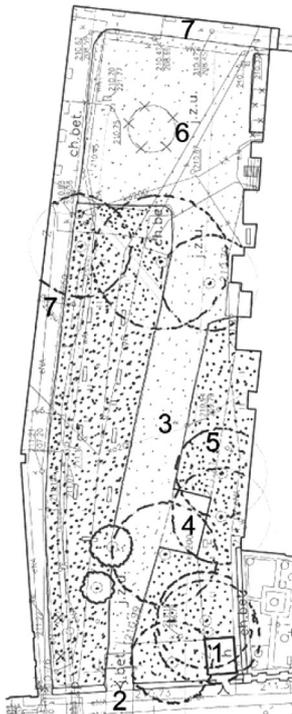
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<sup>1</sup> According to the terminology proposed by J. Bogdanowski (1976).

<sup>2</sup> Polski Komitet ds. UNESCO, Polskie obiekty na Liście Światowego Dziedzictwa, (online): <http://www.unesco.pl/kultura/dziedzictwo-kulturowe/swiatowe-dziedzictwo/polskie-obiekty> (date of access: 2014-10-30).

<sup>3</sup> BIP Kraków, (online): [http://www.bip.krakow.pl/index.php?dok\\_id=48882](http://www.bip.krakow.pl/index.php?dok_id=48882) (date of access: 2014-10-30).

<sup>4</sup> J. Bogdanowski (Ed.), *Parki i ogrody Krakowa w obrębie Plant z Plantami i Wawelem*, Ośrodek Ochrony Zabytkowego Krajobrazu – Narodowa Instytucja Kultury, Warszawa 1997, pp. 134-137.



- where
- 1 – Souvenir shop
  - 2 – Entry gate from Grodzka Street
  - 3 – Gravel driveway
  - 4 – Delineated parking lot
  - 5 – Lawn
  - 6 – Gravel covered surface
  - 7 – Paved walkway

Fig. 1. Extant state – dated 2014

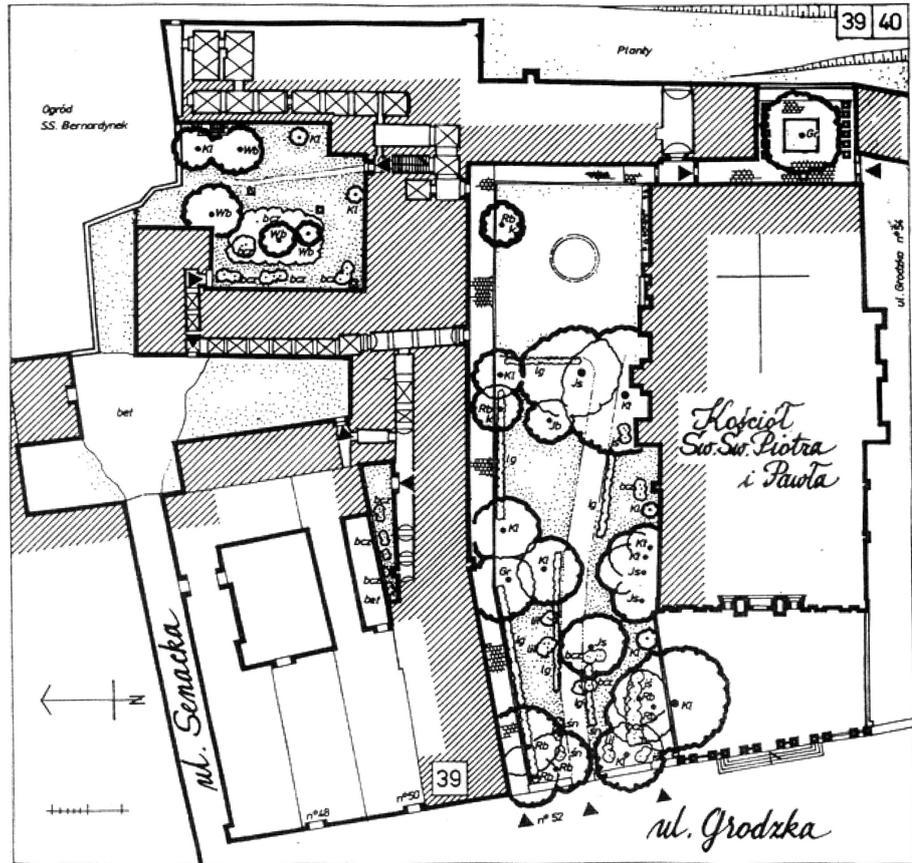


Fig. 2. Extant state – dated 1987 as presented in [2]

facade of the Grodzka 52 building. There is, however, a lack of a holistic and a coherent approach at a series of functional issues, the solution to which is made difficult by the peculiar placement of the property line between the Jagiellonian University and the Parish Of All Saints. It is located exactly on the external line of the wall of the church of Saints Peter And Paul, causing a legal separation of the entrance leading to the sacristy and the small interior courtyard that is located between the eastern wall of the presbytery and the wall that separates it from the *Plenty*. Physically, it is possible to access it, as it is allowed by an agreement between both institutions. In order to conduct any design work, however, it is necessary to take note of a series of very peculiar conditions, the most problematic of which is the provision of a proper fire access route<sup>5</sup> that meets all the legal and technical requirements and, at the same time, juggling a series of functional and aesthetical problems that arise from it, not to mention the aim of restoring the original layout of the garden. This approach can be termed radical, as it forces the designer to choose between the adaptation of the interior to its current lackluster function or a full restoration of the original layout,

while negating modern needs and requirements, with a significant monetary cost of fitting the adjacent buildings with state of the art fire protection equipment and installations. Another functional conflict is the natural tendency of the users of the Collegium Broscianum to expand the number of parking spaces in the courtyard area. Every designer knows that this interior, being a public space, should not be brought down to a mere parking lot, perhaps with temporary parking spots, especially for disabled persons, but never a fully fledged parking lot. A parking lot is not a complementary function to an urban garden, where lawns should clearly dominate over paved surfaces. The problem of revitalization, or rather restoring the state that was one of the phases of the development of this area, also requires confronting with the actual needs of the users of the nearby buildings, the most numerous group of which are students, closely followed by teachers, clients of the archives and tourists. That last group is expected to rise in number due to the steady completion of the phases of constructing the National Pantheon, the entrance to which is going to be located near the south eastern part of the courtyard. This in itself can bring into play a vastly different type of issues and needs.

#### 4. Focus points for the revitalization

The garden, in order to fulfill its function as a representative urban interior and public space, needs to meet certain basic functional parameters, in addition to accessibility,

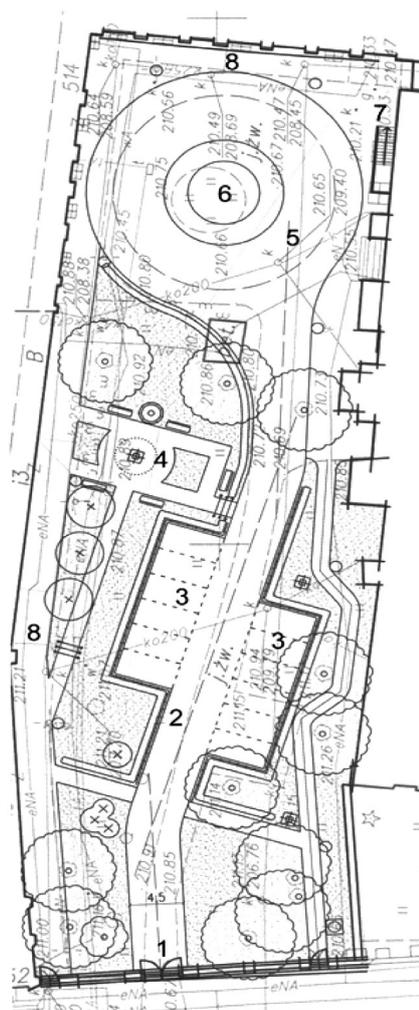
<sup>5</sup> Dz.U.2009.124.1030 – Rozporządzenie Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji w sprawie przeciwpożarowego zaopatrzenia w wodę oraz dróg pożarowych, Rozdział 6. Drogi pożarowe, (online): <http://www.arslege.pl/rozporzadzenie-ministra-spraw-wewnetrznych-i-administracji-w-sprawie-przeciwpozarowego-zaopatrzenia-w-wode-oraz-drog-pozarowych/k348/s3541> (date of access: 2014-10-30).

which are a requirement due to the presence of the surrounding buildings. These are:

- a) Pedestrian and bicycle access,
- b) Providing a driveway for special purpose vehicles of particular technical characteristics (fire department trucks, ambulances, technical services vehicles and vehicles adapted to the needs of disabled persons),
- c) Basic and technical infrastructure (segregated litter bins, valves, electricity meters, etc.),
- d) Parking spaces for disabled persons,
- e) Additional functions (currently: tourist information and commerce),
- f) Existing and planned greenery,
- g) General purpose exterior lighting, illumination of greenery and buildings,
- h) Street furnishings,
- i) CCTV monitoring,
- j) Sculptures and reliefs.

The list presented above illustrates the complexity of the matter, which might, at first glance, appear a simple task of designing, carrying out and maintaining the revitalization of a garden. In order to highlight another problem, which is the volume of long term users of the garden, which demands a separate inquiry in itself, the currently-available information<sup>6</sup> suggests that students that frequent lectures and classes at the Collegium Broscianum number at around 1150, the number of tourists isn't substantial, although the church itself is visited by over 10 000 people per month during the tourist season. This number is not complete, as it does not include those visitors that come from the side of Grodzka Street and who stay in the interior for the shade. This potentially large amount of users is a challenging factor for the designer, as it requires a different approach to the very basic elements of furnishing the future public space. The discussion whether this space should have a fully public or semi-public character is a separate topic, more concerned with elements of management and administration of the site. Currently it is a private space, belonging to the University, which is customarily welcoming to the passersby. The University, as the legal owner, covers all the expenses of maintaining the site. It is improbable that entry into the area will be paid for after the revitalization. The very preparation of a preliminary functional program that does not involve an explosion of expectations and demands from the various groups of users is a problem, which is further compounded by the limited accessibility to technical infrastructure, an issue which is, literally speaking, invisible, yet very important, as it requires the reservation of space for new equipment and the modernization of existing pipelines and cables, without which it is impossible to improve the functioning quality of the adjacent buildings.

<sup>6</sup> USOSweb, (online): [https://www.usosweb.uj.edu.pl/kontroler.php?action=actionx:katalog2/sale/index\(\)&reset=&poziom=3&wartosc=Gr52-CB&sciezka=5,96c0196fb71757fba1ed73482c02d3ae&opis=Collegium+Broscianum&pojemnosc=0](https://www.usosweb.uj.edu.pl/kontroler.php?action=actionx:katalog2/sale/index()&reset=&poziom=3&wartosc=Gr52-CB&sciezka=5,96c0196fb71757fba1ed73482c02d3ae&opis=Collegium+Broscianum&pojemnosc=0) (date of access: 2014-10-30).



- where
- 1 – Entry gate from Grodzka Street
  - 2 – Driveway paved with porphyry
  - 3 – Green parking spaces for disabled persons
  - 4 – Student rest zone
  - 5 – Roundabout for fire department trucks
  - 6 – Proposed location of the obelisk
  - 7 – Entrances to the National Pantheon
  - 8 – Walkway

Fig. 3. Concept design of the garden – 2014

## 5. Artistic issues

All of Kraków's gardens are characterized by the presence of some forms of sculptures, whether they are freestanding or reliefs. This space is similar, as there is a plaque in the courtyard of the Collegium Broscianum dedicated to the memory of murdered judges.<sup>7</sup> Currently, it is the only artistic element there, with a heated debate going on, whether the monument of St. Piotr Skarga, currently standing on St. Mary Magdalene's square nearby, should be placed in the courtyard. This information was published, among other places at the [http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pomnik\\_Piotra\\_Skargi\\_w\\_Krakowie](http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pomnik_Piotra_Skargi_w_Krakowie) website. The conflict that arose around this issue is not yet resolved,

<sup>7</sup> Sąd Apelacyjny w Krakowie, (online): <http://www.krakow.sa.gov.pl/dzialalnosc/Lists/KomunikatyPrezesa/DispForm.aspx?ID=36> (date of access: 2014-10-30).

as both its proponents and detractors have not yet finished arguing, standing by their arguments<sup>8</sup> and legal verdicts.

At the concept stage of the design of revitalization, one can contemplate the various potential compositional and functional factors, which can appear in the future due to the possible relocation of the monument. The concept of locating the monument, as illustrated on figures 4, 5 and 6, allows us to divert the discussion to the sphere of analyzing the potential artistic and compositional implications of each proposed layout, rather than their ideological basis. It is also partially of importance due to the planned artistic accenting of the main entrance to the National Pantheon and the process of beatification of St. Piotr Skarga himself, which will probably increase interest in this location among tourists and pilgrims in places associated with his life's work.



Fig. 4. Concept of moving the monument of St. Piotr Skarga. View 1, directly from behind the gate in the fence of the courtyard



Fig. 5. Concept of moving the monument of St. Piotr Skarga. View 2 from the walkway near the Collegium Broscianum building



Fig. 6. Concept of moving the monument of St. Piotr Skarga. View 3 – from Grodzka Street on the axis of the gate

## 6. Issues regarding composition

The revitalization of the garden requires for certain decisions to be made regarding its composition. The basic issues are: the preservation of trees or the level of the currently present stylistic solutions and functional dispositions in regards to making the garden compatible with new functions. It appears that a general, historically conditioned disposition of proportions of 1 to 3 for the area for car traffic and 2 to 3 for greenery has turned out to be highly appropriate, functioning rather well, and thus, should be preserved. The asymmetrical division of the green garden section by a driveway, which leaves most of the lawn on the side of the Collegium Broscianum allows us to use it in a way that provides students with a recreational space during breaks in classes. The part that is adjacent to the church building needs to fulfill a more practical role. It thus remains the only area where service structures can be constructed, as well as the place for parking spots for disabled persons. Thus, the ability to park vehicles without parking privilege in the garden is removed. Even the roundabout featured in the design (required by fire protection regulations), which forms a circular small plaza, cannot be used for parking purposes. To offset this decision, the design features an appropriate amount of parking spaces for bicycles. The division of a section of the garden into micro interiors, each with its own function, allows us to preserve somewhat a certain functional segregation, making a more effect way of using the garden by various users possible. This is also one of the means by which the desired aesthetic effect is going to be obtained, allowing us to grant each of these micro interiors a unique character – from the official, with benches and a spot for a sculpted bust or other small sculpture, to a simple lawn, where someone can simply sit and rest.

## 7. Conclusions for the later design and construction stages

The author does not believe that the presented way of thinking about the revitalization of this particular garden is the best and only one, demanding its construction in this

<sup>8</sup> Góra J., *Prawo do integralności utworu architektonicznego*, [in:] *Sztuka Architektury*, (online): [http://www.sztuka-architektury.pl/articles.php5?pt=pt\\_articles&ptid=39](http://www.sztuka-architektury.pl/articles.php5?pt=pt_articles&ptid=39), (date of access: 2014-10-30).

form, instead making it one of the many voices in a discussion on the future form of this garden, the reintroduction of which, regardless of the different views on the matter held by interested parties, should be implemented. This is due to an obligation resulting from the unique location of the site in the strict center of Kraków, in a very exposed place, being, sadly, in a state not befitting it, both in terms of its technical and aesthetic state. This needs addressing, without a doubt, which is why a constructive approach by all parties is required, which is difficult, as conflict over the matter has already arisen. We must hope that, once a consensus is reached, the energy which is currently being unproductively wasted can be directed towards acquiring the needed funds and carrying out the project. Should it take the form of a restoration of the proper conditions of a public space, the effect would not only benefit this particular interior, but also spread its positive influence to improve the perception of other the entire center of Kraków. The new garden could give Grodzka Street a new splendor, making the adjacent buildings and the spaces around them friendlier for Kraków's inhabitants and their guests. The very fact that differing opinions and heated discussions exist on the matter of locating monuments and other spatial elements every time such an initiative comes up is, overall, a positive thing. Historically, this attitude is considered traditional for Kraków, as every major initiative which changes our urban environment causes a stir and a discussion. It is a very positive phenomenon, for it shows that the

inhabitants are not oblivious to the aesthetic state of the space around them, which they have come to know, accept and make use of, often forming a deep emotional bond. A different problem are the procedures of locating these types of public spaces in the larger space of the city and the follow up procedures that regulate the possibility of introducing changes or correcting mistakes made by past initiatives and projects. Conventional design and construction wisdom dictates that, sometimes, even though proceedings regarding architectural competitions are held to the highest standards, being given much thought and evaluation by panels of experts, the perception of a work by a wide audience can differ substantially from the views of any jury. Another factor is the passage of time, which can change some, often very emotional and present only due to a very specific situation and context, views on planned or constructed works of art and architecture. Even the current trends in art have an impact on our opinions regarding the aesthetics of a particular work in a given moment. Thus, while not closing the ongoing discussion, the thoughts presented in this article regarding the revitalization of the interior of the courtyard of the Collegium Broscianum, an important element of the Royal Way, located near the church of St. Peter and St. Paul (which belongs to a sequence of elements that make up the larger public space of Kraków's city center), could become an influence for positive actions, so that the quality of this space can be improved. Such is the aim of this article.

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