

THE REVALORISATION OF A HISTORICAL GARDEN BASED ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE BASILICA OF CORPUS CHRISTI IN KRAKÓW

Abstract

The topic of the work is a revaluation of the garden design within the premises of the Gothic Corpus Christi Basilica in Krakow and Canons Regular of the Lantern Monastery, which are located in the Kazimierz district. This project aims to develop a garden design congruent with the epoch in which it was constructed. Project's consistency is achieved by the application of compatible style and composition. Next phase constitutes the creation of the garden design. Old functions and the arrangement of the garden were preserved. the *genius loci* idea was selected as a core value of the project. This work presents consecutive stages of the project's development, ultimately arriving at the complete design.

Keywords: gardens, Corpus Christi Basilica, Kraków, cultural heritage

1. Purpose and topic of the article

The article aims to present a draft of the restoration of the historical garden design belonging to the Basilica of Corpus Christi. It is located in Kraków on the premises of the on the premises of the district of Kazimierz. Location in such a unique part of the city as well as the high rank of this Gothic and Baroque church and monastery complex¹ resulted in the need for a very detailed pre-project analysis whose results are presented in this paper. The text is based on the author's thesis.²

2. Source materials

Bearing in mind the historical value of the area, it was necessary to resort to archival material giving a more complete picture of changes that have occurred on the premises of the building. The collections of the National Archives in Krakow, the V division of iconographic and cartographic materials and the branch III – the Krakow city act, local governments, religious organizations, schools and community organizations proved particularly important. Also, the information resulting from the combination of archival maps from the *Atlas of Polish historical cities*³ proved extremely important in this work. The iconography from *The directory of monuments of art in Poland*⁴ and the

nineteenth – century photographs of Ignacy Krieger included in *The album of old photographs of Krakow*⁵ are also noteworthy.

3. Monastery gardens as part of the cultural heritage

Monastery gardens are undoubtedly an important and interesting element of the cultural heritage dating many centuries back, continuing the tradition of the Middle Ages.⁶ They consist of multiple parts with a patio located at the center of the composition and aesthetically are strongly linked with the surrounding buildings. Their central parts were geometrized plots.⁷ Most were of functional nature, i.e.: orchards, vineyards, vegetable or herb gardens. Often, there appeared climber plants. Although the gardens are not usually visible in the structure of the city and, moreover, are largely neglected, they constitute an important element of the heritage and are valuable as green areas.⁸ Despite many changes, transformations and accumulations, as well as certain omissions in the composition, the usable function of these gardens is still visible. Their essence is a tradition dating back to the Middle Ages.⁹

4. Context of the old district of Kazimierz

The former district of Kazimierz, currently being part of Old Town District I, is an interesting place because of the rich history whose part are the monastery foundations and gardens associated with them. What is meant here are the premises of the Basilica of Corpus Christi and the

* M.Sc. Arch. Julia Klimek, Institute of Landscape Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, Cracow University of Technology, Poland.

¹ The Basilica of Corpus Christi, the monastery of the Canons Regular of the Lateran, and the site of the former churchyard and fence gates were entered in the register of monuments in the first half of the twentieth century.

² This subject has been developed within the engineering diploma project under the supervision of dr inż. arch. Katarzyna Hodor in the academic year 2012/2013, at the Institute of Landscape Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, Cracow University of Technology.

³ Z. Noga (ed.) *Atlas historyczny Miast Polskich*, vol. 5: *Małopolska*, booklet 1: *Krakow*, Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii i Zabytków Krakowa, Kraków 2007.

⁴ I. Rejduch-Samkowska, J. Samek (ed.), *Katalog zabytków sztuki w Polsce*, vol. 4: *Miasto Kraków*, part 4: *Kazimierz i Stradom: kościoły i klasztory*, Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, Warszawa 1987.

⁵ M. Broniewska, S. Taborowski (ed.), *Album fotografii dawnego miasta Krakowa z atelier Ignacego Kriegera*, Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, Kraków 1989.

⁶ A. Mitkowska, *Historia ogrodów europejskiego kręgu kulturowego*, vol. 1: *Od starożytności do renesansu*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Krakowskiej, Kraków 2012, p. 86.

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 60-61.

⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 75-78.

⁹ K. Hodor, *Ogrody klasztorne i ich rola w kształtowaniu tkanki urbanistycznej miasta Krakowa*, Politechnika Krakowska, Kraków 2012, p. 7.

Monastery of the Canons Regular of the Lateran, which are the main focus of this study, but also the Church of Michael (archangel) and St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr with the Order of Saint Paul the First Hermit, Saint Catherine of Alexandria Church and Margaret with the Augustinian nuns or not existing Cistercians garden at Stradom.

Medieval garden design associated with the Order of Saint Paul the First Hermit and the Augustinian nuns have common features and are typical for the time when they were created. The plot layouts had trees planted on the edges with intersecting paths. Also, wider walking paths were introduced and, in the compositional center, were vertical accents. In both cases, patios of a decorative nature were also important. Although the garden at Cistercians church has not survived to the present day, it is known that the inner monastery garden was analogous to other medieval designs of this type in Krakow.¹⁰

5. Basilica of Corpus Christi and Monastery of Canons Regular of the Lateran: History of the building

5.1. The architecture of the building

Corpus Christi Church is a Gothic three-aisled basilica without transept, founded by King Casimir the Great in 1340 as a parish church of the then city of Kazimierz. Construction of the sanctuary was completed in 1387 and the body between 1389 and 1403. The tower, destroyed by fire, was rebuilt in 1556. The architect of the temple is, among others, master Piotr, who lived in the fourteenth century, whereas architects Karol Knaus and Tadeusz Stryjeński are connected with the twentieth century rebuilding of the temple.¹¹

It's an elongated, complex and brick block with three-sided choir with buttresses. Inside, the ornate baroque altar draws particular attention.¹²

Monastery of Canons Regular of the Lateran is located in the north of the Basilica. The northern wing dates back to the period around 1405–1421. Its mannerism early baroque character is due to its rebuilding in the years 1616–1673.¹³

5.2. Historical descriptions of garden design

“In the garden of the monastery, in the east part, there's a gazebo built in the eighteenth century, made of brick and octagonal; entrances and windows alternating with them are in stone, rectangular, friezed window frames, probably from the seventeenth century; pavilion roof is covered with tiles. In the west patio and in the garden, there are stone and marble fragments, among others Gothic beveled window jambs; octagonal floor slabs of black marble, from the seventeenth century, probably from the chancel of the

church; three wall baptismal bowls, baroque, oval, buckled with black marble, from the eighteenth century.¹⁴

It seems, however, that the cemetery church was originally narrower and in the northern frontage of the “Dog Market” (and thus in the northern frontage of today's Św. Wawrzyńca Street within a part of today's cemetery at the monastery of the Canons Regular of the Lateran) there were three plots marked out in the course of the location of the town (the number of the plots was determined by the modular analysis of the plan of Kazimierz of the Middle Ages). On the back of the western parcel was created – as it seems – the house of the preacher of Corpus Christi, mentioned in 1389, adapted in 1405 into Canons Regular monastery. In place of the recently defunct entrance gate into the garden of the monastery there was an inlet of a transverse street, running in the extension of Estery Street towards the Dog (Cattle) Market (...).¹⁵

“Two decorative gates in this simple wall lead one into an extensive church square, overgrown with grass, tree-covered, guarded by a huge church building with a slender bell tower”.¹⁶

5.3. Historical and compositional phases of changes in the garden design

The time of creation of the garden design is XIV–XVII century.¹⁷ Through the analysis of archival maps and plans, it was possible to determine the phases of historical–compositional transformations. However, one should bear in mind that the first two phases, dating back to the oldest periods of the existence of the garden, are purely presumptive.

The first phase dated to the beginning of the V–VII century can be determined using archival descriptions of the garden. What is meant here are the burial cemetery situated near the church and the parish school on the north side. In the garden of the monastery, there appeared a simple layout based on a cross.

The second phase, lasting from the seventh century to 1785, is based on historical descriptions of garden design, but mostly on archival votive image depicting a garden with a natural layout and six chapels. At this time, the gazebo and the wall were created.

The third phase took place in the years 1785–1836 and its determining was enabled by the analysis of the “Kołłątajowski” Plan of 1785. During this time, the monastery garden again took the geometric nature and the brick gazebo became its center. There appeared a wall separating the space at the Church from the area associated with the Monastery. From the south side of the Basilica there is a visible line of trees and the Garden of Gethsemane will be built. What is

¹⁰ B. Stępniewska, *Ogrody Krakowa*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1977, pp. 60–62.

¹¹ M. Różiewicz, J. Czaj-Waluś, *Zabytki architektury i budownictwa w Polsce: Kraków*, Krajowy Ośrodek Badań i Dokumentacji Zabytków, Warszawa 2007, p. 43.

¹² T. Dobrowolski, *Sztuka Krakowa*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1978, pp. 87–90.

¹³ I. Rejduch-Samkowa, J. Samek (Ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 68.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 76.

¹⁵ B. Krasnowolski, *Ulice i place krakowskiego Kazimierza: Z dziejów Chrześcijan i Żydów w Polsce*, Universitas, Kraków 1992, p. 158.

¹⁶ W. Łuszczkiewicz, *Kościół Bożego Ciała: jego dzieje i zabytki*, Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii i Zabytków Krakowa, Kraków 1898, p. 5.

¹⁷ M. Różiewicz, J. Czaj-Waluś, *Zabytki architektury i budownictwa w Polsce: Kraków*, Krajowy Ośrodek Badań i Dokumentacji Zabytków, Warszawa 2007, p. 43.



Fig. 1. Historical and compositional phases of changes in the garden design at the Basilica of Corpus Christi (edited by J. Klimek)

meant here is also the garden from the south, where the composition was based on a single, horizontal axis.

The fourth phase from 1836 to 1889 was determined on the basis of the *Plan of Krakow within the trenches of 1836*. The most significant change that took place in the appearance of the garden design at the Monastery part was moving the vertical axis towards the west. In the part of the garden on the other side of Św. Wawrzyńca Street, the composition is based on two intersecting perpendicular axes.

The fifth phase, lasting from 1889 to the present day, can be determined from the *Plan of the Royal Capital City of Kraków from 1889*. During this period, there occurred major reduction in the green area, both on the east side, where appeared new land development, and on the south side. The garden design is based on a cross with circular headquarters inscribed in the center.

The sixth stage is connected with contemporary times. Near the church, there appeared wooden crosses. In the monastery part, in the wall on the west side, there's a chapel with a statue of the Mother of God, the holy figure in the center of the garden and a sports field on the east side.

Summing up, over the years, there can be seen a gradual thickening of buildings within the very Renaissance- Baroque church and monastery complex as well as in its immediate surroundings. This resulted in the changes in the area of the garden, i.e. it clearly decreased. The brick gazebo, originally being in the center of the complex, is now on its eastern border. In almost all the phases, the compositional lines running perpendicularly from the above mentioned gazebo as well as the vertical line, parallel to the Monastery and whose position was changed in the course of time, are clearly marked.

6. The analysis of conditions

6.1. Planning conditions

The discussed building is situated in an unusually attractive tourist area of Krakow, which has thrived for the last several years. The origins of the Town of Kazimierz date back to the fourteenth century and its location was based on the Magdeburg law by King Casimir the Great. For centuries, it was also an example of co-existence side by side of two different cities. We are talking about the once independent Jewish Kazimierz.

The rich history resulted in numerous monuments like Christian churches, Jewish synagogues, squares, museums and cemeteries. We can distinguish numerous hiking trails on which route is the Basilica of Corpus Christi. This includes the Cracow Path of the Saints or the Trail of Gothic churches of Krakow. Other trails are: Jewish Kazimierz, Christian Kazimierz, Traces of Schindler's List and Traces of the Holocaust.¹⁸

It is worth mentioning that the Basilica of Corpus Christi is extremely important in terms of observation. It is strongly marked in the panorama of Krakow. It is a prime observatory dominant. From the Św. Wawrzyńca Street there is an observation course. It is also linked by observation axis with other historical designs, i.e. the Church of Michael (archangel) and St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr.¹⁹

¹⁸ A. Legutko-Ołownia, *Krakowski Kazimierz: Miasto rozstań i powrotów*, Wydawnictwo Bezdroża, Kraków 2004, pp. 87, 129, 165, 185.

¹⁹ B. Krasnowolski (ed.), *Studium waloryzacji przestrzeni publicznych dzielnicy Kazimierz: praca zbiorowa wykonana przez PKZ ARKONA sp. z o.o.*, vol. 3, chart 2: *Wartości widokowe*, Pracownia Dokumentacji Naukowo-Historycznej, Kraków 2003.

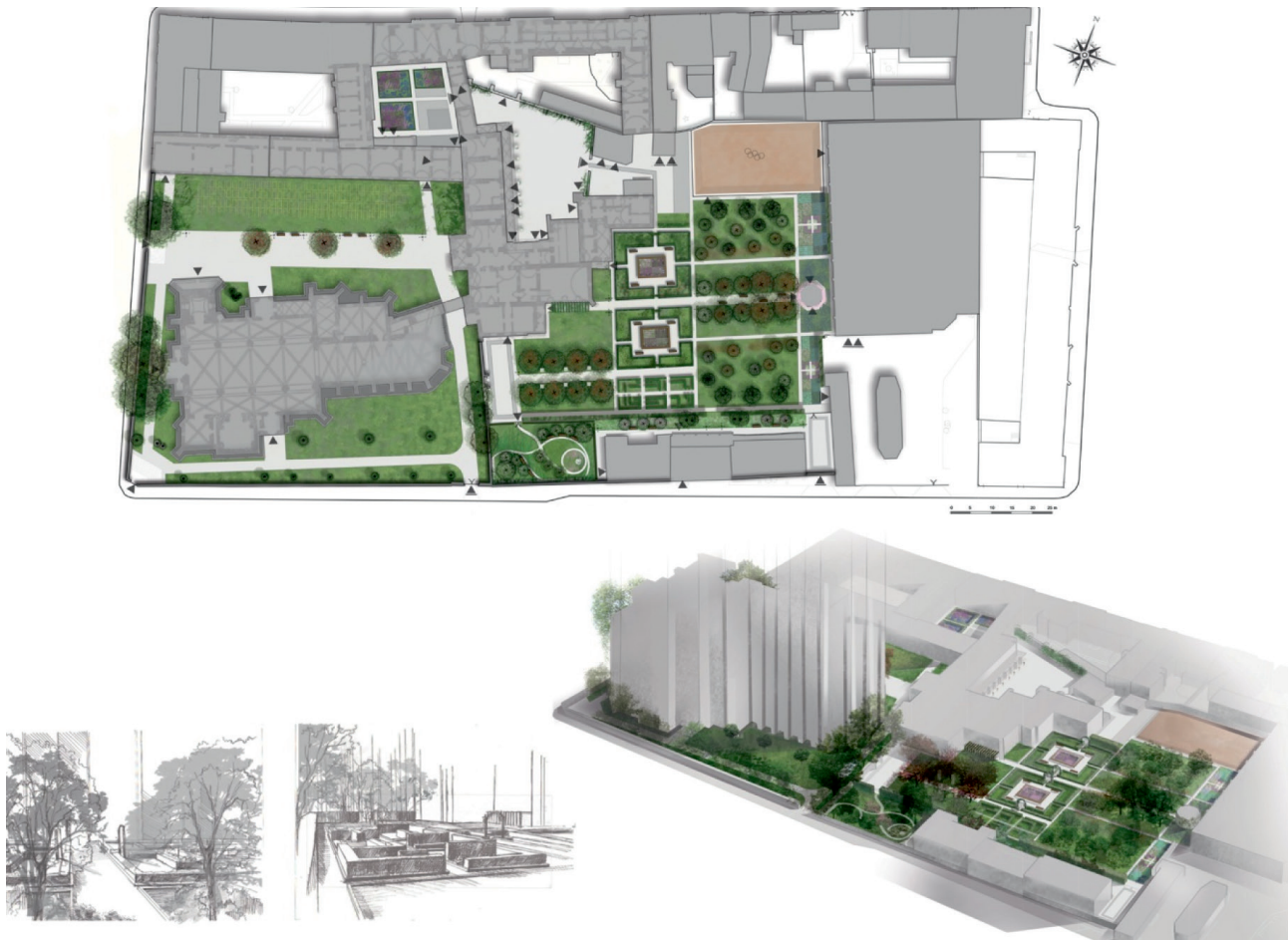


Fig. 2. Floor plan of a restoration project of garden design at the Basilica of Corpus Christi (Ed. J. Klimek)

6.2. Determinants of the area of the complex

Buildings in the vicinity of the above mentioned church and monastery complex are largely residential and utilitarian. On the eastern side, there are buildings of Museum of Municipal Engineering and a school: Junior High School No. 3, together with VI High School. From the south, a hotel with a restaurant is located. A large number of houses in the vicinity are entered in the register of monuments. A significant problem in the area of the complex is the traffic chaos. In particular, we are talking about the patio and the transition zone, connecting the patio with the monastery garden. One can note there a large number of entrances to the attached buildings of low aesthetic value.

Four groups of architectural and landscape interiors were distinguished. The study of 1979,²⁰ discussing the present church and monastery complex, has been updated in accordance with the state of today. The first group covers the area directly related to the Church. The second group is a patio surrounded by monastic buildings. The third group is the already mentioned transition zone. And the last one is a monastery garden area. A special role is

played by a dominant in the form of the block of a temple, on which the observation axis running also along the line of the chapel of Our Lady of the surrounding wall is directed. An important observation point is also the space in front of the gazebo.

6.3. Analysis of vegetation

The area of this study is relatively poor in vegetation. By the Church, on the west side, there occur the oldest specimens of trees (linden, ash). From the south, at the Gothic buildings there are newly planted maple trees formed in the shape of a sphere. In some places, there are hostas and ferns. Part of the patio is almost completely devoid of greenery. A similar situation is in the transition zone, although a high wall covered in ivy can be noticed. In the monastery part, coniferous species such as yew, arborvitae or Sawara Cypress dominate. Central plot is planted with formed boxwood. The study of 1979 mentions a greater diversity of vegetation at the time when there appeared: lilac, hawthorn, redcurrant, conker tree, privet, walnut tree golden currant or cottonwoods. Barbara Stępniewska mentions that formerly a vegetable garden, a herb garden and an orchard existed here.²¹

²⁰ M. Swaryczewska, J. Więckowska, J. Bogdanowski, *Katalog zabytkowych założen Krakowa: Ogród X.X. Kanoników Regularnych Laterańskich*, Zakład Urbanistyki i Planowania Przestrzennego, Politechnika Krakowska, Kraków 1979.

²¹ B. Stępniewska, *Ogrody Krakowa*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1977, p. 63.

7. Contemporary state

Currently, the garden is clearly neglected. The area adjacent to the basilica is mainly the area of the hardened surface and grassy areas with few specimens of trees. The most discordant part is on the north side where chaos is intensified by the large number of attachments such as objects acting as warehouses. In the area of the garden of the monastery can be seen traces of former major lines of composition but the system is not refined and does not fit clearly into the history of this place.

8. Restoration project

The proposed solution stipulates that it is to refer to a typical distribution of the medieval garden. In these places, there were gardens, orchards, herb gardens and groves and also flower gardens, acting as a decorative form.²²

The composition is based on a simple geometric division in which the functions of individual zones are clearly marked. The area around the Basilica was ordered and the historical function of the place was symbolically emphasized through the introduction of light strips on the layout of the former burial cemetery. The original character was restored to the small patio through the use of rectilinear system based on equilateral cross. Part of the monastery garden was divided by intersecting perpendicular paths forming a regular figure. The main idea was to emphasise the most important axes which clearly stood out during

the successive phases of the historical and compositional transformation. We are talking primarily about a line having its origin in an octagonal gazebo. A line running perpendicular to the chapel based in the wall separating the monastic area from the part directly adjacent to the Basilica also proved significant. In the resulting plots, their purpose was inscribed, such as the garden of the Virgin Mary, maze, herb garden and a vegetable garden, enclosed garden, orchard and the ornamental part.

This concept is to both enter into the history of the place as well as to refer to the idea of a medieval garden and restore its utilitarian and decorative function. Moreover, this design is to become an aesthetic and visually attractive place. Despite its closed nature, the greenery adjacent to the monastery becomes increasingly visible from the outside. What is meant here are the nearby restaurants and buildings of the Museum of Municipal Engineering, which are linked scenically of a monastery garden to which they adjoin.

9. Conclusions

There is no doubt that the garden design at the Basilica of Corpus Christi and the Monastery of the Canons Regular of the Lateran constitute high historical value and are a significant element of our cultural heritage. Given the intense development of the area of the former district of Kazimierz and the increase in importance as a place visited by tourists on a very large scale, it is worth noticing also the monastery garden located in the heart of Kazimierz. With the restoration project, it is necessary to refer to the history of the object and create a concept enshrined in the character of the place.

²² J. Bogdanowski, *Polska sztuka ogrodowa: krótka historia kompozycji i rewaloryzacji*, Towarzystwo Wydawnicze „Historia Iagellonica”, Kraków 1999, p. 11-12.

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