

HISTORICAL PARKS AND GARDENS IN SLOVAKIA

TÖRTÉNETI KERTEK SZLOVÁKIÁBAN

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THE SITUATION of historical greenery in Slovakia can be described in one word as unsatisfactory. Reasons for this include lack of interest from the society. Their historical value, economical potential or just their beauty is easily recognizable; but the limiting factor remains the financing. Nevertheless there are first good signs pointing to better times for historical greenery. The severity of situation is even more complicated by the number of objects and the variability of their kinds; from simple memorial trees through small gardens and large parks to composed parts of the countryside. Typology concerns both sacral and secular objects with productive or representative character; the main attributes remains identical: age, style and cultural value.

For a better description it would be appropriate to show specific examples from one area to present the variety of problems. District Nové Zámky from the south-eastern part of Nitra County in western Slovakia is a good model. Statistically every other village has an object of historical landscape (30 historic landscape sites out of 60 cities or villages); also the typology is representative; from memorial trees in the district's capital Nové Zámky (Ľrsekújvár) to a 60 hectare park in Palárikovo (Tóth Megyer). Moreover, the characteristics are accordingly various and sufficient to understand the whole problematic of historical greenery in Slovakia.

BÁNOV (BÁNKESZI) - MALÁ KESA

An eclectic villa from the second half

of 19th century was nicely reconstructed by a new private owner, but the decayed park was just simply cut out leaving just few older trees. The attractive surroundings of the former park with small pond on old Nitra River and meadow grove suggest the possible atmosphere in the park. Today's look of the garden represents the poorness of contemporary garden architecture; outplantings next to the fence, a pool in front of the villa facade, and concrete walls around the plot are not suitable for a historical site.

BARDOŇOVO (BARACSKA)

An example of a positive approach from village authorities (maybe not the most perfect one but still the better one). A middle-sized manor house



Fig. 1. The neglected manor of Hul (Hull)
Fig. 2. Jatov (Jattó)
Fig. 3. Komjatice (Komját)



from the beginning of the 19th century was completely reconstructed to be the seat of village autonomy and a cultural centre. The park will be reconstructed in the near future; but materials for reconstruction of paving were already chosen inappropriately. The park is devoid of fencing and constantly open for the public, against the rules of the Florence Charter.

BELÁ (BÉLA)

Another example of a privately owned historical landscape object with a huge four winged manor house from the beginning of the 18th century built in Baroque style. The object was returned to former nobility owners who started the complete reconstruction in a proper way. There are plans for a four star

hotel with conference facilities, hardly compatible with the unique Baroque temple incorporated into the body of the manor house. But again the park did not get an appropriate attention; the hilly area is disturbed by a former football pitch together with an artificial lake. The park reconstruction is of amateur quality, lacking any plan. A parterre in front of the south-eastern facade does not correspond with the historical state, similarly to the park paths, park pavilion and so on.

HUL (HULL)

An example of a negative approach from local authorities; a small classicistic manor from the end of the 18th century stays empty without use and is for sale (Fig 1.). One half of an already small

park was built upon and the second one is used as a public park with a functionalistic look. There are no more positive expectations about the future of this historical landscape object.

JATOV (JATTÓ)

Another bad example of a site with continuously changed owners; the manor house was rebuilt in the first half of the 19th century; nowadays it is decaying (Fig 2.). This case is obviously inappropriate because of the site's location next to the main road that runs between Nové Zámky and Bratislava. There is an interesting pond next to the park and a Rococo chapel situated across the mentioned road.

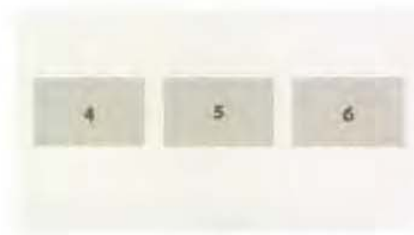


Fig. 4. Maňa (Manya)
– Velká Maňa
Fig. 5. Trávnica (Füss)
Fig. 6. Palárikovo
(Tótmegyer)



KOLTA

A privately-owned manor house from the end of 19th century has undergone complete reconstruction; the cut-down greenery is going to be replaced by a modern style garden. The interesting point of this site is the existence of another curia with a small park and production yard in the adjacent neighbourhood and other smaller historical landscape objects in the village.

KOMJATICE (KOMJÁT)

This is a unique example; the manor house disappeared and the park survived. There are blocks of flats instead of a main building and famous glass-house, and just production buildings remained. Originally a formal park, it was rebuilt in the 19th century to

landscape form. The park is protected by meanders of old Nitra River and offers excellent conditions for dendrologically-interesting plants (Fig. 3.).

LIPOVÁ – MLYNSKÝ SEK (NYITRAMALOMSZEG)

The third form of historical landscape site management is state ownership. This occurs in the case of the Lipová manor house and park; currently used as social healthcare clinic. Continuous maintenance of the park by the institute could be positively evaluated but is not sufficient. It is necessary to mention the good atmosphere in park with its massive trees, but it also unfortunately has inappropriate functionalistic extensions, concrete fencing and public inaccessibility.

MAÑA (MANYA) – VELKÁ MAÑA

This state-owned late baroque manor house from the half of 18th century is also a seat of a public healthcare clinic but with different approach to historical greenery. Its large park is divided in two parts; one belongs to the village and is open to the public (similarly to the front parterre), and the second one belongs to the institute (Fig. 4.). There is not just a fence dividing the park but also a water channel made of concrete. Part of the public park was replaced by a football pitch commonly used as a cultural events site.

PALÁRIKOVO (TÓTMEGYER)

The largest and most important historic landscape object in Nové Zámky District is a 60 hectare park with



a classicistic manor house owned by State Forests institute. Its importance is determined by the existence of other additional buildings like a church, production yard, fountains, wooden water tower and spacious pheasantry. This significant factor influences the existence of the whole object; reconstruction of the manor house is financed by the profit from pheasant hunting. There is a formal parterre with a pink marble fountain in the honour courtyard, which had its mirror on an axis in front of the garden facade. Only the second pink marble fountain remains of the garden's formal parterre replaced by landscape parterre. All the typical marks of a landscape park grounded on lowland are readable in its composition;

including views, vistas and panoramas combined with forest parts and open meadows. Its only weakness is the underestimated water element represented by small lake in the middle of the park although there are several swamps in the neighbourhood. Interesting tree species, the closeness of the district capital reachable by bike in half hour and a very nice atmosphere suggest more intensive use of this historical site in the future (Fig. 5.).

RÚBAŇ (FÜR)

This is another example of a neglected park and small neo-classicistic manor with a sad history. During the socialist regime it served as a detention camp for priests and monks. This period had influenced also the park, where

is now Calvary and Lourd Grotto; part of the park was built in by a functionalistic block of houses because of insufficient capacity in the main building. Return to the original form of the park is therefore impossible; the site stays empty in village ownership.

TRÁVNICA (FÜSS)

Again an interesting situation; three historical greenery objects are situated in one village. A neo-classicistic manor house built at the end of 19th century with huge park and production yard, small late Baroque manor house with a chapel and small park from half of 18th century situated across the road and finally the originally classicistic manor house at the end of the village, which was rebuilt in a functionalistic



Fig. 7. Šarkan (Šarkányfalva)



style during the socialist period. Three different manor houses – three different situations: private owner, village ownership and state ownership (social healthcare clinic). The private object is well maintained, the main building is completely reconstructed to become a hotel; and the park is adapted to hotels needs (horse stables). The part under the ownership of the municipality was decaying a long time and just a short time ago was sold also to a private owner. Now there is a restaurant in a well-reconstructed building with a small park. The third historical landscape object is the most valuable from a dendrological point of view with average maintenance assured by the clinic. The park situated next to the church is composed in landscape style; small damage was caused by necessary playgrounds for children (Fig.6.).

ŠARKAN (SÁRKÁNYFALVA)

A small classicistic manor house built in the beginning of 19th century with a park completely divided by new owners is interesting because of its neo-Gothic fencing around the whole area. The building is decaying, and the iron part of fence was stolen. There are just a few trees left from the former park composition (Fig.7.).

ŠURANY (NAGYSURÁNY)

The district's third largest city with a manor house situated in front of the railway station was rebuilt in a functionalistic style and there is a cemetery in the former park.

The abovementioned sites represent only the largest and the most important ones from the District Nové Zámky. Memorial trees, alleys and old orchards were left out, because of their more natural character. If we have to compare the ownership forms, which are more or less equal

(1/3 of private ownership, 1/3 municipal ownership and 1/3 state ownership) we come to a conclusion that objects in private ownership are still in the best condition. The use of these objects as hotels, restaurants, congress centres or wellness seems to be the most suitable way for the future use of historical greenery objects.

