Architecture and Landscape on Church Premises in Czestochowa

Aleksandra Repelewicz 1, Malwina Tubielewicz 1

1 Czestochowa University of Technology ul. Dąbrowskiego 69, 42-200 Częstochowa, Poland
arepelewicz@bud.pcz.pl

Abstract. The paper shows rare indications concerning site planning of church premises, and describes how areas adjacent to shrines were used; first as graveyards, then as green areas and gardens. Focusing on areas surrounding three different churches in Czestochowa, this case study aims at presenting contemporary tendencies in developing church premises.

1. Introduction
Clues on how to develop church premises are difficult to find in church rules and regulations connected with the proper way of organizing areas surrounding shrines. It is true not only about rules concerning churches in general, but also those applied locally in Poland. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) decided on some general guidelines in terms of designing new church buildings, especially highlighting their aim and significance. However, the Council did not provide any indications on the area adjacent to a building. In Polish church rules such issues are also marginalized. In provisions concerning sacred buildings in Poland [1] published in 1978, among other requirements, the following indication can be found (point 7): It is necessary to develop a car park in front of a church building.

In a church investor manual published in the 1960s the following information can be found: Church authorities are to select a proper area for the building so that it presented well, so that street noise would not interrupt services and the traffic would not block the access to the church building. These rules are customary and they are not regulated by the canon law (…) The building is supposed to be located on a rise. If there is none, according to a tradition, the ground floor ought to be elevated. It should also be possible for a procession to walk around the building. The graveyard should also be separated from adjacent secular buildings [2].

It can be clearly seen that investors have not been limited in their ideas of developing church premises. There have only been two elements that ought to be taken into consideration, i. e., a procession is supposed to be able to walk around the building and the must be a parking lot. All the landscaping elements such as greenery, walkways, lighting depend entirely on the investor and, then, a building administrator. When building a church, a detailed site plan was often created with a certain delay, which was connected with the hierarchy of investments typical for such a sizeable building. Creating such a site plan, however, could eliminate some technical and financial problems that usually arise, especially in connection with the development of the premises of the building.

Church gardening art has its origins in medieval gardens surrounding monasteries. They belonged to religious orders and were intended to be used by their members only. Such gardens were created on the premises of monastic buildings, especially those owned by Bernardines, Cistercians,
Carthusians, and mendicant orders. Gardens of this type were typically characterized by a certain unity of space between the area surrounding the building and the architecture of the building itself. They were situated in flat areas, with fertile soil, often close to rivers or ponds [3]. Over the years they were planted with flowering plants, shrubs, and, frequently, with herbs. At the heart of cloister gardens was a garth epitomizing the place of eternal happiness. As described by Majdacka-Strzeżek: Its spatial development plan was based on geometric division and usually had a form of a square or a rectangle. The division was marked on the perimeter of a garth by means of pathways which crossed perpendicularly or diagonally inside of it. Plants which were typical for garths were decorative flowering plants and shrubs, very often herbs. The height of plants was not considerable so as not to hide the surrounding cloisters enclosing a garth [4]. An area developed in such a way was dedicated primarily for prayer and meditation.

As far as parish churches are concerned, surrounding areas were used mostly as graveyards. Therefore, they are not considered prototypes of contemporary church gardens. Due to sanitary reasons and insufficient space, graveyards situated on church premises were gradually decommissioned, and burial grounds were created on the outskirts of towns and villages. Only then the use of church premises could be different; they started being used as green areas or gardens.

Contemporary church premises are often the result of landscape-architectural planning in which greenery is of great significance. Initially, such areas were planted with long-life high trees of symbolic meaning. Some of these areas resemble parks, others are works of art in which greenery is the major element of composition where contrastive colours of flowers and shrubs are the basis. Such a connection of a tree stands and greenery endows both a building itself and the area surrounding it with a unique atmosphere. Contemporary designers aim at creating public space enhancing meditation, reflection, contemplation, and prayer. Additionally, such an area adds to the landscape of a city.

While designing an area around a church building, it is important to recognize the needs of a given parish, but, additionally, it is equally significant for a designer to be knowledgeable of theology and biblical issues. Such knowledge is extremely useful when creating a church garden as it is obvious that a garden adjacent to a sacral building differs from the one situated next to a single-family house. A church garden is supposed to be unified in form and ought to be characterized by a classic choice of plants and locating of pathways and benches.

A growing importance of elements such as Marian grottoes, statues of saints, Stations of the Cross, or Stations of the Mysteries of the Rosary can also be observed. Such elements of architecture attract the members of a congregation in various times of the day, not only when religious services take place. They encourage private prayer and contemplation. A garden should also reflect the needs of a given parish. It is a good solution to create a thematic garden with an underlying idea comprehensible to visitors, e.g., to present an image of a patron saint of a parish that can inspire believers or depict a biblical story.

2. Materials and methods

There is not a single way of developing church premises. The variety results from the fact that plots where shrines are built are of different size. Each plot is also characterized by a different type of soil, shape of the terrain and the time when a given area was developed. Moreover, there are also subjective factors such as the prosperity of the parish, the taste of priests and parishioners who have an influence on the choice of plants and the design of the area itself. In Częstochowa there are 55 church buildings. In this paper three of them are selected to illustrate diversity in arranging church premises.

3. Church premises in Częstochowa

3.1. Church building situated on small plots of land: St. Stanislaus Kostka Roman Catholic Parish.

The church was built in the years 1987-1988 on a small plot of land at Dabkowskiego Street in a densely built-up centre of the city. One of the walls of the church adjoins a block of flats next to it and the front elevation is situated by the frontage of the street (figure 1). The church building, therefore, does not have a parking lot and, also, it does not provide a possibility for a procession to walk around
The idea of building a church on such a small plot of land resulted from a growing need to provide the inhabitants of the centre of Czestochowa, where there was a scarcity of undeveloped plots, with a parish. Despite the lack of space next to the church, the area was endowed with some small architectural elements: a cross and a statue of a saint. There are two blue spruces planted on both sides of the entrance and a lawn with shrubs along the wall, next to a place where presbytery is located there is yet another silver spruce. Owing to this the whole building seems to be surrounded with greenery and differs from the neighbourhood.

**Figure 1.** St. Stanislaus Kostka Roman Catholic Parish

3.2. Churches built on middle-sized plots: The Church of St. James the Apostle.

The Church of St. James used to be an Orthodox church built in Byzantine style, erected in the nineteen century on the plan of a Greek-style cross. After Poland regained the independence in 1981, the shrine was changed into a Christian Catholic church [5]. The building is located in the centre of Biegański Square opposite the Town Hall. The main entrance is situated on Kilińskiego Street. In 2002 the outside of the building was renovated; the façade was painted light colours, and in the following years the area surrounding the church was rearranged. On the premises of the church there is a statue of St. James the Apostle, the patron saint of pilgrims, which, taking into consideration the fact that Czestochowa is famous for pilgrimages, is deeply symbolic. The statue was created by Szymon Kalafut and is made of sandstone. Next to the church there is also a wooden Missionary Cross. News and information for parishioners are displayed on three stone three-sectional tablets. There are also wooden boards which provide information on the history of St. James’ Parish and Church, services, and events important for the Christian Catholic Church. The green area around the church is enclosed by a stone ledge on three sides and a common snowberry hedge. Wide pathways leading to the church are made of granite paving (Figure 2).
Figure 2. The Church of St. James the Apostle in Częstochowa

They create a passage for city dwellers as well as pilgrims and church processions. The building is surrounded with an old tree stand consisting of for example maples, birches, chestnuts, mountain ash, or larches. Along the pathways there are benches. Street lamps and floodlights light the yard and the building. There is also a carpark located on Kilińskiego and Rakławicka Street. Due to its location, the church is often visited by city dwellers as well as pilgrims and tourists from Poland and from abroad.

3.3. Churches situated on sizeable plots of land: the Church of St. Jadwiga Queen of Poland in Częstochowa.

The Church of St. Jadwiga Queen of Poland is located at General Zajączek Street in Tysiąclecie district. Its construction started on 1 April 1983. It is situated on a plot of 50x100 m between General Zajączek, Worcella, Kniazevicza and Godebskiego Street where a church building, a chapel with a parish office, meeting rooms and a funeral chapel can be found. There are three entrances leading to the yard. The eastern part of the area borders with a residential area (Kniazevicza Street). The church
is surrounded with a garden [6]. Its geometric composition was based on the idea of contrasting colours, shades, textures and flowering times. To the north it is planted with chestnuts, lime trees, spruces and firs. There are also numerous types of shrubs, such as aborvitae, juniper, mugho pine, yew, cypress, spiraea, spindle tree, common box, cotoneaster, barberry, hydrangea, weigela florida, rose, and rhododendron. Grand evergreen rhododendrons with flowers of various colours can be perceived as the landmark of the garden. The whole design is fortified with perennials planted alongside the building. The perennials, in both warm and cold tones, such as rudbeckia, violet, bergenia, or sedum make the whole project complete. The remaining parts of the area are planted with ornamental grass, which add a certain airiness to the entire composition. Such a choice of plants guarantees bright green or celadon shade of grass and leaves during the summer when, with a passage of time, rich colours, such as red, yellow and blue, start to appear. During the autumn the colours change into brown, rust-coloured, or golden colour. In the winter evergreen shrubs are covered with the whiteness of snow. The pathways which lead to the main entrance to the shrine are made of reddish paving stone. Along the pathways flowers in different colours are planted, and the church entrances are highlighted with various species of juniper. To General Zajączech and Worcella Street there is a statue of St. Jadwiga Queen of Poland, the patron saint of the shrine, which dominates over the whole area. It is placed on a marble platform, lit during the night and decorated with green shrubs such as juniper, yew or cypress. Clinker retaining walls filled with silver-blue creeping junipers and planted with cotoneaster horizontalis with typical red fruit. On the premises there are also instances of small architecture, i.e., benches which are used by worshippers during services as well as the inhabitants of this area or random passers-by who need a rest. There are also two parking lots (General Zajączech and Worcella St.). On the premises there is a board where information on services and events in the parish and Archdiocese of Częstochowa are provided. Spruces located next to the entrance to the premises of the church decorate the area throughout the entire year and during Christmas serve as a decoration introducing Christmas spirit to the whole neighbourhood. Common ivy is used to plant the barks of trees; it also serves as a ground-cover plant (Figure 3).

The whole area belonging to the shrine is surrounded with a fence made of 50 stone posts with wall base measuring altogether 120x50cm and metal spans in the form of thing straight bars (300x57cm). The exception is a place where the church premises border with property separated form church premises with fence wire netting. To the north and west there is a hedge composed of white cedar of dark green and golden-yellow colour. The remaining fence is decorated with single trees and shrubs. The entrance to the premises is located at Godebskiego Street. A huge area surrounding a church was transformed into a decorative geometric garden with a multitude of trees, shrubs and flowers. The entire project was carefully planned and thought over and, therefore, it exists in a harmony with the architecture of the church.

4. Results and discussions
Green areas surrounding churches are significant in terms of providing a relationship between church premises and adjacent areas, but also in terms of creating a positive environment for inhabitants [7]. As far as site planning is concerned, a decisive factor is the size of a plot. The time when a garden is created dictates the choice of plants. An example of a shrine erected on a small plot of land is St. Stanislaus Kostka Church in Częstochowa where, in spite of an extremely small space available around the building, the surrounding plants give an impression that there is a lot of greenery. However, the area itself, due to its size, is not functional as there is no possibility for a procession to walk around the shrine and there is no parking lot for churchgoers.
Figure 3. The garden - the Church of St. Jadwiga Queen of Poland in Częstochowa
The premises of The Church of St. James the Apostle are full of high trees typically planted in such areas in the previous century. Now they create the atmosphere of this place and the fact that trees very often become a habitat for native birds adds a special quality to it.

The Church of St. Jadwiga Queen of Poland is an example of the one with a well-developed sizeable plot. The variety of plants, densely planted shrubs remain green throughout the entire year. The choice of flowers based on the principle of contrast gives the garden a picturesque quality all year long. Species of trees selected by the designer diversify the area and serve different functions, e.g., two spruces mark the entrance to the garden. Firs and pines planted alternately hide the massive structure of the church building. One can observe there the integration of greenery with the building itself.

5. Conclusions

Statues of patron saints situated on the premises of all the shrines refer to the past and are evocative of their history. The greenery surrounding these temples provides a facilitating environment where inhabitants or pilgrims can enjoy the atmosphere and spirit of the place. Such areas adjacent to shrines are of great environmental and historical value, they are perfectly integrated with the surroundings, and, therefore, make Czestochowa an attractive city.

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