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Criterion of Authenticity or New Creation in Historical Fortresses on the Territory of Poland

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Abstract. The article discusses adapting ruins or poorly preserved historical structures to new functions, presenting a study of the situation in Polish architecture compared to the efforts of outstanding Western European architects. UNESCO increasingly considers the "criterion of authenticity" in publications on the adaptation of historical structures to modern needs. Some architectural conservators believe castle ruins or other structures should be left in their extant state, even considering their further destruction a natural process. Others argue that ruins are haphazard and lean towards their development, partial reconstruction or redevelopment. Examples of known Western European additions and adaptations of castles to new functions (e.g. Castelgrande in Bellinzona, Switzerland, the Bensberg and Halle castles, Germany) give us hope that interesting modern solutions can also appear in Poland, instead of the increasingly prevalent reconstructions. This hope is particularly justified by the 2013 RIBA Stirling Prize for the best building designed by British architects, awarded for the design of Astley Castle in Warwickshire, West Midlands, England. Saving the ruined twelfth-century castle, a new, contrasting two-storey shell was installed inside the historical walls, turning the castle into a history-rich monument. The Stirling Prize proves the justification and acceptance of such actions. In Poland the situation regarding adapting historical fortresses to new functions is altogether different. According to the latest scholarly calculations, there are currently 421 castles registered as listed sites, around 200 of which are pre-fifteenth-century ones. After World War II a reconstruction of cities from wartime destruction began, also covering larger castles and palaces, which were being turned into museums. The common neglect of aristocratic and noble residences during this time was based on economic and ideological reasons. Many became schools, kindergartens, orphanages or retirement homes, while landed estates became State Agricultural Farms. The situation started changing after 1990, when former residence owners began returning to their homes, while conservation authorities transferred ruined structures to new, mostly private owners, who declared the will to renovate them, in order to have them saved. Local governments also started to recognise that the picturesque castle ruins can become regional tourist attractions. The author's observations and studies of preserved structures proved that there is a lack of modern additions similar to the aforementioned Western European ones. Historical reconstructions are preferred, even in cases with no historical documentation (castles in Bobolice, Korzkiew, Wytrzyszczka, Tykocin). Meanwhile, an introduction of new massings on the basis of winning an architectural competition inside the preserved medieval walls of Ciechanów Castle was sternly refused by conservation authorities. Certain delicate modern additions are being made by experienced designers (Gniew Castle), giving us hope for a change of stance among conservation decision-makers. An analysis of historical processes, as well as a
tracing of the stylistic changes of the architecture of the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, in addition to the artistic stances of their authors justifies the claim that modern architecture has the mandate for intervention into historical substance in cases justified by the necessity of introducing additions or the replacement of said tissue.

1. Introduction

In an era of the standardisation of culture that we are currently observing around the globalised world, cultural separateness - a difference of the landscape, customs and traditions, unique artistic values of architectural monuments or that of urban or landscape complexes - can play an important economic role.

We eagerly visit historical sites, absorbing their atmosphere and ambience, searching for places worthy of remembering and at the same time outstanding through their cultural and historical difference. In European cities we observe works of architecture that make up a substance that accumulates over the centuries, creating a material record of history, exceptionally valuable to national culture, familiarity and identity. Zygmunt Bauman, referring to such writings of the contemporary German philosopher Hans Gadamer, highlighted that the greatest gift that Europe can offer to the entire world is the cultural diversity of its inhabitants. [1] The accumulation of successive epochs and styles constitutes the wealth and attractiveness of historical works of architecture. The common fascination with historical structures that has been observed for years, as well as the observable greater distance and a more reserved approach of the majority of the architectural audience to completely new, previously unknown solutions, encourages developers to search for places that are remembered, romantic, that have this magnetism of tradition, an unforgettable atmosphere and magic.

Interest in this separateness is a factor which influences the development of tourism, which, as a branch of an "environmentally friendly" economy, can and should bring significant profits. A particular role in the organising of structured and individual tourism can be played by castles - defensive, as well as palatial and landscape complexes.

After the Second World War, after the year 1945, Poland saw efforts towards the rebuilding of cities from wartime destruction. There was a lot of work to perform, for the devastation was immense. Suffice to say that Warsaw, Elbląg, Gdańsk and many other cities in the western areas of the country were almost completely ruined, in addition to some larger palaces and castles. The quite common neglect of the residences of aristocrats and the wealthy nobility that was observed at the time was the result of not only economic reasons, but ideological ones as well. Well-preserved castles and palaces that were historically significant to the country were being converted into museums. Mid-range sites - that had been damaged or destroyed as a result of wartime operations, whose owners had been evicted, that had been deserted or - oftentimes - sacked - were in a less favourable situation. To the reigning communist authorities’ palaces and castles were a legacy and proof of social inequalities, proof of the exploitation of the peasantry and workers by the hated wealthy feudal lords and members of the bourgeoisie. The communist authorities thus decided to establish public functions, such as: schools, kindergartens, orphanages or nursing homes in many palaces and residences that had been taken from the wealthy and the aristocracy, while landed estates, along with residential and agricultural buildings, were being converted into State Agricultural Farms. Messiness and apparently deliberate neglect of these structures was being observed.

2. The situation of monuments in Poland after 1990.

The situation started to change after 1990, when owners of former residences started to return to their homes and conservation authorities, in order to protect the damaged, ruined structures, transferred them to new, most often private owners who were declaring they would renovate them. Local governments also started to become aware that picturesque ruins of castles could become essential tourist attractions for a given region. The political transformations and socio-economic changes that have been going on for almost thirty years have caused great change in the ownership structure of historical properties, including palaces and castles. New owners, aware of their authority, often decided to convert buildings into complexes bringing financial benefits, or at times creating settlement structures drawn from their
imagining of the historical ancestral residences of their dreams. Unfortunately, sometimes such efforts were not performed under the supervision of conservators, historians and archaeologists. While a Commission on the Protection of Permanent Ruins was indeed established in 1996 [2], it was only in 2003 that the amended version of the Historical Monuments Protection and Care Act gained legal force. [3]

In Poland there are currently 421 castles listed in the historical monuments registry, of which around 200 sites were built before the end of the fifteenth century. In professional circles discussions regarding the manners of preserving our historical heritage have been going on for many years, but scientific conferences on the subject of the protection, technical condition, as well as the securing of military architecture have only started being hosted quite recently. When comparing the activity of European architects undertaken already in the 1960's and 1970's, in addition to their current efforts in the castles of Western Europe, with attempts at reconstructing such sites in our country, questions and doubts regarding the legitimacy of such measures have started to appear. The problem of whether the enclosing of the approach to the activation of historical sites into exceedingly strict canons was fully justified started being discussed. Perhaps it is rather a form of a safeguard, resulting from fear of making mistakes. Konrad Kucza-Kuczyński said at a conference in 1996: "Fear of creative decisions makes conservators stricter, while architects are funnelled into cheap repetitions because of it". [4] Over 20 years have passed and this statement still appears to hold true. It is difficult to find an adaptation of a fortress in our country that would resemble the works of Aurelio Galfetti at the castle of Castelgrande in Bellinzona, Switzerland, or the built project by Fuensanta Nieto and Enrique Sobejano at the Moritzburg Castle in Halle, Germany, which was being built in a ruin from the period of the Thirty-years’ War. [5] [6] The leaving of a permanent ruin or the reconstruction of a structure is closer to our Polish decision-makers than the introduction of new structures in the vicinity of historical forms. Unfortunately, new private owners have also lately been creating slightly fantastic representations of historical fortresses. Such a fate has befallen the castle in Bobolice, castle Tropsztyn in Wytrzyszczka in the south of Poland or the castle in Tykocin, in the north-east of Mazowsze.

In the years 2010-2012 a group of employees of the Faculty of Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology, as well as researchers from the Lublin University of Technology were conducting a research programme on the subject of the comprehensive evaluation of the condition of historical castle ruins in Poland. The study focused on the ruins of castles built between the twelfth century and the year 1530. The employees of the Warsaw University of Technology calculated that there were 124 such sites in Poland, while the researchers from Lublin found as many as 136 such sites. "Castle charts" were developed as a part of this programme, in addition to conferences being hosted, in addition to a publication highlighting that in many cases the analysis was based on archival materials and the conservation studies were incomplete and required supplementation [7].

Bogusław Szmygin, the then-head of the Polish National ICOMOS Committee proposed during the Krakow conference that summarised the abovementioned research to treat castle ruins that had remained in a state of destruction for years in a different manner, leaving them in the form of so-called "permanent ruins", while structures that still had partially preserved fragments of buildings that had been destroyed suddenly, for instance in a fire or through some other natural disaster, could be subjected to much wider conservation measures, even including their reconstruction or adaptation to new forms of use. European built projects featuring the adaptation of medieval ruins to new forms of use are clear proof of a different approach to this problem by architects.

3. The Astley Castle in England – 2013 Stirling Price RIBA 2013

1 On-site studies by the author of the article in the years 1996, 2001.
2 The design to be constructed was selected from over 300 competition entries which were submitted in 2003, on-site studies by the author of the article in 2010.
The 2013 Stirling Prize for the best building in the EU awarded by the Royal British Institute of Architects, given for the Astley Castle in central England in Warwickshire in particular gives us hope in this regard. This twelfth century castle has an immensely interesting history, close to the heart of almost every Englishman, as it was here that the three royal daughters of Edward IV, Henry VIII and Lady Jane Grey - who was a queen for only eight days during the sixteenth century, being executed immediately afterwards due to being accused of political intrigues - lived in the years 1420-1600. After the Second World War, in 1955, the castle was adapted into a hotel, but it fulfilled this function only until 1978, when it burned down. It became a ruin after that. While saving the history-rich castle that is so close to the hearts of Britons, The Landmark Trust charity organised a competition for the adaptation of the structure into a weekend house in 2007. Inside the historical walls, using only a fragment of the structure, a new two-storey shell was inserted, clearly contrasting with the preserved fragments of the walls. The remaining rooms of the castles were left in the form of a "permanent ruin", in order to provide an image of the history of the site, including the period when it was in ruins. Awarding the Stirling Prize clearly shows the justification and acceptance of such measures.

4. The Polish castles – a few examples of traditional conservation

We can observe changes associated with infrastructure changes on many examples, both in cases of the ruins of castles located in cities, as well as those most often placed on hills in the open landscape, with new roads and highways, the relocation of waterways or the construction of new water bodies. One such event was the construction of a dam and the establishment of a water reservoir between the Niedzica and Czorsztyń castles, which was performed in the mountainous terrain of the Pieniny Mountains, in the south of Poland (the construction lasted from 1977 to 1997). The task of the dam is based on lowering the culminating flood waves not only within the Dunajec River valley, but also on the Vistula River, one of the main rivers of Poland, which runs from the south all the way to the Baltic Sea in the north of the country. The exceptionally picturesque location of both of these castles, on two hills sitting opposite each other above the Dunajec River Valley, has fascinated passing travellers since the Middle Ages. Major trade routes connecting Poland with Hungary passed through the valleys of the Dunajec and Poprad rivers in the Middle Ages. During a trek through the Pieniny Mountains, Czorsztyń Castle, situated atop a tall mountain (588 m above sea level) fulfilled the function of a safe rest stop right near the Hungarian border. The beginning of the end of Czorsztyń Castle, which was built in the thirteenth century, was a fire that occurred in 1790, caused by a lightning strike. The damaged roofs of the castle had never been rebuilt, which quickly caused the progressive devastation of the castle walls. It remained in the hands of private owners until the start of the Second World War, with its current owner being the Pieniny National Park. The landscape situation of the fortresses - picturesquely situated atop two stone outcroppings located opposite each other, one of them being a residential castle [8] adapted to a creative work centre of the Arts Historians Association, while the other (Czorsztyń) was left in the form of a permanent ruin - changed. Due to the construction of the artificial lake, whose waters have surrounded the Niedzica and Czorsztyń castles from three sides, meticulous securing work was performed. Archaeological and conservation work in Czorsztyń was performed in the years 1992-1995 by architect Waldemar Niewalda and archaeologist Adam Szybowicz, while Piotr Stępień executed a conservation project [9].

Another picturesque ruin that I wanted to draw attention to is the castle of the Masovian Dukes in Ciechanów, which was built in the 1380’s. It is located in the northern part of the Mazowsze region in a marshy area near the Łdyenia River. The fortress was built with a floor plan in the form of a regular

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3 The competition was won by a team of British architects: Witherford, Watson, Mann Architects, construction was carried out from 2008 to 2013, after: www.lingualab.pl/blog/2013/10/05/dom-w-ruinach-zamku/
4 The knightly castle in Niedzica, standing on a rocky mount (566 m above sea level) was built on the right bank of the Dunajec River in the fourteenth century by the Hungarian Berzevichi family, successively expanded and redeveloped, it became a ruin in the nineteenth century. It was in Hungarian hands up until the Second World War. Conservation work, adapting the middle and lower castle into a museum and creative work centre was carried out after the year 1952 by a team supervised by professor Alfred Majewski.
rectangle, its dimensions being 48 x 57 m. The entirety was surrounded with an external 10 m high brick wall with two oval towers: from the west - called the arsenal, and from the east - called the prison tower. This image of the fortress lasts to this day, even after numerous redevelopments. The towers had initially been of the same height as the walls and were later extended. In the sixteenth century the castle was redeveloped into a Renaissance residence, serving as one for queen Bona. The marshes had been the cause of the water penetrating the internal courtyard for centuries, which is why in the sixteenth century its elevation was increased by 1,5 m. The fate of the castle resembles that of many medieval fortresses in our country, as it was burned down, suffering significant destruction during the Swedish Deluge in 1657 and has remained a ruin ever since. [10] Inside the internal walls there used to be two houses, the so-called "Large House", with two storeys and four rooms on each level, which was located in the northern part of the courtyard, as well as the "Small House", situated vis-à-vis [11]. The remains of the buildings inside the walls were torn down towards the end of the eighteenth century, leaving a romantic ruin, attracting painters and poets from time to time.5

Conservation studies conducted by the team under the supervision of Maria Ludwika Lewicka at the Faculty of Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology produced the preparation of a reconstruction, in which it was shown that the pitched roof of the "Large House" was much taller than the face of the external walls, while the two oval towers were also covered by tall roofs.

Years ago Konrad Kucza-Kuczyński wrote that Poles were not familiar with the latest successful built projects associated with historical tissue and were afraid of contemporary interventions in a historical environment. Here, however, things went differently. The director's office of the Museum of the Masovian Dukes, as well as the municipal authorities of Ciechanów were searching for new solutions for revitalisation work on the castle. In 2005 an architectural competition was announced for the revalorisation of the castle and a design of the "Large House". It was won (in December 2005) by a modern design proposed by a four-person team from Gdynia under the supervision of arch. Marek Kleczkowski. Despite winning the prize and gaining the approval of the Voivodship Conservator in November 2006, the design has so far not been built. A three-year-long conflict with conservation authorities had begun. The design was protested by the General Conservator of Historical Monuments of Poland (February 2007), the head of the Polish National ICOMOS Committee (March 2007), the General Polish Conservation Commission (June 2007). Finally, the General Conservator of Historical Monuments issued a decision forbidding the revitalisation of the castle in November 2008. The Director's Office of the Castle of the Masovian Dukes in Ciechanów, along with the municipal authorities filed a lawsuit already in November 2008 and despite the fact that on the 25th of November 2008 the Voivodship Administrative Court in Warsaw overruled the decision of the General Conservator of Historical Monuments and reinstated the approval of the Voivodship Conservator of the revitalisation of the castle, the design of the "Large House" has still not been executed.

The historical ruins are still seeing activity of their own. After the Second World War the dead ruins of the castle were converted into a living structure, which influences the tourism-related development of the city and the region. In recent years, the opening of the "Small House" in the courtyard inside the walls in January 2013 became the first stage of the almost two-year-long revitalisation of the Castle of the Masovian Dukes, which started in 2011. It houses an exhibition space, an educational room and sanitary facilities. The museum offers a broad educational programme for children and youth. It is a site of various forms of workshops, museum lessons and multimedia presentations on the subject of archaeology, astronomy and history. Frescoes were discovered and restored in 2013 during conservation work on the internal side of the towers.6

The example that has been presented proves that innovation is a very difficult task. The belief in "preserving the past" is very widespread in the architectural conservation community. In its opinion it is safer to repeat and thus reconstruct, rather than to introduce new forms. Gaston Bachelard was of the opinion that the architect, in order to create a reality that is different from the current one, is forced to

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5 [www.zamekciechanowie.pl.historia/](http://www.zamekciechanowie.pl.historia/)
6 [muzeumciechanow.pl/zamek-już-otwarty/](http://muzeumciechanow.pl/zamek-już-otwarty/)
reach to dreams and the unreal world. [12] Roman Ingarden stated that architecture that deals with the pursuit of new compositions draws from the world that surrounds us, searching for a difference from those that were already created and used in a given period. The skill of achieving this highly important "uniformity of tuning", which is obtaining the acceptance of new forms within historical tissue among the audience, is not possible for all artist. [13] It is so because the problem of the placement of the boundary that forbids new interventions has not been solved. Everybody agrees that new architecture that is being built in the vicinity of historical tissue should be "of the highest quality". The architect becomes the decision-maker here - an artist convinced of the individual treatment of every intervention within a historical environment.

5. The Gothic castle in Gniew - contemporary conservation

The Gothic castle in Gniew, which is situated in the northern part of Poland on the left bank of the Vistula River, near Gdańsk, is a good example of the appropriate understanding of conservation efforts in which contemporary elements, clearly separated from historical substance, supplement the historical structure and serve its new function well.(Figure.1) Built in the thirteenth-fourteenth century by the Teutonic Order as a brick and stone fortress, it played an important strategic and political part. It was redevelopment several times in the nineteenth century. In 2010 the castle was bought by Polmek SA, a private company from Gdańsk and in the years 2011-2013 it was subjected to revalorisation work. The mighty brick castle with a square outline with four corner towers and an expansive interior courtyard took on the function of a hotel and conference centre. The castle courtyard has been covered by a transparent glass roof suspended at the height of the uppermost storey, obtaining a space with a floor area of 400 m², which can host musical and theatre spectacles. (Figure 4) The new stone floor of the courtyard is now heated, while a glazed gallery has been built along one of the walls at the height of the first floor, (Figures 3, 5) which can be accessed by glass stairs supported by a steel structure. (Figure 2).

![Figure 1. The Gothic castle in Gniew near Gdańsk, build XIII/XIV century – view from outside](image)

The structure of the roof has been altered as well, through the addition of dormers and the placement of hotel rooms there. [14] All the newly introduced elements, based on conservation studies, have been clearly contrasted with existing tissue through their contemporary materials and constitute one of the more interesting and bold attempts at showing times in which such an adaptation has been performed in this country. The carrying out of conservation work at the castle in Gniew was compliant with the

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7 The author of conservation work was professor architect Andrzej Kadłuczka from Krakow.
precepts of the Venice Charter of 1964, according to which "Restoration (...) stops where supposition begins - beyond that border all supplementation work considered necessary must be derived from architectural composition and must bear the mark of our times". [15]

Figure 2. The Gothic castle in Gniew – inner courtyard – details of coexistence of modern and historic elements

Figure 3. The castle in Gniew - the inner courtyard
Figures 4, 5. The castle in Gniew – the inner courtyard – the glazed gallery has been built along one of the walls at the height of the first floor.

6. Conclusions

UNESCO is more and more often highlighting the "criterion of authenticity" in works associated with the adaptation of historical structures to modern needs. Some architectural conservators thus believe that the ruins of castles or of other structures should be left in the form they had been encountered in, even accepting their further destruction as a natural process. Others, conversely, believe that a ruin is random and inclined to develop, or partially reconstruct or redevelop it.\[16\] This "criterion of authenticity" is becoming a reason for the preservation of the cultural landscape, obligating us to protect ruins along with their surrounding landscape. Examples of known infills and adaptations to new forms of use concerning castles in Western Europe [17] give us hope that instead of the more and more often employed reconstructions, new interesting contemporary solutions can appear in Poland as well. The analysis of historical processes, as well as tracing the stylistic transformations of the architecture of the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first century, in addition to the artistic stances of its designers, allows us to state that contemporary architecture has the right to interfere with historical substance in cases that are justified by the necessity of the supplementation or replacement of this tissue.

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