

Development Design of the Poniatowski Hill in the Architectural-Landscape Complex of the Town of Nałęczów

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Abstract

The area of the Poniatowski Hill, the subject of this research, is located in the architectural and landscape complex of Nałęczów spa, which is inscribed in the monuments register of Lubelskie Voivodship. At present, the hill is covered by dry-ground forest. The area is neglected and undoubtedly deserves restoration to the proper aesthetics. The location near the center of the town creates a need for arrangement of the terrain and adaptation for recreation and rest. Owing to the commitment of the authorities of Nałęczów and the local community, the idea of development design of the Poniatówka, as the hill is known, has been conceived. The design process has been preceded by complex analysis of the terrain and the project was framed on the basis of the outcomes. The conception complies with the necessity to maintain the hill in the least altered shape.

Keywords: development design, natural landscape, Poniatowski Hill, Nałęczów town

Introduction

Local authorities and communities are more and more frequently stressing the need for using the natural and cultural values of the immediate environment for recreational purposes (Zachariasz 2008, 158). Adaptation of the facilities selected to perform these functions should include their protection. This requires making appropriate spatial reconnaissance and arrangement, as well as designing the area adapted to the needs of its users. Any potential educational values of the area should be exploited and appropriate information boards ought to be designed. It is particularly important in the case of towns where tourism and recreation constitute a significant source of income, like in Nałęczów – a health resort of national importance, a training and recreation center, and a weekend destination for inhabitants of the neighboring city of Lublin (Kałamucka and Koziel 2005). Many well-known artists have lived here. Among them there were: writers, painters, and architects who left behind a number of Swiss, Italian, and Zakopane style villas (Kozuchowski and Rogalski 2006, 162–166). In 1963 Nałęczów received city rights, and in 1972 its architectural and park landscape complex entered the Register of Historic Monuments of Lubelskie Voivodship under No. A/585, as “a city-garden.”¹ Every year several thousand patients with cardiac disorders visit this place for health reasons (Bubula et al. 2011). All this creates the demand for walking and recreational areas.

1. See: Decyzja Prezydium Wojewódzkiej Rady Narodowej Wydziału Kultury, Wojewódzkiego Konserwatora Zabytków w Lublinie znak: KL.IV-7/22/72 z dnia 28 marca 1972 r.

Nałęczów is located at the confluence of two small rivers: Bystra and its ring-side tributary—Bochotniczanka, at the top of the Nałęczów-Kazimierz-Puławy “tourist triangle,” an area heavily cut with loess ravines (Zgłobicki and Rodzik 2012). The oldest settlement was located at Bochotniczanka near the Lublin-Kazimierz road. Here, opposite Wzgórze Kościelne (Church Hill), there is a hill with remains of earth embankments, dated back probably to medieval times. It is called Góra Poniatowskiego or Poniatówka, according to a tradition which says that King Stanisław August Poniatowski was greeted here (Kozuchowski and Rogalski 2006, 86).

Thanks to the efforts of local authorities and the community of Nałęczów, an initiative of revitalizing Góra Poniatowskiego has been launched. Its aim is to improve the aesthetic and natural values of the site. One important goal is to create a vantage point in a relatively intensively utilized area (wooded and built-up) and to allow walkers and tourists easier access to it, in compliance with the history of the place.

In the first stage of the research, some historical materials were collected and there was a consultation with the Heritage Conservator, the Investor and the local community as regards the purposefulness and limitations of the investment.² A preliminary assessment of scenic values was made on the basis of a 1 : 10 000 topographic map and a field vision. The analysis of the hill topography was conducted using a 1 : 500 base-map and field measurements.

On the basis of the land survey, the analysis of animated nature values was carried out. This dendrological inventory together with the map for design purposes were the basis for the development of the design concept. In addition, the following analyses were performed: greenery, history, altitude, transport, users’ needs, functional and spatial, view, insulation and sensation analysis by Wejchert’s method (Wejchert 2008).

1 Hill location in the landscape of Nałęczów

Poniatówka is a promontory of a loess hummock between the river valleys of: Bochotniczanka and its periodic right bank tributary. The hill, whose top surface reaches up to 191,5 meters above sea level, is separated from the ENE side with a little pass located 8–10 m below. Hill slopes on the other sides—13 to 18 m high—descend to the bottom of the valleys. Despite its location “in the shadow of” the undulating plateau of the height exceeding 200 meters above sea level, the hill is exposed from its surroundings and may be an excellent vantage point for the neighboring area within a radius of several hundred meters (fig. 1).

Góra Poniatowskiego is located 500 meters from the center of Nałęczów at one of the major roundabouts, between two public roads of varied importance: local (Dulębów Street) and regional (Graniczna Street). In both the immediate and more distant neighborhood there is residential



Fig. 1. Poniatowski Hill, view from the west side, from Dulębów street. Photo by M. Boruch, 2013

2. See: Decyzja Wojewódzkiego Urzędu Ochrony Zabytków w Lublinie znak: IN.5146.49.1.2013 z dnia 7 maja 2013 r.

development (mainly detached houses) and the nearby seat of a fire-fighting unit. There are two notable open views from the hill. The first one extends in the southern direction onto the meadows and Bochońniczanka valley, the other in the north-west direction onto the historic villas in Poniatowskiego Street.

One's perception and subjective estimation of the project area are positively affected by its natural values, whereas pollution and land degradation cause some negative feelings. Poniatówka is perceived by its potential users as a walking and recreation area, as well as a local communication system. Currently, the strings of pedestrian paths run through the project area, and there are run-down, concrete and stone steps.

2 Poniatówka Hill description

The hill, extended in the ENE-WSW direction, is 90 meters long and 60 meters wide at its bottom. Its flat top surface has dimensions of 16×10 m, or 22×17 m if it is measured together with the surrounding ring located 0,5 m below.³ Approximately 5 m below the top, the hill is surrounded on three sides by a trench, or a ditch-moat with an external earthwork which is 0,3–1,0 m high. Above the trench, the hillsides have a 30–35° slope, and below, it is 20–25°. From the north, the hillside of 30–40° slope, has a uniform concave profile which originated as a result of gravitational processes degradation (falls, slumps and slides), whose effects may be seen in a photograph from 1908 (fig. 2). The imbalance of the „naked” the hill at that time used as a pasture, was due to an undercut by an eroding earth road (currently Dulebów Street).

Upon the hill, 297 trees have been found (fig. 3). They belong to 16 taxons and the most common ones are: *Acer platanoides*, *Pinus sylvestris*, *Populus canescens*, and *Betula pendula*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Robinia pseudoacacia*, *Tilia cordata*, *Quercus robur*. There are 5 species of shrubs: *Symphoricarpos albus*, *Juniperus communis*, *Padus avium*, *Sambucus nigra*, and *Prunus cerasifera*. Due to the significant density of self-seeding trees, the species composition of the undergrowth is quite poor. According to the research results, the ground cover consists largely of ruderal species and a small proportion of dry-ground forest plants.



Fig. 2. Poniatowski Hill in Nałęczów in the postcard at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, unknown author

Source: Zbigniew Lemiech collection, Archiwum Fotografii Ośrodka „Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN”. Courtesy of Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN”

3. [In the journal (in both Polish and English texts) European practice of number notation is followed—for example, 36 333,33 (European style) = 36 333.33 (Canadian style) = 36,333.33 (US and British style). Furthermore in the International System of Units (SI units), fixed spaces rather than commas are used to mark off groups of three digits, both to the left and to the right of the decimal point.—Ed.]

The trees which grow on the hill are mainly 20–40 year-old self-seeding trees of a low biological value. There is also a noteworthy 120-year-old linden (*Tilia cordata*), whose girth is 300 cm. It grows on the top, by the side of a wooden cross and can be seen in the old photograph from 1908 (fig. 2). The cross was there since 1887 and was replaced by a different one, which has been there since 1987. Landscape values are raised thanks to a chapel built in a classical style at the bottom of the hill. It was restored by Countess Maria Krasicka in 1891 (Kožuchowski and Rogalski 2006, 86). On a small square next to the chapel, surrounded by a railing, there is a Liberty Oak, planted in 1916, on the day when the anniversary of the Constitution of May 3 was first celebrated openly in Nałęczów (Tarka 2002).

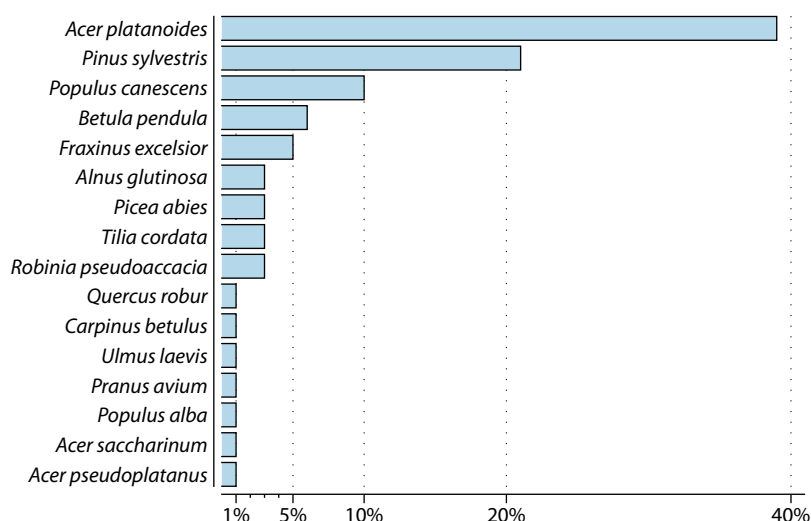


Fig. 3. Species composition of the trees on Poniatówka Hill

3 The development plan of Poniatówka

3.1 Design guidelines

The site development plan should emphasize the hill's natural landscape values as a vantage point and a recreational area (fig. 4). To achieve this, it is necessary to reduce self-seeding plants, restore the ground cover and nurture greenery. However, the potential risk of mass movement to the hillside should be taken into consideration. In the case of excessive reduction of vegetation, the steepest—northern slope, which is prone to gravitational processes, might undergo destabilization as a result of a heavy frost or intense rainfall.

It is advisable to maintain the shape of the hill due to the presumed existence of a medieval gord in this place. For this reason, earthworks should be limited, and pedestrian paths, or stairs in particular, should be built at locations of already existing ones. Any excavations should be carried out under the supervision of an archaeologist and geomorphologist. Even a cursory reconnaissance may contribute to deepening our knowledge about the past of the hill (geological, prehistoric and historical) and its former shape.

At the bottom of the hill, there should be information boards about the natural values of the hill and its interesting history. Lighting should be designed in order to stress the aesthetic values of some structures or information boards, as well as to ensure the safety of walkers on pedestrian paths, steps and the terrace. All the elements of the site development should be designed in a simple convention in order to not interfere with the form of the protected area. Any elements of landscape architecture should be made from natural materials whenever possible.

3.2 Assumptions of the design concept Wzgórza Poniatówka

- Emphasize open views to the South onto the meadows and the river valley, and to the North-West on the historic villas on Poniatowskiego Street.

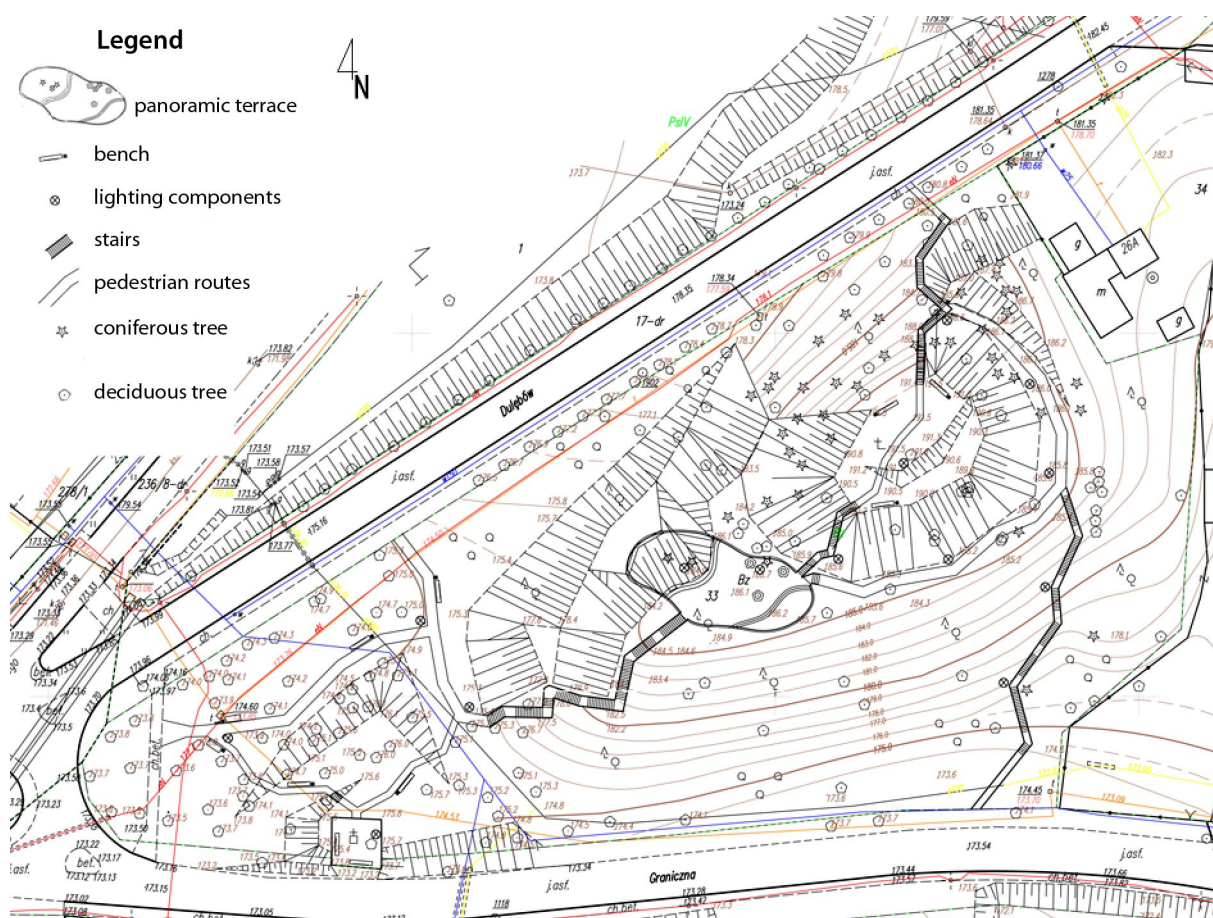


Fig. 4. The design concept of the Poniatowski Hill in Nałęczów

- Remove unaesthetic self-seeding plants, creating a park ground cover compatible with the habitat by planting bulbous perennials and rhizome perennials which are characteristic of mixed deciduous forests.
- Construct a vantage point with a recreational area consisting of a wooden terrace with wooden seats and a protective barrier.
- Lay paths of stone and gravel surface:
 - field path with stone stairs, running up the hill
 - pedestrian path surrounding the top from the south and east (fig. 3).
- Lighting of the area:
 - at the bottom, highlighting (at the ground level) the chapel and the “Liberty Oak,” and lighting the information board
 - lighting pedestrian paths
 - at the top, highlighting (at the ground level) the linden situated by the wooden cross.
- Introduce elements of landscape architecture (information board, dustbins, wooden seats — without back rests along the footpaths and with back rests next to the chapel) using wood, stone and steel (only in indispensable structural elements).

Summary

Góra Poniatowskiego in Nałęczów is currently a neglected area. Lack of control of the managed stand of trees over the last several dozen years meant that the aesthetic, cultural and environmental values of this place are lower than its potential. Yet Poniatówka, located near the center of Nałęczów, has a very high sightseeing, natural and cultural potential. Development design of this area will enhance its recreational use to the residents, as well as tourists and patients.

The site development plan assumes the least interference with the surface of the hill, in order to maintain its current shape, which results from the existence of a medieval fortification facility in this place. The project also aims at setting up appropriate information boards about the past of the hill—geological, prehistoric and historical, the remnants of which are religious buildings, and historic trees.

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