Revalorization of the romantic park in Dobrzyca

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Abstract: Revalorization of the romantic park in Dobrzyca. Poland has over 10 000 parks. Within this great number most of them are historical parks. A sizable number of them are romantic parks. This specific style dominated the landscape gardening art of Poland. Interesting examples of romantic residencies can be found at Pulawy, Zofiówka, Klemensow, Opiniogora and Dobrzyca. These are splendid examples of palace-park creations. The specific characteristic of romantic parks is their compositional chamberness (even with a sizable park object), their numerous scenic landscaping views regardless whether within the park object or encompassing the surrounding landscape, the rich literary program, the poetic final touch relating to the native traditions and the cult of wild nature expressed through richness of plant forms as well as species and types of utilized plants.

After the Second World War the state took over the palaces and their adjoining parks and adapted them for new use. Frequently the new adaptation resulted in destroying unique values which were characteristic of the historical park objects. The long period of improper usage and lack of adequate care of the romantic parks caused a significant loss in their value, especially through the destruction of park elements and dendrological stocks. Only in the second half of the 20th century were the park and palace objects subject to renovation and revalorization. Some of this work, however with interruptions, continues until today. The park palace object in Dobrzyca, a jewel of the romantic park composition, began the intensive revalorization process – both at the palace and in the park – towards the end of 20th century. The revalorization concept for Dobrzyca’s park had been concluded back in 2006 and had been approved by both: the conservatory authorities as well as the user of the object. The revalorization became a concept with detailed solutions. It was taken into calculation that it would take many years to do this work. Indeed, it began in the spring of 2006 and it’s still in progress and the results can already be admired.

Key words: historical park, romantic park, freemasonry, revalorization, adaptation.

INTRODUCTION

There is a great number of park objects in Poland representing the landscaping mainstream. Among them a significant number belong to the romantic objects. They formed the proper frame for the palace and mansion residencies. The main features of the romantic parks were its compositional closeness, numerous visual ties with the landscape both inside the object as well as in connection with the surrounding landscape. There was also a rich literary program and poetic figures relating to the domestic traditions as well as to the cult of wild nature expressed through the color richness of the greenery and the type and species of the plants used.

The park-palace objects after WW2 had been taken over by the state treasury and adapted for new use. This adaptation quite often resulted in new ways of exploitation which were a leading factor in the loss of their exceptional value
characteristic for park objects. This long period of improper use and lack of proper care over the romantic parks resulted in significant loss of their value but mainly in damages to the program equipment as well as the parks’ dendrological stock. Surviving until today the historical tree inventory is only a small percentage of the original existing trees in many parks. The introduced park alterations as well as the lack of surviving planning materials from the previous epochs creates a serious obstacle to decipher all aspects of the park composition which is being worked on.

The palace park in Dobrzyca is an example of gardening art representing the landscaping thought of forming the surroundings and expresses characteristic tendencies of romantic parks.

A specific of such landscaping is within the structure of the surroundings to:
− create depth and at the same time forming a closeness with the interior,
− numerous space interconnections within the structure as well as beyond it,
− the richness of plant formations and sets of means whose purpose is to form a specific park atmosphere full of changeability, transition, wilderness as well as surprises.

For romanticism is understood as picturesque. Picturesqueness as a category of aesthetic uses all forms which express transition, aging, disintegration, that is diversified, irregular, shredded, deformed or thick raw composition.

Romanticism expresses an interest in the past. This interest transforms itself into using a rich program in the form of many elements of small architecture. And it’s no different on the grounds of the park in Dobrzyca. Surviving until today the monopteron and the pantheon are the main architectural elements of the park composition, aside from the main palace building which is a dominant of the residential structure.

At the turn of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st century at Dobrzyca the conservation work began both within the palace and park buildings as well as in the park itself. My worked out concept of revalorization of the Dobrzyca park was accepted by the conservation authority and is now being realized in stages. The fulfilling of the revalorization project was preceded by numerous analysis and scientific work appropriate for conservatory procedures with respect to the historical park landmarks.

RESEARCH METHODS:
For working with revalorization concept at Dobrzyca palace park object the standard revalorization procedure was used. This procedure included a set of analyses, such as: the degree of survival, historical, species and age of the tree cover, the condition of the environment, spacial composition, valorization of the park area. As a result of the scientific work the conservatory guidelines had been formulated and the project of revalorization of the park was worked out.

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS
The first mention about Dobrzyca dates back to the fourteenth century. This property was owned by many families. Since the eighteenth century it became the property of the Gorzenksi Family1.

In 1795 Augustyn Gorzenki begins to reconstruct the previously existing residency. The palace, as it is known today, was restructured according to the project of Stanislaw Zawadzki and built on the bevel plan (Fig. 1). The interior of the palace was richly decorated with frescos painted by Antoni Smuglewicz and Robert Stankiewicz. On the park grounds were built: servants’ quarters, monopteron, pantheon, a hill and a grotto. The water lines were extended. The park became

FIGURE 1. Dobrzyca, View of the palace, lake and the biggest Platanus acerifolia in Poland
romantic in character. In the middle of the nineteenth century as a result of financial problems Dobrzyca was auctioned off and became the property of the Kottwitz family, then the Bendelov family and from the end of the nineteenth century its owner was Zygmunt Czarnecki. After WW2 Dobrzyca was taken over by the state treasury. A part of the residential grounds were divided. Destroyed were the castle, the coach house and the stables. The palace became the home of the post office, residential apartments, a library and an office. The new functions and the lack of care ruined the palace and the pavilions. A sizable portion of the historical tree stock was destroyed both as a result of cutting down and a lack of maintenance work. In the park different rose species, rhododendrons and many types of shrubs as well as coniferous trees had been introduced. In 1988 a division of the Poznan National Museum was created at Dobrzyca. This park-palace is still functioning as a museum, being now an independent museum finding itself in the realm of the Marshals’ Office.

The revalorization work of the architectural objects (palace, the servants’ quarters, pantheon and monopteron) began in the 90’s of the last century and ended in 2008. The renovation of the castle, orangery and the gardener’s house as well as the reconstruction of stables and the coach house and their adaptation for museum needs are planned. Since 2006 the revalorization work is in progress in the park.

THE STATE OF SURVIVAL ANALYSIS

The state of survival of Dobrzyca park doesn’t differ from many other parks of this nature. Years of neglect after the war contributed to ruining both the palace as well as other park objects and only a small hill remains in the place of the castle ruins. The road around the residency have been changed and the leading approach road uses a different path. The stables and the coach house which were historically bound with the residence were destroyed after the war. The small river Patoka running through the park grounds was polluted, the bridges and the grotto were ruined and many old the trees underlining the historical park composition didn’t survive. There were many new plantings of trees introduced to the park as well as shrubs which conflicted with the historical composition. This was controversial because species used were not characteristic of the epoch.

In spite of this the basic spacious design with the palace as a dominant as well as ties to other park objects were maintained. The analysis of the age of the tree stock in the revalorization of the park became very important because of the non-existing planning material. This analysis, together with the analysis of the survival rate and a few iconographic data became a base for defining the specifics of the romantic composition of the park.

In the 90’s of the twentieth century the revalorization work began in the palace and next in the pantheon and the monopteron. (Figs 2, 3.) Recently this work has been completed. The terrain of the park is under constant care and the first stage of the revalorization work is underway.

FIGURES 2 and 3. Surviving until today the monopteron and the pantheon are the main architectural elements of the park composition, aside from the main palace building which is a dominant of the residential structure
TREE AGE ANALYSIS

The tree age analysis was done based on the inventory of the greenery. The age of the trees was determined by using the calculating tables of prof. L. Majdecki. The inventory of the tree cover was done based on terrain work as well as office using information from two previous inventories from 1085 and 1994. The current inventory done for the purpose of this paper includes the park terrain in its present boundaries and partially within the closest vicinity (the trees next to the road adjacent to the present border of the park).

On the terrain of the park in Dobrzyca the inventory listed 809 leafy trees which compared with the previous years shows decidedly diminishing dendrological stock. The list showed 998 trees in 1994 and 1.405 trees in 1985. Therefore, the dangerous tendency of losing trees in the last 20 years is evident. The current tree cover is barely 65% of the 1980’s inventory.

In the Dobrzyca park there are some 50 tree species of which 96% are leafy trees and only 4% coniferous. From earlier inventories it can be determined that coniferous trees, mainly firs and larches, were represented in greater number as late as the middle of the previous century. Currently only individual examples of coniferous trees can be found in the park. Lost of the coniferous trees in the Polish parks in the second half of the 20th century, unfortunately, is a common tendency not only noticeable in the Dobrzyca park. This is a result of constant lowering of water tables. The historical drawings’ analysis of the park in Dobrzyca show the presence of *Populus nigra ‘Italica’*, a species eagerly used towards the end of 18th and in the 19th centuries. These are known to be trees characteristically slender of a short life span. Currently you won’t find this species in the park.

The purpose of analyzing the tree cover – dendrochronology – is to calculate the ring of growth in trees in the park. Dendrochronology makes it possible to evaluate not only the age of specific trees but also the elements and spatial forms of plants, even the entire park. It allows to date the grounding of the park and determine the growth periods in which the spatial development took place.

For the park in Dobrzyca the following age groups were used:
Group 1 – trees 0–25 years;
Group 2 – trees 26–65 years;
Group 3 – trees 66–100 years;
Group 4 – trees 101–140 years;
Group 5 – trees – 141 and more years.

The division according to age groups was based on data regarding history of the residency and on the remaining dendrological material. Thus, age group 5, the oldest, consists of trees which were part of the beginning of the residency. These are exemplary trees of exceptional size and beauty. These trees are represented in table number one (1).

Group 5 includes trees since the beginning of the park. These are the most valuable, extremely long-lived specimens which is its value. In the oldest age group represented are valuable species present in the park, such as: oaks, maples, lindens, planes, hornbeams and beeches. The group 5 is unfortunately the smallest. There are only 24 tree specimens of

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3 Majdecka-Strzeżek A., 2006: Koncepcja rewaloryzacji zabytkowego założenia rezydencjonalnego w Dobrzycy, opracowanie projektowe.
which barely eight have more than 200 years. This oldest age group of trees is undoubtedly a left over from the old park structure. Unfortunately, this is giving us only a hint of what the park looked like during the building of the palace.

Age Group 4 includes trees from 101 to 140 years old which means there were present in the park in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the changing composition of the second half of the nineteenth century in Europe, therefore in Poland, important changes took place by introducing many different species which were in turn the beginning of the romantic parks. This age group includes 85 trees. The largest number among them is the maple, especially Acer platanoides – 31 trees, next we have the ash – Fraxinus excelsior – 19 trees and the hornbeam – Carpinus betulus – 9 trees.

Age Group 3 includes trees between 66 and 100 years old which means they were present in the park in the beginning of the twentieth century until the beginning of the Second World War when this palace park was taken and occupied by the Germans. This group, as compared to the two previous groups, is well represented. We have 245 specimen trees of 15 species. The most popular are: maples, ashes, lindens and hornbeams. In the next order there are: oaks, black locust and chestnuts.

<table>
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The most frequent trees found in the park are in the age groups 3, 4 and 5. Their value is not only their age and type but also, more than anything else, their reflection of the historical past of the park. Without doubt there were more trees in these age groups but with the passing time and lack of conservatory supervision resulted in significant losses.

Age groups 1 and 2 include tree cover which appeared in the park after the Second World War which is the time when the palace park became state property. This means that some of these trees in this age group were self-seeded and now interfere with the spacial structure of the park. Both these groups form more than half of the trees which is 455 trees, that is 56% of the total.

Putting it all together the tree cover in Dobrzyca park is multi-aged and multi-species. It consists mainly of the domestic trees which are well adapted to the natural surroundings. You will find exceptional and elegant tree specimens which are a very important element and surviving historical substance of this park. They require a lot of care and conservatory work. Almost half of the tree cover is young or very young and there is not much variety of species. There is a need to sort out the existing tree cover based on the analysis of the spacial composition for rebuilding the historical look of the park.

THE SPACIAL COMPOSITION OF THE LANDMARK PARK IN DOBRZYCA

The palace park landscape in Dobrzyca is an example of a romantic park composition. The park occupies twelve hectares of land. The dominant of the residential landscape is the palace building, built on the characteristic bevel. The palace is located in the center of the garden composition and is the center of visual attraction from all angels of the park grounds. The interior of the park is formed by groupings of trees as well as masses of trees, bunches of shrubs surrounding the flat park glades or the water reservoirs. The main park interiors contain architectural elements in the form of park buildings (palace, servants quarters, monopteron, pantheon) but also enriched with solitary decorative tree examples of a valuable species. The park interiors found on the periphery of the park are smaller, deprived of the architectural elements and their attachments. These park interiors have a local character which in certain cases fits in to the surrounding landscape. The main visual points of the residential grounds in Dobrzyca form a relationship with the palace building:

- Palace – monopteron on the island;
- Palace – pond with grotto and further down outside the park ground;
- Palace – the servants’ quarters;
- Palace – pantheon;
- Palace – the main glade on the palace axis – the longest scenic composition axis.

The remaining composition dependencies, but not less important for the arrangement of the park, appear in conjunction with:

- **monopteron** on the island – a viewing group in the direction of the palace, servants’ quarters in the background; groups of trees on the edge of the pond;
- **pantheon** – a viewing group in the direction of the gardening compound, current guest house, in the background of
a scenic hill, grandeur solitaries and groups of trees;  
**servants’ quarters** – a viewing group in the direction of the palace, monopteron as well as local forestry in the form of solitaries and groups of trees;  
**scenic hill** – a viewing group in the direction of the pantheon, groups of trees as well as the sweet garden;  
**pond with grotto** – a viewing group in the direction of the entrance, residency as well as solitaries and tree groups in the farthest part of the park;  
**periphery park interior** – a viewing group enabling mutual visual connection – inner as well as selected interior which form picture windows towards the surrounding landscape.

**REVALORIZATION CONCEPT**

The palace and park grounds were created as a landlord’s residency, whereas currently it serves as a museum open to the public. The revalorization concept of the palace-park in Dobrzyca foresees securing and exposing the romantic form of the park and its historic values. That’s why it’s important to underscore the inner and outer ties between the main historical elements in the program of the historical park object. For the realization of this undertaking it is necessary to correct existing forestry, both historical and post WW2. The project foresees for transplanting or removing trees colliding with the main viewing directions, introducing filler trees as well as correcting shrubbery. In the park bordering regions, especially in places where after the war the borders were corrected the concept includes introduction of masking plantings covering the borders of the object and at the same time masking new, contemporary object beyond the boundaries of the park (for example a gasoline station).

Introduced curtains should be in the form of groups of shrubs of different heights and climbers. The main viewing axis should became more visible in its course, deprived of a part of the young trees and coniferous shrubs, especially those which collide and represent alien uncharacteristic species of the epoch. The inner park should become more readable through correction of the tree cover. The pond with a small bridge, which forms main viewing points from the palace, should be corrected taking into account the formation of the bank line. To make it more readable decorative water plants and near-water plants should be introduced, especially in the part next to the grotto. The group of trees and shrubs forming the curtain for the points of scenic views from the palace should be enriched with decorative shrubs as well as by a border edge consisting of multi-type perennial and annual plants of a naturalistic character.

The immediate area of the palace should be enriched by planting shrubs enhancing the representation character of the entrance to the building. Because of the enormity of the palace, based on the historical analysis of the palace scenic view points the concept foresees it seems wise to suggest planting shrubs, huge and decorative year round.

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4 Majdecka-Strzeżek A., 2006: Koncepcja rewaloryzacji zabytkowego założenia rezydencjonalnego w Dobrzycy, opracowanie projektowe.  
A. Majdecka Strzeżek

stretching from the entrance gate towards the palace the conceit foresees introduction of seasonal bulb flowers forming. A similar planting of seasonal flowers, in accordance with this concept, should be found on the lawn in the neighboring servants’ quarters and as a filler among the tree covering and shrubs across the palace.

The revalorization concept foresees planting additional shrubs accompanying the tree groups and tightening the specific inner areas of the park. The additional planting will be done with already existing species in certain places since they are within the spacial criteria and needs. New species whose role would be to enrich the groups’ plasticity and at the same time reinforce the positioning valor will be added. The concept also puts forward a plan to form new groups of many-species shrub plantings. The new cubature objects, with are planned in the former household section of the park, therefore they are adaptation elements according to the needs of the new owner. The forming of the terrain as well as the spacial structure of the park demands the introduction of a vegetal curtain to maintain the historical character of this place.

The revalorization concept of the residency in Dobrzyca foresees utilizing of the land adjoining the park and leading to the former stables. Former stables and coach house will be adapted for hotel and restaurant use and in their vicinity parking lots as well as parking facilites for the guest visiting the museum and the park will be created.

The important element of every park object is its tree covering, its richness and variety as well as numerous assortment of the historical forms of the object’s area. In the park in Dobrzyca the majority of trees are domestic species which are corresponding to the requirements existing in the park.

Doing the things in such a way while forming the park, that is using the native species, was a common practice. Obviously, aside from the native species in tree covering, the tree covering of romantic parks contain many exotics. Their difference was an element in catching a visitor’s attention and even though it resulted in additional care, it was widely practiced. But planting the domestic species allowed assuring the historical survival of the spacial area. We are facing a similar situation in the park in Dobrzyca. On the park terrain we find old trees pronounced as nature’s monuments and specimen trees. They have great value, both historical and environmental. The revalorization concept expects them to be under constant care because they form the most valuable historical substance of the park. In spite of losing some of the oldest trees, which is part of nature’s biological change, the spacial formation of the park remained for the most part readable. The disturbances for the most part are the result of self-seeding, which is a result of many years negligence as well as introducing new tree and shrub plantings in places colliding and inappropriate. In most cases they are wrong species for romantic parks.

Currently there are some 50 different types of trees growing in the park of Dobrzyca. They are mainly leafy (dedeciduous) trees. Only a few percent of them are coniferous. In the middle of 20th century these proportions were different. Coniferous trees prevailed in Dobrzyca, especially common firs and larch. Today
only single samples of old coniferous trees are growing in Dobrzyca. This diminishing number of coniferous trees in parks is a current tendency associated with changing ground water conditions in the vicinity of parks. Mainly because of low water tables. In the group of young trees which were introduced to the park in the second half of the 20th century, coniferous trees and shrubs are well represented. In many case they were planted in prominent places. They are species which are partially alien and inappropriate for the historical park terrain. The concept calls for their removal or relocating them to a lesser area or the park mainly in the part previously adapted as the “sweet garden”. Among the most valuable species of trees in the park are: oaks, plane trees, beech, catalpas, linden trees, chestnut trees (Aesculus), liliodendrons, Caucasian Wingnut, hornbeams and shrubs. Their condition can be best described as “satisfactory” but requiring steady control, especially among older species. The main damage that can be seen in each old tree is: dried out branches, broken and damaged limbs. Occasionally we can find surface injures. Another occurrence is the deformed crown of a tree because they grow in a tight cluster. There are many self-seeded trees throughout the terrain of the park. They form a sizable percentage of the park’s tree cover. The concept foresees the reduction of their spreading to the places where they don’t belong. The most represented self-seeded trees are: maples, ash trees, common alder and black alder, hornbeams, poplar trees, lindens and Robinia pseudoacacia (black locust) as well as shrubs. There are shrubs in the Dobrzyca park. They usually form clustered gatherings together with self-seeded young trees, especially on the peripheries of the park, next to running water and in the vicinity of groups and tree masses. Sporadically, shrubs form solitary specimens. These are mainly hazelnuts and jasmines. These species are not the right ones for solitaries. Especially jasmines should form clusters. In landscape parks the layer of shrubs is a supplementing element to the layer of trees, forming a wrapping around groups or beds.

Solitary is used sporadically. Most of the young shrub plantings are unfortunately treated as solitary, instead of group forms, and this has to be changed. New shrub plantings are going to fill out and enrich the current groups as well as form new entities of a cover character, often together with a layer of trees. Shrubs of exceptional value such as rhododendrons and azaleas are going to be placed as an attraction in specially chosen areas also in group forms. The only exception to this rule will be individual samples of elegant park roses which can function as solitaries. There are many species of shrubs growing in the park. They are: Euonymus europeus, Lonicera xylosteum, Philadelphus coronarius, Ribes alpinum, Ribes rubrum, Rubus sp., Sambucus nigra, Sambucus racemosa, Symphoricarpos albus, Corylus avellana, Spiraea salicifolia.

The above mentioned species are proper for the historical parks with landscaped areas. Coniferous shrubs such as: junipers, mahoganies, thujas are alien to romantic parks and will be removed. There are remains of rhododendrons and azaleas planted in the park and they should be supplemented. There are also
climbers Lonicera xylosteum and Hedera helix using trees as support and enriching fruits. The concept anticipates additional planting of Hedera helix and Parteno-cissus species. They will serve as elements enriching fruits as well as creating additional curtains (cover) especially in places where the boundaries of the park were changed.

SUMMARY

The residential facilities at Dobrzycy is an interesting example of the surviving romantic park structure. Dozens of years of neglect caused a significant ruination of the object. A part of the associated elements and park structures didn’t survive today. The lack of sufficient historical material showing the park, the border changes of the park and numerous loss of the historical plants is the reason why we cannot completely restore the historical park shape. A part of the interdependencies of the park will never be available. That’s why an important element of the revalorization project and the park adaptation was reading and underscoring the specific romantic park composition.

If we want to do this right we need a lot of time, a lot of patience and specialized conservatory supervisory skills to fulfill our objectives. The park-palace residency at Dobrzycy shared a similar fate as many other residential objects which since the middle of last century became the state property and suffered from a wasting process. The “Report On The Condition of the Landscape Residences” shows that the condition of survival of parks and gardens is bad and unsatisfactory in over 60% of the objects. The historical cultural heritage of our country expressed through parks and gardens in many case is disappearing forever. Only a small number of the park objects will see revalorization work. The Dobrzycy example located in Wielkopolska (western administrative district) is a landmark that shows that in spite of lacking the archival material and in spite of the run down state of its object is was still possible to bring back to life its exceptional value and save it for future generations. Using the revalorization process for such a landmark object entails untold sums of time and work peculiar to such a scientific undertaking.

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Streszczenie: Rewaloryzacja romantycznego parku w Dobrzycy. Na terenie Polski znajduje się ponad 10 000 obiektów parkowych. To duża liczba, w której większość stanowią historyczne parki krajobrazowe. Wśród nich znaczącą liczbę stanowią parki romantyczne. Styl ten dominował w krajobrazowej sztuce ogrodowej Polski. Interesującymi przykładami rezydencji romantycznych w Polsce są rezydencje w Puławach, Zofiówce, Klemensowie, Opinogórze, Dobrzycy. Są to okazale założenia pałacowo-parkowe. Specyfiką parków romantycznych jest ich kompozycja na kameralność (nawet przy dużej powierzchni obiektu), liczne powiązania widokowe tak w obrębie założenia, jak i w powiązaniu z otaczającym krajobrazem, bogaty program literacki, poetycki sztuka nawiązujący do tradycji rodzimych, a także kult dzikiej przyrody wyrażany bogactwem.
Revalorization of the romantic park in Dobrzyca

Form roślinnych, a także gatunków i odmian za-
stosowanych roślin.

Założenia pałacowo-parkowe po II wojnie świa-
towej zostały przejęte na rzecz Skarbu Państwa
i zaadaptowane do nowych przeznaczeń. Często
nowe przeznaczenia przyczyniały się do utraty
wyjątkowych wartości, które cechowały histo-
ryczne obiekty parkowe. Długi powojenny okres
niewłaściwego wykorzystywania i brak właściwej
opieki nad romantycznymi parkami spowodował
znaczącą utratę ich wartości, a przede wszystkim
zniszczenia w zakresie elementów wyposażenia
programowego i w zasobach dendrologicznych
parków. Dopiero w drugiej połowie XX wieku
poddawano zniszczone już mocno obiekty re-
zydencjonalne pracom rewaloryzacyjnym i ada-
pacyjnym.

W założeniu pałacowo-parkowym w Dobrzy-
cy, klejnocie romantycznej kompozycji parkowej
intensywne prace rewaloryzacyjne dotyczące tak
zespółu pałacowego, jak i parkowego rozpoczęły
w końcu XX wieku.

Koncepcja rewaloryzacji parku w Dobrzyce
została opracowana w 2006 roku i uzyskała nie-
zbędną akceptację tak władz konserwatorskich
jak i użytkownika obiektu. Koncepcja przybrała
formę koncepcji i rozwiązań szczegółowych Pra-
ce realizacyjne w parku obliczone na wiele lat
rozpoczęto wiosną 2006 i nadal trwają, ale pierw-
sze efekty działań są już widoczne.

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