

RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION OF GARDENS, PARKS AND HISTORIC LANDSCAPES IN TERMS OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES

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Abstract. In the last century towns and urban green spaces changed their semblance concerning landscape and architecture, due to physical, cultural and a constant overall built development. As time passed by many gardens became of historic value, but the way in which plants and ornamental elements are disposed nowadays, is highly different from the original one. The goal of the study is to find the right steps in educating people concerning the way historical parks, gardens and landscapes should be restored or conserved and how we could integrate these monuments into a constant development of environment using a good management plan and respecting the cultural context. Many disciplines and professions (Horticulture, Arboriculture, Garden and design management, Garden and architectural history, Ecology and wildlife conservation, Archaeology, Hydrology etc) need to collaborate to match the complexity of the site, to examine the features that should be repaired or renewed and to guarantee a good analysis, communication and coordinated actions in completion of a good project plan. The historic environment should be seen as a resource that can be used to demonstrate the future generations how men lived in a particular period in the past.

Key words: conservation, historic environment, restoration

INTRODUCTION

Gardens, parks and landscapes are historically important sights that contain relevant heritage values which offer an excellent look into our past by reflecting the society in which they were constructed, enhancing our identity and can be used sustainably for the benefit of the future generations (Watkins and Wright, 2007). As time passed by different layers were overlapped on a garden and many of them became of historical value, but the way in which plants and ornamental elements are disposed nowadays, is highly different from the original ones. In our country there is a significant lack in the identification and protection of this kind of cultural heritage. Since the last century a greater importance has been given to the built spaces in the detriment of green areas many historical landscapes, parks and gardens were neglected (Banffy Castle, Rascruci), others have been claimed by the owners and split in agricultural fields (Banffy Castle, Bontida) or abandoned. Even for most of those restored in the last decades there had been used incorrect policies and management plans.

Restoration requires a thoughtful and good collaboration between many disciplines and professions to match the complexity of the site (Musso and De Marco, 2008), to examine the features that should be repaired or renewed and to provide a good analysis and research, communication and coordinated actions in completion and implementation of a good project plan.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

In order to design a restoration plan, a detailed knowledge of the site in study is required. The first step is to create a complex project and to evaluate the range of information needed to develop and accomplish the plan (Wright, 1993). The process of preparing the plan will include a project team with a large range of skills that match and cover the complexity of the site in study (Musso and De Marco, 2008). The best plans are structured to meet the needs of the community and designed to be used as everyday spaces. Without a good project plan different areas can be neglected, which could damage the entirety or destroy important elements of historic or other significance. The method used to accomplish a project plan is based on several analyses and references, suitable to reconstruct the historic image of urban green areas. The materials and steps used to help the team to analyze the site are:

- documentary and published materials from: archive centers, museums, diaries, main bibliographies, description of garden visitors, correspondence of owners;
- illustrative materials: old illustrations, historic plans, drawings, paintings, recent photographs, satellite photographs, park diagrams;
- study the destination and the functions of the park (Watkins and Wright, 2007);
- evaluation of public access, actual and guidelines (ICOMOS 1993; 2010);
- digitalization of the resulted material using a three-dimensional digital program (Tassinari et al., 2009);

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the current context of climate changes, social-economic variations and transformation of the green areas function, the importance of the specialist in historical garden restoration is indispensable. Many students of the Landscape design Department showed an increasing interest on this subject in the last few years, as it is illustrated in fig.1.

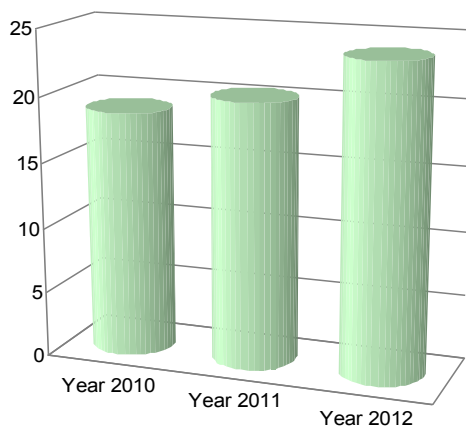


Fig.1. The percentage (%) of students who selected as subject for the diploma project the restoration of historic gardens

The topics chosen by these students for the diploma project had, as main objective, the restoration and reintegration of historical sites located in the urban and peripheral places into a new green circuit. Therefore this is a discipline that requires a sound knowledge and approach of the protocol used (material and method) to complete a restoration project.

In this context there has been made a study on the restoration of Simion Bărnuțiu public garden, Cluj-Napoca, completed in 2012 and there are a few aspects to be taken in consideration (Fig.2).

- The route of pathways was not changed but modifications have occurred over the pavement material. The old tiles of the two sidewalks that are recommended for slow and relaxing walking were replaced by asphalt mixture covered with gravel, that makes these sidewalks uncomfortable for promenade, bicycle and roll-skates.

- The main promenade which was made initially of compressed ground for carriages, then used as the only public jogging track of the town has been covered with the same materials as the sidewalks, totally unsuitable for this kind of sports.

- As the tridimensional composition of the park is constantly evolving due to the growth and aging of vegetation several cuttings were performed over the years. By the excessive cuttings for regeneration of trees carried out in 2012 there has been destroyed the harmony of the composition, and there were no substitutes planted for the rejuvenation of the whole park.



Fig. 2. Simion Bărnuțiu public garden, Cluj-Napoca: a) before restoration; b) after restoration

Our society must be convinced about the importance of these values by involving it in competent information programs and then to integrate these areas into the overall built environment. In our University, the Department of Landscape design develops periodic updating programs, by using a multidisciplinary support, where students are informed about the changing of legislation, workshops, the evidence of historic gardens in Europe and Romania etc.

CONCLUSIONS

The prospects for development of historic parks, gardens and landscapes in our country are very attractive. To develop and integrate these values into a constant changing environment, we need to adopt preservation policies and practices, multidisciplinary and

interdisciplinary trainings of future landscape restorers in order not to destroy the image, function, privacy and the balance of the park, as happened in Cluj-Napoca.

Understanding the history of a garden, park or landscape is the first step in determining the correct manner and approach in which the green area should be restored or conserved.

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