

---

## HISTORICAL SYSTEMS OF PUBLIC GREEN AREAS AS AN UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF TOWNS: THE EXAMPLE OF CIECHOCINEK

---

BALIK Katarzyna <sup>1</sup>  
LISOWSKA Magdalena <sup>2</sup>

---

1 Katarzyna Balik, National Institute of Cultural Heritage  
kbalik@nid.pl

2 Magdalena Lisowska, National Institute of Cultural Heritage  
mlisowska@nid.pl

**ABSTRACT:** Historic green spaces in towns and cities, especially those with developed systems of public areas, play an extremely important role in shaping urban spatial structure. These systems, often designed by excellent planners, architects and urbanists, are highly durable elements of urban layouts and to a large extent determine the development of towns. This article presents the results of research on green areas in Ciechocinek, conducted by the authors between 2017 and 2022 as part of statutory activities in the National Institute of Cultural Heritage. The first part outlines the functioning of homogeneous systems of public green areas in Ciechocinek, clearly defining the character and specificity of the town and its huge potential. The second part presents the history of its formation and development, its characteristic features and values as well as the state of preservation and threats, along with actions that aim to realize the town's potential. The article emphasises the need to plan activities not only at the scale of individual objects, but also in relation to the whole system since their being a part of a larger whole comprises their essence and value.

**KEYWORDS:** green systems; monuments; Ciechocinek; spas; green areas

---

## **Historical systems of public green areas as an untapped potential of towns – the example of Ciechocinek**

Ciechocinek is one of the most famous spas in Poland. Its unique historical values are evidenced, among other things, by the fact that the brine graduation towers, along with the salt brewhouse, and the parks: Graduation [Tężniowy] (connecting the former Health Park [Park Zdrowia], Under Graduation Tower Park [Park Pod Tężniami]) and Spa Park [Zdrojowy], were recognised as Monument of History in 2017. It is also one of those cities where greenery has played a fundamental role in shaping urban space. Unfortunately, despite surviving the Second World War in relatively good condition, today's Ciechocinek does not resemble the fashionable resort from before the war, once called a suburb of Warsaw. Reasons for this include the lack of recognition of the basic values and features of its historic green system, which led to often unfavourable changes. At the same time, the current state of preservation of the system of public green areas in Ciechocinek is mainly the result of actions taken in the post-war period.

### **Is Ciechocinek a park?**

The system of public green areas in Ciechocinek was formed in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. Undoubtedly, its development was rooted in the rise of the town as a spa. It was not shaped in a haphazard and spontaneous way, as was often thought so far, but is the result of well thought out planning.

The first regulatory plan of Ciechocinek was drawn up by Henryk Marconi and Jakub Gay. They identified the best area for the future development of the spa – a sandy hill, safe from flooding by the Vistula, stretching along the road to Nieszawa. The planners allocated most of the available area in the centre of the spa to public green space, where they placed the spa buildings. The plan was not fully implemented, but the general spatial assumptions adopted by the architects, including the location of spa buildings along with new baths and public green areas in the central part of the village, set the direction of the development of the spa and became the foundation of the spatial layout of the town, shaping the future system of green areas in the town.

With the dynamic development of the spa in the period 1870-1890, the drainage of the town and the acquisition of new land for buildings, the acreage of green areas would constantly increase, maintaining the course set by Marconi and Gay. Well-known planners and architects such as Franciszek Szanior, Julian Majewski and Hippolit Cybulski contributed to the shaping of the town's spatial layout and greenery system (Balik, Lisowska 2022). The green areas developed centrifugally, from the centre of the spa town towards its periphery. The nineteenth-century system of public green areas in Ciechocinek, consisting of parks, gardens, greens and squares connected by alleys, was supported by the greenery accompanying private buildings such as villas and guesthouses. In fact, owners of private buildings were obliged by spa authorities to keep a garden on their property. In its heyday, at the end of the nineteenth century, Ciechocinek was seen as a "single large park" (Borucki 1882, 321), also called "a magic garden" (Łapiński 1891, 7). Alongside the famous graduation towers, the healing power of brine and spa infrastructure, it was the well-planned public space, dominated by green areas,

that determined the development of the spa, lending it the character of a vast garden and even fostering the development of natural medicine.

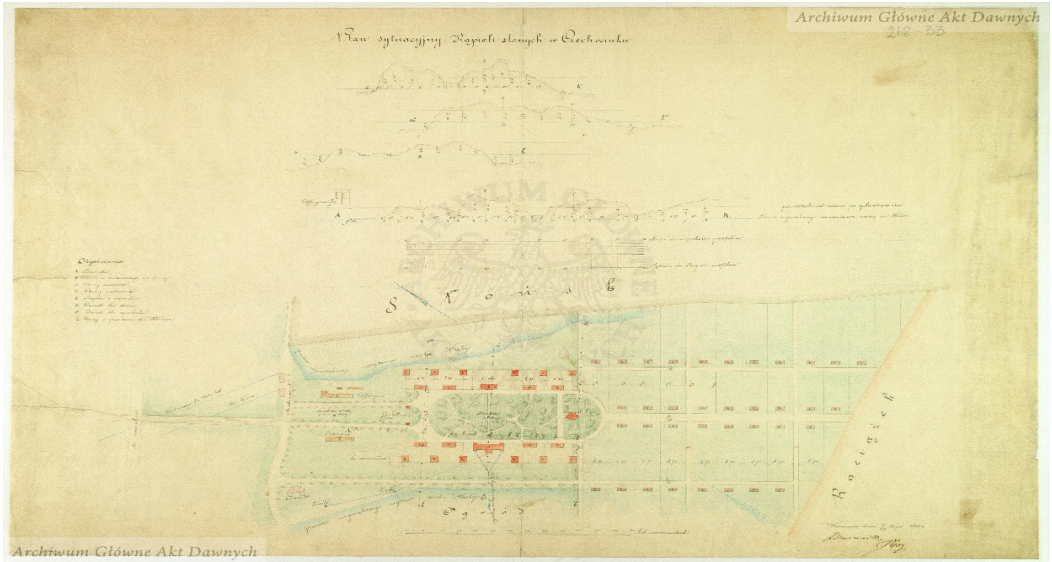


Fig. 1 Detail from the regulatory plan of Ciechocinek drawn up by Marconi and Gay, 1843; source: AGAD, unit 402, Cartographic Collection, ref. 268 – 33.

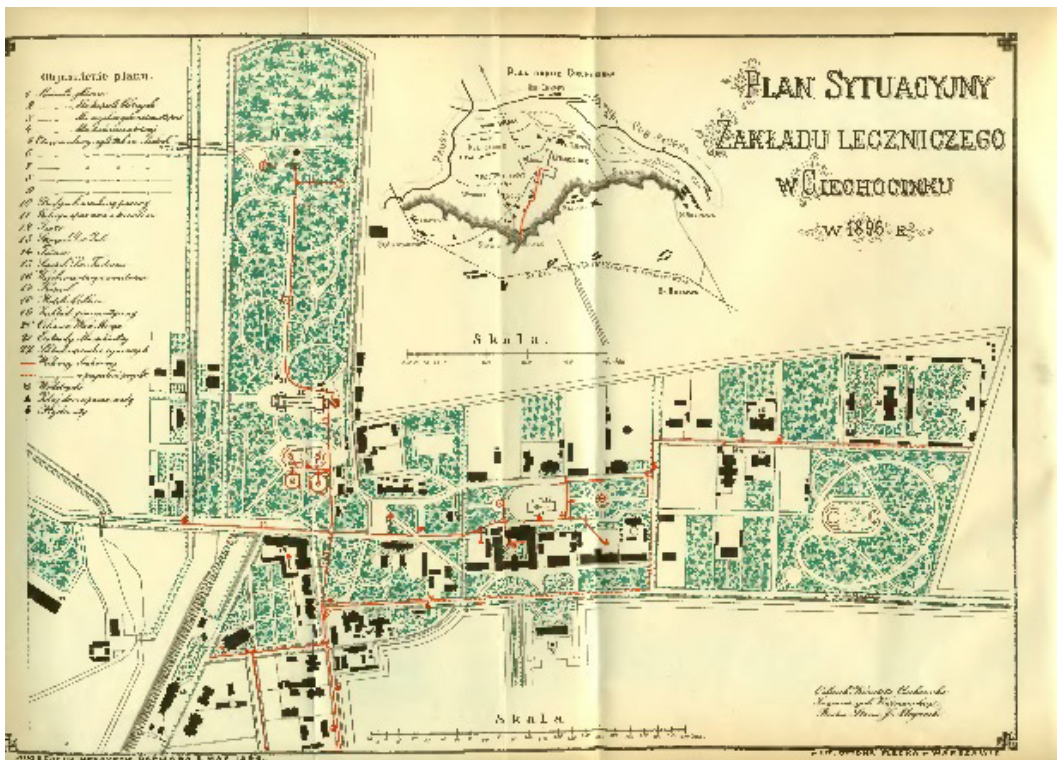


Fig. 2 Plan sytuacyjny Zakładu Leczniczego w Ciechocinku [Situation plan of the Therapeutic Institution in Ciechocinek], 1896, by Julian Majewski, source: (Ruppert 1896, 30).



After Poland regained independence, existing green areas were further developed and improved, ensuring that the spa is on par with first-class foreign resorts. In the 1920s, the public space was enriched with new facilities, including green areas. The most important of these were the reception garden at the building of the Mineral Water Board [Zarząd Wód Mineralnych] designed by Leon Danielewicz (Zdrój Ciechociński 1928, 1), the thermal pool and garden at Baths No. 3, the square with the “Mushroom” [Grzybek] fountain, the square at the monument to Romuald Traugutt, and the school garden (Balik, Lisowska 2022). Activities undertaken in the 1930s were significant for the shaping of public space. The area between the graduation towers, previously used as a sports field for equestrian events, was developed for natural healing purposes into a modern Health Park [Park Zdrowia], while the centre of the spa was tidied up by unifying its character according to the fashionable modernist style (Balik, Lisowska 2022). The town acquired a modern image, influenced mainly by outstanding artists: architect Romuald Gutt, forerunner of “environmental architecture” (Kucza-Kuczyński 2013), and Zygmunt Hellwig, designer of new public green areas in Ciechocinek. It is to them that Ciechocinek owes its modernist objects, which have become, along with the nineteenth-century graduation towers, the town’s trademark. These modernist highlights include:

- the thermal-saline swimming pool considered to be an “excellent [...] architectural object and perfect solution for the space between the graduation towers” (Scholtz 1966, 543) as well as “one of Gutt’s most intriguing realisations” (Dybczyńska-Bułyżsko 2008, 106);
- the green spaces in the town centre designed by Hellwig: the flower parterres by the baths, the floral clock and greenery next to Baths No. 1. They dominated the space around the baths, giving a uniform character to the spa centre. In all of these objects the same materials and spatial forms were used, which is extremely important as it helps to perceive them as components of a larger whole. These elements include prefabricated concrete retaining walls, earth terraces, and water framed in geometric shapes (Balik, Lisowska 2022).

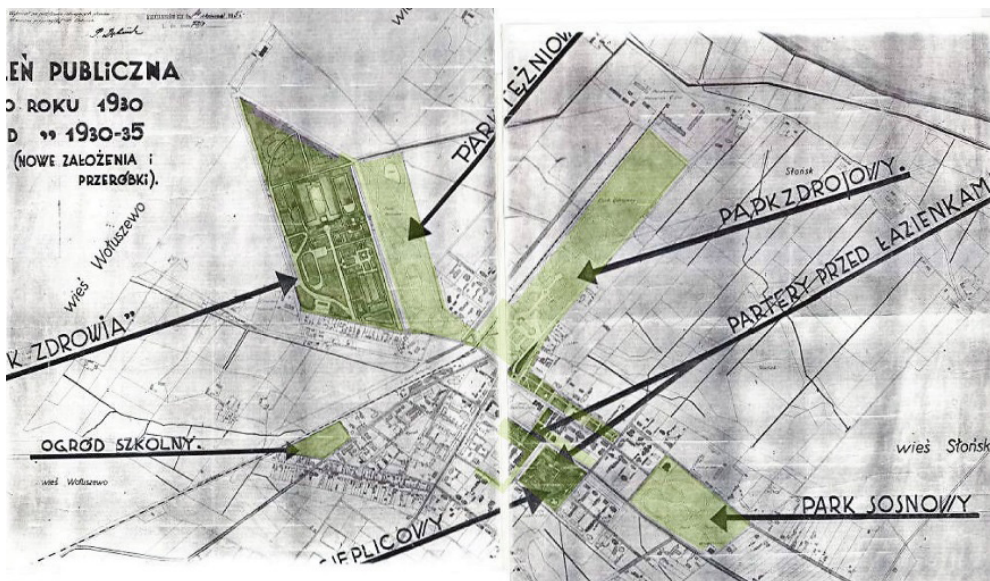


Fig. 3 Plan of Ciechocinek’s public greenery 1930-35 (new assumptions and alterations) (detail), 14 June 1935, source: Wiktor Hibner’s private archives (green shading by the authors).



Towards the end of the 1930s, the spa's greenery system consisted of more than a dozen public green spaces occupying a significant part of the town's area, connected to each other by numerous avenues: four parks (with a total area of about 65 ha): Spa [Zdrojowy], Under Graduation Towers [Pod Tężniami], Health [Zdrowia] and Pine [Sosnowy]; gardens: the reception garden (by the building of the Mineral Water Board), the thermal pool garden, and the school garden (altogether approx. 10.5 ha); numerous squares and greens: by the "Mushroom" fountain, by the theatre, by the church, by the monument to Romuald Traugutt, by Baths No. 1, and by the post office; Hellwig's Parterres, and the greenery along Nieszawska street (Balik, Lisowska 2022).

Characteristic features of the greenery system in Ciechocinek were:

- location of green areas in the central part of the resort;
- predominance of green areas in the centre of the spa in relation to buildings;
- continuity of the layout, ensuring comfortable movement around the spa (interpenetration of green areas or connection by means of alleys, as well as continuity of the view over neighbouring green areas, which enhanced the impression of never leaving the garden);
- harmonious combination of green areas arranged in different styles;
- unique and innovative twentieth-century spatial solutions in individual green areas (especially in the modernist style);
- great attention to detail and meticulous maintenance of greenery.

These features testify to the conscious shaping of the spa's urban space through "garden measures" (Dybczyńska-Bułyszko 2008, 112). High importance of greenery for mental health and general human well-being was already understood at the time. Further development of the system of public green areas became the main objective of subsequent regulatory plans for the town of Ciechocinek. Their authors were Tadeusz Tołwiński (Państwowy Zakład Wód Mineralnych 1922, 37) and Adam Paprocki (APT, 16). They aimed to merge two large blocks of greenery – one centred around the baths and the other located by the complex of graduation towers. Unfortunately, these plans were never realised.



Fig. 4 System of public green areas in Ciechocinek, 1930s (Balik, Lisowska 2022). Legend: 1 – Spa Park, 2 – Park Under the Graduation Towers, 3 – Pine Park, 4 – Health Park, 5 – square by the “Mushroom,” 6 – Garden by the building of the Board of Mineral Waters (PUC), 7 – thermal pool garden, 8 – Hellwig’s Parterres, 9 – green area by Baths no. 1, 10 – green area by Baths no. 2, 11 – square by the church, 12 – square by the Traugutt monument, 13 – square by the theatre, 14 – green area along Armii Krajowej Street (road to Nieszawa), 15 – square by the post office and railway embankment, 16 – square by the market hall, 17 – school garden, 18 – walking route along the tributary levee (graduation towers – brewing plant), 19 – cemeteries.

### What is left of the “magic garden”?

The location and boundaries of most public areas forming the town’s greenery system have not changed since the interwar period. The acreage of green areas in the town has not decreased; on

the contrary, the plans to extend the Health, Under Graduation Towers and Spa parks, unrealised before the war, have now been completed. Overall, the final balance of green areas is positive. However, the sense of appropriate preservation of the greenery system in question proves illusory upon comparison of the overall area occupied by greenery in the interwar period and today. In spite of the increase in area, the continuity of greenery as well as its state and the functioning of individual components appear to be insufficient today.

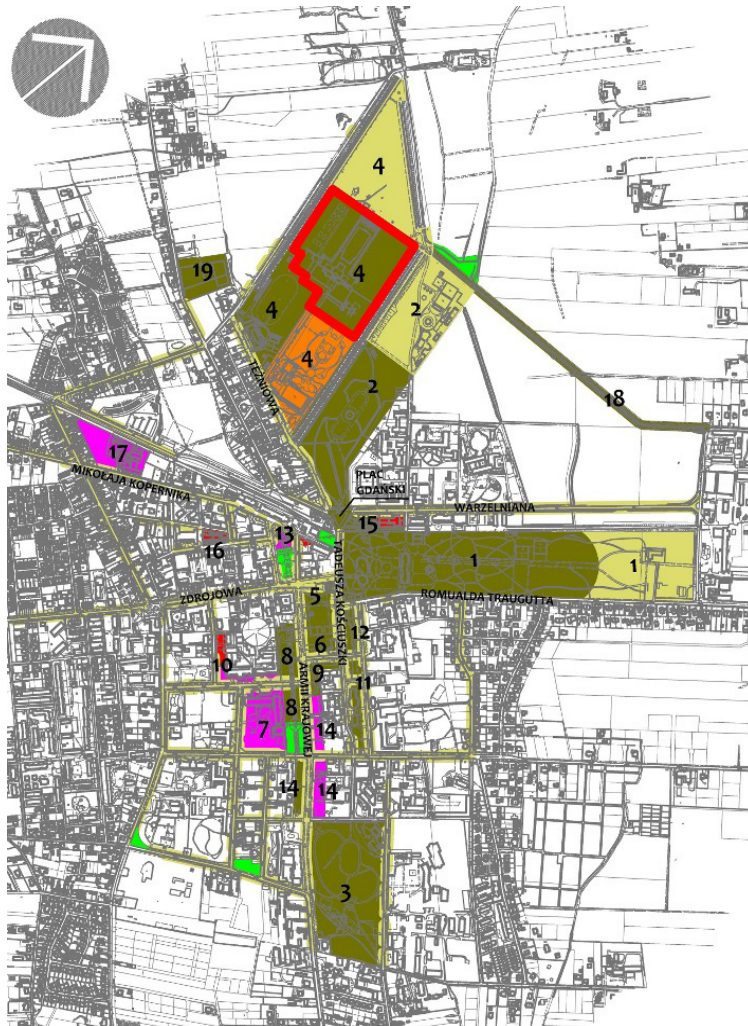


Fig. 5 The system of public green areas in Ciechocinek - their present state of preservation (numbering according to the legend from fig. 4, compiled by the authors).

- Preserved historical greenery objects, with clear composition, accessible
- Preserved historical greenery objects, with clear composition, neglected, inaccessible
- Contemporary biologically active areas, with no composition, within historical greenery arrangements
- Designed green areas planned in the interwar period, realised after the war in different form
- Newly designed green areas in place of historical composition (degradation of original composition)
- Lost historical greenery (change of composition and function)
- Contemporary composed greenery in new locations



Unfortunately, the compositional, functional as well as natural values of the new facilities is low as they are inconsistent and sometimes even disharmonious with the original layout of historic parks. These areas were arranged in a haphazard manner, generally without any plan, and realized through community works, often as a temporary solution (northern part of the Spa Park, northern part of the Health Park), or arranged as sports and leisure areas (northern part of the Under Graduation Towers Park). The aggressive contemporary form of the new facility in the Under Graduation Towers Park, with its climbing wall, tennis courts and water playground, arranged in an area listed in the Register of Historic Monuments, not only constitutes a discordant element that stands out against the backdrop of graduation towers, but also duplicates the function of the swimming pool complex located on the other side of graduation tower No. 1 and designed by Romuald Gutt.



Fig. 6 The new water playground in the Under Graduation Towers Park, with graduation tower No. 1 in the background, source: <https://ciechocinek.pl/rusza-druga-czesc-wodnego-placu-zabaw/> (accessed 13 August 2020).

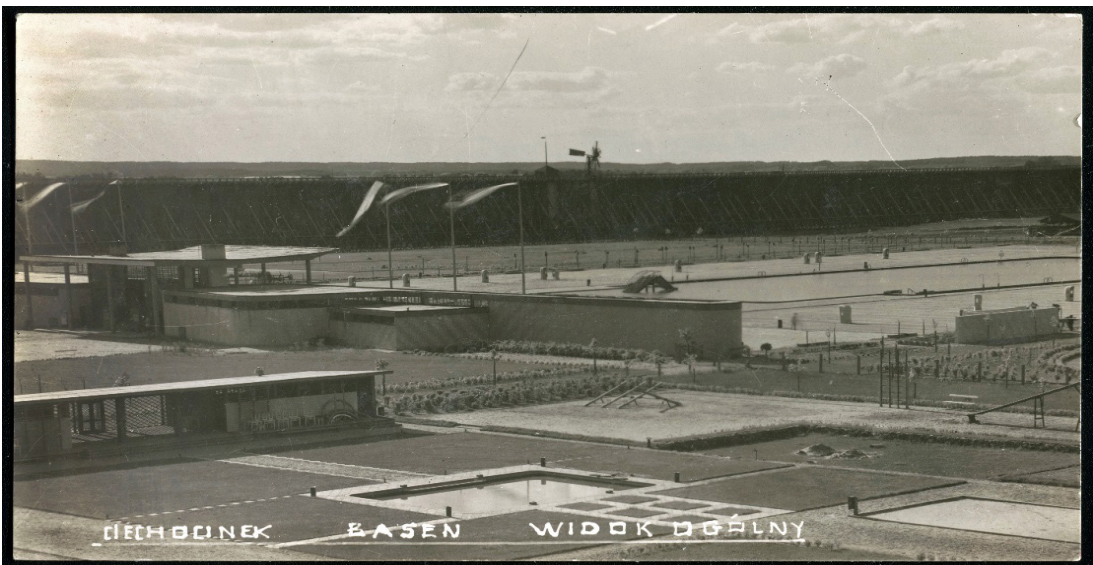


Fig. 7 The Health Park, view from graduation tower No. 1, facing north-west, towards the Jordan Garden and the brine thermal bath. Source: Wiktor Hibner's private archives.



Still, there are also positive examples of new developments in the green system. A number of squares have been laid out, the location of which fits the historical greenery system. These include the extension of Hellwig's Parterres, which is aligned with the historical axial composition of the green area, and the Eccentrics' Square [Skwer Ekscentryków].



Fig. 8 The new, contemporary part of Hellwig's Parterres, featuring a fountain, arranged as a continuation of the historical composition by Zygmunt Hellwig in 2011, visualisation, source: <https://ciechocinek.pl/places/partery-hellwiga/> (accessed 11 January 2023); photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.



Fig. 9 Examples of transformed or degraded components of the historic system of public green spaces (numbering according to the legend from fig. 4; compiled by the authors).









Fig. 12 Square by the market hall, 1930s/40s and the present today; source: [https://miastociechocinek.com/pl/galeria,uzdrowskowe\\_reminiscencje,96.html](https://miastociechocinek.com/pl/galeria,uzdrowskowe_reminiscencje,96.html) (accessed 28 April 2022); photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.

Although the preserved historical green areas in Ciechocinek, including those under protection, are still used as public green areas, they have undergone continuous, significant transformations. This negatively affects not only their composition and value as listed historic monuments, but also the integrity and functioning of the town's entire greenery system. A blatant example of this is the inhalation garden in the Health Park, where contemporary works carried out as part of the project "Renewal of public functions of degraded spa areas in Ciechocinek, September 2012" led to the destruction of the original modernist composition and the substance of this historic monument by replacing original forms and materials with contemporary ones that are stylistically alien.

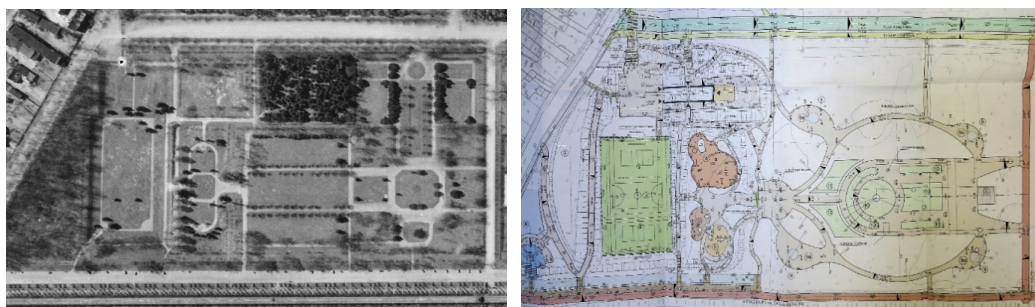


Fig. 13 The inhalation garden in the Health Park (1959) and the project for its revitalisation (2010). Source: aerial photograph of Ciechocinek (detail), 1959, GUGiK, ref. 11\_0750 1959; project "Renovation of the public functions of degraded spa areas in Ciechocinek, Tężniowy Park – Area no. 1"; construction project stage, multi-discipline project; Pracownia Architektoniczna "Arus," Bydgoszcz, 2010, WUOZ Włocławek.



Fig. 14 Inhalation garden in the Health Park – state before revitalisation (2012) and after (2022). Source: Google Earth (accessed 1 December 2022); <https://polska.e-mapa.net/> (accessed 1 December 2022).



Fig. 15 The inhalation garden in the Health Park with graduation tower No. 1 in the background, 1939 and today. Source: photo by M. Plebańczyk, 25 August 1939, MHMK, ref. MHK-6473-N-2; photo by M. Lisowska, 2021.

Some of the objects merely appear to be in good state. It is only upon closer inspection that this becomes apparent, despite the preservation of the original composition. As a result of refurbishment, much of the original historic substance has been removed and replaced with contemporary, mismatched materials. This is the case with Hellwig's Parterres, where the characteristic paving was removed – the “Roman pavement” – and replaced first with concrete slabs and then with concrete paving blocks. Other numerous damaging transformations of the characteristic architectural elements and furnishings include changing the layout and material of the low retaining walls, planting (e.g. replacing the rose garden), and removing the stairs to the café terrace. In addition, new elements obstructing proper perception of space were added: a “forest” of historically styled lanterns and a massive sculpture on the axis of the green area, close to the former sundial.



Fig. 16 Hellwig's Parterres, main axis, 1949 and today. Source: NAC, Unit Wojskowa Agencja Fotograficzna, ref. 3/131/0/-/53/36; photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.





Fig. 17 Square with sundial and characteristic decorative pavement on the main axis of Hellwig's Parterres, 1930s and the present state (2022). Source: photo by H. Poddębski, ca. 1939, NAC, unit Archiwum fotograficzne Henryka Poddębskiego, ref. 3/131/0/-/53/39; photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.



Fig. 18 Rose garden – part of Hellwig's Parterres, 1930s and the present state (2022). Source: photo by H. Poddębski, ca. 1939, NAC, unit Archiwum fotograficzne Henryka Poddębskiego, ref. 3/131/0/-/53/38; photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.

Clear composition has been preserved in the Spa Park, Pine Park and squares near the church and the Traugutt monument, although even here a number of changes that are unfavourable from the point of view of conservation should be pointed out. They concern the introduction of modern paved surfaces made of stone or concrete paving blocks, new forms of garden architecture, e.g. granite cobbled streams in the Spa Park, as well as changes in the functional-spatial layout, e.g. relocation of the main entrance to the Spa Park.





Fig. 19 The Bristol Café and its surroundings in the Spa Park, ca. 1909-1914 and its present state – Georgian restaurant Metreveli and its surroundings. Source: <https://fotopolska.eu/1021224,foto.html?o=b5343> (accessed 7 April 2022); photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.



Fig. 20 Main entrance to the Spa Park through the entrance square, featuring an ornamental lantern in the middle, 1930s and the present state. The main entrance and the square have lost their rank and representative character (Łozicki 2017, 327); photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.

The entire greenery system in Ciechocinek was maintained before WW II at a high level of horticulture, with great attention to detaFig. At present, in spite of many efforts and often good



quality of materials used for planting in some areas (e.g. in the Health Park, around Hellwig's Parterres, at Gdański Square, in the square by the Traugutt monument, and next to the church), the effects are unsatisfactory. This is due, among other things, to lack of knowledge or understanding of the historical composition, lack of conscious compositional planning, and sometimes lack of control over the expansion of vegetation. As a result of the replacement of historical forms and materials, such as retaining walls, paving, furnishings and floral forms with modern ones, the composition and characteristic features of these areas have been blurred, obliterating stylistic differences between nineteenth-century and modernist objects, and making all uniformly contemporary. This is all the more important since the harmonious combination of stylistically different objects into one whole determined the uniqueness of the system of green areas in Ciechocinek. It should be also emphasised that the composition of greenery in the interwar period, which based on regular, modernist layouts, has been particularly disrespected, although it was this aspect of the composition – designed in the same style, mostly by one planner, Zygmunt Hellwig – that has lent the modern, homogenous character to the spa, clearly distinguishing the representative centre from the town itself. This issue concerns Hellwig's Parterres and the green area at Baths No. 1, along with the streets Braci Raczyńskich and 3 Maja, squares by the Traugutt monument, and the church.

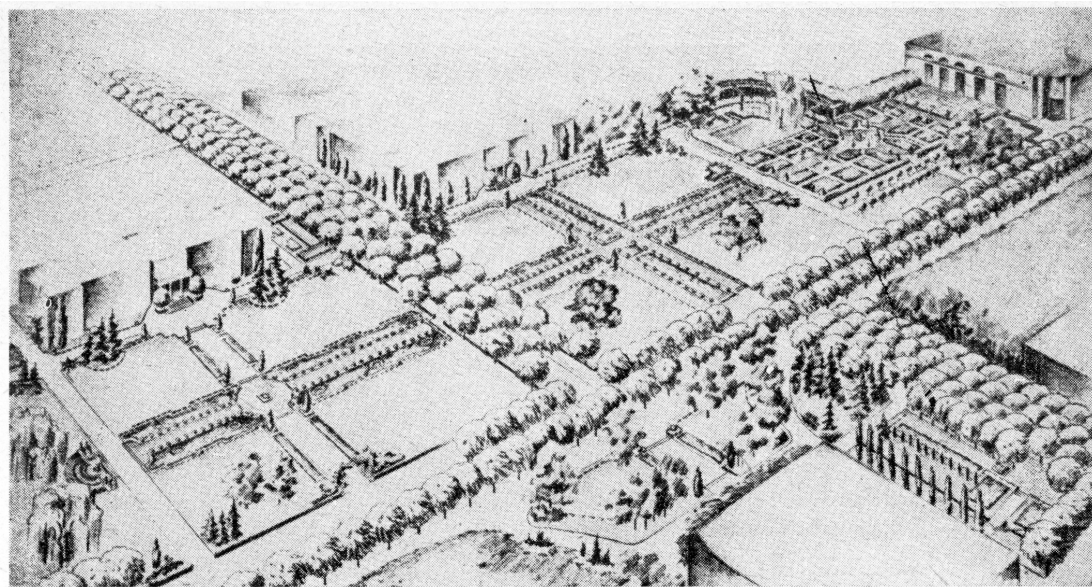


Fig. 21 Hellwig's Parterres, designed by Z. Hellwig, perspective drawing, 1933/34 (Hellwig et al 1953, 57).





Fig. 22 The green area designed by Z. Hellwig at Baths No. 1, 1930s and the present day (2022). Photo by H. Poddębski, ca. 1939, NAC, Unit Archiwum fotograficzne Henryka Poddębkiego, ref. 3/131/0/-/53/34; photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.

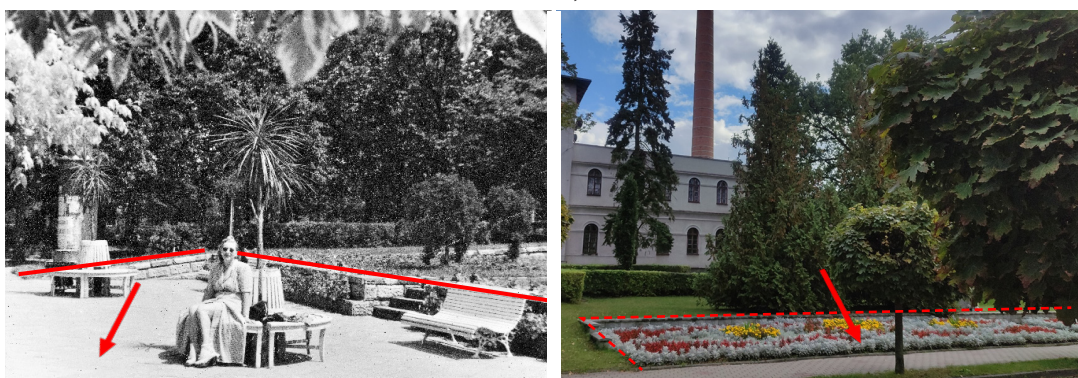


Fig. 23 The northern part of greenery at Baths No. 1, designed by Z. Hellwig, the square in front of the building of the Mineral Water Board near the flower calendar, 1947 and today. In 2013, a contemporary flowerbed was established at the square in place of the former floral calendar. Source: NAC, Unit Socjalistyczna Agencja Prasowa, ref. 3/3/0/47/1005/3; photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.



Fig. 24 Greenery at Baths No. 1, composed surroundings of the Virgin Mary statue with geometrical, overflowing water reservoirs designed by Z. Hellwig, ca. 1938 and today (Staffa 1938, 84); photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.





Fig. 25 The square next to the Traugutt monument, 1930s and today. Source: photo by H. Poddębski, ca. 1939, NAC, Unit Archiwum fotograficzne Henryka Poddębskiego, ref. 3/131/0/-/53/41; photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.

The garden character of the centre of Ciechocinek was emphasised by the use of surfaces typical for gardens and parks (squares, plazas) – earthen and mineral surfaces as well as the so-called “Roman pavement,” while pedestrian routes running closely along the streets were covered with concrete slabs that are characteristic of modernism. Today, these pavements have been replaced with contemporary hard surfaces made of concrete and granite paving blocks.



Fig. 26 The square by the “Mushroom,” 1940s and today. The gravel surface was still in use in the 1960s and 70s but has been replaced with concrete blocks. Source: <https://fotopolska.eu/758203,foto.html?o=b7198>; photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.



Fig. 27 Hellwig's Parterres – the “Roman pavement” of cast-in-place concrete slabs, 1930s and the present state (2022) with contemporary concrete block pavement. Source: photo by H. Poddębski, ca. 1939, NAC, Unit Archiwum fotograficzne Henryka Poddębskiego, ref. 3/131/0/-/53/40; photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.

Aside from the paving, one characteristic element of the historical greenery system, ensuring its homogeneity, is small garden architecture. Hellwig used a system of prefabricated concrete retaining walls in most of the objects from the interwar period. These have been partially preserved in the green area at Baths No.1, and in the Jordan Garden in the Health Park, but are in very poor condition. Remaining objects designed by Hellwig (at the flower clock and the Parterres) have been replaced using contemporary materials.

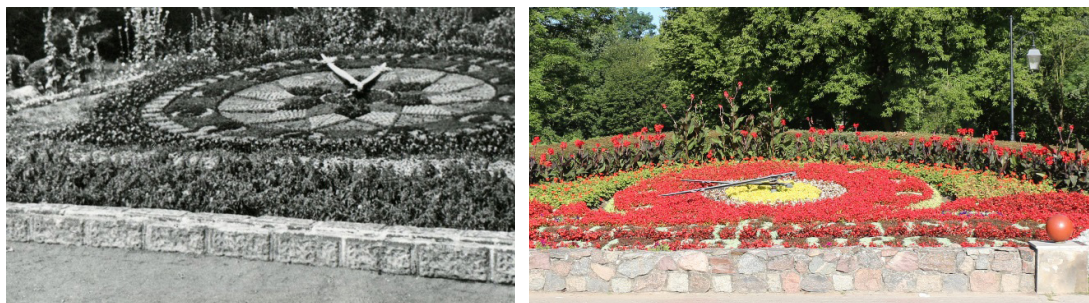


Fig. 28 Original prefabricated retaining wall by the flower clock, 1950s and today. Source: postcard (detail), ca. 1959, photo by A. Funkiewicz and P. Mystkowski, <https://fotopolska.eu/259681,foto.html>; photo by M. Lisowska, 2017.



Fig. 29 Detail of the original retaining wall in the greenery area at Baths No. 1, photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.

Other characteristic elements of green areas in Ciechocinek include ornamental plant forms, which became the town's trademark. The floral clock at Gdański Square has survived, but its composition has been significantly altered. Compared to other objects of this type in the world, Hellwig's work in Ciechocinek is original and innovative. Usually, floral clocks with a raised dial favour viewing from one side only. The specificity and uniqueness of the sundial in Ciechocinek consists in combining the ornamental dial plate with a rock garden surrounding the plate and bringing the viewer, as it were, inside the whole structure through a special path along the crown of the embankment. In this way, the dial could be viewed from all sides. Today, as a result of transformations and lack of attention to detail, only the dial face is visible from Gdański Square.



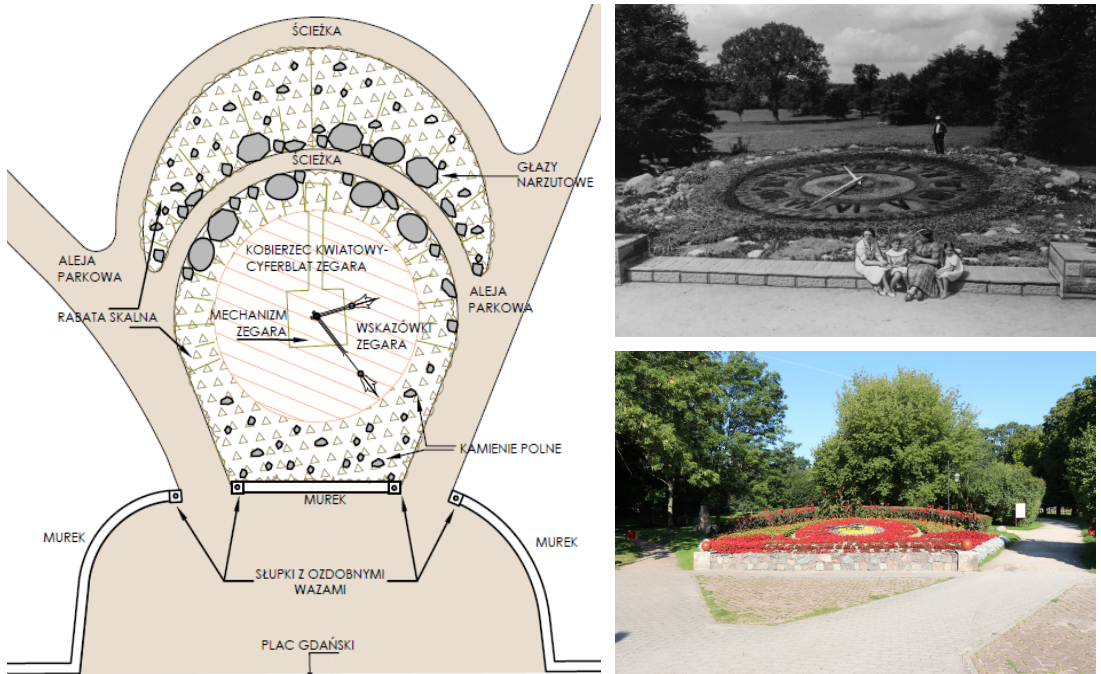


Fig. 30 Floral clock, its composition and scheme; condition in the 1930s. Rock garden visible around the clock in 2017 (Balik, Lisowska 2020, 269-280); NAC, Unit Koncern Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny – Archiwum Ilustracji, ref. 3/1/0/9/638/2; photo by M. Lisowska, 2017.

Elements that did not survive to this day include the flower calendar in 3 Maja Street, garlands of *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* stretching between pruned hawthorns in Braci Raczyńskich Street, and the circular flowerbeds bounded by decorative fences in bowls around trees in 3 Maja Street.



Fig. 31 Flower calendar in 3 Maja Street in the 1950s, replaced by a contemporary flowerbed. Source: photo by E. Baruch, 21 June 1959, <https://fotopolska.eu/329815/photo.html?o=b5343>; photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.



Fig. 32 Detail of a four-row avenue of shaped hawthorns with garlands of *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* stretching between them in Braci Raczyńskich Street, 1930s and today. Source: photo by H. Poddębski, ca. 1939, NAC, Unit Archiwum fotograficzne Henryka Poddębskiego, ref. 3/131/0/-/53/20; photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.

Furthermore, green areas tend to be treated today as separate objects with no connection to neighbouring ones. This approach has disturbed the spatial relationships between constituent elements of the greenery system, often obliterating its continuity, which was sought by planners since the nineteenth century. Both functional and visual continuity characterised the greenery system in Ciechocinek. Today, however, attention to connectivity and interpenetration of green areas as well as continuity of views over neighbouring areas have given way to spatial isolation and separation of individual sites by vegetation and fences. For example, Hellwig's Parterres, designed in the lowering of the area between Armii Krajowej Street (formerly Nieszawska) and Baths Nos. 3 and 4 were originally separated by a low hedge from the side of Nieszawska Street. This solution afforded view from Nieszawska Street over the entire length of the green area. Today, the site is isolated from the promenade by a high yew hedge. In the Parterres, the links between individual parts have also been disrupted. This can be observed at the pergola, which the designer intended as a resting place, with benches allowing one to admire the flowerbeds, but which is now a dark tunnel.

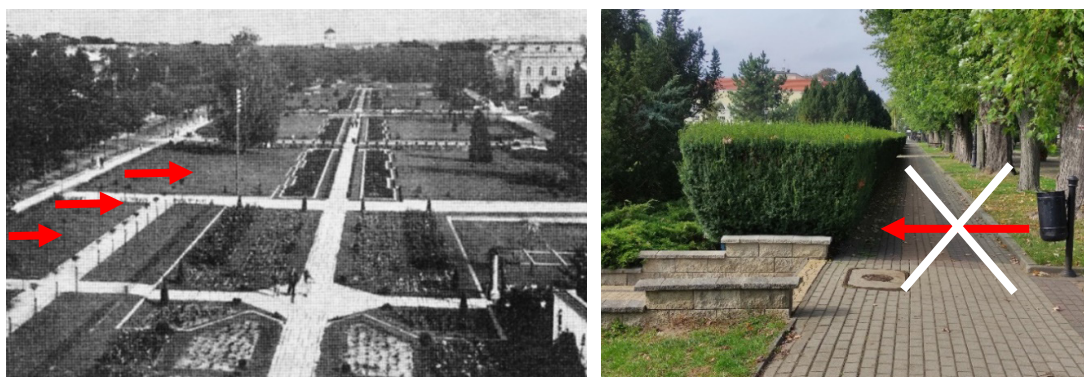


Fig. 33 Hellwig's Parterres, 1934-36 (half a year after the completion of the project) and today. The inappropriate management of the hedges disrupts the spatial links with neighbouring areas (Hellwig et al, 1953, 58); photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.





Fig. 34 Pergola at Hellwig's Parterres, 1930s and today. As a result of complete overgrowth with *Parthenocissus*, there are no links from the interior of the pergola to the area of the Parterres. Source: photo by H. Poddębski, ca. 1939, NAC, Unit Archiwum fotograficzne Henryka Poddębskiego, ref. 3/131/0/-/53/32; photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.

Particular value is held today by objects that have largely retained their original historic substance. Paradoxically, these are the places where no revitalisation has been undertaken (or was very limited), or ones that have been neglected and therefore suffered least transformation. These include:

- the swimming pool complex in the Health Park together with the Jordan Garden designed by R. Gutt, A. Szniolis and Z. Hellwig, which was still active at the beginning of the twenty-first century, but is now devastated;
- the reception garden at the Mineral Water Board (PUC) building, designed as a geometric composition by L. Danielewicz;
- the modernist greenery at Baths No. 1, designed by Z. Hellwig.

In the context of activities undertaken so far in other green areas, e.g. the inhalation garden, there is concern that in the future these objects will be exposed to modernisation works, which may lead to the destruction of the original composition and substance. Therefore, these objects urgently require conservation documentation.



Fig. 35 Saline bath complex designed by R. Gutt, A. Szniolis and Z. Hellwig, 1932-1939, and the abandoned and degraded complex today. Source: NAC, Unit Koncern Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny – Archiwum Ilustracji, ref. 3/1/0/13/189; photo by M. Lisowska, 2019.



Fig. 36 Reception garden at the Mineral Water Board (PUC) building, 1920-1939 and today. Source: NAC, Unit Koncern Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny – Archiwum Ilustracji, ref. 3/1/0/13/162; photo by M. Lisowska, 2022.

### Conclusions. How to restore the splendour of the system of public green areas in Ciechocinek?

The state of preservation of the historic system of public green areas, and, above all, the fact that they remain mostly undeveloped, creates an opportunity to restore their value and draw on it to improve the image of Ciechocinek. This system, designed by eminent architects and planners, has functioned efficiently and has become a landmark, contributing to the success of Ciechocinek as a health resort. Therefore, it is reasonable to adopt a top-down approach and refer to the whole system in the first place, only then turning to its constituent objects. This should be borne in mind when making new plans for the revitalisation of the town's public spaces.

1. It is necessary to protect the historical system of public green areas in Ciechocinek. According to the original assumptions of its creators, greenery occupies a significant part of the town centre. The specificity of the system consists in treating urban space in the town's centre as a park with spa buildings. The following should be protected:

1.1. the spatial layout of the town formed by the network of main roads, their course, together with characteristic nodal points – squares;

1.2. the axis of the spa composition, closed on one side with Pine Park and on the other - with Gdański Square, along with the flower clock;

1.3. green areas that constitute an integral part of the historic system:

- parks: Spa Park, Pine Park, Health Park, Under the Graduation Towers Park (together Health Park and under the Graduation Towers Park, currently referred to as the Graduation Tower Park);

- gardens: the garden next to the building of the Mineral Water Board (PUC); thermal pool garden;

- squares and greens situated near the following landmarks: the "Mushroom" fountain, the church, the Traugutt monument, the theatre, the post office, the railway embankment, the market hall; green areas along the Armii Krajowej Street (formerly Nieszawska) and at Baths Nos. 1 and 2; the school garden;

- alleys and cemeteries;

1.4. the tributary levee, with its important pedestrian route connecting the graduation towers and the Graduation Towers Park with the brewhouse – an important element of the green area system and a relic of the historic drainage facility.



The scope of protection appropriate for the aforementioned objects will vary depending on the degree of preservation of the historic substance and should be developed following thorough conservation research and analysis.

2. It is necessary to preserve the homogeneous character of the spa centre. Hellwig's modernist design (comprising Hellwig's Parterres, the green area next to Baths No. 1 along with alleys in Braci Raczyńskich and 3 Maja Streets, the square next to the church and the Traugutt monument) is an example of a rare approach to urban space using "garden measures." Both the historical composition and the preserved original historical substance (paving, prefabricated concrete retaining walls, earth-level terraces, geometrically framed water) should be highlighted and protected.

3. The original function of historic public green spaces should be preserved, including places where little historical substance survives. To this end, they should be protected from the pressure of development because they form an integral part of the composition. Harmful actions such as developing historic buildings without taking into account the original composition and the context of the system of green areas ought to stop. Contemporary projects should not undermine the organisation of space and details planned by outstanding artists such as R. Gutt, Z. Hellwig, L. Danielewicz, J. Majewski, H. Cybulski and F. Szanior.

4. It is necessary to plan activities not only on the scale of individual objects but, above all, by taking into account the entire system, thus ensuring that the spa can be navigated comfortably, as was the original intention. The continuity of public green space should be preserved and restored in terms of:

4.1. spatial and functional continuity in places where it has been violated. Lost elements should be restored, e.g. the green stripe along Armii Krajowej Street, the area of the former thermal pool garden, and the square by the market hall.

4.2. visual continuity, achieved by interweaving green areas or linking them with alleys, as well as continuity of the view over neighbouring areas, which enhances the impression of the garden's omnipresence. Different parts of the system should not be spatially isolated or treated independently. To this end, it is recommended to:

4.2.1. dismantle fences that introduce spatial and visual barriers, instead introducing low hedges in the centre of the resort (fences could be also masked with hedges);

4.2.2. control the size of trees and shrubs, reducing the height of yew hedges on the border of the pedestrian zone along Armii Krajowej Street and around Hellwig's Parterres, in order to ensure continuous view;

4.3. stylistic continuity of the greenery system, taking into account two harmonious styles characteristic for Ciechocinek: the free garden composition from the late nineteenth century (Under Graduation Towers Park, Spa Park, Pine Park) and the regular arrangements from the turn of the centuries and the modernist period (Health Park, garden at the building of the Mineral Water Board designed by L. Danielewicz, Hellwig's Parterres, green area by Baths No. 1, square by the Traugutt monument, square by the church). It is thus recommended to:

4.3.1. restore and expose historical elements of small garden architecture, ensuring the homogeneous character of the composition in the town centre, specifically the system of prefabricated retaining walls and stairs introduced by Hellwig;

4.3.2. unify and restore historic surfaces in public spaces, emphasising the garden character of the town centre: mineral paving in public squares and parks, “Roman pavement” in documented places, 50 x 50 smooth concrete slabs (pavements, pedestrian routes in the centre of the spa), cast-in-place concrete slabs combined with clinker and anti-slip, grooved concrete slabs (swimming pool area in the Health Park);

The use of permeable paving is important not only from the perspective of conservation but also in the context of climate changes and the need to develop green-blue infrastructure.

4.3.3. restore characteristic ornamental plant forms (e.g. the flower calendar in 3 Maja Street, garlands of climbing plants in Braci Raczyńskich Street, and the rock garden as an integral part of the composition of the flower clock).

5. Throughout the centre of the spa it is essential to pay attention to detail following the perfectly preserved architectural iconography.

6. The system of alleys in the centre of the spa (more than thirty alleys along the main streets) should be preserved and maintained. They connect individual objects and constitute independent interiors. Of particular importance in the composition are the representative four-row alleys in Braci Raczyńskich Street and in 3 Maja Street. Due to the tradition of systematic crown-shaping of street trees in Ciechocinek in order to regulate shading and humidity (confirmed in written sources and iconography), it is still acceptable to apply these treatments, observing the principles of the art of gardening. However, it is recommended to use those kinds of trees that have small, regular crowns to reduce the need of excessive pruning.

7. View links:

7.1. View connections between the town centre and the graduation towers should be restored, ensuring the exposition of graduation tower No. 1 and the connection between Gdański Square and the Graduation Tower Park (views over the main park glade behind the flower clock and over the graduation tower No. 1 should be recreated).

7.2 The legibility of the main view axes in the town should be restored, especially in relation to major architectural structures, which have been obscured through excessive canopy growth, inappropriate species selection, or inappropriate landscaping.

7.3 View of major architectural structures in the town centre should be restored, basing on preserved iconography.

7.4 View of graduation towers Nos. 1 and 3 from the pedestrian route along the embankment should be preserved and made authentic. It is necessary to stop the expansion of development on the meadows between the embankment and graduation towers Nos. 1 and 3, which occupy the foreground of the view.

8. It would be advisable to consider the possibility of returning to the plans made already in the 1930s and 1960s concerning the integration of the spa greenery blocks by incorporating new areas into the system, i.e. by connecting the public green areas near the baths with the area between graduation towers in reference to the regulatory plan of Ciechocinek made by Paprocki or the concept of the 1000-year Park developed in the 1960s.





Fig. 37 Plans to merge systems of green areas in Ciechocinek (1930s, concept by A. Paprocki and 1960s – plan of the 1000-years Park). Source: (Balik, Lisowska 2022); Ciechocinek, Park 1000-lecia – master plan, 19 December 1962, Założenie projektowe park 1000-lecia w Ciechocinku, Biuro Projektów Służby Zdrowia, Warszawa. AP in Włocławek, Zespół nr 365, Komisja Zdrojowa w Ciechocinku I. 1929-1969 (1970-1971), seria 3.5 Inwestycje komunalne, ref. 44.

Historic green spaces in towns, especially those that form systems of public areas, play an extremely important role in shaping urban spatial structure. Often designed by excellent architects and urban planners, these systems prove to be durable elements of urban layout and to a large extent determine the development of the town. They become the guarantee of spatial order and deserve utmost attention since they influence not only the quality of life among the inhabitants, but also contribute to the image of the town and often – as in the case of Ciechocinek – lend the town a unique character. Therefore, green spaces impact the town's spatial, social and economic development. However, it is common today that such areas are marginalised or ignored, disregarding their historical importance and leading to their degradation. Under strong pressure from investors, their existence and proper functioning has been increasingly endangered. As a result, it is necessary to recognize the values of historic green space systems and to identify measures that would ensure their protection. In the context of ongoing revitalisation of public spaces in cities, it becomes urgent to pay attention to the potential of historic systems of public green spaces and acknowledge the necessity to treat individual green areas as parts of a larger whole.

#### **Acknowledgements:**

We would like to thank the National Institute of Cultural Heritage, which enabled research on historic green areas in Ciechocinek, and Wiktor Hibner, who provided archival materials and valuable comments.

### Bibliography:

Balik K., Lisowska M. (2020). *Dokumentacja rewaloryzacji Parku Tężniowego w Ciechocinku*, Warszawa, maszyn., NID.

Balik K., Lisowska M. (2022). *Historyczny system publicznych terenów zieleni w Ciechocinku*, [w:] Balik K., Kola R., Kotlewski L., Lisowska M., Paczuski A., Stocka M., Ciechocinek, pow. aleksandrowski, woj. kujawsko-pomorskie. Studium ochrony wartości kulturowych. Warszawa, maszyn., NID.

Borucki M. (1882). *Ziemia kujawska pod względem historycznym, jeograficznym, archeologicznym, ekonomicznym i statystycznym*, Włocławek, Herman Neuman.

Dybczyńska-Bułyżko A. (2008). *Kształt dla Chaosu. Twórczość Romualda Gutta a problemy polskiego modernizmu*, Warszawa, DiG.

Hellwig Z., Lisiak B., Sieroszewski W., Wizner K., Zielonko A. (1953). *Urządzanie terenów zielonych*, Warszawa, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Techniczne.

Kucza-Kuczyński K. (2013). *Romuald Gutt: odkrywanie*, ARCH, 2013 nr (3)17, s. 100-103, Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich SARP.

Łąpiński S. J., (1891). *Przewodnik po Ciechocinku. Jego historia i zasoby lecznicze z dodaniem planu całej osady*, Włocławek, L. Rosiński.

Łozicki A. (2017), *Ciechocinek. Powrót do źródeł*, Włocławek, Wydawnictwo Duszpasterstwa Rolników.

Ruppert H. (1896). *Ciechocinek Zakład Zdrojowo-Kąpielowy* [w:] Dobrzycki H. (red.), *Zdrojowiska, zakłady lecznicze i stacje klimatyczne w guberniach Królestwa Polskiego i najbliższych guberniach Cesarstwa oraz prywatne zakłady lecznicze w Warszawie*. (s. 31-45): Warszawa, druk P. Laskauera & W. Babickiego.

Scholtz A. (1966). *Architekt krajobrazu*, [w:] *Architektura*, 1966 nr 12, s. 543, Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich SARP, Arkady.

Staffa, K.B. (1938). *Dwa efekty wody w ogrodzie*, [w:] *Przegląd Ogrodniczy Rok XXI, Nr 2, luty 1938*, p. 84.

*Ciechocinek na drodze wspianego rozwoju. Wywiad z Dyr. Państwowego Zakładu Zdrojowego p. Stanisławem Kozłowskim* [w:] *Zdrój Ciechociński*, 1928, R. 15, nr 4, p. 1.

*Ciechocinek Państwowy Zakład Wód Mineralnych. Przewodnik na 1922 r.*, p. 37.

APT O. Wł. Zespół 23. Akta miasta Ciechocinka 1923-1944, jednostka sygn. 16. Akta dotyczące rozbudowy miasta Ciechocinka (1929-1934), *Protokół nr 4 z posiedzenia Tymczasowej Komisji Zdrojowej, z dnia 12 stycznia 1935 r. w Ciechocinku*.