

## A FEW OF THE PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE REHABILITATION OF URBAN HISTORIC COMPLEXES: THE EXAMPLE OF STARY SAĆZ

The urban conservation study of Stary Saćz was made between 1975 and 1978 at the Research Institute Workshop for the Conservation of Cultural Property (Cracow branch), at the request of the local Conservation Bureau. The methods adopted had been devised by Professor Janusz Bogdanowski of the Department of Landscape and Parks Architecture of the Cracow Polytechnical University.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the feasibility of an optimal programme for the preservation and conservation of existing complexes and to establish guidelines for future development which would bring out the exceptional qualities of Stary Saćz, its historical monuments and its townscape.

### *The History of the Town of Stary Saćz*

The town of Stary Saćz is situated at the foot of high mountains on a terrace rising above a broad valley between two rivers (the Poprad and the Dunajec). Its origins can be traced back to the 13th century, the earliest siting of the township under Polish law being recorded after 1257; at that time it assumed an oval form with a centrally located long and narrow market, in the middle of which stood a parish church. At the close of the 13th century two religious houses — the convent of the Poor Clares and the Franciscan monastery — were built immediately adjoining the city on its diagonal axis.

The subsequent siting under the law of Magdeburg gave the town a chequer-board pattern with a regular street network and a rectangular market with two streets converging at each corner. This layout has been preserved, with minor alterations, till the present day, except that the town was enlarged in the 16th and 17th centuries by the addition of three small suburban complexes. This second stage in the life of Stary Saćz was its golden age of prosperity, for it was then an important point on the Hungarian trading route from the south to the north of Europe. As soon as this route lost its importance as a main commercial thoroughfare (16th and 17th centuries) there was a falling-off in the development of the town, the primacy now going to the nearby town of Nowy Saćz, with the result that more and more of the inhabitants began to engage in agriculture.

This situation was reflected in the character of the architecture. Following a series of disastrous fires a special type of one-storey house had been developed. Many of these structures — still preserved today — were designed in the form of an elongated rectangle with a central corridor leading through to the other parts of the farmstead. In the 18th century barn architecture appeared on the highways leading out of the town; in the 19th further work was done on a number of streets and communications were improved by river, railway and a new road to Nowy Saćz.

Subsequently all building activities in Stary Saćz were suspended until the 'sixties of the present century. The town then expanded to the north-north-west, where a residential area with single-family dwellings and, very recently, prefabricated blocks of flats, have been added.

### *Present State of the Town*

Stary Saćz, with a population of 7,000, is mainly a working-class town. A modest percentage of the working population is employed in a few small factories, workshops, offices and the municipal administration; but the majority work in factories or administrations in the neighbouring town of Nowy Saćz. A further large sector of the population is still engaged in agriculture. For twenty years now, it has been a



1. Plan of the town.



common thing for the younger people to leave the town; they move to bigger towns which can more easily respond to their aspirations for better education and jobs and a fuller cultural life. Today, as in the past, the role of Stary Saż within the context of the whole region remains to be defined.

All this has served to determine both the attitude of the inhabitants towards their historical traditions and their expectations as regards a better standard of living. The bad state of the traditional houses and the lack of technical equipment capable of satisfying the requirements of modern civilization have been the cause of a negative attitude towards the idea of protecting the historical monuments of the town. At the same time a mode of life associated with standard, styleless architecture has become fashionable. The result of such trends has been the development of new single-family dwellings in the northern part of the town and individual houses on the outskirts of the oldest quarter. A further testimony to these trends is a new estate composed of five-storey blocks of flats. There were therefore two factors to be taken into account when the study was made: the necessity of preserving and protecting the town's historical landmarks and cultural heritage and, at the same time, the current needs and demands of its residents.

#### *Methods and Procedures*

The first thing that needed to be undertaken was an inventory of the existing townscape and a historical analysis.

The drawing-up of the plans required by the study will involve three stages, of which Stages I and II have so far been completed, i.e.:

Stage I : Establishment of guidelines for conservation work in the form of an overall plan (scale 1:5000);

Stage II : Establishment of guidelines for a detailed plan (scale 1: 1000);

Stage III : Detailed analysis of the old town blocks (scale 1: 100).

#### *Stage I*

Under Stage I a landscape survey of the town's immediate surroundings was made. It was attempted to show the silhouette of Stary Saż against the landscape and to evaluate its components. In conjunction with the historical study it made possible the establishment of both historic areas and areas of importance for the protection of the landscape and the listing of the unfavourable features disrupting the townscape of Stary Saż and its background.

Following these investigations the conclusions arrived at with regard to conservation requirements were drawn out on a plan dealing with the whole area lying between the natural boundaries formed by the Poprad and Dunajec rivers. This showed the boundaries of the strictly regulated conservation areas in both the oldest sections of the town and the suburbs built later on. Areas for future residential districts were marked out with precision on locations lying



2. Church square present condition and proposed renovation scheme.

beyond the zone of the greatest townscape value and it was laid down as a principle that houses must be individually planned. The plan provided for the use of the two river-banks as sports grounds and recreational areas. Essential changes were also made in the communications system in that through traffic was eliminated from the centre, and to this end the plan indicated the most suitable site for the building of a ring road along which the best general view of the town could be obtained.

Other conclusions concerned locations for bus stations and for parking areas on the outskirts of the town, as well as a possible system for the introduction of two local bus services linking the centre with the future housing estates. It was also suggested that the town have a partial green belt to conceal some of the negative elements in the landscape.

### Stage II

Concerns the old town. The space accessible to the public has been divided, in theory, into units, which have been designated as "basic townscape and architectural enclosed spaces" (i.e. squares and streets) and these in turn have been divided into sub-units, the criterion being that each division must correspond to an enclosed space which may be encompassed by the eye.

In addition to this, the visibility range of the town's architectural dominants and landmarks has been determined. (By "dominants" is meant the monastery towers and the parish church, and by "landmarks" St. Roch's church, the Holy Cross chapel and the monastery bastions).

After certain of these "enclosed spaces" had been evaluated both in layout and in elevation, certain alterations in design had to be made with regard to both the outward appearance of the buildings and their architectural details, the fencing of planted areas and street lighting and paving.

Finally, joint conclusions have been reached as regards the rehabilitation of the whole historic fabric of the town. These involve:

- i) Clearing the area by demolishing houses which disfigure or blur the traditional layout.
- ii) Replacing features technically in a very bad state of repair.
- iii) Repairing spatial irregularities.
- iv) Altering the shape of certain buildings or their architectural details.
- v) Altering the surface treatment of certain streets.

Besides providing the guidelines for rehabilitation the study defines the function of Stary Saçz both as a town and in relation to the region as a whole.

Stary Saçz is beautifully situated at the entry into the Poprad river valley, which is a holidaying area, from which a number of attractive tourist routes lead up to the nearby mountains of Beskid Sadecki. In view of these advantages



3. Present condition and future appearance.

the most suitable function for the town would appear to be that of a press and tourist centre. This will provide an opportunity for altering the character of the old town, whose population will move out to new districts. The buildings of the old town, once suitably adapted and reappointed, could house administrations, municipal services, craftsmen's workshops, tourist agencies, catering establishments, retail shops, etc. Also, a small number of houses will be purchased from their present users and equipped as "plein air" ateliers for visiting artists.

There is also the possibility of obtaining subsidies from the State institutions for the conservation of buildings that have been in private hands. Some of these will be adapted to serve as accommodation, the utmost use being made of the space available in the attics, outbuildings and service quarters.

The scheme which has been adopted may also solve certain problems of a sociological nature. It will increase the number of jobs, raise the incomes of residents, enliven cultural life and enhance the prestige of the town throughout the region.

The principles laid down in the study have been fully accepted by the local conservation and administrative authorities, and their approval is reflected in Stage III of the project which will shortly be carried out.

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PROJEKT

4. Present condition, future appearance and (p. 123) overall plan.



### QUELQUES PROBLEMES LIES A LA REHABILITATION DES CENTRES ANCIENS: L'EXEMPLE DE STARY SACZ

L'étude du projet de réhabilitation urbaine de Stary Sacz a été réalisée entre 1975 et 1978 par l'Atelier de recherche du patrimoine culturel de Cracovie. Le but de cette étude était de proposer les bases d'un programme de conservation des ensembles existants en corrélation avec le développement futur de Stary Sacz, qui tient compte des qualités exceptionnelles de son site et de son architecture.

La ville de Stary Sacz, fondée au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, est située au pied de hautes montagnes sur une terrasse dominant une large vallée. Elle avait à l'origine une forme ovale centrée sur une artère commerçante. Sous la domination des Magdebourg la ville s'agrandit selon un quadrillage régulier de rues autour d'un marché rectangulaire. C'est cette forme que l'on retrouve aujourd'hui mais développée au XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles par l'adjonction de trois communes sub-urbaines. L'essor de la ville lié à la route commerciale qui traversait la Hongrie du Nord au Sud de l'Europe s'arrêta au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, lorsque cette route perdit son importance, et la population se tourna alors vers l'agriculture.

Aujourd'hui, avec une population de 7.000 habitants la ville de Stary Sacz est principalement une ville ouvrière, dont la population travaille dans les usines et les administrations de la ville récente de Nowy Sacz, et dont le rôle social et économique est à redéfinir.

La première étape de l'étude a consisté à établir une analyse historique et un inventaire de la ville qui déboucheront sur des plans de plus en plus détaillés (1/5000, 1/1000, et 1/100).

Commençant par une étude du paysage et de la silhouette de la ville, elle s'est attachée à délimiter les secteurs à sauvegarder en fonction des données naturelles et historiques, et les zones constructibles à la périphérie de la ville. Un plan de circulation a été conçu en vue d'éliminer la circulation du centre et de dessiner une voie de contournement périphérique.

La deuxième étape concernait la vieille ville, qui a été divisée en « unités architecturales de base » pouvant être appréhendées par l'oeil humain. On a fait la liste des éléments architecturaux dominants, et afin de respecter l'harmonie de ces « espaces délimités » on a prévu certaines modifications de détails architecturaux, de clôtures, d'éclairagés extérieurs et de revêtements de sols.

Enfin, à côté des charges relatives à la réhabilitation elle-même, on a cherché à redéfinir le rôle de la ville et sa relation à la région environnante, qui est une région touristique. L'ensemble de la vieille ville est ainsi appelée à abriter des administrations, ateliers d'artistes et d'artisans, équipements hôteliers etc.

Il ne reste plus, actuellement, qu'à descendre au stade le plus fin de l'étude afin d'exécuter les projets déjà adoptés par les autorités locales.

1. - Plan de la ville.
2. - Place de l'église, état actuel et projet d'aménagement.
3. - Etat actuel et projet.
4. - Etat actuel, projet et plan masse.

**ALGUNOS DE LOS PROBLEMAS  
ENLAZADOS CON LA REHABILITACIÓN  
DE LOS CENTROS ANTIGUOS: EL  
EJEMPLO DE STARY SACZ**

Los estudios del proyecto de rehabilitación urbana de Stary Sacz han sido realizados entre 1975 y 1978 por el Taller de investigación del patrimonio cultural de Cracovia. El fin de esos estudios era de determinar las proposiciones de base para un programa de conservación de los conjuntos existentes en correlación con el desarrollo futuro de Stary Sacz y que tuviese en cuenta las cualidades excepcionales del sitio y de su arquitectura.

Stary Sacz, fundada en el Siglo 13, esta situada al pie de altas montañas sobre un terraplano que domina un amplio valle. En su origen tenia una forma ovalada centrada sobre una via comercial. Bajo la dominación de los Magdeburgo, la ciudad se agrandecio siguiendo un cuadrículado regular de calles alrededor de un mercado rectangular. Es esa forma la que tiene aún, pero desenvuelta en los siglos 16 y 17 por

la añadidura de tres pueblos suburbanos. El desarrollo de la aglomeración estaba vinculado a la carretera que iba del norte al sur de Europa y que atravesaba Hungría; cuando en el Siglo 18 esa carretera perdio su importancia el desarrollo se paró y la población se dedico a la agricultura.

Hoy tiene una población de 7.000 almas y es principalmente una aglomeración obrera. Los habitantes trabajan en las fabricas y la administración de la nueva ciudad de Nowy Sacz y es por eso que su papel social y economico tiene que ser definido de nuevo.

La primera etapa fue hacer una análisis histórica y un inventario de la población; los estudios desembocaron sobre planes de más en más detallados (1/5000, 1/1000, 1/100).

Se empezó por el estudio del paisaje y de la silueta de la ciudad, delimitando los sectores a salvaguardar en razón de los datos naturales e históricos, y de las zonas de construcción en las afueras. Un plan de circulación fue concebido en vista de eliminar la circulación en el centro y de preveer una vía de contorno periférica.

La segunda etapa de los estudios tuvo por objeto la ciudad antigua que fue dividida en «unidades de base» que puedan ser percibidas por el ojo humano. Se hizo la lista de los elementos arquitectónicos dominantes y, para respetar la armonía de esos «espacios delimitados», se han previsto ciertas modificaciones de ciertos detalles arquitectónicos tales que: el cercado de los espacios verdes, el alumbrado, el revestimiento del suelo.

En fin, al lado de las cargas relativas a la rehabilitación se ha definido de nuevo el papel de la ciudad en su relación con la region que la rodea que es una region de turismo. En su conjunto la antigua ciudad debe abrigar administraciones, talleres de artistas y de artesanos, el equipo hostelero etc.

Actualmente no queda más que llegar a la etapa la más fina de los estudios para llevar a cabo la ejecución de los proyectos que han sido adoptados por las autoridades locales.