

REHABILITATION OF BUZAU MARGHILOMAN PARK

REABILITAREA PARCULUI MARGHILOMAN DIN BUZĂU

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Abstract. *The park, having a surface area of 10.17 ha along with Albatross Villa and other building facilities of the time, make up a monumental complex that is on the Historical Monument List under the code Bz-II-a-B-02347. The rehabilitation proposes the English garden restoration by reinforcing and completing the arboreal mass, placing valuable groups or species of trees and shrubs, remaking the round walks and floral borders, the rose garden being well known for its rarities, works of vertical systemizing in the area of restored constructions, retracing some alleys and total restoration of its carpet, modernizing the illumination system, endowment with specific urban furniture in “fin de siècle” style. A peculiar attention is given to the former horse training track and the lake. At the same time, it is considered the park securing by restoring the surrounding wall of the estate. The intervention works should give back to the spiritual life of the area a valuable architectural and landscaping ensemble, comprising some elements with primary status at national level.*

Key words: rehabilitation, historical park, cultural center.

Rezumat: *Parcul, în suprafață de 10,17 ha, împreună cu Vila “Albatros”, și alte construcții din aceeași epocă, formează un ansamblu monumental, încadrat în Lista Monumentelor Istorice sub codul Bz-II-a-B-02347. Reabilitarea propune refacerea parcului englezesc prin consolidarea și completarea masivelor arboricole, amplasarea de grupuri sau exemplare valoroase de arbori și arbuști, refacerea rondurilor și platbandelor florale, rozariu fiind vestit pentru raritățile sale, lucrări de sistematizare verticală în zona construcțiilor restaurate, retrasarea unor alei și refacerea integrală a îmbrăcămînții acestora, modernizarea sistemului de iluminat, dotarea cu mobilier urban specific, în stil “fin de siecle”. O atenție deosebită esta acordată fostei piste de antrenament hipic și lacului, cu problemele lagate de consolidarea malurilor, a plantațiilor și aleilor perimetrare, refuncționalizarea ecluzei. Lucrările de intervenție vor reda vieții spirituale din zonă un ansamblu arhitectural și peisager valoros, conținând unele elemente cu statut prioritar la nivel național.*

Cuvinte cheie: reabilitare, parc istoric, centru cultural.

INTRODUCTION

This ensemble was as early as 1892 one of the most flourishing and modern estates in the country. While Alexandru Marghiloman was the owner, the estate included Albatross Villa (BZ-II-m-B 2347.01 additional buildings), the stables and the gust house (BZ-II-m- B 2347.02), other constructions, some of them still

existing however not on the M.I. list, such as the horse jockey and horse riding coach house, and later, after 1913, an hippodrome that was later demolished.

Our project aim is to finalize the restoration works of Villa and to be used as Alexandru Marghiloman Cultural Center as well as to set up the rehabilitation works for the site of this monument, the park and the lake.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The aim of the project is to rehabilitate this park in order to bring it back to the present using standards, in the context of arranging in this place the monumental complex of the Alexandru Marghiloman Cultural Center, important components of cultural and leisure endowments of Buzau municipality.

We are not planning to make modifications regarding functional partition, on the contrary, but preserving and emphasizing the original composition, including the return of the original layouts of some alleys modified in time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Brief history

Iancu Marghiloman, characterized as one of the greatest farmers of the country, Mayor of Buzau city, deputy and senator, won at cards, between 1870 and 1890, The Iazul Morilor estate, placed not far away of Buzau city, including a pond and land with a surface area of 20 ha that belonged to Constantin Musceleanu. On the property Iazul Morilor, Iancu Marghiloman erected in 1884 – 1890, The Albatross Villa. Previously the son of Iancu Marghiloman, perpetuating his father interest for pedigreed and race horses, organizes a bloodstock horse stud on Marghiloman property as well as the famous stables existing even nowadays (Penes N., 2007).

In 1890 Alexandru Marghiloman married to Princess Eliza Stirbey and set its residence in his country side residence on the estate Iazul Morilor. Since this time the park organization and lake lay-out started.

Between 1892 and 1906, the estate and the house traverse a flourishing period. Now the famous English gardens is arranged, the lake gained its approximate present contour changed compared to its initial profile in order to develop the park and to erect a performing small size horse track following the model of Baneasa Hippodrome horse track. He built a hippodrome in the vicinity of Villa, with tracks, paddocks, administrative house and watchman house, power plant, water supply system and drainage system for the entire complex.

By its functions and dimensions, the way of arrangement, the estate became unique in this country highly appreciated by King Carol I, the Queen Mary and later on by King Ferdinand, as well by politicians and men of culture that were among the guests of Alexandru Marghiloman. (Penes N., 2007)

The lay outs are kept at the same high level of organizing and refinement till 1925 when Alexandru Marghiloman died and the usufruct of his estate came to Maria Petrescu – his second wife. After this date, the bloodstock stud is sold, the stables and hippodrome decayed, the park fell into ruin and the house, a

depository of a rich documentary material, furniture, valuable books, paintings entailed with mortgage and lawsuits, inhabited by administrators faced a severe degradation.

In 1935 the hippodrome – one of the most modern in the country was however on the way of demolition. When Maria Marghiloman died, the estate and the facilities, the houses came to the successors Mihai Butculescu and Alexandru Pherekide, sisterly nephews of Alexandru Marghiloman. The estate was estimated and the expertise contains an accurate description of houses and estate. Due to the property state (entailed with debts), it is sold to the Ministry of Air and Marine, and the stud farm is also liquidated (sold to Solomon Goldman).

By his political career and as a chairman of the Conservative Party, between 1918-1925, A. Marghiloman attracted to Albatros Villa, important personalities: King Carol I, Queen Maria, King Ferdinand, Titu Maiorescu, Dimitrie Sturdza, P.P. Carp, A. Lahovari, Tache Ionescu, A. Vaida Voievod., I.C. Bratianu, N. Iorga. Alongside of his political concern, A. Marghiloman is considered one of the great lawyers of the country, being recognized for his oratorical skill and one of the pioneers of Romanian horse racing. In this respect, the Marghiloman estate of Buzau is representative. The hippodrome built by him in Buzau and demolished in 1938 had a surface of 42 ha, and the organization of stables, the paddocks of training tracks were at international at that time. He contributed in making the horse racing grounds of Baneasa and founded the Romanian Jockey Club. (Penes N., 2007)

Between 1939-1948, the Albatros Villa, the park, the lands, the houses of the estate passed from one owner to another and started to decay. In 1948, Albatros Villa passed to the ownership of the state, belonging to Buzau Popular Council, and the park with a surface of 11.91 ha became a public garden. The park is modified regarding the layout of the alleys, the plantations are re-arranged as well as the enclosures and the access way.

In 1980, Villa, other houses of the former estate and the park were administrated by the Industrial Production Company for Railroad Construction of Buzau. This company made repairs at Albatros Villa and re-arranged the park.

Starting from 1987, the Albatros Villa, the guesthouse and other buildings of the estate are declared as unused and are abandoned.

In 1992, DMI (DMASI) presently DCCPCN, represented by ONMI, takes over in administration the Marghiloman Complex estate and finances the restoration of Albatros Villa, work executed between 1992 and 1998 by S.C. Rom Construct Istrita S.R.L. company till the consolidation phase, framework rehabilitation, execution 90%, covering works. The works are stopped in 1998 due to short of funds. After 2000, the guard of the estate can not be provided and the construction is looted and is continuously degrading together with the park and the outside layouts.

2. Present state

In 1890, Alexandru Marghiloman and his wife Eliza Stirbey arranged around the Albatros Villa a romantic park with exotic trees, Japanese pagoda tree, cypress and local species (poplars, elms, chestnut trees), renowned species of roses. The author of the park arrangement probably was Eliza Stirbey whose contributions are well known for other famous gardens such as Cismigiu gardens.

Queen Mary, frequently a guest on this estate, noted down "... Eliza Marghiloman helped him to make a splendid garden. We enjoy much to work the Albatros Villa. It just brings back to our minds a life style like other foreign countries. We enjoyed the horses and highly appreciated the strawberries as well as the beautiful roses which made their house a particular one..." Likewise, at the time, it was famous for its chestnut alley, as well as for the horse racing training track, a copy of the Baneasa one. The shape of the lake was changed in order to allow the construction of the track. After 1938, the park and the estate decayed. After 1947, the park was taken by the Romanian state and becomes a public park, named Dorobanti Park (Ciobanasu C., 2009).

This park is rearranged by changing the alleys, restructuring the plantations and the enclosure modification as well as the accesses, the layout of the furniture pieces without considering the specific ambience and disconsidering the original style.

In 1982, many modifications took place, sacrificing certain plantations due to sewage works crossing the park from east to west. The surface of the park is diminished by making the level crossroad of Horticolei Street, in this part, the wall enclosures were demolished.

From 1990, the park has fallen into ruin regarding alley routes, water surface, lighting system, plantations, furniture items, enclosure.

The first founding is alteration of romantic park feature, due to frequently contradicting successive uninspired interventions. The arrangement of the main functional areas largely remains as the initial one but correlated also with retracing of some alleys, and suppression of others, and, mostly, their present physical state contributes to the aspect of destructuring.

The composition is defined by the two major axes, the longitudinal one, on NE-SW, between Al. Marghiloman and Luceafarului streets, laid out in front of Albatros Villa, making the connection with the lake, and the perpendicular one on NW-SE, on the right side the proper park, with the arranged lake, and on the left side the main access way, frontally oriented to the mansion, as well as the façade garden and what remained of the park after the arranging works of the level crossroad from the SW corner of the estate (Ciobanasu C., 2009).

The area in the proximity of the Villa, on each side, is out of use as a consequence of construction works needed for restoring works. On the site, there are waste and earth deposits and remains of construction materials.

Beyond the transversal alley, to the NE, there is the rose garden with a diameter of about 75 m, with two concentric alleys and three radial ones.

North to the main, longitudinal alley, an ample area of the park expands, unfortunately, in a mediocre state of preservation with degraded lawns, trees and shrubberies, alignments or isolated, in disorganized compositions.

In extension to this alley, before reaching the lake, on a descending platform succession, a rest area is organized, with alveolas supported by decorative walls, provided with heavy benches and pergolas made of painted rolled steel sections that stand aloof from park ambience. The alley extension passes over a decorative footbridge connecting the two banks of the lake, terminating in the protection area located at the north-east border of the property.

The two main alleys, as composition generators, like the access alley to the Villa, have a rectangular layout, the rest of the alleys developing a sinuous course, suitable to a development with a dominant romantic character. Either asphalted or with prefabricated slabs, their state is precarious with uneven portions, cracks and settlements, in tune with the general image of the park.

Neither other furniture parts are in a better state, the wood benches, the masonry pillars of pergolas, the component parts of the children playing ground, some portions of the enclosing wall present important damages and, stylistically, have nothing in common with the park.

The banks of the water surface are degraded, with eroded portions, without a suitable plantation. Because of this, the perimetric alley is out of use, not presenting security of pedestrians. Furthermore, the decorative, metal footbridge crossing the lake has an advanced degree of wear, as well as the water gate that regulates the level of the accumulations in the set up basins.

3. Proposed situation

The aim of the project is to rehabilitate this park in order to bring it back to the present using standards, in the context of arranging in this place the monumental complex of the Alexandru Marghiloman Cultural Center, important components of cultural and leisure endowments of Buzau municipality.

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In the area conterminous to the Villa, works of vertical systematization should be carried out on a surface of 3.265,0 sq. m., so that the rain water to fall off the construction. New grassed lawns should be arranged on a surface of about 1.400 sq. m., rounds and flat strips with flowers, rest benches should be placed, two water basins, decorative statues, and information signs. Foot ways were provided of about 600,0 sq. m. with the wear layer made up of Margaritar type gravel and decorative kerb stones. The mansion's footway should be remade with stone slabs on a sand bed cu connecting elements to grassed surfaces and to the building base. Two parking areas should be arranged, one parking area with 18 places for cars, at NE to the building, the other on the SW side of the Villa, with a capacity of 56 places, directly connected to the rehabilitated driveways; also in this area, a household platform should be arranged provided with ecological containers (Ciobanasu C., 2009).

In the rest of the park, on a surface of about 96.000,0 sq. m., ample works of rehabilitation are provided for the alley network, some portions returning to their original routes, earthworks in the areas affected by previous construction works, recovery of degraded lawns.

It is suggested to remake the horse racing track, the horse running circuit, reinforcing the lake banks, including the planting of suitable species, *Salix Alba*, *Salix Babilobica*, restoration of the metallic, decorative footbridge and of the water gate.

At the same time with restoration of enclosing wall, the original access gates should be reopened, laying out in their vicinity two new parking areas with 100 places each.

Regarding the vegetal material, completions of trees and shrubs should be carried out in shrubberies of alignments, as well as isolated species with an emphasizing role. It is considered the sustaining of the composition axes, outlining favorable perspectives to the mansion, lake or rose garden. The rounds, flat strips, mosaics and flower borders made of annual, biennial or perennial flowers should be stylistically framed to the “fin de siècle” ambience (Ciobanasu C., 2009).

The urban furniture made of benches in eclectic style, pergolas of stone and wood walls, eliminating the morally and physically used metal elements, decorative wells, lighting units of suitable style having a functional but also a decorative role, in completion to the proposed endowments.

CONCLUSIONS

The ensemble of this works, together with the restoration of Albatros Villa, should occasion the organization of the Alexandru Marghiloman Cultural Center, at his place, in a place full of history, where one of the most important political men of Romania of the 20th century initiated some outstanding events at that time and not only.

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