Magiczny Kraków

Enter the trail of the Kraków Fortress and learn about unusual heritage

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In Kraków, we can find traces of the magnificence and military power of the Kraków Fortress virtually everywhere. They can be found in over 100 different places – both in the centre and in areas located a few or several kilometres away from the Market Square, including the outskirts and even areas outside the borders of Kraków.

It is easy to come across many of them. Hidden in the greenery, but majestic and not similar to residential or office buildings, looking stern and formidable, they align with the main streets of the city. Sometimes we only pass by their remains, looking in surprise at ruins or irregularities of the surface on which only trees and shrubs grow, with brick or concrete fragments of walls protruding here and there. Other big structures are hidden in the greenery of municipal parks or forests. You can see them on hills surrounding the city, near major thoroughfares and in housing estates. Many of them also seem to be normal buildings. They are full of hustle and bustle, people work there, tourists and inhabitants go through adjacent streets – in fact, only old inscriptions on walls or on metalwork or stonework details suggest that their original function was completely different. Look, for example, at the renovated house at Stradomska 12–14 Street, where the following old inscription in Latin was unveiled at the end of August 2021: *Si vis pacem, para bellum* (‘If you want peace, prepare for war’). For a long time, it was simply another dilapidated building and, therefore, a place of investment; in the times of the Kraków Fortress, however, it was one of the city’s major military buildings, which served as the seat of the corps district headquarters having command over imperial and royal units in Western Galicia, in Cieszyn Silesia and in Moravia. This is why we can find an inscription like this here.

ENTER THE TRAIL OF THE KRAKÓW FORTRESS*

Most of these secret buildings scattered around Kraków have been included in the city transportation system. Therefore, in order to sightsee the former Kraków Fortress, the structures of which are scattered throughout the city and its outskirts in an area of over 60,000 ha, you can go there by various means of transport: by tram, by bus, by car, by bike or on foot.

*The trail is temporarily available only in Polish