Borek Fort on the Podium - Modernisation of the Year & Construction of the 21st Century

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The former artillery fort No. 52 Borek disappeared from the map of Krakow for a long time, deteriorating as a vacant lot. At the end of July 2022, the fort returned as the modern, as well as architecturally and historically unique, headquarters of the Podgórze Cultural Centre branch and the Polish Song Library Cultural Centre (*Biblioteka Polskiej Piosenki*). The unique investment project took part in the prestigious National Building Competition "Modernisation of the Year & Construction of the 21st Century", where it was well received by internet users.

The National Building Competition **"Modernisation of the Year & Construction of the 21st Century"** has been organised for 27 years by the Association for the Protection of National Material Heritage (*Stowarzyszenie Ochrony Narodowego Dziedzictwa Materialnego*) and is a prestigious competition that selects building projects of outstanding quality, functionality, urban planning and aesthetics. Newly built, modernised, remodelled or expanded buildings can be entered into the competition, as well as adaptations of buildings for other purposes, or interesting interior designs. The evaluation criteria include the functionality of the modernised and rebuilt buildings and structures, the modernity of the technology and design solutions used, the use of new techniques, modern efficient and safe equipment, and the quality of construction and maintenance workmanship, and in the case of historic buildings, also attention to architecture and the protection of cultural heritage.

The modernisation of the former artillery fort No. 52 Borek in Krakow, which houses a branch of the Podgórze Cultural Centre – Fort Borek and the Polish Song Library Cultural Centre (146 Forteczna Street), was submitted for this year's 27th edition of the competition.

Fort Borek ranked as follows in the online voting:

- in the category of Krakow buildings – 1st place
- in the category of historic buildings – 2nd place
- in the Małopolska building category – 3rd place
- in the overall classification – 12th place

From artillery fort to cultural centre

The main artillery fort 52 Borek was built in the second half of the 19th century as part of the fortifications of the Krakow Fortress, and had a military function until the 1950s. It later housed, among others, a processing plant and a building depot, before being left deteriorating for years as a vacant lot. Restored (in 2013-2022) thanks to efforts of the Municipal Buildings Management Board of Krakow – with European funds (Regional Operational Programme for the Małopolska Voivodeship), as well as from the Municipality of Krakow and the Social Committee for Renovation of Krakow Monuments – it now serves a cultural function. Following the grand opening ceremony on 30-31 July 2022, it now houses a new branch of the Podgórze Cultural Centre (more at: **borek.ckpodgorza.pl**) and the Polish Song Library Cultural Centre.

Magiczny Kraków

Artillery fort No. 52 Borek, built between 1884-1886 on the southern defence line, served as the main structure defending the Viennese route (now Zakopiańska Street) and the nearby railway line. It cooperated with two smaller neighbouring armoured forts – No. 52a Łapianka and 52½ Skotniki. The project to revitalise the fort envisaged adaptation for cultural activities together with the revitalisation of the fort's greenery and the creation of a nature trail for visitors. Investment challenges included, on the one hand, the goal to preserve the unique fortress character of the site, and on the other hand, to make it a facility that, with its new cultural functions, meets modern requirements and fully responds to the needs of the local community and tourists.

The total cost of the investment amounted to more than PLN 24 million, of which nearly 10 million came from external sources – from EU funds (Regional Operational Programme for the Małopolska Voivodeship) and funds from the Social Committee for Renovation of Krakow Monuments. The works carried out by the Municipal Buildings Management Board of Krakow covered the area inside the moat (barracks building, the barrage, artillery rampart, infantry rampart). In parallel, outside the moat, an investment was carried out by the Board of Urban Greenery in Krakow regarding the creation of a park at the Borek fort, which opened on 20 June 2022.