

Revitalisation and adaptation

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In 1918, the forts of the Kraków Fortress were taken over by the Polish state. Their most frequent user was the Polish Army, which used the buildings mainly as barracks or for storage purposes or sometimes for other activities. During the German occupation period, some of the forts were adapted to hold prisoners-of-war. After the war, the ownership of the forts returned to Poles.

Some of them were demolished as relics of the past with which the communist authorities did not identify. Attempts were also made to demolish some forts in order to obtain building materials. Soon, however, it turned out that the attempt to obtain bricks for the restoration of war-damaged cities was pointless because most of the bricks torn off the walls of fortress buildings were cracked. Other parts of the fortress were backfilled or demolished because they stood in the way of plans for urban development.

In the 1960s, the destruction of the heritage of old Kraków ceased as a result of a social campaign conducted by scientific and journalist circles, in which Prof. Karol Estreicher and Janusz Bogdanowski, PhD, played the leading part. The forts and buildings were adapted to new functions, which proved more or less effective. The most finely preserved ones were those that remained the property of the army and were used by it almost in line with their original function. In many other cases, adaptation works unfortunately led to the damage of structures. In the 1990s, a majority of the forts became the property of the Kraków City Commune; unfortunately, many of them were vandalised by thieves who stripped them of their metal fittings and became yet more decrepit due to the growing destructive impact of time.

The forts taken over by engaged enthusiasts were those in the best condition – for example, Fort 49 ‘Krzesławice’, which was adapted for the seat of the Fort 49 ‘Krzesławice’ Youth Cultural Centre thanks to the work of its director Franciszek Dziadoń, or Fort 49 ¼ ‘Grębałów’, which owes much to Bogumił Peschak, President of the Przyjaciel Konika [A Horse’s Friend] TTKF Centre.

Nevertheless, thanks to the efforts of city clerks and students of Prof. Janusz Bogdanowski, including Prof. Jadwiga Środulska-Wielgus and Krzysztof Wielgus, Ph.D., the attitude towards former Austrian structures changed slowly but effectively. On 25th October 2006, the Kraków City Council adopted a resolution containing the ‘Framework Programme for the Protection and Revitalisation of the Historical & Landscape Complex of the Kraków Fortress’, which took into consideration a majority of suggestions from researchers of the Kraków Fortress and created a solid framework for further actions. On the basis of these provisions, the City initiated the co-operation of tenants, owners and users of fortress buildings and the increasingly better co-operation of city departments and services with fort administrators.

The acquisition of funds for renovations started, including funds from the budget of the Kraków City Commune granted by the Kraków City Council, EU funds and funds from the Social Committee for the Restoration of Kraków Monuments. In the third decade of the 21st century, regeneration and adaptation works were under way, among others, in Bastions III ‘Kleparz’ and IVa ‘Luneta Warszawska’, Fort 50 ½ O ‘Kosocice’ (‘Barycz’), Fort 53a ‘Winnica’, Fort 51 ‘Rajsko’, Fort 49 ‘Krzesławice’, Fort 51 ½ O ‘Wróblowice’ (‘Swoszowice’), near destroyed bastions of Fort 2 ‘Kościuszko’ and guardhouses adjacent to it; apart from that, green conservation works were



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carried out near Fort 47 ½ 'Sudół'. The works will soon encompass also Fort 31 'St. Benedict'.

In 2021, the assumptions of the project 'Landscaping elements for the big fortress' were drawn up so that historical buildings could be surrounded with stylistically uniform signboards, sightseeing route signs, benches or bicycle racks in identical colours.

In 2022, the following facilities were put to use: Fort 52 'Borek' for the Podgórze Cultural Centre and the Polish Song Library and Fort 52a 'Jugowice' ('Łapianka') and, at an earlier date, an armoury complex called "Cekhauz" at Rakowicka Street, which is the seat of the Museum of Photography, and gate guardhouses at Fort 2 'Kościuszko'. Works were completed in Fort 52 ½ S 'Sidzina' and 52 ½ N 'Skotniki'; now only the regeneration of greenery is to be carried out.

Information about current works and their scope in various forts of the Kraków Fortress administered by the Kraków City Commune can be found on the website of the [Council Building Administration](#).