

Muskauer Park / Park Muzakowski (Germany / Poland)

No 1127

1. BASIC DATA

State Party: The Republic of Poland
and
The Federal Republic of Germany

Name of property: Park Muzakowski / Muskauer Park

Location: Lubskie County, Zary Region, Leknica Town, Poland
and
Saxony, Neiderschlesien Bezirk Oberlausitz, Bad Muskau Town, Germany

Date received: 18 July 2002

Category of property:

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *site*. In terms of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, paragraph 39, this is a *cultural landscape*.

Brief description:

An extensive landscape park, laid out around his estate by Prince Pukler, which extended into the town of Muskau, and blends effortlessly with the surrounding farmed landscape. Straddling the Polish/German border, the mid 19th century Muskauer Park was the forerunner for new approaches to landscape design in cities and the countryside, and influenced the development of 'landscape architecture' as a discipline.

2. THE PROPERTY

Description

The nominated site is the core zone of an extensive landscape park laid out by a leading European personality of the mid 19th century, Prince Hermann von Puckler-Muskau, around the New Castle of Muskauer either side of the river Neisse, the border between Poland and Germany. The entire park extended around the town of Muskau and out into the surrounding farmed landscape. What is being nominated is the 'kernel' or inner park of this huge creation – with the outer park forming part of the proposed Buffer Zone.

The nominated area covers a total of 559.90 ha. Of this 348 ha is within Poland and 211.90ha within Germany. The buffer zone extends way beyond the outer park covering in all 1,788.65ha, encompassing the town of Bad Muskau to the west and part of the town of Leknica to the east.

The Park was created between 1815 and 1844 by Prince Puckler, the owner of the estate. His work was continued by Eduard Petzold, one of Puckler's master students.

The Park Muzakowski-Muskauer Park forms the starting point for an entirely different approach to the relationship between man and landscape. The design does not evoke classical landscapes or paradise, or provide enlightenment to some lost perfection, instead it is 'painting with plants', enhancing the inherent qualities of the existing landscape through embellishing its structures with trees, meadow and watercourses, to allow the landscape to merge with nature. The park become part of the wider landscape, the wider landscape in turn becomes part of the park.

Puckler created an integrated landscape framework, extending into the town of Muskau. Green passages formed urban parks framing the areas for development, and the town becoming a design component in a utopian landscape. His ideas were to have profound influence on the development of the landscape architect's profession in Europe and America.

The quintessence of Puckler's design theories on ideal landscapes are to be found in his theoretical book *Andeutungen uber Landschaftsgartnerei* (Hints on Landscape Gardening). This beautifully illustrated book appealed to both gentlemen gardeners and professionals. It also made Puckler sought after as a gardening authority and adviser on landscape design. His design work can still be seen in Weimar and Potsdam. He founded the Muskauer School to educate gardeners in his ideas and, through his students, these spread throughout Europe.

Although Puckler's vision was new, he nevertheless built on the great European styles of the 18th and 19th century - the English landscape gardens of Capability Brown and Repton and the 'continental' European Romantic Age gardens, and his work can be seen as a successful synthesis of these earlier landscape styles, although emancipated from architectural dominance and mainly using local species of plants rather than exotics.

The structure of the Muskauer Park is focused on the New Castle, re-constructed by Puckler in the 1860s, according to the designs of the Prussian architect, Schinkel. A network of paths radiates out from the castle. Along them are 'culminating points' in the topography which create ideal viewpoints, each part of an intricately constructed network of wider inter-related views. The elements Puckler used were a combination of built and natural: bridges, watercourses, paths, ornamental buildings, woods, arboreta, scattered trees and the inherent geology of terraces, crags and the valley of the river Neisse. He wove all these into a visual picture of the highest aesthetic quality and one characterised by extraordinary simplicity and expansiveness.

The landscape thus has a structure that can be appreciated for its aesthetic qualities. It also has strong intangible values – for the place it holds in the evolution of landscape design, and for its influence on what followed.

The nominated site consists of a landscape conceived as a whole but which nevertheless can be perceived in several parts:

Tangible qualities:

Castle Park: To the west of the river Neisse, and between the river and the town, this consists of the Old and New Castles & flower gardens. The New Castle, a medieval castle reconstructed in 17th century, and again by Puckler in 1863 and 1866, was destroyed by fire in 1945. It has been under re-construction since 1995. The Old Castle, formerly the gatehouse, was also destroyed in 1945. It was re-erected between 1965 and 1972.

Castle Lake and Oaks Lake and bridges

Upper walk A thin green strip bordering Muskau town and with views across the river to the Castle Park

Mountain Park to the south of the town of Muskau from which glimpses can be had of the town

Spa Park A small part of the mountain park surrounding a spa and with fairly intensively cultivated gardens; the main buildings were destroyed in World War II.

River Neisse bridges Four bridges connected the park either side of the river and all were destroyed in 1945. The main Double Bridge, constructed of wood in 1822 has recently been re-built. Reconstruction of the English Bridge is planned.

Park on Terraces On the east bank of the river, this was the heart of the park and consists of raised areas, some wooded with ancient oaks, overlooking the river terraces and giving views out to the wider park. The main viewing points are marked by stone benches.

Arboretum This was created by Petzold from 1857 for testing trees, bushes and shrubs.

Intangible qualities:

The park as a reflection of Puckler's design principles

The park as inspiration for landscape architecture ideals

History

Prince Puckler inherited his family seat in 1811. Inspired by travels to England, he quickly began transforming the ancient estate into an expansive landscape park. The symbolic beginning of his creation was the publication of a letter to the inhabitants of Muskau in 1815 informing them of his intentions and inviting them to sell their land to him. By 1817, he had acquired about 5000 *morgs*, some 10ha.

Puckler's first interventions were to raze the Castle's fortifications and moats. He then began constructing an artificial watercourse through the Castle Park, which was expanded into the Castle Lake and completed in 1819. Over the next five years he remodelled the Castle, turned the malt-house and Orangery into a greenhouse, built two bridges, a Gothic chapel and an English-style cottage. The construction of the Spa Park followed in 1823, and was completed by 1840. The smaller bridges across the river were built in 1826. After 1829, Puckler began the transformation of Upper Mountain Park landscape and created a greenhouse at Castle Farm. Finally in 1844 the Orangery was created out of the former brewery – just a year before Puckler was forced to sell the estate for financial reasons.

The estate was purchased by Wilhelm Friedrich Carl Prince of the Netherlands and he took on Puckler's student Eduard Petzold to manage the park. Petzold continued Puckler's vision and in particular realised the concept of embracing the town by the park. He constructed many paths, further bridges, the Arboretum and the Lower Mountain Park, (in the proposed Buffer Zone).

In 1878 Petzold resigned and the 1883 the park was sold to Traugott Hermann Count von Armin. Until World War II various modernising works were carried out, but the structure of the park was hardly changed.

World War II was a radical turning point for the park. It was the site of the last decisive battle of the war. Two thirds of the town buildings were destroyed as well as the two Castles and all the bridges. After the war the River Neisse became the border between Germany and Poland.

The subsequent conservation history of the park is detailed below.

Management regime

Legal provision:

In both countries the park is well protected for both its cultural and natural aspects.

In Poland part of the park has been designated a Cultural Reserve by the Centre for the Preservation of Historic Landscape, under the Local Town and Country Development Plan for the town of Leknica. The whole park is designated under the Protected Landscape Area. The park is also entered in the Historical Monuments Registry – for both tangible and intangible assets.

The area of the park alongside the Neisse and Skroda valleys is protected under the Nature Conservation Act for both natural and cultural values, while specific ancient English Oaks and European beech trees are protected as Nature Monuments.

The entire German part of the park was granted protected in 1955 as a Historical Monument of Landscape and Garden Composition. In 1984 this protection was confirmed under the Law on Protection of Monuments of the Free State of Saxony. Under the Municipal Land Use Zoning Plan for Bad Muskau, the park is protected as a Monument of Historical Heritage.

All the significant buildings and built elements in the park and significant buildings in Bad Muskau are protected individually. The park is also a protected category subject to the Law on Protection of nature.

Management structure:

As a cross border nomination, the key management element is the arrangement for joint collaboration for strategy and management. This is currently conducted at five different levels: National, Trustees, Working Group, Park Maintenance Group and Coordination Group. The Trustees are those of the Prince Puckler-Park Bad Muskau Foundation set up jointly by both countries in 2003 as the Centre for Historic Monuments Studies and documentation (see below).

This joint collaboration has overseen the production of a thorough and detailed management plan. This is

underpinned by a restoration concept and the goals are clearly articulated. The plan lists clearly the restoration projects achieved to date. It is less detailed with timescales for short and medium term future objectives. However during the mission a much more detailed list of planned restorations and restorations under preparation was provided.

Resources:

- Polish side:

Maintenance funds are provided by the Centre for the preservation of Historic Landscape. Funds for project work have so far been provided through the Polish-German Co-operation Foundation and from the PHARE European Fund. No funding has been put forward for future projects.

- German side:

The Federal Republic of Germany has designated the Muskau Park as 'kultureller Leuchtturm', which means that there can be financial support for any necessary restoration projects. The German Environmental Protection Foundation (Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt), Osnabruck has announced recently that its future projects will focus mainly on WH sites in Germany.

The Management Plan states that: 'the personnel and financial resources of the Foundation are assured both for the present time and for the longer-term future by the engagement of the Free State of Saxony and the Federal Authorities, [funding] does not present any problems that the restoration programme will be implemented step by step over the forthcoming years'.

Justification by the State Party (summary)

Muskauer Park is said to display the following cultural qualities:

- The park is a 'classical' landscape park whose artistic perfection is exemplary and unsurpassed
- Prince Pukclar's concept for urban design, as carried out around Bad Muskau, integrating the town into the park, became the essential foundation of modern green space design for public urban areas
- The training ideals of Prince Puckler and his pupil Eduard Petzold have been re-established in the Muskau School, an international school for landscape management
- The connection with the pioneering book by Prince Puckler on '*Hints of landscape Gardening*'.
- The park has become the catalyst for cross-border cultural collaboration between Poland and Germany

3. ICOMOS EVALUATION

Actions by ICOMOS

An ICOMOS Mission visited the park in August 2003.

ICOMOS has also consulted its International Scientific Committee on Historic Gardens / Cultural Landscapes.

Conservation

Conservation history:

In 1955 the German side was given protection as a Monument of Garden Art. In 1988 there was the first official reunion of German and Polish Historical Heritage Conservationists in East Berlin which led to the signing of an agreement between the Institute for Historical Heritage Conservation of the GDR and the Central Authority for the Protection and Conservation of Historical Palaces and Garden Complexes in Poland (today the Centre for the Preservation of Historical Landscapes). This was the first example of cross-border historic garden conservation in Europe, subsequently renewed in 1992, 1999, and 2002.

In 1992 the Centre took over the administration of the Polish side of the park, and the park became a Protected Monument of Cultural Heritage.

In the same year, the Free State of Saxony took over the German part of the park and the following year handed over administration to the Furst-Puckler-Park Bad Muskau Foundation.

In 1992 in order to ensure that the spatial integrity of the whole park is respected, a working team from both countries was set up.

On the Polish side, major restoration begun in 1990 on the basis of a jointly agreed Polish-German methodology. This work has concentrated on restoring spatial integrity to both parts of the park and gradually reviving its overall composition and key views, through clearing self-sown trees and restoring paths, culverts small bridges and cascades. Early work has focused on the central section of the Park Terraces.

Work has just been completed on re-building the Double Bridge – a major compositional element of the garden linking the two sides of the river. Its official re-opening in October 2003 symbolised the re-joining again of the two halves of the park.

On the German side, maintenance work of the horticultural elements did not significantly decline after World War II. The park buildings did however deteriorate and a restoration plan for them was started in the 1960s and this has accelerated since 1993. The most important building project was the reconstruction of the Old Castle.

The combined restoration project is detailed in the nomination document. This shows the magnitude of the undertaking. It also lists forthcoming major projects for which external funds are being sought, and planned survey programmes.

The remarkable cultural cooperation between Poland and Germany in the restoration of the park received honourable mention at the award of the Melina Mercouri Prize for safeguarding and management of cultural landscapes in 1999. In 2002 the Foundation received the *Europäische Garten-Kultur-Preis* from the Pro Europa European Foundation for Culture.

Prince Puckler's vision for a school to provide training in garden and landscape architecture has just been realised in the setting up of the Muskau School in the northern wings of the New Castle. Officially opened on 4th October 2003, this will be open to specialists in the broad field of

landscape conservation. Course will have theoretical and practical components – the latter in the Muskau Park.

State of conservation:

The park is, as has been shown above, in the early stages of an extensive, restoration project underpinned by a rigorous methodology and careful research and aiming at sustainable regeneration of the tree cover. With the setting up of the Muskau School, the landscape has in a sense become a huge training programme, the restoration work offering opportunities for debate and involvement with others from outside the park.

Management:

On the Polish side, management is under the control of the Centre for the Preservation of Historic Landscape, Warsaw.

On the German side the management agency is the Prince Puckler-Park Bad Muskau Foundation. Large construction projects are undertaken by the State Office for Property and High Construction, Bautzen.

Coordinating work on both sides of the border is undertaken by the Polish-German Working Group.

A detailed Management Plan was drawn up in 2003. This has been worked up fully in accordance with the Operational Guidelines of the WH Convention. During the evaluation mission, this was supplemented in the form of extra plans, inventories and copies of key collaboration documents.

Risk analysis:

The following are mentioned in the dossier:

- Development pressures:

Polish side: Major new developments are subject to satisfactory control. Existing factors are traffic from the border crossing and the border zone market. The border crossing is planned to be moved upstream outside the park; while it is believed that the market will phase itself out when price levels move towards equilibrium between Poland and Germany.

In the Management Plan, uncontrolled vehicles in the park and graffiti are also cited as problems – but with measures suggested for tackling them in the medium term.

German side: The dossier states that no major development threats are anticipated. The extensive buffer zone would prevent harmful development.

Not mentioned in the dossier but discussed during the evaluation mission was the development of a new Spa in Bad Muskau on the ‘Loose Wiese’ area (*location unclear*) by a developer. Discussions with the State Department for Conservation, Freistaat Sachsen, confirmed in a letter of 11 September 2003, state that any spa development should preferably be within the Spa Park, thus preserving the rationale of Puckler’s layout.

- Environmental pressures:

Polish side: Detrimental effects of emissions from factories has, and is, being addressed. Likewise sewage pollution in the River Neisse is being reversed through the development of sewage treatment plants.

German side: The lignite based power stations –said to affect the Polish side – have been converted to acceptable burning methods.

- Natural disasters:

Flooding is not seen as a high risk and fire risk is under the control of the forest services on the Polish side.

- Tourism pressure:

Tourism numbers on both sides are low and authorities are making efforts to increase them. However the distance of the park from urban centres makes over-visiting seem unlikely.

Authenticity and integrity

Authenticity:

A striking aspect of the garden is that no extensive remodelling has taken place since it was first laid out. It has remained in its essential layout from the time Petzold completed Puckler's work. In that sense what remains is an authentic reflection of Prince Puckler’s work.

What is not mentioned in the dossier, in connection with authenticity, is the loss sustained during World War II. Then both Castles were partly destroyed as were the bridges linking the two parts of the garden across the river Neisse. At the same time other buildings in the garden such as the English House were levelled.

The Castles are being restored and work has just been completed on the first re-creation of one of the bridges. Although these are therefore not now ‘authentic’ elements of the garden in themselves, their restoration does give meaning back to the landscape design which revolved around them. The restoration work is based on detailed documentary evidence, Puckler’s plans, air photos and reports dating from the 1940s together with research extending over thirty years.

The restoration philosophy stresses the spatial planning of the gardens and park and thus the relationship between built elements and their function as part of the overall design. Without the bridges across the river, the landscape would be severed; thus restoring the bridges brings back the essential links between the two halves of the design. Similarly restoring the New Castle was essential as it has a focus within the overall plan: with the Castle restored, the paths that radiates from it once again have a sense of purpose and place. The exterior of the Castle and how it relates to the landscape is what is crucial rather than the internal details, which have not been restored faithfully.

The authenticity of the property is thus related to the overall design concept of Puckler, which has largely remained uncompromised. Within the overall design, elements can be restored rather in the same way as windows or doors might be restored in a building to retrieve its authenticity.

Integrity:

The whole park is once again being perceived as a single unit and has a management plan to sustain it as a single entity. Its integrity has thus been re-established.

Comparative evaluation

The dossier highlights the difficulty of drawing comparative examples for what is put forward as a unique creation in landscape design. Nevertheless an attempt is made to seat Muskauer Park within the evolving European landscape garden movement from the 17th to the early 20th centuries, and thus to highlight its significance in order to demonstrate how it broke new ground and why it has become so influential.

Muskauer Park should be viewed as a central European development of 18th century English ideas and practice. Prince Puckler was greatly influenced by the work of Humphrey Repton in his *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, particularly in the idea of zoning gardens, in the development of view and vistas out in to the countryside, and of pivotal visual points in the landscape – which were mostly built structures in Repton's gardens. Pukcler also absorbed John Nash's work in modelling tree and shrub borders – as carried out in London Parks, and his advocacy of a rustic style for cottages and park buildings.

But above all Puckler was building on both of these in seamlessly merging his park with the landscape and in enveloping the town of Bad Muskau in a way not done before on such a grand scale.

Pukcler was not working in isolation. At the same time as Muskauer Park was being created, in mountainous areas of central and eastern Europe, spas were being developed and around these spa towns and spa resorts vast landscape backdrops were planted. Many examples can still be seen in Poland, Slovakia, etc. In Germany, Lenne and Ludwig and others were producing important landscape parks and Pukcler went on to develop or influence other major parks in Germany, such as Weimar and Potsdam, and in France the Bois de Boulogne, Paris. In England people were buying up land in the Lake District to build houses and 'improve' the landscape with extensive tree planting projects that used the perceived natural landscape as extensions to their new parks. Pukcler was part of this wider landscape movement that stood against the classical allusions of 18th century parks and espoused the idea of accentuating and improving nature.

Muskauer Park stands out because it is still largely intact, because of its outstanding quality and because its creator Prince Puckler's published landscaping theories turned out to be widely influential, particularly in the way they promoted the idea of green spaces in and around towns.

Outstanding universal value

General statement:

Muskauer Park is of outstanding universal value for the combination of the following cultural qualities:

- The park exemplifies and epitomises the European landscape park tradition of incorporating and 'improving' nature within dramatic natural landscapes and of the separation of landscape design from architecture.
- The park is of the high aesthetic quality.

- The incorporation of the town of Bad Muskau into the overall design and layout of the park led it to be seen as a seminal piece of landscape design which has come to influence modern urban design particularly in the USA, in for instance the green parks of Boston, and the development of the profession of landscape architect, The park's association with Prince Puckler, and his influential book '*Hints on landscape Gardening*'.

Evaluation of criteria:

The park is nominated on the basis of *criteria i and iv*:

Criterion i: Assessed as a piece of landscape design, the Muskauer Park is one of the finest examples of an extensive European landscape park; assessed according to the norms and precepts of its day, it stands out as being an exceptional piece of landscape 'improvement' that broke new ground in terms of development towards an ideal made-made landscape

Criterion iv: Muskauer Park was the forerunner for new approaches to landscape design in cities and the countryside, and influenced the development of 'landscape architecture' as a discipline. It thus marks out a significant stage in the evolution of landscape design theory and practice.

4. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation for the future

The park has become the catalyst for cross-border cultural collaboration between Poland and Germany. It is an exemplary example of such collaboration in the development of a programme of restoration but also in the establishment of an active conservation school, the Muskau School, an international school for landscape management that has put into effect the training ideals of Prince Puckler and his pupil Eduard Petzold.

Recommendation with respect to inscription

That the property be inscribed on the World Heritage as a *cultural landscape* on the basis of *criteria i and iv*:

Criterion i: Muskauer Park is an exceptional example of a European landscape park that broke new ground in terms of development towards an ideal made-made landscape.

Criterion iv: Muskauer Park was the forerunner for new approaches to landscape design in cities, and influenced the development of 'landscape architecture' as a discipline.

ICOMOS, March 2004