Strakhotsky Palace in Mostyska

Rudnykivsky Palace in Mostyska

Schloss Strakhovskyi in Mostyska

Schlagwörter: Schloss (Bauwerk)
Fachsicht(en): Kulturlandschaftspflege, Archäologie, Denkmalpflege, Landeskunde, Architekturgeschichte
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Front view of the Strakhotsky Palace (2021)
Fotograf/Urheber: Maria Snaichuk



Around 1820, Anthony Strakhotsky (1776-1850) began the construction of Strakhotsky Palace, with the support of the architect Frederick Baumann (1765/1770-1845). In the fashion of that time (romanticism, glorification of old ruins), the project was made in the style of a romantic castle with a tower. Adjacent to the north, a park was created. This park is almost completely gone today.

Historical background

Mostyska is one of the oldest cities in Western Ukraine. It was first mentioned in the Galician-Volyn chronicle in 1244. Its medieval urban condition has survived to this day. The northern part of Mostyska once was an independent village called Rudnyky. There the Strakhotsky Palace is located. The first mention of Rudnyky (formerly known as Rudnyky Lackie) dates to 1593.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Rudnyky, which belonged to the crown estates of the Mostyska eldership, was inherited by the nobleman Anthony Strakhotsky. He lived with his younger brothers Josef (b. 1790, a major in the Polish army and a Napoleonic officer), and Roman (b. 1794, who took an active part in the polish patriotic movement). Anthony Strakhotsky was a respected man and a friend of the Polish prince Henryk Ludwik Lubomyrsky (1777-1850), who was a magnate, politician and patron of the arts and lived in Przeworsk (Poland). It is assumed that high acquaintances prompted Strakhotsky to build a palace so that society would not suspect him of poverty or greed.

Thus, in the 1820s, the construction of a palace began in Rudnyky. Exact documented data on the authorship of the project have not been preserved but based on indirect facts it is believed, that the creator was the famous architect Frederick Baumann. He was very popular among the elite at that time and involved in interior design and reconstruction of the facade of the Lviv Ossolineum (now situated in the Stefanyk Street, Lviv), restoration or reconstruction of several Lviv houses and palaces (including the Kornyakt House and the Besyadetsky Palace). Baumann became most famous for his work in the Polish city of acut. There he designed the premises of acut Castle, namely the ballroom, greenhouse and large dining room. His working partner in acut was the Polish

architect of the Classicist era Christian Peter Aigner (1756-1841). acut Castle is one of the most important palace and park ensembles in Poland. It was built in the first half of the 17th century by Prince Stanislaw Lubomirski (1583-1649).
It is known that as of 1825 only the foundations of the future Strakhotsky Palace were ready. Marcin Smarzewski (1788–1866, participant in the Napoleonic Wars, poet, and translator), who visited the Strakhotsky Palace,was sincerely surprised by the scale of construction. He wrote in his diary: „With what perspective did such expensive construction begin? Its maintenance will be a great burden for the nobleman".
In 1838 the palace was described and illustrated in the book "Galicia in Images". And after the construction of the palace in the modest village, three artists painted the building, which made it famous. The oldest and most interesting paintings were made before 1830. These are two engravings by Peter Piller (18th-19th century) and Antoni Lange (1774-1842), an Austrian painter and graphic artist, who was originally German. The paintings show that the palace was made of two wings of different nature, placed at right angles to each other and connected by a rotunda tower. In front of the main entrance, two lions carved out of sandstone lay down to rest. Under the two main windows the coats of arms of the owner of the palace and his wife are attached. The three-tiered rotunda was made in the classicist style. The residential right wing of the palace was much more modest. Its smooth walls were devoid of expressive architectural details.
After Anthony Strakhotsky's death in 1850, Rudnyky passed to his son Erasmus who sold the village and the palace to Count Volodymyr Borkovsky (1819-1886) in 1870. The estate was later inherited by his daughter Helena (19th-20th century), who was the wife of Count Edward Kholonevsky (1846-1928), the great master of ceremonies of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Most of the time he lived in Vienna. His debauched life in the capital led to the confiscation of Rudnykivsky Palace by the land bank on the eve of the First World War, and part of the lord's lands was divided. Count Kholonevsky gathered a large library in the palace, mostly in Polish and French, as well as paintings, porcelain, bronze. Unfortunately, these collections are lost today.
During the First World War, the palace housed the headquarters of the Russian army, which commanded the siege of the fortress of Przemyl (Poland), that was protected by the Austrians. In March 1915, the surrender of the fortress of Przemyl was signed in Strakhotsky Palace.
After the war, the Kholonevsky family finally sold the property to the government. During the reconstruction caused by military damage, the interior of the palace was redesigned. In the 1930s, a school was located here.

Architecture and landscape park

A representative area of the palace has survived to this day in its original form. In its center a fenced green field of oval shape and a composition of various trees and shrubs is located. The former front yard was later used as a sports ground with a basketball court and horizontal bars for sports exercises. In front of the main entrance to the palace, there is an asphalt pavement. Parts of the original outbuildings of the palace are lost, as well as the west wing of the palace.
Additional attention needs to be paid to the study of the state of preservation of the landscape and park area, which is adjacent to the north of the building. It once was created in the style of romantic gardens with maximum view of the unique picturesque corners of nature, which have not been touched by human hands. Due to a lack of care, the original style was neglected and is gone today.

General characteristics of landscape parks

Each of the individual parts of such a garden reflected a different state of mind. Their composition was dominated by winding paths that led to places of solitude, dedicated to a particular mood or experience. For example, altars of Love, Friendship, Hope, Thanksgiving and Memories were created in the Polish Romantic Park in Pulawy and Arcadia Park. There was a strong connection between people and nature. On this basis, various small architectural forms appeared in romantic gardens, such as gazebos and grottoes, which symbolize certain romantic moods dominated by „melancholy", which acquired great meaning. Shady places were set aside in gardens and parks for melancholy reflections. Monuments to deceased friends or relatives appeared in the "wild" forest, in the shade of old trees. The vegetation that prevailed in such gardens was shady and creeping. These could be old trees (pines, spruces, oaks, chestnuts, plane trees, birches and poplars, alder, maple, linden), and shrubs (dog rose, spirea, lilac) and perennials and flowers - especially roses (a lot of roses, preferably various varieties, randomly planted, wilder and more unpruned). In the planning areas of landscape-park zones the mixed type (symmetrical and, for the most part, asymmetric) prevailed.

The former landscape park of Strakhotsky Palace

Winding paths, secluded places, the style of „islands of inviolability" were also features that were characteristic of the Strakhotsky Palace complex and reflected its romantic style. Strakhotsky Palace has a beautiful landscape with its own features. It was (and, in fact, is) surrounded by a romantic park with spacious lawns, which housed groups of different trees. Part of this garden now are

used as gardens bye the local population. There was also a beautiful pond (a bay from the Sichna River, which flows within the Mostyska district), near a luxurious park. Swans swam on the water. In the middle was an island with a gazebo. On beautiful sunny days, Countess Kholonevska, who was considered a good lady by the people, often drove on the pond with a boat. Village children ran along the shores, and the lady always threw them money and sweets from the boat.

Remnants of Strakhotsky Palace

In the 19th and beginning 20th century, there were also picturesque compositions of trees and shrubs of different varieties, which can be seen in still existing engravings of Bogush Stenchynsky (1814-1890) and Karel Auer (1818-1859). The gatehouse and part of the paths are lost today. In the park, there still are many century-old trees. Many of the old trees have been cut down. Today, the original island compositions, consisting of various kinds of plants, shrubs, bushes and trees, are lost and appear unkempt and overgrown. Although the generally poor state of the buildings and the park, the architecture of the romantic style is still clearly visible. For example in the asymmetry of plans and facades, the pointed end of the towers, the scale and compactness of the building itself and the combination of several styles. Emblems and mixing of styles were often used in decoration. Strakhotsky Palace combines such styles as Neo-Renaissance and Neo-Gothic. The palace consisted of west and east wings, connected by a tower covered with a conical roof. The three-story west wing was higher than the east wing and was designed in the neo-Gothic style. It was decorated with massive columns. In front of the main entrance, two lions carved out of sandstone. Both were stolen several years ago. The walls were deprived of expressive architectural details. Only the decoration of the eastern three-part wing of the palace has survived.

The palace is located in a run-down park, where several interesting ancient buildings can be seen, including a barn (or mill), a shed with buttresses and an old roadside chapel.

Due to its current state, the modern look of Strakhotsky Palace has lost part of its romantic composition, but even in such a truncated form it differs in the architectural environment of the settlement. Its composition can be divided into three blocks. The main role is played by the rotunda with a spire tower (block 3, located in the eastern part of the palace). It characterizes the facade composition. The next is the entrance area, protruding to the foreground (block 2, located in the southern part of the palace). The background of the facade composition is perceived as the part that recedes the most from the viewer and performs rather a connecting function (block 1, located in the western part of the palace). This part is made in a classic style, not rich in decor and decoration. Authentic framed windows have been preserved. Block 2 is made in the neo-Gothic style; it is rich in decorated elements. There are pointed arches and columns, preserved authentic window fillings, rare in their execution and style. The roof cornice is also decorated with Gothic elements. Block 3 (Rotunda) is decorated in Neo-Renaissance style. Authentic windows and doors have not been preserved; the doorways are covered with bricks. The authentic completion of the rotunda was also lost and replaced.

The main accent of the two-storey building is a massive round tower, made in the classical style, as evidenced by its pilasters (flat pillars placed near the wall or built into it). From there stretches a large wing, which has features of neo-Gothic style: windows finished with ogive, arcade frieze (decorative element consisting of several small arches), placed under the cornice, stepped pediment of one of the walls, a gallery of columns connected by ogive arcades at the height of the second floor. The second wing is in the Neo-Renaissance style. Both have tiled roofs. Numerous chimneys were also a decorative element of the palace. The facade has an interesting portal, next to which there are reliefs of a lion’s mouth on the wall. On the back side there was once a large greenhouse in the shape of a Gothic chapel, and on the left side there was an extension connected to the main building by a small passage.

Today's situation

The palace is state-owned. Now it houses the Rudnykivska School 4 (1st and 2nd degrees). It serves the population living in the northern part of Mostyska. The total number of children currently (2021) enrolled in the school is 66. Before the Second World War, the palace housed a Polish school. In the post war period, a Soviet three-year school and since 1991 a Ukrainian school.

In some classes, plaster sculptures on the ceiling are still preserved: the chemistry classroom once was the banquet hall, and the physics classroom was the dance hall, with excellent bas-relief sculptures on the walls and oak parquet.

In order to attract students and research work, expand and deepen their knowledge of ethnography, folklore and protection of historical monuments, the school has an ethnographic museum. It consists of three main parts: the history of the city, tools and life of ancestors.

During the Second World War, the palace was severely damaged. Until today, there has been no serious initiative of reconstruction. The greenhouse was lost, romantic chimneys were destroyed, and collections of paintings, porcelain and bronze were looted. After the Second World War, when the palace was adapted for a school, the authentic interiors were destroyed, of which only the remnants of stucco have been preserved.

The windows in the palace have been partially replaced. The general condition of the monument is unsatisfactory, it needs roof replacement and repair as well as restoration works.

Plans for Strakhotsky Palace - Unused potential

It is necessary to preserve this style in architecture and landscape. A feature of romantic palaces are their parks. The territories of such objects are suitable for the organization of public parks and gardens, which will allow including them in the cultural environment of settlements and will create an opportunity to contemplate the architectural monument. Depending on the state of preservation of the palace, it is necessary to use different methods of restoration. Objects of this type are also attractive in terms of attracting investors. They are small and admire the interesting composition and variety of small architectural forms.
In 2010 the Mostyska authorities at the international level declared their readiness to develop design and estimate documentation for the restoration of the palace. The work was to be carried out jointly with the Department of Cultural Heritage Protection of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine. The idea of restoring the palace was to be realized within the framework of the international project “Fort Mission”. Fort Mission was an annual arts festival held in 2009-2012 near the Ukrainian-Polish border. It was held at the forts of the Przemyl fortress. However, in recent years the festival was not held, due to lack of funds.
The restored palace and the surrounding natural beauty would have had the opportunity to become a real pearl of Mostyska. In addition, the revival of tourist traffic in the border area of Lviv region was expected. However, things have not changed, although even today local enthusiasts do not give up the idea of turning Strakhotsky Palace into a popular tourist attraction.
Preservation and restoration of architectural monuments is an expression of memory and respect for the historical and cultural heritage of the people. Palaces of romantic style, created in the form of small castles, attract attention with their picturesque architectural composition. As architectural dominants that stand out in the ordinary urban environment, they need special attention from conservationists and careful historical and architectural research.

How to reach Strakhotsky Palace
From Lviv to Mostyska can be reached from the bus station of the main railway station. Another option is by electric train Lviv-Mostyska from the suburban station (exit at Mostyska I station).
Mostyska is located 75 kilometers from Lviv and 14 kilometers from the village of Shehyni, which is a checkpoint with Poland.

(Maria Snaychuk, Lviv Polytechnic National University, 2021)

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Ort: 81300 Mostyska
Fachsicht(en): Kulturlandschaftspflege, Archäologie, Denkmalpflege, Landeskunde, Architekturgeschichte
Gesetzlich geschütztes Kulturdenkmal: Kein
Erfassungsmaßstab: i.d.R. 1:5.000 (größer als 1:20.000)
Erfassungsmethoden: Fernerkundung
Historischer Zeitraum: Beginn 1820 bis 1830
Koordinate WGS84: 49° 48 43,27 N: 23° 08 56,67 O / 49,81202°N: 23,14908°O
Koordinate UTM: 34.654.611,62 m: 5.519.946,02 m
Koordinate Gauss/Krüger: 8.438.985,39 m: 5.519.823,80 m

Empfohlene Zitierweise

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