

ZAMOYSKI PALACE HISTORY AT FOKSAL STREET IN WARSAW – CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES OVER THE DECADES

Joanna Koszewska✉

Institute of Civil Engineering, Warsaw University of Life Sciences – SGGW, Warsaw, Poland
Laboratory Médiations, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Sorbonne University, Paris, France

ABSTRACT

The background of the undertaken research was constituted by the functioning of a historical palace for the professional association (Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich – SARP, i.e. Association of Polish Architects), where everyday needs are confronted with the historical fabric of the building. Well known as a monument, exposed on the urban axis of Foksal Street, the Zamoyski Palace exemplifies the history and evolution of Warsaw's architectural ownership and changing functions. The aim of the study was to determine to what extent new goals for the use of historical buildings may serve the common good and fulfil new tasks, while not losing their original character of architectural substance. In the presented case, this question regards the maintenance and management of the formerly private residence for associative purposes. The author is involved in the activities of SARP, thus had interest in information on estate management; therefore, the work was proofread by scientific reviewers. The applied methods to conduct the presented research outcome included literature source queries (such as Warsaw's monuments monographs, conservation inventories, and charts) and regular site visits (enlarged with repetitive photographic documentation). The analysis of the documentation of the course of transformations contributed to the completion of available data. The result is a presentation of a sample of buildings, owners, and styles as part of the national heritage. The Zamoyski Palace, the seat of the Association of Polish Architects, which preserves memories of Polish independence and contemporary history, offers material for reflection on the role of architecture and conservation in the past and on modern urban planning within the Warsaw landscape. In conclusion, the analysed example documents good practice in the preservation of the historical substance of the building (i.e. the addition of a neutral glazed exhibition pavilion or maintenance works), without the loss of its historical identity, built fabric, and urban role.

Keywords: architects' association, heritage, palace, common good, Warsaw, townscape

INTRODUCTION

By tracing the history of the Zamoyski family palace at Foksal Street in Warsaw, from its origins through the era of WWII (1939–1945, destruction estimated at 84%) and the city's post-war reconstruction (Koszewska, 2025), a significant part of Warsaw's architectural history can be illustrated and examined. Warsaw was destroyed, depopulated, traumatised, and needed to undergo mine clearance by sappers (Brzostek, 2021). Despite being the most destroyed city in the country, within its changed borders (Sołtys & Jaszczyński, 2012), it was

re-elected to become the capital of post-war Poland, despite all the ruins (Leśniakowska, 2005) and rebuilding disputes (Piątek, 2020).

This heritage unit can be seen as a sample in the mosaic of local building stories (their investors, owners, users, etc.) and as an expression of architectural wealth, style, and aspirations in the light of recent socio-architectural narratives. The local history is part of national heritage in its vivid colours.

The Zamoyski Palace (Fig. 1) serves as a site for the national and Mazovian branch of the Polish Association of Architects (Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich – SARP and Oddział Warszawski [Warsaw Branch] SARP – OW SARP). This association's history is rich in meaning for the built memory of Polish independence and contemporary history. In the context of Warsaw's reconstruction and the 21st-century dynamic investment landscape, what it represents today can serve as a cross-section – material for reflection on the role of architecture and conservation in the passing decades and on decisions regarding urban planning today (Mordyński, 2021). The Foksal Street name was changed: płk Bronisława Pierackiego (colonel murdered by Ukrainian nationalists at the gate of 3 Foksal Street in 1934), and after WWII to Młodzieży Jugosławiańskiej (Yougoslavian Youth), participating in the reconstruction of Warsaw.



Fig. 1. The localisation of Foksal Street in Warsaw city centre (marked in the red rectangle)

Source: own work based on city masterplan (Geo-System, 2026).

Today, the partially closed Foksal Street (from Nowy Świat Street, where motor traffic is reduced; the street ends with the Neo-Baroque gate to the Zamoyski Palace Estate) is full of galleries, bars, and restaurants (Majewski et al., 2009).

HISTORIC URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Early days of the palace estate *entre cour et jardin* in the Śródmieście District

The palace was built between 1875 and 1877, following the Foksal property parcellation to finance the palace construction during an era of rapid urban tissue densification and reorganisation, commissioned by Count Konstanty Zamoyski (the plot was purchased around 1870 from Wiktor Ossoliński). Figure 2 presents the parcellation plan made around that period. The founder grew up in France during the era of the Second Empire, maintaining a lifelong fascination with French art and culture. The land property was brought by his wife Aniela Potocka de domo, who inherited it. The design of their future manor (Leśniakowska, 2005)

was executed by architect Leander Marconi (son of Henryk Marconi, who also designed other Warsaw projects: banks, a synagogue, palaces, and villas), a respected architect working in Warsaw at that time (Jaroszewski, 1987).

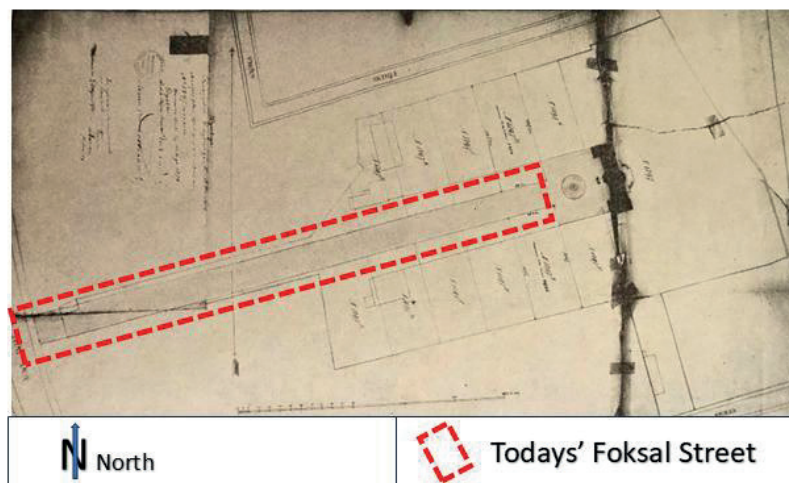


Fig. 2. Parcelation plan for count Konstanty Zamoyski (1878)

Source: own work based on Jaroszewski (1987, p. 34).

This part of Warsaw became a place of opulent residences, located along the Vistula escarpment, allowing open views toward the riverbed in the eastern direction (Kwiatkowski, 1993).

In 1880, the front tenement house at 34 Nowy Świat Street was destroyed (Parcel 1297, visible on the plan in Figure 3b), part of works that allowed the creation of the new street (Brzostek, 2021) – today's Foksal (Kasprzycki, 1997).

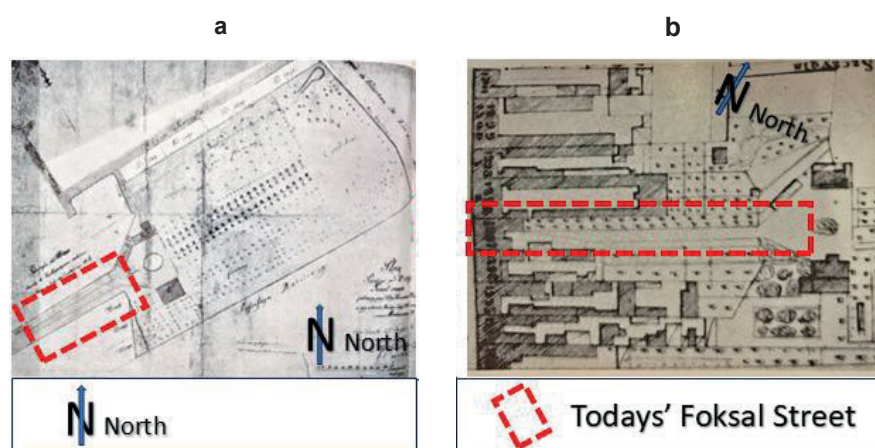


Fig. 3. Site contexts: a – historical axis, plot with the garden (by S.B. Marciszewski), b – Parcel 1297 at Nowy Świat Street (1832)

Source: Jaroszewski (1987, pp. 24, 27).

Analogous palace, also designed by L. Marconi, on the Vistula escarpment was funded by the Branicki family (founder Władysław Branicki) in the Frascati gardens in 1875–1879 (Majewski & Markiewicz, 1998). Unfortunately, this residence did not survive WWII (burned during the Warsaw Uprising 1944 and never reconstructed), which exemplifies the loss of Warsaw’s constructed heritage over the ages (Szymański, 2015).

Zamoyski Palace at Foksal Street is one of the rare surviving representative examples of pre-war residential architecture in Warsaw. The complex is located on an axis (the main three-storey building, eleven-bay, with three symmetrical bay windows and two two-storey annexes, five-bay), at the end of today’s Foksal Street, which branches off the Royal Route (Trakt Królewski), i.e. Nowy Świat Street. Along the urban composition axis, the gardens offer a view from the heights of the Vistula escarpment (Powiśle District).

Particularity of the location on the Vistula escarpment

The Warsaw escarpment was protected over the decades in subsequent planning documents: defined as “protected landscape area of Warsaw Escarpment” in the years 1988–1989, later in the 1992 general master plan as an area strategic for urban identity and landscape characteristics. These notions were also represented in construction height regulations along the escarpment (Madurowicz, 2007). They are also present in planning regulations in the quarter of the 21st century.

The architecture of the palace

Aim of the study and the formulation of the research problem

The question is to what extent historical architectural substance may serve new societal and functional goals without losing its historical role and identity. The building’s structure is visibly inspired by the French residences of the early Renaissance in the finishing and wall decorations, the shape, angle, and finishing of the roofs, and the entire complex – *entre cour et jardin* layout composition (Chrościcki & Rottermund, 1978; Kaczorowski & Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1994; Figs 4–5). The characteristic neo-Renaissance decorations can be attributed to the era of the French monarchs’ constructions: King Henry IV and King Louis XIII, when numerous modern city palaces were built, as well as palaces and châteaux (Fontainebleau – Fig. 6, or the residences in the Loire Valley).



Fig. 4. Zamoyski Palace in late 1980s: view from Foksal Street (western composition axis)

Source: Jaroszewski (1987, p. 30).



Fig. 5. Zamoyski Palace contemporarily: view from Foksal Street (western composition axis)

Source: photo by Joanna Koszevska, 2025.



Fig. 6. Palace of Fontainebleau near Paris (Renaissance side wings in *pierre et brique* décor)

Source: photo by Joanna Koszevska, August 2025.

They are reminiscent of, among others, the Place des Vosges in Paris, with its brick facades and sandstone corners (the French name for the decorative style is *pierre et brique*). A series of enfilade-like rooms has been preserved in the interiors of the ground and first floors. The attic is now used as a working space, and the basement houses additional exhibition space. The multi-pitched roofs with a significant angle of inclination are covered today with galvanised sheet metal. The exhibition pavilion on the side was added in the second half of the 20th century (described further in detail in this article), previously used for restaurant.

The origins and historical context of the palace complex

In the 17th century, this area, like the ridge of the Warsaw escarpment below the Old Town, served as a backdrop for the stately residences of magnates. Initially, it was a landscape park, purchased in 1746 by Maria Anna Brühl from bishop Walenty Aleksander Czapski and Michał Sapieha. Commissioned by her, Carl Friedrich Pöppelmann, Joachim Daniel von Jauch, and Johann Friedrich Knöbel designed a park with a pavilion. The estate was later purchased by Teodor Wessel and subsequently by other owners (Jaroszewski, 1987).

The area of today's Foksal Street, filled with stately residences and wealthy townhouses, is associated with an elegant recreational area. In the mid-18th century, an amusement park was created here, modelled on the British Vauxhall Gardens (three periods of functioning – with the last 1732–1859) in London (Vauxhall, 2026), a type of privately run, commercial pleasure gardens. The name was Polonised as “Foksal”, a location where elite outdoor cultural events and numerous entertainment activities took place, such as picnics, shows, concerts, etc. (Jaroszewski, 1987). In 1817, even a modern balloon flight (by Jean-Pierre Blanchard) was watched here by the last Polish elective King Stanisław August Poniatowski (Majewski et al., 2009).

Figures 7 and 8 show almost unchanged through centuries period architectural features of the Zamoyski Palace with (accordingly front and garden façades). Figure 9 presents the ground floor with a terrace, and Figure 10 presents the first floor of the plans from the construction period. Figure 11 presents the sketch of the complex composition of the ensemble in the *entre cour et jardin* layout, i.e. accessible from the front court, hiding the garden on the axis, dividing the space into public and private, of the palace and adjacent pavilions (Leśniakowska, 2005). The original plans did not survive to this day, but their photography was found (Jaroszewski, 1987; Figs 11 and 12). The plans of Warsaw buildings dating before WWII are a scarce resource because of Warsaw's destruction (1944).



Fig. 7. Zamoyski Palace: front façade

Source: Koszevska (2024).



Fig. 8. Zamoyski Palace: garden façade with terrace on the axis

Source: Jaroszewski (1987, p. 41).

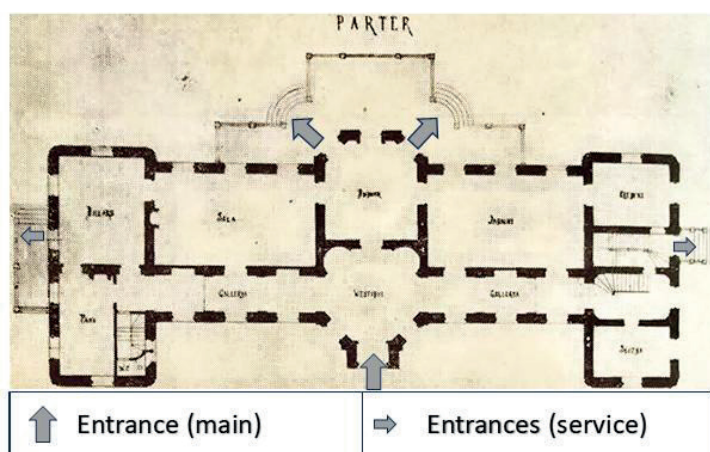


Fig. 9. Zamoyski Palace project by Leander Marconi: main corpus, ground floor (1877/1878) (saved as a photograph of the supposing, originally drafted plan)

Source: own work based on Jaroszewski (1987, p. 42).

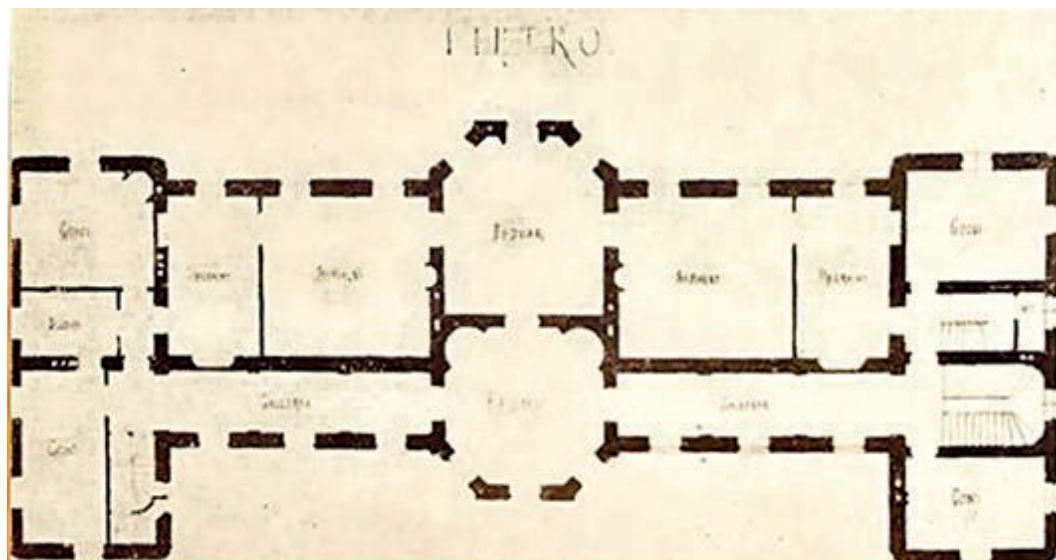


Fig. 10. Zamoyski Palace project by Leander Marconi: first floor *piano nobile* (1877/1878) (saved as a photography of the supposing, originally drafted plan)

Source: Jaroszewski (1987, p. 42).

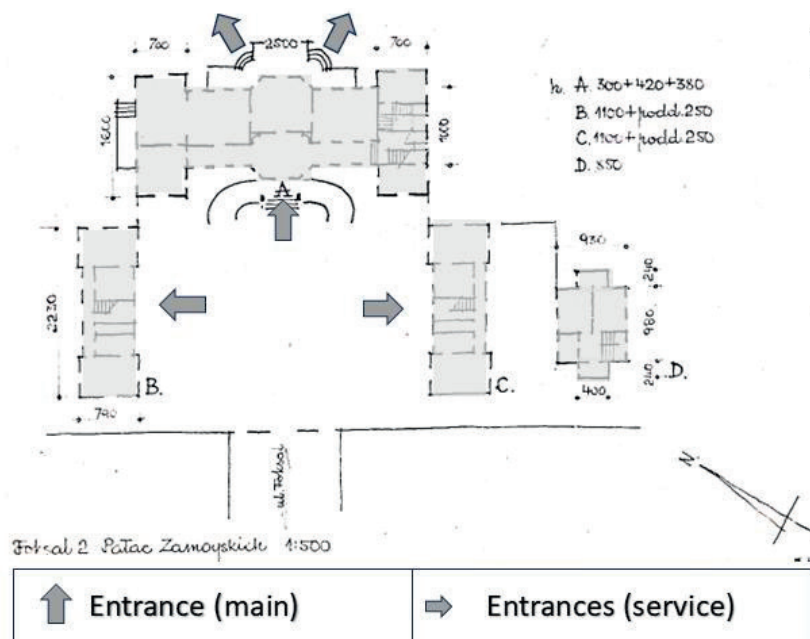


Fig. 11. Zamoyski Palace complex in 1963: 2 Foksal Street buildings A–C: A – main corpus of the palace (height: 300 + 420 + 380 cm), B – western pavilion (height: 1100 cm + 250 cm – of the attic), C – eastern pavilion (height: 1,100 cm + 250 cm – of the attic); 1A Foksal Street building D – guard/gardeners' house, called Biały Domek (850 cm high). Note: The exhibition pavilion was added later (1964–1968, see Figure 12)

Source: own work based on conservation chart inventory scheme (Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa [NID], 1963a).

Foksal Street urban context

In this area, a space was created, serving as a garden for high society to stroll and participate in cultural animations, such as concerts, balls, and shows. The development was funded by banker Fryderyk Kobryt (originally Cobrit, descended from the Huguenot migration wave to Poland, escaping from France to seek religious tolerance under Polish kings) and his business partner – royal butler Franciszek Ryks in 1766 (Majewski et al., 2009).

After the investor's bankruptcy in the last decades of the 18th century, the land changed hands several times, passing into the hands of the Przeździecki family (who were responsible for the parcelling of the estate) and the Ossoliński family (Jaroszewski, 1987). It then came into the possession of the Zamoyski family when Konstanty Zamoyski purchased the land around 1870. He ordered the paving of the streets, thus modernising the existing urban fabric. He also initiated the construction of a (sanitising) sewer system along the streets, the installation of gas lighting, and the paving of the sidewalks. Subsequently, the plots were parcelled out in 1878 and connected to Nowy Świat Street in 1790 (two years later), which contributed to the city's infrastructure modernisation. Figures 12–15 illustrate the current appearance of Zamoyski Palace.

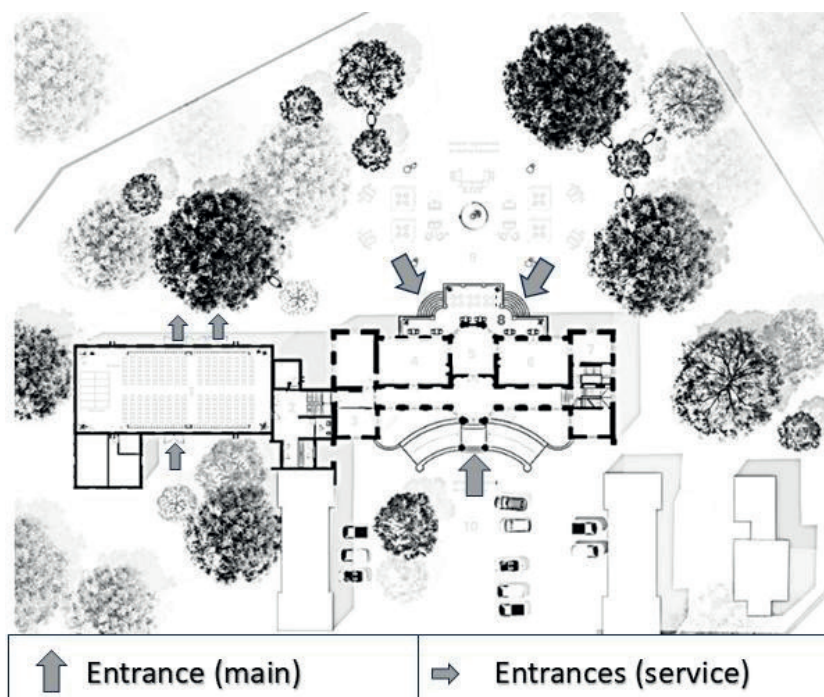


Fig. 12. Zamoyski Palace contemporarily: on the left side adjacent is visible the exhibition pavilion, ground floor of the palace, along the inner courtyard – today's parking on both sides is visible the location of front annexes, parking, behind the palace from the terrace – garden opening to the Vistula valley and the gardener's house

Source: own work based on Pałac na Foksal (2025).



Fig. 13. Zamoyski Palace contemporarily: a – view through the entry gate to main entrance (wrought iron gate, topped by the Zamoyski family coats of arms and two symmetrical lanterns), b – view through the main entrance towards the court (paved with historical cobblestones), gate wall, and Foksal Street axis

Source: photo by Joanna Koszevska, May 2025.



Fig. 14. Zamoyski Palace garden contemporarily: view from the eastern terrace on Powiśle District and Vistula valley. The central concrete fountain is located on the palace's axis

Source: photo by Joanna Koszevska, March 2025.

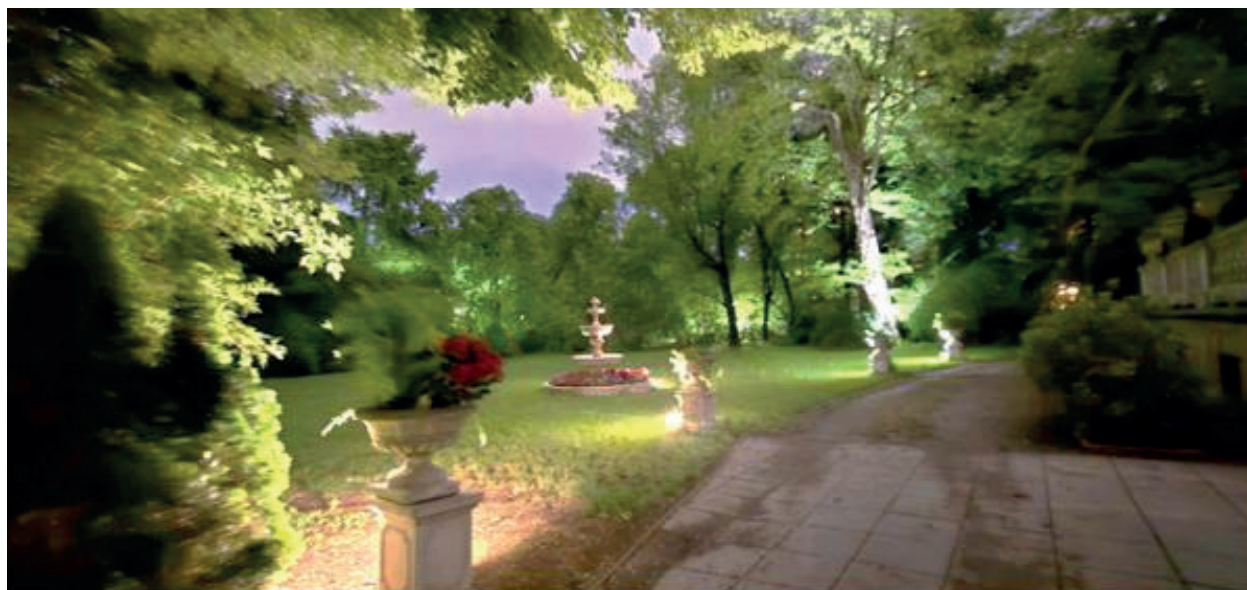


Fig. 15. Zamoyski Palace garden contemporarily in the evening light

Source: photo by Joanna Koszevska, May 2025.

CITYSCAPE CHANGES AT FOKSAL STREET IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Wartime devastation

The fate of the Zamoyski family during WWII is part of the tragedy of the Polish nation (Davies, 2004), oppressed in the 20th century by the fascist (German) and later communist, i.e., Soviet (Russian) invaders. At the beginning of the war, the occupiers deported the family of the then-owners of the palace to the Dachau concentration camp (in the German Third Reich). Adam Zamoyski died in 1941, two years after the outbreak of WWII, following the German attack on the Second Polish Republic. Formally, Aleksander Zamoyski (a relative, inheriting the property) took over the estate in 1943, three years after it had been handed over to real estate management under the fascist occupation (Jaroszewski, 1987). Despite the ongoing war, the palace and park suffered only 20% damage (Jaroszewski, 1987). Original elements, such as the staircase furnishings and the marble flooring in the interiors, have survived to these days.

Other original elements were replaced (although the fireplace in the interior survived): the collection of Polish and European (foreign) paintings was replaced with portraits of the founders' family, the door joinery was destroyed, and the carved wood was covered with oil paint.

Warsaw's destruction during WWII was followed by intense works of massive reconstruction (Przywara, 2023), opening the current urban studies trend in both circular reuse of materials and anthropological perspective.

The concept of how to rebuild the Polish capital, destroyed by 80%, was a matter of an animated professional debate (Górski, 1988). The quasi-total destruction opened the opportunity for a visionary approach (Piątek, 2020) towards rebuilding the city differently than by reconstruction (Mordyński, 2021).

The introduced communist totalitarian political doctrine was critical and revisionist towards the pre-war heritage of previously privileged social groups. At the same time, monumental buildings, such as palaces, were adopted as seats of new administrative power (using the decorated formal language to pronounce social distinction and representative function) (Piątek, 2020).

The opening of the temporary artistic exhibition of artworks in Zamoyski Palace, already in use by the Association of Architects, was noted in artistic reviews of 1947 (Górski, 1988).

Changing owners as a sign of the times

Post-war new socio-political order in Poland

Following the end of WWII, the conclusion of the Yalta Peace Agreements (4–11 February 1945), setting the new world order between Western and Eastern world forces (Davies, 1998), meant for Poland the loss of numerous eastern lands, properties, and freedoms in favour of what would later turn out to be an unstable peace under the political domination of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the eastern side of the Iron Curtain; it also formulated the postulate of the organisation of “free” elections in Poland, and the candidate should be recruited both from the temporary Lublin committee and London members of the government in exile. Later, the Potsdam conference established new borders.

In 1947, the Association of Polish Architects was assigned management of this facility, moving into its new headquarters (Fig. 16), finally attributed to it in 1949. This architects’ professional organisation was established after Poland regained independence, in the interwar period (in 1934), to support the reconstruction of the Polish State through the combined efforts of personnel educated within the borders of various hostile partitions. Established in the 1930s (1933), the institution resulted from the merger of numerous previously operating local professional organisations (Dutkowski, 2024).

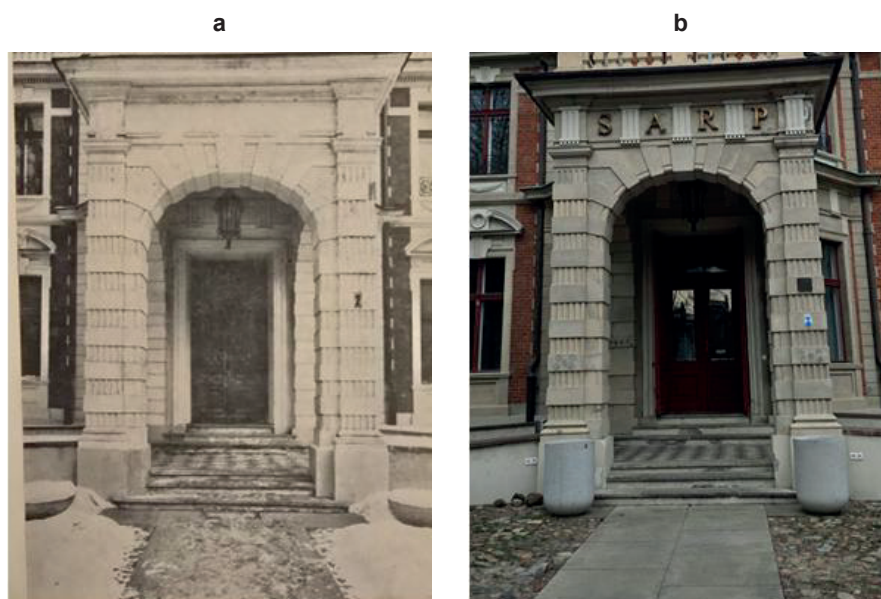


Fig. 16. Zamoyski Palace: main entrance arcade in 1987 (a) and in 2025 (b)

Source: ^aJaroszewski (1987, p. 59), ^bphoto by Joanna Koszevska, 2025.

End of private land ownership in Warsaw from 1945

The decree on ownership and use of land in the area of the Capital City of Warsaw was voted on 26 October 1945 (Dekret z dnia 26 października 1945 r.). The law, called the Bierut Decree, was named after the leader of the communist party of that time, Bolesław Bierut (Górczyńska, 2016). It regulated ownership and land use

in Poland, with an exceptionally severe adaptation to Warsaw plots explained to society as a reconstruction necessity. It induced nationalisation (Kusiak, 2019), i.e. expropriation of larger land properties in the whole country, and all the privately owned parcels in Warsaw within its pre-war perimeter (Piątek, 2020). The buildings often remained formally dissociated from land rights (Kuletskaya & Willam, 2022). In exchange, modest financial compensations were supposed to cover the loss, but they turned out to be inadequately low in proportion to land value. This move facilitated the public reconstruction process of the capital city of Poland, Warsaw (Górczyńska, 2016). The consequences of real estate chaos resulting from the execution of this law weight until today, bothering land planning and construction in Warsaw for plots of unsure ownership. The situation got only more complicated with generations passing, as heirs of former owners may reclaim their rights. In 2017, the Warsaw Reprivatisation Commission was established in order to regulate these issues.

Association of Polish Architects (SARP)

Originally called the Association of Architects of the Republic of Poland (reactivated in Lublin), the name was changed in 1952 to the Association of Polish Architects. After WWII, the Association was once again intended to serve the common reconstruction of the Polish State and its infrastructure, this time under the Polish People's Republic (Polska Republika Ludowa – PRL).

The history of the association dates back to the initiative of builders and engineers forming the Kraków Technical Society (Krakowskie Towarzystwo Techniczne) in 1877, followed by the architects' involvement in the Warsaw-based Society for the Promotion of Trade and Industry (Towarzystwo Popierania Handlu i Przemysłu) in 1899. The Association is worth a more explicit explanation of its development phases. These efforts were continued by the independent Delegation of Polish Architects (Delegacja Architektów Polskich – DAP), established in 1908 after the International Congress of Architects in Vienna. The DAP represented the aspirations of Polish architects from all partitioned parts of Poland. By creating joint architectural exhibitions at congresses and organising competitions, Polish architecture gained recognition internationally. A unified position on the protection of the profession was also developed, along with elaborated proposals for the organisation of architectural education. These goals remain crucial until today.

One of the community's strategic achievements (before independence) was the development of rules for architectural competitions (1911, for territories under different political rules). In the 20th century, after Poland regained independence, the Warsaw Architects' Circle (Koło Architektów) organised the First General Congress of Architects (Powszechny Zjazd Architektów, 1919). In 1926, the Association of Polish Architects (Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich – SAP) was established in Warsaw, when the congress of Polish architectural associations voted to erect the institution of conventions of delegates under the name of Delegation of Polish Architects and the Union of Associations of Polish Architects (Związek Stowarzyszeń Architektów Polskich – ZSAP) was set in Poznań. In July 1934, the General Congress of Delegates (PZA) in Warsaw registered the Association of Architects of the Republic of Poland (Stowarzyszenie Architektów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej – SARP), uniting all architectural organisations. This name lasted until 1952, when the name was changed to Association of Polish Architects (Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich), retaining the previous abbreviation SARP at the 6th General Congress of SARP Delegates. The name has been used until this day (Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich [SARP], 2014).

The association served the new state in its social and strategic goals, supporting systemic reconstruction efforts. It became, at first, the user and later the owner of the complex in 1974. (It was also the only association whose activities were not suspended during the 1982 martial law and 1983). For years, this organisation has conducted, sponsored, or assisted architectural competitions to obtain high-quality designs through its rigorous procedures. Taking advantage of the association's headquarters' scenic location, the garden exhibition "Sculpture in the Garden" was organised in 1957. This was followed by the establishment of the Foksal Gallery in 1965 (in the northern annexe of the palace complex).

Exhibition pavilion added by architects

As the role of the architects' organisation was strategic to the second half of the 20th century centralised planning development of Warsaw, along the 1950s and 1960 many architectural competitions were held by SARP. The procedure required several steps, including the showcasing of results, presenting competing entries. In response to the need for gathering and gallery space (Barucki, 2001), a glass-glazed multifunctional pavilion was erected (2a Foksal Street). Between 1964 and 1968, a steel and glass exhibition pavilion was added to the north wing of the palace (designed by architects Marek Bieńkowski, Jerzy Józefowicz, Krzysztof Moldzyński, Jerzy Przeradowski, and designed by Włodzimierz Panorski and Władysław Wierzbicki), financed by the Social Fund for the Reconstruction of the Country and the Capital (Społeczny Fundusz Odbudowy Stolicy) (Leśniakowska, 2005). The design was prepared by Marek Bieniewski, Jerzy Józefowicz, and Jerzy Przeradowski; structural design by Krzysztof Moldzyński, Włodzimierz Panorski, and Władysław Wierzbicki. The addition was located adjacent to the northern wing of the palace at Foksal Street, between the main corpus and left (northern) annexe (Jaroszewski, 1987). Its surroundings were also designed carefully. The pavilion form might have been inspired by Mies van der Rohe's modernist exhibition pavilions (such as those in Berlin or Barcelona), as it is repeatedly referred to in the literature (Sołtys, 2012; Kempniński & Ziajkowska, 2021). The building's importance is recognised within the "List of architectural goods of contemporary culture heritage" [own translation; in Polish: "Lista dziedzictwa dóbr kultury współczesnej"] (Sołtys & Kuciński, 2014; Oddział Warszawski SARP [SAPP Warszawa], 2018).

The communication access to the building surroundings was reorganised in a way to join the walking connection to Smolna Street and cut out from the garden the park alley along the escarpment. Figure 17 presents the modern pavilion designed for conferences and exhibitions.

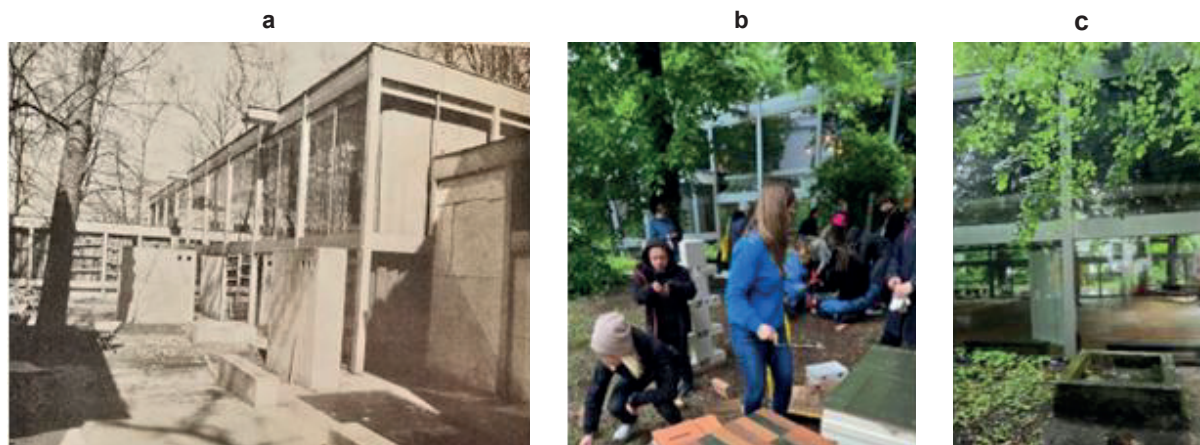


Fig. 17. Foksal complex: a – exhibition pavilion of the SARP, b, c – participants of young architects' workshop organised by Warsaw branch of SARP for representatives from regional SARP members

Source: ^aJaroszewski (1987, p. 74), ^{b, c}photo by Joanna Koszevska, May 2025.

Figure 18 presents the exhibition pavilion terrace during social, business, and educational events (internal or external to the SARP organisation), where different scenography and furniture can be arranged. This building is also rented outside of the association for economic purposes to finance the statutory activities of this non-profit organisation.

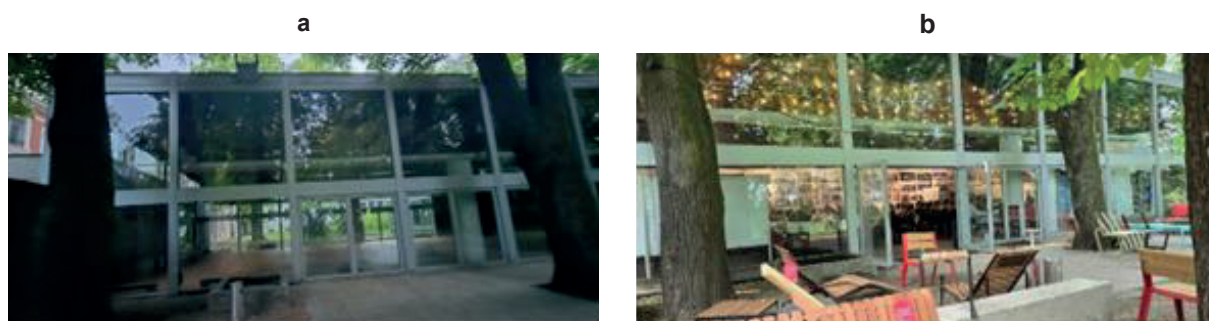


Fig. 18. Foksal complex: a – exhibition pavilion after hours, b – exhibition pavilion during young architects' workshop for the regional SARP representatives

Source: photos by Joanna Koszevska, May 2025.

Important modernisation works of the Foksal complex included: 1944 post-war reconstruction (devastated interiors, total damage estimated at 20% of the buildings' substance), construction of the adjacent exhibition pavilion: 1964–1968. Its form was integrated with the surrounding garden by large openings, though juxtaposed to the 19th-century palace in French Renaissance style (Kempiński & Ziajkowska, 2021). The new development was used for competition exhibitions and debates (Figs 20–22); today, it also serves this purpose, together with the Zodiak (Zodiak, 2026) – a pavilion closer to Warsaw Centre – coordinated jointly by the SARP and the Warsaw Municipality (Jaroszewski, 1987).



Fig. 19. The board informing on regional financing of the window joinery renovation

Source: photo by Joanna Koszevska, December 2025.

Between 1967–1968, the underground level, used for a restaurant, was renovated (also in 1969–1970). In 1970, general restoration works were conducted (on the ground floor). In 1973, the technical and economic plan for the next works was prepared. The main façade renovation was conducted in 2019, thanks to funds from the Municipality of Warsaw (the city granted PLN 80,000, which represented 67% of the total works cost), as well as the renovation of the central part of the garden façade (Architektura Murator, 2022). From 2022 – the rehabilitation of the garden façade was realised. In 2024 and 2025, the window and door joinery is being refurbished with means from Mazovia – Mazowsze regional administration (Fig. 19).

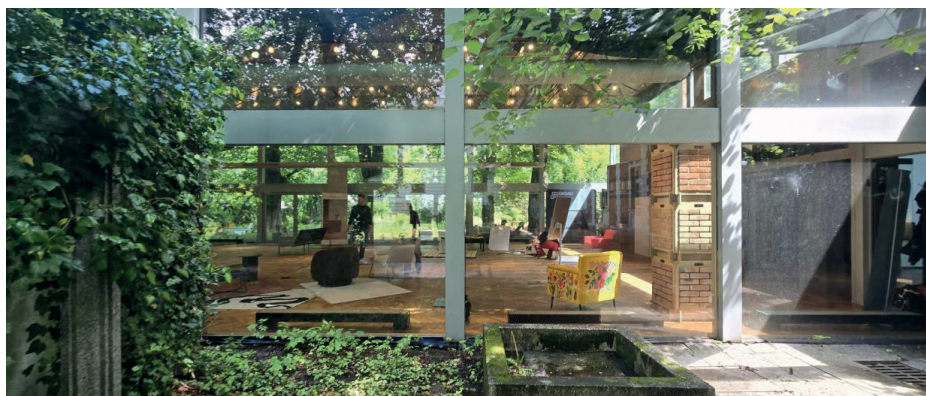


Fig. 20. Foksal complex: exhibition pavilion during national young architects gathering U40

Source: photo by Joanna Koszevska, May 2025.



Fig. 21. Foksal complex: exhibition pavilion after the parquet polishing

Source: photo by Joanna Koszevska, May 2025.



Fig. 22. Foksal complex: exhibition pavilion during the professional event

Source: photo by Joanna Koszevska, May 2025.

The contemporary users and the role of SARP

Currently, the Zamoyski Palace, the seat of the Main Board of the SARP (ZG SARP) (rooms on the first floor, in the exhibition pavilion and basement, as well as in the gardens) – the SARP main board and the Warsaw branch board (OW SARP) – houses the authorities of the SARP, both the national board and the authorities and administration of the Warsaw branch of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship (i.e. the capital) in the ground floor space (Mirror Room, lounge, and office).

In addition to the SARP, the National Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning (Narodowy Instytut Architektury i Urbanistyki – NIAiU), an institution established in 2017 (NIAiU, 2026), also has its headquarters mainly in the palace annexes. The Institute conducts activities with a nationwide scope and a mission of promoting architectural and urban planning knowledge and, on a national scale, bridging the specialist, hermetic community of architectural designers and the broader public addressed by the programs, exhibitions, and other cultural events (including international ones) run by the Institute, aimed at raising public awareness of the built environment in Poland. Figure 23 presents the views of the first-floor interiors (in disposal of Main Board of the SARP).



Fig. 23. Zamoyski Palace: a – salon on the axis, above the main entrance; to the left – a balcony door, first floor. On the walls there is a permanent collection of pictures of the SARP directors and prize laureates' plaques (which took place of former owners' Zamoyski family portrait gallery), b – conference room with the view to the garden, first floor. Workshop during the SARP regional delegates – young architects' meeting (managed by the national branch of SARP and Main Board of the SARP)

Source: photos by Joanna Koszevska, 2025.

As mentioned, the Zamoyski Palace in 2026 is home to several institutions: the Narodowy Instytut Architektury i Urbanistyki (NIAiU), representatives of national authorities, and regional – capital city unit of architects’ associations (Main Board and Warsaw branch of the SARP), the Foksal Gallery, more minor associations (such as interior designers), and numerous internal units within the SARP (thematic circles, including the open-air painting circle called Koło Plener and its temporary gallery, sections, etc.), and the library with the association’s archives (with a separate archival branch location) (Figs 24–26). The Association of Polish Visual Artists, Polish Applied Art (Związek Polskich Artystów Plastyków – ZPAP), was also located at this address (ZPAP, 2026), but today other artists’ organisations rent offices in the palace.

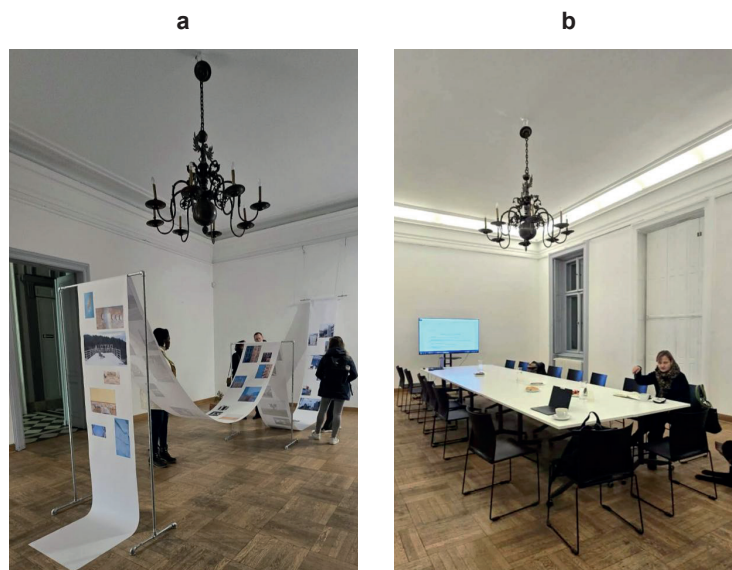


Fig. 24. Zamoyski Palace, Mirror Room, ground floor: a – Museum’s Night in Warsaw, young photographers’ pop-up exhibition during the event – the Majówka OW SARP 2025 seasonal event, b – Warsaw branch of the SARP reunion room

Source: photos by Joanna Koszevska, May 2025.



Fig. 25. Zamoyski Palace, Mirror Room, ground floor: architectural competition exhibition

Source: photo by Joanna Koszevska, December 2025.



Fig. 26. Zamoyski Palace, Mirror Room, ground floor: SARP contemporary art – paintings exhibition by Koło Plener during a guest open lecture on sustainable design

Source: photo by Joanna Koszevska, September 2024.

Contemporary functions of the palace

Current work, internal meetings (the SARP General Assembly, regular meetings of the SARP Regional Board and General Board, the Governing Council, and events of thematic circles and sections), and public cultural events (including outdoor exhibitions, art exhibitions, debates, picnics, recently the opening of the headquarters during the Night of Museums in May 2025, and open events during the Architecture Festival – co-organised with the Municipality of Warsaw) fill the calendar of the SARP headquarters in Zamoyski Palace at Foksal Street. The association's mission remains to promote architectural knowledge in society and to ensure compliance with regulations governing the professional work of architects. It cooperates also with other dedicated institutions in the field, such as the Chamber of Architects (e.g. Kongres Architektury Polskiej in May 2026 in the new building of Muzeum Historii Polski in Warsaw) and with NIAiU.

The need to pay commercial taxes and fees to the Municipality of the Capital City of Warsaw obliges the Association to rent its premises for paid, commercial entertainment, business, or cultural events, generating income for conservation work and the ongoing maintenance of the architects' headquarters. Thanks to open and commercial events, the palace's premises are accessible to a broader range of users.

The analysed case is one of numerous examples of the changing character from originally a private magnate residence, adapted to the new role as a building serving as a public facility, oriented towards common good use (Koszevska, 2024), according to the changing law regulations (here: turbulent property regulations over the centuries, as explained in the text).

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PALACE COMPLEX

The Zamoyski Palace, along with two outbuildings and a garden complex, has been added to the register of monuments on a regional scale (Masovian Voivodeship). They are a testament to the palace complexes

of the First Polish magnates built on the Warsaw Escarpment. They demonstrate their natural, landscape, compositional, architectural, and urban heritage (Jaroszewski, 1987; Kupiecki & Jaroszewski, 1977).

An integral part of the complex is the architecturally decorated entrance gate bearing the coat of arms of the founders' family (entry gate to the estate – Figure 13a), along with the entire fence and four side gates, which enclose the view of Foksal Street. The preserved cobblestones in the courtyard attest to its history and cultural significance, despite the changes to the city's traffic system. The palace was partially rebuilt after the destruction of World War II. In the postwar years, the tenement houses on Foksal Street were modernised, with the carved decorations, amongst others, for ideological reasons.

The building is part of the “Warsaw – Historic City Complex with the Royal Route and Wilanów” [own translation; in Polish “Warszawa – historyczny zespół miasta z Traktem Królewskim i Wilanowem”] – a historical monument, which testifies to Poland's spatial heritage, reflecting both its dispersed and centralised historical authority.

The Zamoyski Palace at Foksal Street in Warsaw – a meeting place of art, architecture, urban planning, and landscape history – attests to the rich history of this area, defying the numerous turbulences of history, so acutely felt in Warsaw's urban and historical context (Koszevska & Mika, 2015). Both the palace itself and the surrounding park on the Warsaw Escarpment were added to the list of historical monuments in 1967 (entry dated 1 July 1967, under numbers 659 and 658, respectively). In 2019, the Warsaw city authorities provided a grant for the renovation of the main part of the palace for 283,000 PLN (representing approximately half of the total cost of the renovation of the palace façade). In addition to the main body, the palace also includes two axially symmetrical perpendicular annexes, renovated for NIAiU.

A DISCUSSION ON THE CURRENT ROLE OF THE PALACE COMPLEX

The appearance on the market of a spatial puzzle – a spatial model of the Zamoyski Palace at Foksal Street in Warsaw (Polskiezabytki.pl, 2025) – demonstrates the need to popularise high-level, inclusive industry-specific knowledge of conservation and architecture through educational and outreach activities in the fields of: art & architecture, city building, or Warsaw's built heritage locally. A paper package (in line with the global “DIY – do-it-yourself” trend) was launched in the nationwide Empik press and bookstore chain in May 2025. The event, supported by the SARP, coincided with the Association of Architects' headquarters opening to the public in mid-May 2025. The popularisation of knowledge regarding the local construction heritage is inscribed in the movement of opening the Polish capital's goods to public access, to which extent new goals for the use of historical buildings may serve the common good purpose, enhancing the understanding of local architectural heritage (Koszevska, 2024).

The Zamoyski Palace at 2 Foksal Street, entered in the register of monuments, is subject to protection, together with the southern outbuilding (1 Foksal Street), the outbuilding – former stable-coach house (2a Foksal Street), the northern outbuilding – former steward's office (4 Foksal Street), and the park area, under Decisions No 658, 659/1, and 659/2 of 1 July 1965 – area a4.1 (Plan miejscowy rejonu Foksal, 2017; Fig. 27).

The findings of the Masovian Regional Conservator of Monuments – the Voivodeship Office for the Protection of Monuments in Warsaw, issued for the Warsaw branch of SARP on 3 April 2025 (upon request of 19 August 2024) regarding the issuance of conservation findings for the modernisation of office and exhibition rooms on the ground floor of the main building in the Zamoyski Palace at 2 Foksal Street indicate the possibility of renovating the sanitary facility and finishing fabric of the office rooms and the exhibition hall.

The ensemble of elements is registered as a national monument under the following number: Complex of Zamoyski's Palace, 1875–1877 (1. Palace: 659/1, dated 1.07.1965, 2. Parc: 658, dated 1.07.1965). Other registered objects include Technical Houses (659/2, dated 1.07.1965) and the Guardian's House (659/2, dated 1.07.1965).

Heritage of 26 November 2020 on the conduct of conservation work, restoration work, and conservation research at a monument (introduced in the register of monuments or on the List of Heritage Treasures), as well as construction work, architectural research, and other activities at an immovable monument entered in the register of monuments, as well as archaeological research and monument searches (Obwieszczenie Ministra Kultury, Dziedzictwa Narodowego i Sportu z dnia 26 listopada 2020 r.). Modernisation work is underway at the facility to adapt the interiors to current needs, benefiting from partial public subsidies.

Contemporary changes to the facility must align with conservation policies, both in architectural and urban dimensions. The exceptional location at the top of the Vistula valley escarpment also requires special care in managing the facility within the context of Warsaw's landscape (protected panorama etc.).

The analysis of the available documentation on the monuments' changes was carried out in a manner suited to its historical décor, called "costume" in the thematic literature, proving the possibility of the adapted use of the historical building according to good practices and state-of-the-art knowledge. It was shown that the adjustments and works carried out both in the palace itself and its side pavilions preserved the original architectural style and principal interior layout. However, further adaptation to the needs of users with reduced mobility will have to be addressed in the next stages of the maintenance works (according to internal institutional needs as well as binding legal regulations – following the internal proceedings of SARP).

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Note: The presented study is intended to serve as preliminary work for further elaborations.

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HISTORIA PAŁACU ZAMOYSKICH PRZY UL. FOKSAL W WARSZAWIE – WYZWANIA WSPÓŁCZESNOŚCI

STRESZCZENIE

Tłem podjętych badań było funkcjonowanie zabytkowego pałacu jako siedziby stowarzyszenia zawodowego (Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich – SARP), gdzie codzienne potrzeby są konfrontowane z historyczną tkanką budynku. Znany jako zabytek, eksponowany na osi urbanistycznej ulicy Foksal, Pałac Zamoyskich jest przykładem historii i ewolucji własności oraz zmieniających się funkcji warszawskiej architektury. Celem badań było określenie, w jakim stopniu nowe cele użytkowania obiektów zabytkowych mogą służyć dobru wspólnemu i spełniać nowe zadania bez utraty pierwotnego charakteru substancji architektonicznej. W prezentowanym przypadku pytanie dotyczy utrzymania i zarządzania dawną rezydencją prywatną w celach stowarzyszeniowych. Autorka jest zaangażowana w działalność SARP-u, praca została zweryfikowana merytorycznie przez recenzentów naukowych. Zastosowane metody

realizacji prezentowanego wyniku badań obejmowały: kwerendy literaturowe (m.in. monografie zabytków Warszawy, inwentaryzacje i mapy konserwatorskie) oraz regularne wizyty terenowe (rozszerzone o powtarzalną dokumentację fotograficzną). Analiza dokumentacji przebiegu przekształceń przyczyniła się do uzupełnienia dostępnych danych. Rezultatem jest prezentacja przykładowej mozaiki budowli, właścicieli i stylów jako elementu dziedzictwa narodowego. Pałac Zamoyskich przechowuje pamięć o niepodległości Polski i historii współczesnej, dostarcza materiału do refleksji nad rolą architektury i konserwacji w przeszłości oraz nad nowoczesną urbanistyką w krajobrazie Warszawy. Wnioskując, analizowany przykład dokumentuje dobrą praktykę zachowania historycznej substancji budynku (np. poprzez dobudowanie neutralnego, przeszklonego pawilonu wystawowego lub przeprowadzenie prac konserwatorskich) bez utraty jego historycznej tożsamości, tkanki i roli urbanistycznej.

Słowa kluczowe: stowarzyszenie architektów, dziedzictwo, pałac, dobro wspólne, Warszawa, krajobraz miejski