

SHARED PAST

Stone Traces





Legend



You are here



Tourist Information Point



Parking



Toilets



Length: 3 km

Trail design: Stanisław Byczkowski

Collaboration: Grzegorz Kołodziejcki,
Stanisław Mikołajczyk



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The Tourist Trail “Stone Traces of the Past” in the Ducal Park in Żagań

The Ducal Park in its current form was shaped between 1844 and 1859 by Princess Dorothea de Talleyrand-Périgord and her court gardener Friedrich Teichert. Throughout the entire grounds, numerous viewpoints and picturesque corners were created at that time, intended for rest and contemplation of the surrounding landscape. Each of these places, as well as secluded groves, splendid trees, meadows, clearings and bridges, bore names that were carved into stones placed alongside them. The names mostly commemorated members, friends and acquaintances of the ducal family, as well as notable personalities. To this day, several such stones have survived within the Ducal Park. A few of them are located along the walking path “Stone Traces of the Past”, which is approximately 3 kilometres long. The trail begins in front of the ducal palace in Żagań and leads through the palace garden to the middle park known as the Pheasantry. The route is marked with concrete posts bearing red directional arrows and information boards. We invite you to set out along the stone traces of the past.

The Gatekeeper's Cottage

1



The Gatekeeper's Cottage was one of the first park structures of the new palace and park complex being created from 1844 by Princess Dorothea de Talleyrand-Périgord. It was built in 1845, following the demolition of the remains of the town walls running towards the palace. In the past, one of the three gates of Żagań stood next to the cottage – the Bożnowska Gate, which together with the moat and town walls formed part of the medieval urban fortification system. During the reign of Louis Napoleon, the son of Princess Dorothea, the lodge was considerably enlarged.

The Park Inspector's House

2



The building visible from this spot was erected in 1849 as the residence of the ducal gardens inspector. During the reign of Princess Dorothea de Talleyrand-Périgord, the court gardener was Friedrich Teichert, who had held this position since 1829. In 1852 he was elevated to the rank of ducal garden inspector. Shortly before Princess Dorothea's death, Hermann Gireoud succeeded him in this post. In the second half of the 20th century, during a renovation of the building, all stucco elements were removed and the building was separated from the park grounds. To this day, the ducal coat of arms has survived and can be seen above the entrance to the building.

Dorothea's Retreat

3



In the place where we see the stone circle, there once stood a secluded spot known as Dorothea's Retreat. This place was surrounded by fir trees and birches, and at its centre stood the trunk of an old oak decorated with flowers, known as the Lulu Oak. Around the oak, benches made from tree branches and roots were arranged, along with tables made from stumps left after the felling of trees. The setting of this place was completely altered in the late 19th century.

The Fishing Lodge

4



The Fishing Lodge, or rather a gazebo-pavilion, was built in 1853. At its base, the banks of the pond were reinforced with stones and planted with deciduous vegetation, forming a frame for the cascading dammed water. Two years later, a granary and a new ducal mill, visible on the left, were erected behind the lodge. On the initiative of Ducal Prince Louis Napoleon of Żagań, the pavilion was thoroughly rebuilt and considerably enlarged in 1880.

Maria's Spot

5



The stone visible here marks a resting place and at the same time a viewpoint. From here one could look out over the dam on the Bóbr River, the bridge, the ducal mill, and also the picturesquely situated sawmill on the opposite bank of the river, which was destroyed by a flood in 1897. The place commemorates Princess Dorothea's granddaughter, Maria Dorothea de Castellane, who on 3 October 1857 married Antoni Radziwiłł.

Maria's Island

6



In the Ducal Park, viewpoints, resting places, secluded groves, splendid trees, meadows, clearings, bridges and benches all had names. The naming referred to the history of the duchy, members of the ducal family, notable personalities, as well as to the localities with which they were associated. The island – in fact an artificial peninsula – where we now stand was named Maria's Island. On the pedestal visible in the background stood a copy of the statue of Diana of Gabii, which could be admired from the benches placed nearby.

The Orangery by Bóbr River

7



The Orangery was built in 1799 to a design by C.V. Schultze. The ceremonial laying of the foundation stone took place on 23 May 1796. Prince Peter of Biron attended this event in person. In 1853, restoration works were carried out on the building and it was incorporated into the Dutch Garden, which was being laid out on the initiative of Princess Dorothea. During the reign of Princess Dorothea's son, Louis Napoleon, the Flower Fountain was placed in front of the orangery façade, later replaced by a fountain with a vase. On the pedestals standing beside it were copies of statues of Mercury and Hebe – the first by Giovanni da Bologna, the second by Antonio Canova.

Adolf's Bench

8



Adolf's Bench is one of the many viewpoints located within the Ducal Park. The spot was positioned at the edge of a clearing known as the Biron Line, stretching from the Millrace to the northern bank of the Rear Bóbr. From here one could look out over the palace and Elizabeth's Bridge connecting the palace garden with the Pheasantry. The place commemorates the diplomat Adolphe Fourier de Bacourt (1801-1865) – friend, confidant and executor of the last will of Princess Dorothea de Tallcyrand-Périgord, who died in 1862.

Zatonie Square

9



The name of the square refers to the village of Zatonie (German: Günthersdorf), which is today a district of Zielona Góra. After the death of her eldest sister Wilhelmine, Princess Dorothea de Talleyrand-Périgord came from France to Prussia with the intention of settling property matters. In June 1840, she moved into a small palace in Zatonie, which belonged to her along with the estates she had received as a dowry provision under her father's will. After the princess's death in 1862, the Zatonie estates were inherited by her son Alexander Edmund. The lithograph shows the palace in Zatonie, where Princess Dorothea resided until 1844.

Valençay Square

10



Valençay Square is a secluded resting place created in 1858. In its central part stood a pavilion resembling today's open garden gazebo. The name of the square refers to the French Talleyrand residence in Valençay in the Loire Valley. Princess Dorothea de Talleyrand-Périgord lived in France from 1809 to 1840. The château at Valençay was the last place of residence of the princess before her return to Prussia.

The Elves' Place

11



The stone visible before us is located in the central part of the Pheasantry, at the junction of the Biron Line and Wilhelmine's Meadow. The name of this place differs from the established naming convention of the other viewpoints and resting places, which mostly commemorated individuals from the ducal family's circle. In the lower part of the stone is inscribed the date 29.05.1855, which most likely symbolises the completion of the palace and park complex that Princess Dorothea had been laying out since 1844.

Stolberg's Spot

12



Stolberg's Spot is a secluded corner of the park situated at the edge of the Biron Line. The spot served for rest and contemplation of the surrounding landscape. From here one could take in a splendid view of fine thickets and ancient oaks, as well as the wide clearing known as Wilhelmine's Meadow. The place commemorates Count Anton Stolberg-Wernigerode (1785-1854) – a minister of state and later minister of the royal household. It was created the year after his death.

Klara's Cottage

13



Klara's Cottage was created during the reign of the Duchess of Żagań, Wilhelmine. In the time of Princess Dorothea, it was rebuilt anew as a circular wooden structure with coloured stained-glass windows. The cottage served as a tearoom and a place for rest and enjoying the views. During the flood of 1897, the cottage was destroyed. It was rebuilt in a simpler form as an open-sided gazebo. The place commemorates Wilhelmine's ward – Klara Bressler.

Elizabeth's Bridge

14



The bridge connected the palace garden with the Pheasantry. Its existence is confirmed from at least 1787. During the reign of Princess Dorothea, it was named Elizabeth's Bridge to commemorate Queen Elizabeth Ludovika of Wittelsbach of Prussia. In the Talleyrand era, the bridge was repaired and rebuilt on multiple occasions. It is known that in 1897 it suffered considerable damage as a result of flooding and was not rebuilt until 1901. The former Elizabeth's Bridge was situated approximately 20 metres above today's Park Footbridge.

The East German Rose Garden in Forst (Lausitz)

Between Roses and History

The East German Rose Garden in Forst (Lausitz) is far more than a garden complex. Among its roses, avenues and water axes, numerous stone testimonies have been preserved, which can be read as traces of history. Sculptures, fountains and architectural elements tell of artistic movements, technical development and the social transformations of the 20th century.

The East German Rose Garden is divided into the Rose Park, the park on Wehrinsel island and the park on Reisigwehrinsel island. It is in the Rose Park that the stone elements are concentrated which continue to shape the historical character of the entire complex. They form a network of memory traces that gradually reveals itself as one walks through the garden.

Photo: Alicja Zielonka



The Historic Main Entrance and the Rose Fountain

One of the most important stone traces is the historic main entrance, which already served as the ceremonial gateway to the garden during the Rose and Horticulture Exhibition in 1913. Today's form refers to the original, temporary structures and was recreated in 1993 as a reconstruction inspired by the historical prototype.

Between the symmetrically arranged pavilions stands the so-called Rose Fountain, the work of the Cottbus sculptor Walter Adler. The ensemble combines architectural discipline with figurative decoration in the Art Nouveau style. At the centre stands the figure of Flora, goddess of flowers. She is surrounded by four angels – allegorical representations of the seasons, conveying the cyclical nature of the natural world.

The use of concrete as a material refers to the experimental phase of using modern building materials in garden architecture at the beginning of the 20th century. At the same time, there is a clear aspiration here to unite art and architecture into a single, cohesive whole.

Photo: Leo Seidel



The Novelty Garden with the Cascade Fountain

The Novelty Garden combines horticultural innovation with historical memory. Since the 1930s it has served as a showcase for new rose varieties and thus symbolises the constant evolution of garden culture.

The central feature of this part of the garden is the cascade fountain. Originally erected in 1913 in a different location, it was moved to Brody/Pförtchen shortly after the exhibition and was only reconstructed on the occasion of the garden's centenary. The basis for the reconstruction was provided by preserved fragments held in the Polish town of Brody.

As a result, the fountain also acquires a dimension of cross-border history. As a reconstructed object, it is simultaneously a testament to the original and its contemporary interpretation – a stone trace linking past and present.

Photo: Alicja Zielonka



The Colonnade Courtyard

Landscape Architecture and Flood Protection

The Colonnade Courtyard came into being as part of flood protection measures and the construction of embankments along the Neisse in the 1920s.

Pergolas and pathways give this space architectural order and make it an important point of orientation within the park. This is where the succession of different garden spaces can be read with particular clarity.

Although the plantings have changed repeatedly over the decades, the essential structural elements have largely been preserved. They retain the original idea of this space and make the Colonnade Courtyard a compelling example of the durability of stone composition.

Photo: Alicja Zielonka



The Dancing Fountains

Transformations and Reconstruction

The Dancing Fountains form the central water feature of the Rose Park. First laid out in 1913, they were transformed on multiple occasions and were ultimately reconstructed in 2004 according to historical plans.

The geometric form of the basins, the stone surrounds and the rhythmically arranged water jets reveal a close relationship between architecture and nature. At the same time, the successive transformations of this complex reflect the changing design concepts of the 20th century.

Today the fountains form a harmonious whole and are among the most frequently photographed subjects by visitors to the park.

Photo: PatLografie Patrick Lucia



The Bear Cub Fountain on Wehrinsel Island

A particularly vivid example of “stone traces” is the bear cub fountain on Wehrinsel island. It too was made by Walter Adler and depicts a lively, playful scene featuring several bears shown in animated interaction.

The fountain demonstrates the artistic quality of the park’s early furnishings and the significance of individual creative personalities in shaping the whole complex. It is also a testament to the loss and recovery of heritage: some of the elements were destroyed during the Second World War but were later successfully recreated from surviving fragments.

The combination of original substance with subsequently cast elements makes this fountain an authentic site of memory. It recalls the ruptures of history while at the same time showing the effort invested in preserving cultural heritage.

Photo: PatLografiePatrick Lucia



The Fragrance Garden with the Snake Fountain and the Pergola Courtyard with the Lion Fountain and the Frog Fountain

The Fragrance Garden creates a unique thematic space within the East German Rose Garden, in which sensory experience and historical composition interpenetrate. Although today the focus is primarily on fragrant plants – roses, herbs and perennials – the entire complex simultaneously draws on its multi-layered history.

The central stone feature is the Snake Fountain with a figure of a boy drawing water, made by the sculptor Walter Adler. Its restoration, carried out in 2018, underscores the enduring significance of the historical substance for today's appearance of the garden.

The way in which the fountain has been integrated into changing planting concepts clearly shows how living nature is superimposed upon the enduring stone form.

This picture is completed by the Pergola Courtyard. Through the Lion Fountain and the Frog Fountain it reveals both the loss of historical furnishings and their recovery.

Photo: PatLografie Patrick Lucia



The Girl with a Jug

The sculpture “The Girl with a Jug” belongs to those works of art of the East German Rose Garden that were first lost and then recovered. It was originally created in 1913 by the Cottbus sculptor Walter Adler and formed part of the original furnishings of the Rose and Horticulture Exhibition. It remained in the garden until the 1940s, after which it was presumably lost as a result of the destruction of the Second World War.

Its present existence is the result of a painstaking reconstruction. Since neither original fragments nor casting moulds had survived, the figure could only be recreated on the basis of historical photographs. The sculptor Christoph Enk developed clay models for this purpose, which were then refined in close collaboration with the conservation authorities.

The re-installation of the sculpture in its original location marked the return not only of the artwork itself, but also of a fragment of lost history. “The Girl with a Jug” thus becomes an example of careful engagement with cultural heritage and of the fact that memory can be reconstructed anew even from only fragmentarily preserved traces.

Photo: PatLografie Patrick Lucia



The East German Rose Garden in Forst (Lausitz)

Opening Hours

ROSE PARK

1 May – 30 September, 09:00–18:00
admission charged

1 October – 30 April, 09:00–17:00
free admission

WEHRINSEL ISLAND PARK AND REISIGWEHRINSEL ISLAND PARK

Wehrinsel island park and Reisigwehrinsel island park are freely accessible all year round. Special events are excepted.

Wehrinselstraße 42-46, 03149 Forst (Lausitz)
www.rosengarten-forst.de

Tip: those who wish to continue tracing history can discover the Industrial Culture Trail in the town centre, leading to important sites connected with the history of the textile industry. Along the way, visitors can see impressive former factory buildings – red-brick structures, old weaving mills and industrial courtyards – which tell of the former wealth of cloth production. A particular highlight is the Museum of Textile and Industrial History of Lusatia in Forst, which offers an interesting insight into the past, present and future of the town's industrial history.



Audio guide
in Polish and German

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Kofinanziert von
der Europäischen Union
Współfinansowany przez
Unię Europejską

Brandenburg – Polska



The project „Shared Past – Stone Traces” is co-financed
by the Small Projects Fund in the Spree-Neisse-Bober Euroregion
under the INTERREG VIA Brandenburg-Poland 2021–2027
Cooperation Programme within the framework of European
Territorial Cooperation.

ISBN 978-83-980553-8-3