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**Idea of the symbolic garden in the concept  
of development of area around the church  
of Urszula Ledóchowska in Lublin**

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Idea ogrodu symbolicznego w koncepcji zagospodarowania terenu  
wokół kościoła pw. św. Urszuli Ledóchowskiej w Lublinie

**Abstract.** Each element of space is a potential sign or it can become thanks to the author's intentions. Sign and symbol issues are used in design for the development of the area around St. Urszula Ledóchowska church in Lublin. The work defines the concept of a church garden as well as features and functions of a well-designed object. The fieldwork consisted of carrying out a detailed dendrological inventory and assessing the condition of existing facility. Then, a conceptual design was developed, which proposed a new selection of plants with the preservation of some existing trees. The surface has been completely changed and elements of small architecture have been added. The area was divided into three zones: representative, contemplative and relaxing. The whole idea is to serve the clergy and parishioners, while being a vote of gratitude to St. Urszula Ledóchowska.

**Key words:** church, symbolic garden, symbolism of plants

INTRODUCTION

Church gardens are places of religious worship. Over the centuries, a rich symbolic layer was introduced to them regarding the composition and species of plants [Kobieltus 2014]. Similarly today – knowledge of the proper selection of materials and greenery requires a great deal of knowledge about the design of green areas and Christian theology.

Vegetation and small architecture are to guide the users' thoughts to specific issues. The church garden refers to a paradise known from the Bible and is a symbol of man's longing for a paradise garden. Setting up a garden, in a sense, means continuing the divine gesture of creation. The vegetation of church gardens should be longlived and decorative throughout the year to attract the attention of visitors. It is important to properly design this place, which is to constitute the symbolic setting of sacrum, and aesthetic surroundings of the chapel and the place of an individual meeting with God on the Way of the Cross [Siewniak and Mitkowska 1998, Majdecka-Strzeżek 2003, Włodarczyk and Wajda 2007].

When designing a garden, one should keep in mind who will be its users and what will be the purpose? The space around the church is for believers and clergy. Here are held processions and other religious services. There are also designated places for individual prayer. Greenery and elements of small architecture must harmonize with the architectural style of the church. However, sometimes ill-considered planting of trees and shrubs causes chaotic overgrowing of the area around the temple. Ignorance of the target size of newly planted trees results in a collision with the building walls. Large parking surfaces hardened with paving stones are also frequently encountered mistake. In society, especially in rural areas, there is a belief that the priest is the authority, and the parishioners reflect his actions. Also, design solutions at the church, are relocated by the faithful people to their gardens, e.g. by planting the same plant species. Unfortunately, quite often, the parish council does not attach too much importance to the thoughtful arrangement of the temple surroundings due to the lack of financial resources, and plantings are carried out spontaneously [Mircea 2008, Sowińska 2012, Sowińska and Soszyński 2012].

The aesthetics of a garden affects the intellectual and spiritual satisfaction of a man. Garden that can be considered sacrum, is a mythical reflection of paradise. Sacrum can be any place, object or person. The power of landscape is conducive to creating sanctity. The sublimity, which belongs to the aesthetic category, is often regarded as a very important feature of such space [Zachariasz 2013]. Symbolism of the Christian religion is considered to belong to highly developed fields based on the genre, color, layout or form carrying a particular message. Using examples, the sessile oak is attributed to John the Baptist, because it symbolizes durability, strength and power. The rose genus has a very extensive symbolism. White roses mean love for the Mother of God, as well as her virginity and resurrection of Christ. The red rose, however, refers to mercy and the Passion of the Lord. The willow symbolizes immortality of the soul. Tamarisk is identified with the hypothesis of a miracle with manna, and is a symbol of the gift of heavens and spiritual food. Hope of salvation is given by evergreen boxwood. Eternity, immortality and paradise are attributed to lesser periwinkle [Forstner 2001, Kaplan 2001, Lane 2002, Hageneder 2006, Lengiewicz 2008, Marecki and Roter 2010, Kobielski 2014].

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The aim of the study is to present proposals for the development of the area around St. Urszula Ledóchowska church located at 1 Roztocze Street in Lublin. Re-

search activities were carried out in 2017. They consisted of carrying out a literature review of the subject and a detailed dendrological inventory in the field. The existing communication system and technical condition of the pavement were analyzed. Composition spatial and users' needs analyses were made (10 interviews and talks with priest). Information on basic parameters of trees was collected – species name, trunk diameter, tree height and crown range, as well as their phytosanitary status was described. The above activities were an introduction to the implementation of the land development plan with new plantings, modernization of the communication system and small architecture facilities.

#### CHRISTIAN SYMBOL IN GARDEN DESIGN

The term symbol comes from Ancient Greek – *symbolon*, meaning originally a small, split object made of metal, bone, fired clay, wood, such as a ring or a plate. These halves were the hallmark of two people who shared an interest, a contract, related kinship, united obligations of the alliance, friendship, hospitality or help. When a stranger, a son, friend, business associate or steward of another person came from distant places, bringing with him a half of a ring or a plate, it was enough to match the edges of both parts (Greek *symballein*) to make sure that the stranger was trustworthy. Symbols are objects, concepts, images, experiences related to some internal relationship (resonating, associating, having a “common rhythm”) with another object, concept, etc. In the areas of the same or related cultural or religious traditions, certain things, words and signs evoked other things, words, and signs in the minds, feelings, and imaginations of our ancestors, what matters in this phenomenon is not what the real connections between these things and concepts are, but what was believed and how they were associated [Kopaliński 2015].

There are special places in the generally understood space. Man shapes the relationship between himself and space. Among the various forms of this relationship, the existence of a sacred experience of space can be distinguished. The issue of the symbolism of sacred space is one of the main topics that Mircea Eliade (1907–1986) dealt with among the most outstanding humanists of the 20th century [Bramorski 2002]. In his theory, the sacred is a sphere of holiness which is the opposite of the profane – the secular sphere. The space with the features of the sacred is combined with exploration, the rite of passage, crossing the border and interior sequences, expectation and gradual disclosure, which consists of complexity with the diversity of elements in the scenery and the mystery associated with discovering, investigating, reaching hidden places [Bell et al. 2004, Zachariasz 2013].

Holiness may be a feature of the entire garden, e.g. a temple, but it may also feature a small fragment of a large garden or park and usually results from the presence of an object with symbolic features associated with the sacred. Sacrum is a special property of a place or landscape, permanent or temporary, associated with objects (temples, chapels, monuments), spaces (gardens, cemeteries), traditions or events (May devotions at chapels). The creators of gardens, using semantic contents, trigger many associations in the visitor, refer to his faith, experiences, knowledge and experience [Zachariasz 2013].

At the beginning God created Eden – a delightful place, heavenly, earthly paradise. Edible fruit trees grew there, and inside the tree of good and bad news. The symbolism of the garden as a paradise manifests itself, among others in medieval monastery closes. Limited by cloisters, they are also interpreted as a known world. Symbolism of the number four – associated with four sides and paths – about four rivers of paradise, four evangelists and four cardinal virtues. This form remains in connection with *hortus conclusus* – an enclosed garden. With the rise of the medieval cult of the Virgin, Maria is often identified with a rose, hence many images of a closed garden show go as a rose, see also other flowers with their own symbolism. Plants of medieval gardens often had their youth with meaning and miraculous healing powers. Among the symbolism associated with the sacred is a maze. It is a cosmic symbol, it is a “picture of the world” in which the cardinal cross organizes the chaos of the system. In the Middle Ages, the maze was called Jerusalem, e.g. in the Cathedral of Chartres, a holy city located in the center of the world. It was a life experience with his astray, trials of patience and hardships or hardships without a way out for the devil. In the symbolism of the Christian side, a maze with paths that are duplicated, double, receding in all four axes, in such a way that the carrier of the value of the cross. The number of surrounding paths is eleven, although there are also mazes at 7 and 15. The maze became the lighting of many gardens because of its mysticism, a threat in church, monastery and residential gardens, e.g. a maze of hedges or lines in England in Woodstock in the castle of King Henry III (1216–1272) [Majdecka-Strzeżek 2003, Majdecki 2007, Zachariasz 2013, Kopaliński 2015].

Geometric figures also have a symbolic meaning. Since geometry is an attribute of God, it was attributed to its features not only, but also mystical. Their symbolism is a way of reading the world of God’s ideas. Two figures were suitable for heavenly happiness as five: a square and a circle, as well as their geometric modifications – pentagon and octagon [Frey 2016].

The sacredness of the garden can be derived by creating a mood of holiness – majestic scenes and the aesthetics of the sublime. Such images can be obtained with the help of water, sculptures, but also vegetation with appropriate colors, forms and species symbolism [Zachariasz 2013].

According to the biblical record, God created plants on the third day of creation. Over the centuries, plants have acquired many symbolic meanings. In the Bible, plants are usually mentioned in a symbolic context that relates directly to moral and theological content. The species presented below come from the Christian tradition and can be found in painting, e.g. pictures of plants decorated the walls of churches and illustrated in publications on religious topics (tab. 1). The inventory may be the basis for the selection of plant species in the tradition of the Christian garden in old and new churches.

The beauty of plants is manifested mainly in the colors that have very extensive symbolism. The canon of the colors of the Catholic Church is contained in the treatise *De sacro altaris mysterio* I (1198) of Innocent III. These are the following colors: white, red, green and black, and purple (tab. 2). White represents purity, red – blood and flames, black – mourning, fasting, penance, mass for the dead, purple was used to soften black, green – a neutral color. Red, white and green – the flowers of these three colors represent mercy, faith and hope [Jurek 2011].

Table 1. The symbolism of plants in the Christian garden [own compilation based on Kobieliński 2014, Basiura 2018, Drożdż-Szczybura 2018]

Species	Symbolic meaning
Periwinkle	immortality, often planted in cemeteries
Ivy	marital fidelity, fame, eternal life
Birch	symbol of spring, rebirth
Boxwood	longevity, patience
Yew	immortality, often planted in cemeteries
Oak	a sacred tree, immortality, strength, a symbol of happiness and peace
Violet	the scent of Christ, the scent of heaven, humility, Virgin Mary
Apple	tree of life, overcoming sin, eternity, marriage
Lily of the valley	salvation, pure love, humility, happiness, Mary's tears turned into lilies of the valley
Lily	purity, innocence, virginity
Lime	tree of Virgin Mary, linden trees marked the sacred space and protected the holy springs
Rose	Virgin Mary, petals: 5 wounds of Christ, praying the rosary as an offering of roses to the blessed Virgin Mary
Willow	a symbol of vitality, regeneration, hope, connected with the stream
Grapevine	Eucharist symbol, life

Table 2. Symbolism of colors in the Christian garden [own study based on Jurek 2011, Frey 2012]

Color	Color meaning
Red	Blood of Christ shows strong emotions such as love or hate. The use of this color is a reminder of the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus. Often this color is also associated with the martyrdom of saints.
Blue	The color of the sky. It symbolizes hope, honesty and piety. This color is also often associated with the figure of the Virgin Mary.
Green	The color of green is a sign of spring, growth, but also rebirth, the victory of life over death. This color symbolizes faith, immortality, but also contemplation.
White	Always represents purity and innocence. White is often associated with God in pictures.
Yellow	Used to color the halo of saints. It is also a color that symbolizes divinity, power and glory.
Violet	It is believed that Christ wore a purple garment before his crucifixion, so this color has become a symbol of suffering and endurance for a reason. Purple is also used to depict the kingdom of God or God the Father himself. It also symbolizes love, truth and passion.
Gray	The color symbolizes humility and mourning, but also represents the immortality of the spirit.

## GARDEN CONCEPT DESCRIPTION

The construction of St. Urszula Ledóchowska church began in 1989. The parish has about 8000 believers. The temple was consecrated in 1996. The property has an area of approx. 1 ha. The building has a fairly modern form, in which a white tower in the shape of a tulip and an apse in turquoise color stand out. In the area, there are two other buildings consisted of apartments for priests, catechetical rooms and a parish office (fig. 1–4).

One-hundred-and-twenty-six items of trees and shrubs were inventoried. In terms of quantity, the majority are: rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* L. (23 items), Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris* L. (15 items), European larch *Larix decidua* Mill. (14 items) and European spruce *Picea abies* K.Harst (1 item). The specimen of the large-leaved linden *Tilia platyphyllos* L. has the largest perimeter of the trunk, which is 170 cm. On the property, there are numerous specimens of creeping juniper *Juniperus horizontalis* Moench., red barberry *Berberis thunbergii* 'Atropurpurea', rhododendron *Rhododendron* sp. and common yew *Taxus baccata* L. All existing plant specimens have been preserved.

The planting project has preserved all existing trees and partially preserved the shrubs. The old plantings were supplemented with new plants. Selection of plants was influenced by difficult urban conditions. In addition, greenery cannot create cultivation and care problems. The conceptual design includes not only the aesthetic appearance of plants, but also their symbolic meaning. The garden has been divided into three thematic zones: representative zone Green paradise, contemplative zone Breeze of the past and seating zone Burst of energy (fig. 5). The basis for the arrangement was mainly the religious aspect due to the unique patronage of the church and a vote of gratitude to St. Urszula. The whole is to serve all the faithful regardless of their age. Garden is also adapted to people with disabilities through the introduction of non-slip surfaces, barriers and driveways for wheelchairs.

Representative zone is a fragment of the eastward-facing garden and is located at the intersection of Kraśnicka Alley and Roztocze Street. The greenery designed here is intended to highlight the main entrance to the church and be a showcase of the place. A stone was placed with a blackboard and an engraved quote from the Old Testament: "And God said, let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good" [The Book of Genesis 1:11–12].

The contemplation zone is located in the northern part of the garden and from the side of Kraśnicka Alley. The main purpose was to display the figure of the Mother of God and create a place for prayer here. Two stylish benches were located here. A nice fragrance of rose flowers encourages to stay longer in this place. Due to the green belt from Kraśnicka Alley side, the noise coming from the busy roadway is suppressed. An oasis of peace gives the opportunity to calm down and focus on contemplation.

The relax zone is the space that is located at the back of the church, in the western part of the plot. The basis for the arrangement was covering the outbuildings with a high beech hedge. A garden in the romantic style has been proposed here. The dominant colors in this part are white and blue. A beautiful fountain with an angel sculpture made of white stone attracts attention and encourages to stay in this place, especially children.



Fig. 1. View of the front part of the church [phot. K. Kawalec]



Fig. 2. View of the entrance to the parish office [phot. K. Kawalec]



Fig 3. View of the shrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary [phot. K. Kawalec]

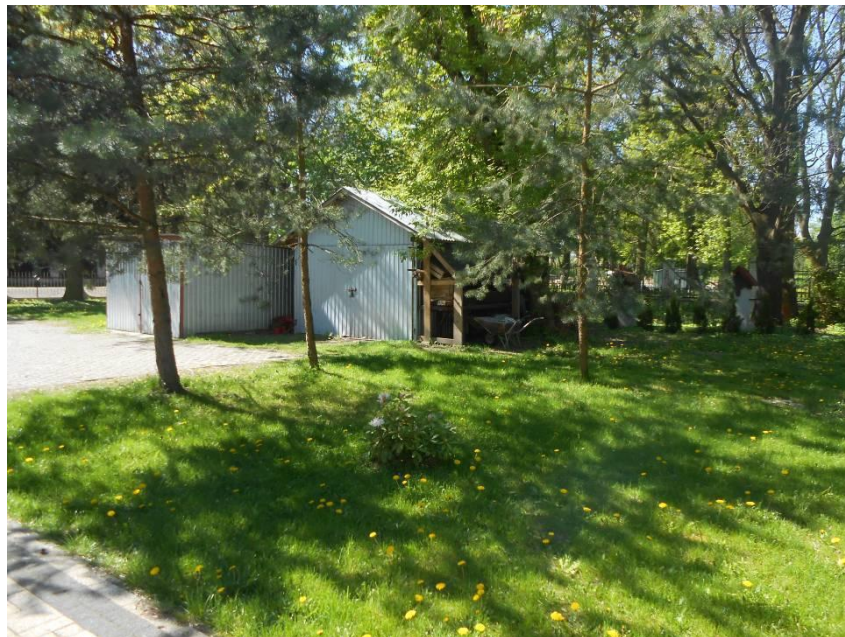


Fig. 4. View of the commercial part [phot. K. Kawalec]





Fig. 5. The garden concept at the church of St. Urszula Ledóchowska in Lublin [M. Dudkiewicz]

Complementing the space is a wooden park bench, where a moment of respite after a walk along the soft waves of a walking path made of granite blocks, can be found.

An important aspect of the church garden design was the use of plants associated with religious symbolism. Early spring will be followed by the border forsythia 'Maluch', which begins a spectacular feast of colors in the garden. Apple trees 'Liset' and white mulberry bloom later. Perennials were chosen to bloom from spring to autumn; among which they are: lesser periwinkle 'Multiplex', catmint 'Fassena', garden phlox 'Blue Paradise', candle larkspur 'Black Knight', true lavender, small-wood sunflower 'Lemon Queen', Madonna lily, common heather 'Allegro', Chinese pennisetum. In summer, more shrubs bloom: summer lilac 'Ile de France', smooth hydrangea 'Annabelle', Fuzzy deutzia 'Candidissima' and a dozen rose cultivars: 'The Fairy', 'Max Graf', 'Weisse', 'Sympathie'. In autumn, the fruit of bushes will stain nicely: scarlet firethorn 'Soleil d'Or', holly 'Meservy', bearberry cotoneaster 'Holstein Resi', common hawthorn 'Compacta'. Formed boxwood will adorn the garden in winter.

## SUMMARY

The main project assumption was to create an attractive space for parishioners and clergy. The garden concept took into account partial conservation of valuable vegetation and addition of a new one. Sick trees that looked unsightly were removed. Result of these activities was the church garden divided into three thematic zones. When selecting the plants, the most important was their aesthetic appearance and also the symbolism of greenery. This was to arrange a green area, in which finding a place for prayer and contemplation will be able. It is intended for everyone, regardless of age. A great attraction, especially for children, is beautiful marble fountain, which is located in the recreation area. The garden is also adapted for people with disabilities. Selection of small architecture emphasized the character of the place, adding elegance, and also facilitated the use of the site.

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