

# CONCEPTUAL INTERVENTIONS INTO THE FERME ORNÉE CHATEAU KAČINA NEAR KUTNÁ HORA

Klára PALÁNOVÁ<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Architecture, Faculty of Civil Engineering, VŠB – Technical University of Ostrava, Ludvíka Podéště  
1875/17, 708 33 Ostrava – Poruba, Czech Republic

[klara.palanova@vsb.cz](mailto:klara.palanova@vsb.cz)

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**Abstract.** *The empire style chateau Kačina near Kutná Hora is being used as a museum of agriculture and thus is not a very attractive tourist destination. The manager of the estate approached the students of Architecture and engineering, from the civil engineering Faculty at VŠB-TU in Ostrava, to create conceptual designs of intervention into the ornamental estate, or Ferme ornée which preserve the significant historical context of the premises. The paper presents the process of approaching a solution to the assignment and attaches relevant outputs.*

## Keywords

*Ferme ornée, ornamental farm, embellished farm, Kačina, Kutná Hora*

## 1. Introduction

The term ornamental farm or embellished farm (Ferme ornée) was first specified in the year 1715 in the literary volume of Stephen Switzer *The nobleman, gentleman and gardener's recreation*. [1,2] The ornamental farm is a country estate, which is part of a worked landscape, which contains a set of buildings for its management and stems from the desire of the 18. century man for the countryside and pastoral safety [2], in terms of understanding the original agricultural homesteads of folk architecture, which "...embodied complete integrity, anchoring in place, connection with resources, human values and satisfaction of archetypal human needs. [3, p. 35]

Referring to a book by Vitruvius Moravicus, Ondřej Zatloukal describes three sources of the idea of the ornamental estate, which later become interconnected during the first half of the 18th century. The first idea

comes from the open English countryside, the second from the Italian villas, especially Andrey Palladia, which are proportionally perfect harmonious rural buildings set in the countryside, which itself becomes the garden. The third inspiration is France, where, unlike the idealized Italian landscape, it represents a specific type of farm, strictly separated from its surroundings. In some cases of built structures of this type, the result is almost staffage architecture, which does not fulfil its function.

The park of the Kačina Empire chateau near Kutná Hora, founded in 1789 (before the construction of the Chotek family residence from 1806-24) [4], is a significant example of the idea of ferme ornée in the Czech Republic. The chateau park is separated from the pastures by the most well-preserved ha-ha ditches in the Czech Republic, which prevent movement but not the view to the landscape. The agriculturally used land and buildings form an integral part of the park, its aesthetic component, along with working people and grazing animals. It is a unique natural landscape park which includes both aesthetically significant park scenery with axial compositions with vistas, substantial trees, but also small buildings, i.e. pavilions and gazebos as well as farmed areas: fields, meadows, pastures with grazing sheep, pheasantry and a vineyard. The idyllic landscape is complemented by idealized rural buildings. Individual distant elements in the landscape are connected to a center of gravity, i.e. the chateau, by four-row or two-row colonnades of fruit or non-fruit trees. Fields and meadows become an ornamental element here. Numerous reservoirs serve not only for fish breeding but are an important part of the landscape or park.

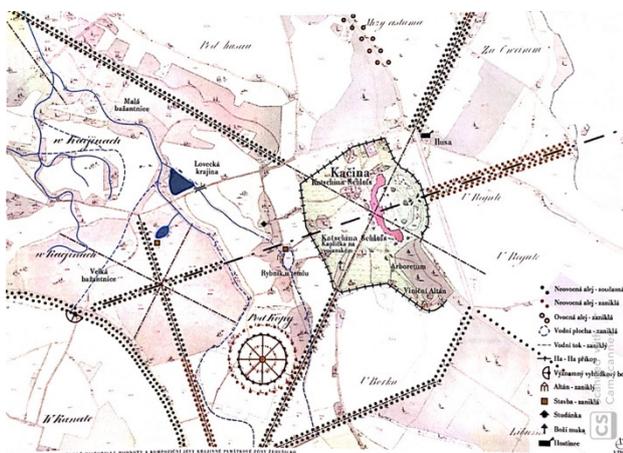
Unlike Veltrusy estate, which also belonged to the Chotek family, the area of the chateau Kačina was never completed. Over two centuries, some landscape features gave way to another system of agricultural management. The small architectural objects situated in the park also disappeared.

At present, the chateau and adjacent farm buildings

are used by the National Museum of Agriculture, which is interested in using the premises, the surrounding park and the surrounding landscape for study and tourist purposes in the future. For this purpose, the managers approached teachers and students of Architecture and Civil Engineering at the Faculty of Civil Engineering of the Technical University of Ostrava and asked them to create conceptual interventions into the ferme ornée of the Kačina Chateau near Kutná Hora.

## 2. Methods and aim

Students led by prof. Petr Hruša, doc. Martina Peřinková and Dr. Klára Frolíková Palánová first visited the chateau. In order to acquaint herself with the history, the current state and situation of the building, the manager conducted a local survey of the building itself, the park, and related farm features in the vicinity. The results of the local survey were then compared with historical maps and preserved documentation. The findings, objects and elements of landscape design were grouped into several categories. The first contained objects and elements that were originally planned, but were never built or completed (for example, the interior of the chateau chapel and some gazebos and pavilions in the park area). The next category consisted of objects and elements that have been built but have not been preserved to date (such as some four but also two rows of tress, or parts thereof, many of the numerous reservoirs and a vineyard gazebo, temple, etc.). The final category consisted of objects and elements that have been implemented and are still used today due to regular maintenance (the chateau itself, where the original representative rooms were restored in the 1990s), elements that have been restored, such as vineyards, and then objects and elements, which need intervention in terms of poor construction-technical condition, or inappropriate function (object of farming facilities, conservatory and carriage house near the north side of the chateau).



**Fig. 1:** Site plan - the output of analyses with demarcations of existing and non-existent objects and landscape elements. This drawing then served as a basis for the evaluation of what students were to focus on in their individual assignments. (source: student work of Kristýna Raszková and David Juračka [5])

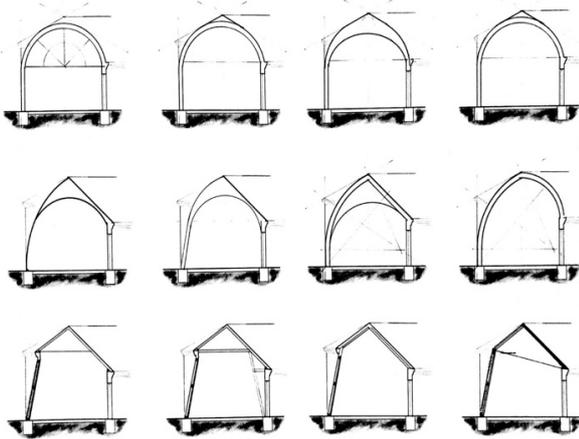
The results of the analyses are depicted on the historical map of the locality, see Fig. 1, where the present, preserved, but also non-existent places are marked. It was the specification of cultural-historical values that served as a basis for the individual assignments that the students focused on in the coming months.

The aim was to develop the possibilities and services of the agricultural museum and to raise the interest of tourists through these conceptual interventions into the current state of the original ornamental estate.

## 3. Own work and results

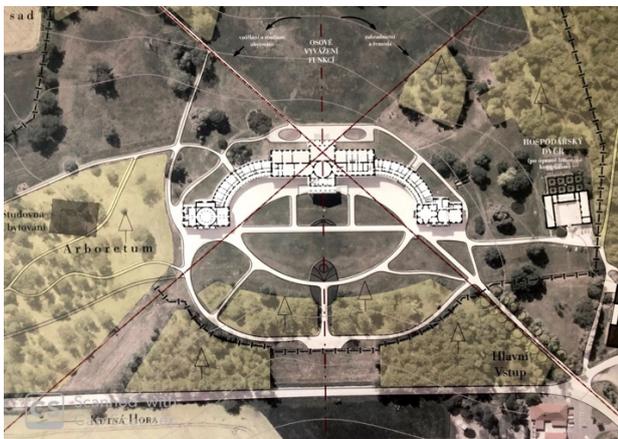
The building which was to undergo reconstruction and change of purpose was a coach house and conservatory situated near the north wing of the chateau. Behind this building there was a herb garden, which had the strict geometric composition of French gardens. It was hidden from view from the Kačina chateau by a wall in order to separate the utility part from the surrounding landscape [2]. The building is U-shaped. Its yard is closed by a wall with a gate, which is placed on an axis, but the ground plan shape of the building only partially supports it. The southern part of the building doesn't seem to fit the original concept, according to surveys it was additionally added along with the outdated greenhouse. This extension hid the gable of the coach house and at the same time it prevented entry into the herb garden. However, the overall concept of the original part of the building together with the main gate and herb garden justifies the existence of the south wing, which completes and closes the overall composition. The students worked on the design of precisely this wing and the overall conversion of the object. The conceptual future purpose of the building was to become a study center of the museum with the possibility of workshops and accommodation.

Christian Norbert Schulz, in his book *Genius Loci*, claims that since ancient times man has needed more than his biological functions, he needs places filled with meaning that help one to grasp the place, which is an integral part of existence. [6] With regards to this view, most effort was devoted to the overall grasping of the volume of the added wing in the context of such a strong and distinctive classical architecture. Since it is not possible to simply replicate the north wing and, given the context, even think of any contemporary assertive expression, students sought to combine contemporary architecture with the phenomenon of classical beauty according to the following idea of Petr Hruša: contemporary changes... can still stem from, or in the environment of liquid modernity, stem from the phenomenon of classical beauty, where admiration arises from proportionally perfect, harmonious parameters of the building, from the idea of a rural villa, but also, in particular, from the idea of setting it in the open landscape, interpreted in Palladian from Palladio's understanding of the architectural and landscape context. [7]



**Fig. 2:** Searching for a suitable section shape of the new wing of the farm building, in this example, the section of the conservatory was being designed (source: David Juračka's student work [8]). The design takes operational requirements into account, it is based on the composition of a symmetrically fitted already existing wing, on its shape, and its mass.

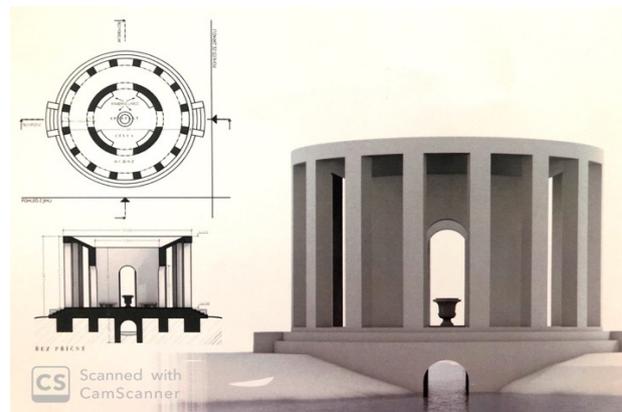
A similar approach was followed by the students in the design of the new vineyard gazebo and the gazebo at the temple, which were situated at or near their original location. The location was chosen according to the current landscape possibilities while preserving the vistas, or with the support of the original vistas during their restoration. The Palladian concept [9] was also applied in designing the guesthouse which is to serve the museum's professional visitors. The new building, without any reference to history, was placed in an arboretum on the south side of the chateau park. Its layout was taken from the farmhouse in the north of the park and was rewritten into the arboretum according to the central main axis of symmetry, which passes through the center of the chateau and is supported by a tree colonnade to the east and west of the chateau. Palladio's villa appears to be the best model for accommodation due to its purpose, orientation and openness to all four cardinal points, classical architecture and setting into the landscape.



**Fig. 3:** Situation of the new building of the boarding house in the arboretum - see the picture "boarding study room" - as a mirror image of the footprint of the existing "farmyard" (source: student work of David Juračka [8]). The building itself, like the country villa of Adrey Palladio, will be open to all directions, will be strictly symmetrical and

its garden will become the existing arboretum, just as it was in the countryside of Palladio's villas.

Regarding the park and landscape, the proposals included the restoration of the reservoir at Temple (where a new gazebo was proposed at the place of the nonextant one) and the reservoir Mikulášský in the east of Kačina, which they propose to re-connect to the chateau by a four-hundred-meter two-row non-fruit tree colonnade. At the end of the reservoir, there is to be a port and tourist accommodation to support tourism, and on the other side of the restored reservoir there is a gazebo, which has never been considered in history, but logically closes the main axis continuing from the chateau by the tree colonnade, port and reservoir.



**Fig. 4:** Palladian conceptual design of a gazebo at Temple (source: David Juračka's student work [8]). The gazebo is optically oriented towards the landscape of the park from all sides in terms of the gallery, while the inner "cella" is open to all cardinal points. Following the example of antiquity, the roof is dropped inside the layout. The gazebo also forms a bridge over the reservoir tributary, so that it does not create a barrier in the place, but also because of the symbolism of the connection of the landscape and its completion and consolidation.

A similar concept is then used in the design of the vineyard pavilion near the original location of the vineyard gazebo in the south-eastern part of the park, which are adjacent to recently restored vineyards.

The students' interventions thus ranged from architecture to landscaping, since the ornamental estate cannot be perceived as a strictly delineated entity.



**Fig. 5:** Vineyard pavilion on the south side of the arboretum (source: Kristýna Raszková's student work [10]). The concept responds to classical architecture by maintaining a regular rhythm of holes and columns, its location in the landscape supports the symbol of the anchor.

## 4. Conclusion

Analyses and subsequent student interventions suggest possible solution approaches. In any case, the renewal of the ornamental farm is about supporting the theme of the countryside, which by its symbolism anchors the visitor in place and time and in the understanding of the roots. In addition, in the context of classical Empire architecture, it is necessary to highlight the Italian source of ferme ornée by referring to Palladian architecture. To meet the goal of making better use of the grounds for the Agricultural Museum and improving the tourist facilities and awareness, it is possible to complement the park and landscape with attractive functional and symbolic locations such as gazebos, pavilions, restoring tree colonnades with pedestrian.

## Acknowledgements

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## About Author

**Klára PALÁNOVÁ** The study of architecture of the FA, VUT Brno and a doctorate study at VŠB-Technical University Ostrava, where she works as an Assistant Professor, she runs Studio Works and contributes to the theoretical lectures in the typology and theories of architecture. The Ph.D. study dealt with the aspects of the minimal housing; follow-up projects are aimed at "living for eternity" - burying and funeral architecture.