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Exploration and restoration of parts of Poltava's town fortifications during the Northern War and elements of field fortifications used in the Battle of Poltava in 1709

Eksploracja i restauracja części fortyfikacji miasta Poltawy podczas wojny północnej oraz elementów fortyfikacji pola bitwy pod Poltawą w roku 1709

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Słowa kluczowe: struktury obronne, Poltava, bitwa pod Poltawą, upamiętnienie, muzea

Introduction

Today, the question of using historical fortifications to preserve them and find funds for restoration is urgent for many countries where the rich heritage of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance has been preserved (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Ukraine). The problem is that many fortifications are located in inaccessible places, which complicates their inclusion in tourist networks, while others are in a severe state of disrepair and also cannot be included in tourist routes until major repair and restoration is performed.

The relevance of this topic is evidenced by the emergence of a number of publications¹, which also analyze the possibility of re-profiling historical fortifications, since in many cases this is the only way to preserve them. In particular, M. Dyomin, Yu.Ivashko and O. Ivashko formulated the criteria that historical

fortifications must meet to carry out their re-profiling².

However, this approach is possible only if the defense structures (or other historical buildings) are at least partially preserved. If they are not preserved, one of the possible ways to increase the tourist attractiveness of a particular city is to recreate them (more or less reliably). One example of a large-scale reconstruction of a historic building, which has been praised by both professionals and the public, is the reconstruction of the central part of Warsaw after World War II, led by Jan Zachwatowicz³. However, quite often the planning structure of a city changes after the destruction of its historical fortifications and the complete restoration of its fortifications or even parts of them is impossible. In such cases, one can resort to rebuilding (according to archival materials or historical reconstructions by individual authors) of the most characteristic elements

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Fig. 1. Castle in Khotyn, Chernivtsi region, Ukraine; photo by Y. Ivashko.

of defensive structures (the Golden Gate in Kyiv), or to open the preserved elements of fortifications, sometimes including them in cultural and educational complexes (as it has been done with the bastion of St. Andrew of Stanislaviv fortress in Ivano-Frankivsk)¹.

Historic fortifications in many cities of Ukraine have long become centers of tourist routes. The castles in Kamianets-Podilskyi, Lutsk, Khotyn (fig. 1), Pidhirtsi, Ostroh, Olesko, Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi, or the nineteenth-century fortifications in Kyiv are well-known.

However, there are many cities in Ukraine with an ancient and rich history that have almost no preserved historical fortifications. One of these cities is Poltava, the first written mention of which dates back to 1074. In 1709, the city and the surrounding area became an arena of notable events that influenced not only Ukraine but Europe as a whole. On April 6, 1709, the siege of Poltava by Swedish troops, led by King Charles XII, began and lasted until June 27. The Battle of Poltava, fought between Swedish and Russian troops, took place on that day, and was a victory that allowed the Moscow State to reverse the course of the Northern War with the Kingdom of Sweden in its favor.

One of the means of increasing the tourist attractiveness of Poltava is the partial restoration or memorialization of its lost historical defensive structures – both in the historic city center and in the Poltava Battle field.

Purpose of the article

Analysis of experience in the re-building and use of elements of the historical fortifications of the town of Poltava and the battlefield of the Battle of Poltava of 1709 in order to increase its attractiveness to tourists.

Main material

The concept of forming the „Poltava Battle Field” National Reserve² was developed in the years 2002–2007, under the guidance and at the initiative of Corresponding Member of Ukrainian Academy of Architecture, Ph.D., Associate Professor V.O. Trehubov. The architects: O. Belavska, S. Chopivska, T. Divoniak, A. Shovkoplyas, I. Babich, K. Trehubov also took part in the development of the concept. The historical part was prepared by historian L. Shendryk. During the work on the concept, a list of structures that were in need of repair and restoration, and a list of modern, newly built structures and the identification of places and structures for memorialization and musealisation were prepared.

In 2007, by decree of the President of Ukraine³ and the decision of the Executive Committee of the Poltava City Council, the concept was approved and partially implemented in the years 2008–2009.

One of the key provisions of the concept was the reconstruction of the city and battlefield defensive structures from 1709. It was decided to create additional sites for memorialization at the site of the Podilska tower and the bastion next to it in the historic center, and to restore the partially lost structures (the redoubt of transverse line at the site of the Battle of Poltava) (fig. 2).

The main problems when rebuilding historical structures (either fully or partially) include determining the exact location of the structures, their likely appearance and the possible degree of reconstruction (full, partial or symbolic). The study of these issues requires the use of a multidisciplinary approach, in addition to scientific methods.

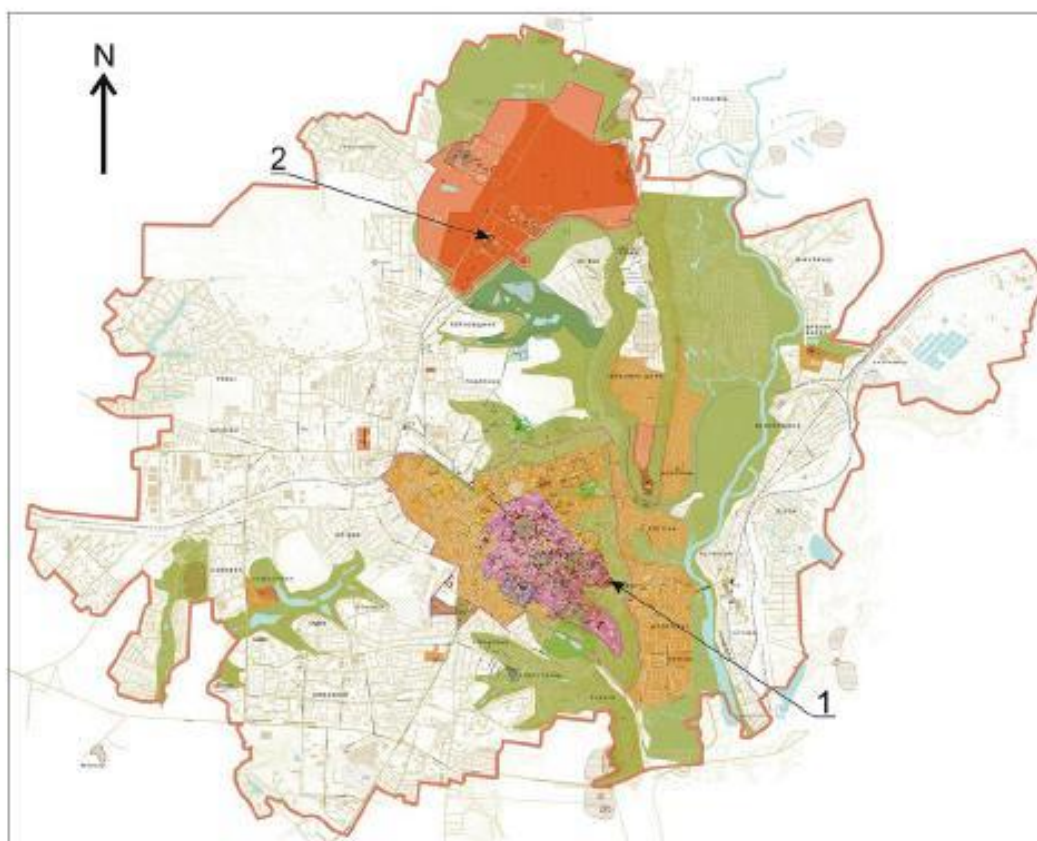


Fig. 2. Location of memorialization structures on a historical and architectural basic plan of Poltava (developed by UkrND/proektrestavratsia): 1 – Podilska tower and the nearby bastion; 2 – the redoubt on the site of the Battle of Poltava.

First of all, it is necessary to refer to historical sources that describe the defensive structures.

Poltava, as a fortified settlement, attracted attention in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. After the Lublin Union in 1569, the Poltava region and Poltava itself came under Polish influence and control. „The erection of the Poltava fortress took place in two stages: at the beginning of the seventeenth century, fortifications arose on Ivanova Hill, and in the 1640s they were expanded at the expense of Mazurivska ravine along with the Poltavka River and parts of Institute Hill¹⁷. After the expansion, the old part of the fortress was called Old Poltava, and the newly built – New Poltava.

Field Hetman of the Crown Stanisław Zolkiewski (restoration at the first stage in 1608) and the Great Hetman of the Crown Stanisław Koniciepski (with him the fortress was almost doubled) played a prominent role in the restoration and expansion of the Poltava fortress.

During the Hetmanate at the end of the seventeenth century a bastion system was introduced here, bastions and cranver defense structures were strengthened, and towers and wooden fortifications were reinforced and erected. Despite the modernization of the

fortifications, as of 1709 Poltava remained a weakly fortified regimental city, the fortification of which did not correspond to the European models of the time.

On the „Map of the Kiev Voivodeship” by G.L. Beauplan (1650), which is the first cartographic document of the town of Poltava and its borders, the outlines of its defensive structures are clearly visible, albeit in a reduced form¹⁸. The maps of the period of the battle itself are more detailed and clearly show the types and general outlines of the old and new towns and defensive structures – for example, the manually drafted „Plan of Old and New Poltava” from 1709¹⁹. However, the lack of detail and the low accuracy of these maps and plans make it impossible to use them to determine the exact location of the town’s fortifications.

The maps drafted shortly after the Battle of Poltava are more suitable for this, given that the rebuilding of the town’s fortifications did not occur during this period. These include, in particular, the plan of engineer Ivan Bishev from 1722 (fig. 3a) and the plan of engineer Vasilii Kutuzov from 1730 (Fig. 3b). These plans identify with their respective signatures the names and types of defensive structures, their size, and the residential and public buildings that surround them. In

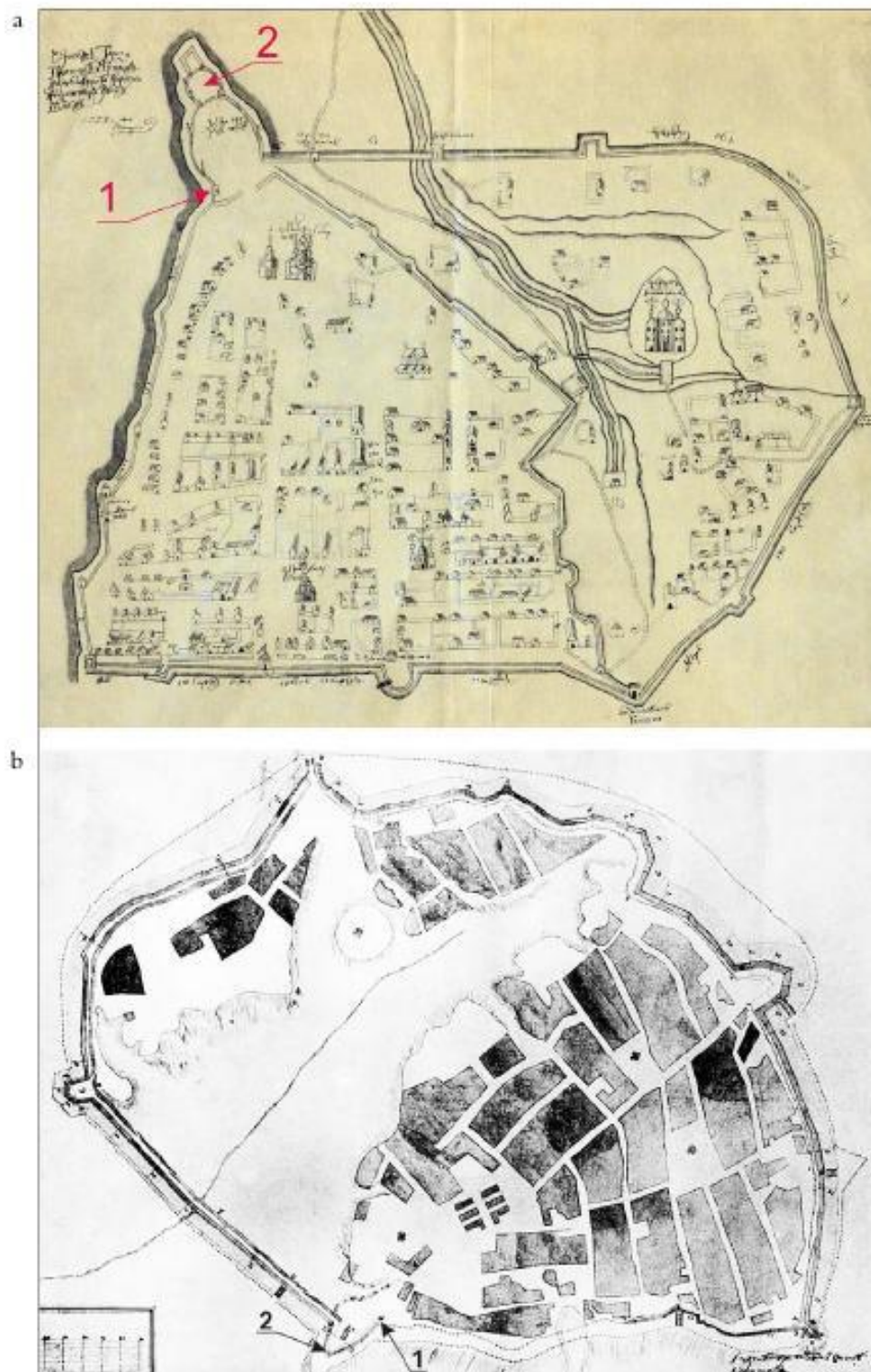


Fig. 3. Historical plans of the Poltava fortress with the placement of defensive structures intended for memorialization and partial restoration: a – „Drawing of the town of Poltav” by J. Bishev from 1722/14; b – „Description of the plan of Poltava fortress” by engineer V. Kuzov (1730/15); 1 – location of the Podliska gate; 2 – location of the bastion.

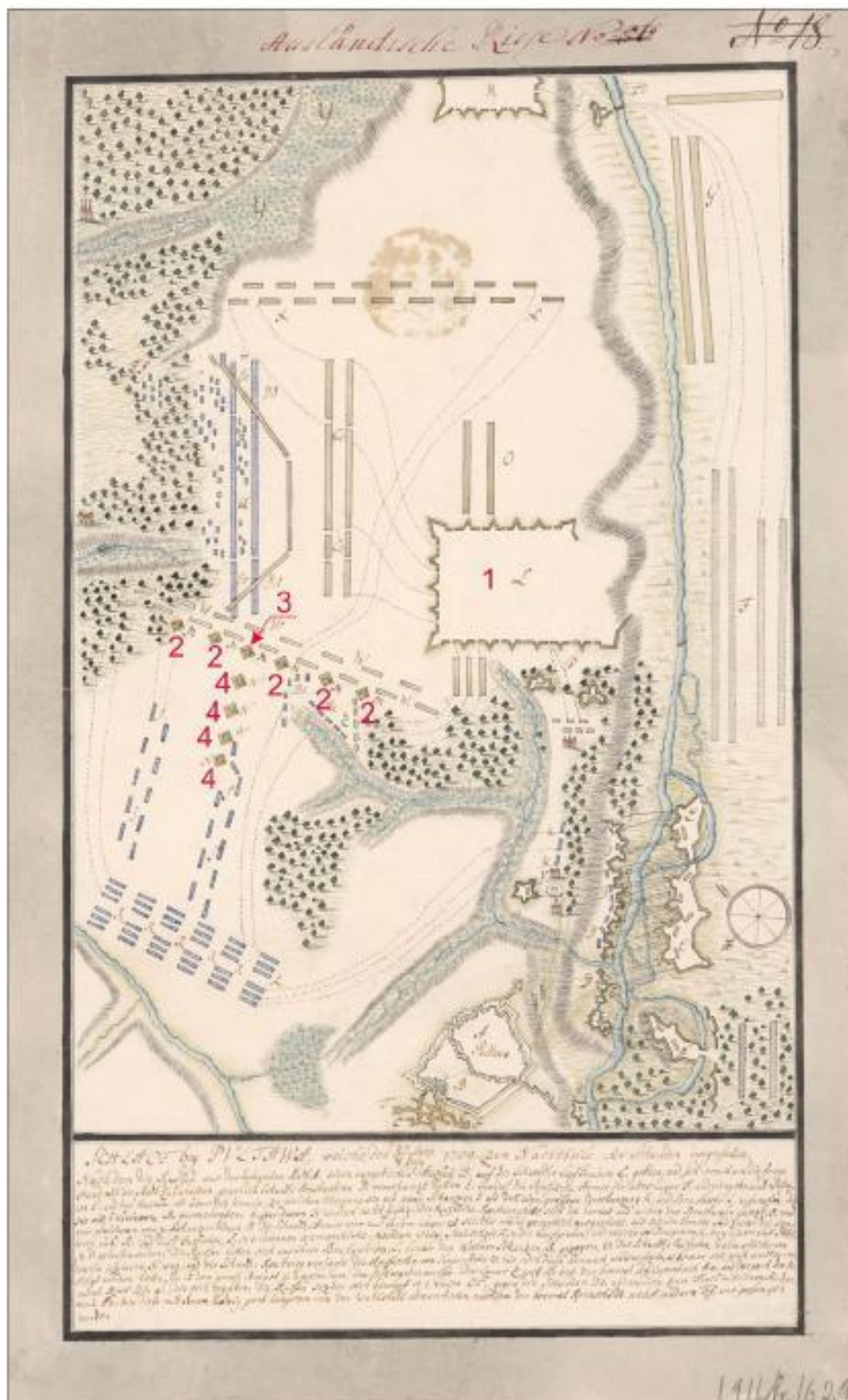


Fig. 4. Plan of the battlefield of the Battle of Poltava: 1 – the second fortified camp of the Russian army; 2 – transverse redoubts; 3 – the third transverse redoubt, which was restored; 4 – longitudinal redoubts.



Fig. 5. Visualisation of the placement of the bastion and the tower (authors V.D. Trehubov, K.Y. Trehubov); the White Arbour is in the center.



Fig. 6. Podilska tower and memorial plaque; photo by K.Y. Trehubov.

addition to the bastions and moats with ditches, the town's defensive structures also included towers and gates. „All the towers were wooden, hewn, quadrangular, low, with pyramidal roofs”¹⁰. There were five gates: Podilska, Mazurivska, Kyivska, Spaska and Kurylivska.

To determine the location of the town's defensive structures, the authors used the results of archaeological research in the territory of the Poltava fortress, during which cultural layers and objects from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were discovered and investigated. The main archaeological studies were carried out by I. Liapushkin in the years 1945–1946 at Sobornyi Square; I. Kulatova in 1990, at the site of a former confectionery factory; O. Suprunenko in the years 1997–2007 at the Mazurivska section of the fortress, Mykolaivska, Institutaska Hills, Sobornyi Square, L. Vinogradska and in 2005 at Spaskyi Square.

The analysis of studies on the history of the Poltava fortress, particularly the works of V.V. Vecherskyi¹¹, S.Ye. Gerbanovskiy¹², and Ya.G. Ivaniuk¹³ was also very important for determining the location, planning structure and appearance of the city fortifications of Poltava.

The battlefield defensive structures used in the Battle of Poltava, the site of which is located north of the city, are much better documented than the city's fortifications. There is a considerable number of plans of the Battle of Poltava, the comparison of which makes it possible to determine the location and appearance of defense structures with sufficient accuracy (as shown, for example, by O. Kovalevska¹⁶).

The main battlefield defensive structures include the second fortified camp of the Russian army and a system of four longitudinal and 6 transverse redoubts (fig. 4). A military engineering field structure – the redoubt is in the form of a 50x50 meters square on top of a breastwork. During the Battle of Poltava, redoubts were first used by Peter I in large numbers and in a certain order – in the form of a T-shaped plan. This arrangement made it possible to separate the advancing Swedish troops and deal the maximum amount of damage to them.

The placement of the redoubts is facilitated by the fact that in 1909, during preparations for a commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Poltava under the direction of Lieutenant-Colonel G. Lagorio, concrete obelisks (replaced with granite in 1939) were installed at the probable locations of the redoubts (in their imaginary centers).

Initially, design sketches followed by working documentation were developed for structures to be rebuilt and memorialized. V.O. Tregubov and K.Yu. Tregubov were the authors of these projects.

The tower and bastion were proposed as structures that memorialize the Poltava Fortress, and are also used as additional structures of the city's tourism infrastructure (Fig. 5).

It was decided to restore the bastion granary with the possibility of entering the stairs from the level of the White Arbour and from the level of pedestrian street on the side part of bastion.



Fig. 7. Construction of the Podilska tower, February 05, 2009; photo by K.Y. Trehubov.

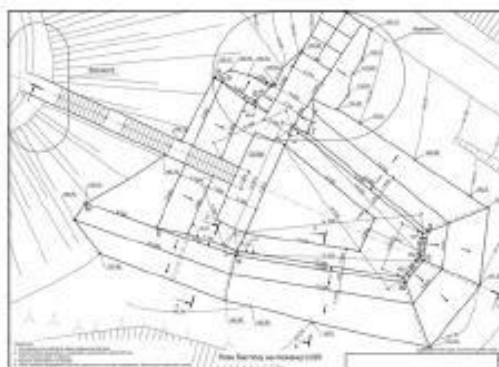


Fig. 8. Fragment of working documentation of the bastion placement (authors V.O. Trehubov, K.Y. Trehubov).

The tower, as a memorialization image of the historic Podolsk tower, which was approximately sited in the area of the present-day Ivanova hill slope, has the appearance of a single-space log structure that is 4x4 meters at grade level and consists of two main masses covered with a viewing platform, which can be accessed via an exterior staircase from the ground level. The space beneath it houses a seasonal gift shop.

The observation deck is a gallery, covered with a four-sided roof that imitates wooden shingles and is topped with a small spire top, also made of wood. From this level there is a picturesque view of the old lowland city part and the new residential district of Levada.

On the ground floor there is a hexagonal granular entrance opening to the souvenir shop, on the door of which is a plaque with information about the building and the authors (fig. 6).

The building has additional exterior lighting and landscaping elements in the form of an additional paved walkway and imitation palisade wall adjacent to the tower. Construction began in early 2009 and was completed in the same year (fig. 7). Over the course of the project implementation, due to lack of funds, only the structure of the Podilska tower was built. Part of the works on memorialization of the bastion, as

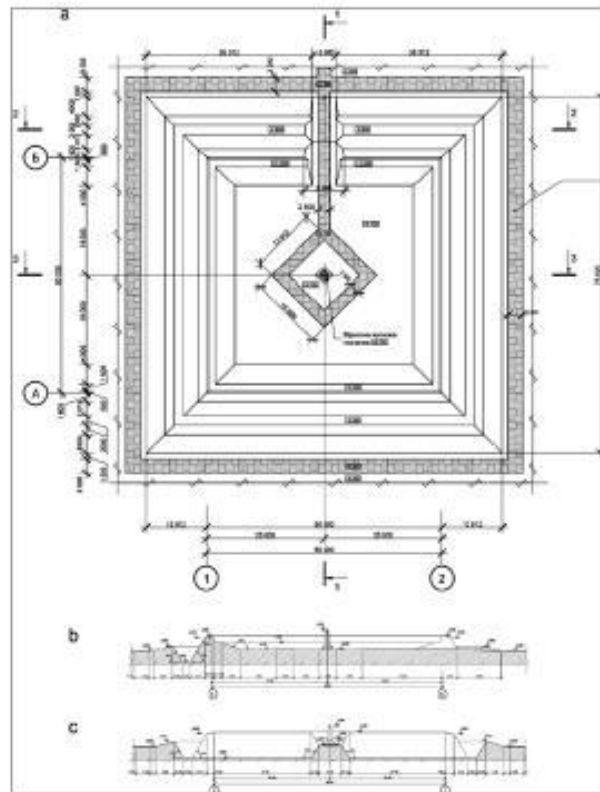


Fig. 9. Fragment of the working documentation of the reconstruction of the third redoubt of the transverse line; a – plan; b – section 1–1; c – section 3–3; authors V.O. Trehubov, K.Y. Trehubov.

listed in the project documentation (fig. 8), has not been completed.

Also, within framework of the concept and allocated financing, it was decided to restore one of the battlefield defensive structures of the Battle of Poltava, namely the third redoubt of the transverse line (fig. 9).

During the redoubt's reconstruction, a ditch was dug around the site of the existing obelisk and a shaft with a breastwork was dug up. The inside of the redoubt was reinforced with a covering of wooden piles and poles.

Conclusions

In Poltava, where urban fortifications were demolished in the early nineteenth century and city planning changed accordingly, memorialization is often the only way to reminisce about the historical past and create an attractive structure. This can be performed by building historical defensive structures that do not completely replicate historical models but are primarily intended to remind us of them. Such reminders of historical past have been used before (obelisks on the sites of the redoubts on the battlefield of the Battle of Poltava or White Arbour, which was built in 1909 partly on the

site of a former bastion, which became one of the architectural symbols of the city and an extremely attractive place visited by Poltava's residents and tourists). At present, the full restoration of rather significant elements of the city's fortifications is either impossible (in order to accurately recreate the bastion at the Podilska gate, it would be necessary to demolish the White Arbour), or impractical in terms of attracting tourists.

Today, the complete restoration of historical fortifications (such as redoubts) is only possible outside of existing urban development on the former battlefield of the Battle of Poltava.

In addition to the cultural and educational aspect of the restoration of historical fortifications, the commercial aspect should also be considered. It was envisaged that the reconstructed defensive structures (primarily those located on the battlefield of the Battle of Poltava) would become powerful attractors for tourists (especially from Russia) and would significantly increase tourist flow. An analysis of more than ten years of use of the recovered sites shows that these hopes (at least for visitors to the site of the Battle of Poltava) were unsubstantiated. Throughout this period, considerably more people visited a small building on the site of the former the Podilska tower in the center of

Poltava than the restored redoubt. At the same time, the reconstruction of the Podiliska tower has a generic memorial character in terms of the location of the building, and differs significantly in size, massing and planning solutions from its historical prototype. The appearance of the tower is also, in fact, an adaptation of the generalized image of a log defensive tower from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, modified to perform modern functions: an attractive function of the observation deck and a commercial function in the form of a souvenir shop.

In the years 2008–2009, due to insufficient funding, the measures outlined in the Concept of the development of the „Poltava Battle Field” National Reserve were not fully implemented. According to the provisions of the Concept, all redoubts, and subsequently the second protected camp of the Russian troops, should be completely restored. It also envisaged the restoration of the bastion on Ivanova Hill near the Podilsky gate. Considering the experience of using the reconstructed redoubt, the complete resto-

ration of historical defensive structures on the battlefield of the Battle of Poltava currently seems inappropriate. It is unlikely to significantly increase tourist flow, given the current state of Ukrainian–Russian relations and the active use of speculation concerning the historical events of 1709 by modern Russian propaganda. From a cultural and educational point of view, the restored redoubt gives a sufficient idea of the nature of the defensive structures that played a part in the Battle of Poltava. It should also be kept in mind that the locations of all of the main defensive structures of the Battle have already been marked with memorial signs, obelisks, etc.

Instead, the experience of memorializing the individual elements of the Poltava Fortress’ fortifications proved to be quite successful. This makes it possible to recommend the partial rebuilding of the bastion near the White Harbour, as well as the continuation of the memorialization of the key elements of the city’s fortifications, while taking theoretical foundations and foreign and domestic experience into account.

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Abstract

This article discusses the peculiarities of memorialization and musealisation of the fortifications of the town of Poltava, which are dated to the beginning of the eighteenth century, and the field fortifications used during the Battle of Poltava of 1709, and including them in the general concept of development of the „Poltava Battle Field” National Reserve, with a partial restoration of these structures. The authors highlighted the rethinking of the functions of historical fortifications in light of current experience.

Streszczenie

Artykuł dotyczy możliwości upamiętnienia i muzealizacji struktur obronnych miasta Poltawy z początku XVIII wieku oraz okresu bitwy pod Poltawą w roku 1709, będących częścią Narodowego Rezerwatu „Pole bitwy w Poltawie”. Konceptcja rozwoju rezerwatu zakłada m.in. częściowe przywrócenie historycznych struktur. Autorzy artykułu zwrócili uwagę na potrzebę ponownego przemyślenia funkcji fortyfikacji historycznych w świetle aktualnych doświadczeń.