

Recovery and Reconstruction. Post-war Strategies of Regenerating and Restoring War-damaged Parks and Gardens

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Post-war reconstruction and commissioning of parks and green spaces are a topic that in Russia is best described by the example of the restoration work in Pavlovsk Park. The park is part of the Pavlovsk State Museum-Reserve and the most important monument of Russian neo-classicism of the late 18th to early 19th centuries. In addition, the Pavlovsk Palace and Park ensemble is an object of cultural heritage of federal importance.

The history of the park begins in the spring of 1778, when works of building a country residence for the heir to the throne began here. The forest was cleared and the preparation of the construction sites began. From 1780, serious work began on the construction of a large stone palace for the grand-ducal family, designed by Charles Cameron, invited to Russia by Catherine II. Cameron, a connoisseur of antiquity and author of the book *The Baths of the Romans*, was an ardent admirer of the Italian architect and theorist of architecture of the 16th century Andrea Palladio, whose work became an inspiration for the design of the palace.

Since 1784, the Italian Vincenzo Brenna began working in Pavlovsk. In 1803 a fire broke out in the palace, which resulted in the damage of many palace halls. Then the complex was not only fully restored, but also supplemented with a complex and thorough finishing.

When World War II started, the artistic treasures in Pavlovsk were packed and evacuated. During the war years, the collections of Pavlovsk were kept in the city of Sarapul of the Udmurt ASSR in the building of the Museum of Local Lore, in Novosibirsk in the Opera House, as well as in St. Isaac's Cathedral in Leningrad.

On September 17, 1941, the Nazis entered Pavlovsk, and the occupation lasted until January 24, 1944. During these years the Gestapo headquarters, the barracks, and the officers' hospital were located in the palace, and the territory around the palace was turned into a restricted area, which almost completely destroyed its original appearance. In Pavlovsk Park, 70,000 trees were cut down, bridges were blown up, the melioration system was destroyed, the network of



Pavlovsk Park, Temple of Friendship (© Alex 'Florstein' Fedorov, Wikipedia)

roads and pavilions were damaged and in January 1944, during the retreat of the Nazis, Pavlovsk Palace was badly damaged by fire.

The study of the post-war restoration of the palaces and parks of Pavlovsk Palace in the 1940s and 1950s shows that the restoration task was solved by the phased commissioning of various facilities of the palace and park complex. This contributed to the success of the restoration work. Such work should be based on archival documents, many of which were introduced into scientific circulation for the first time. This approach was a novelty in the study of the problem of the post-war restoration of Pavlovsk Palace.

Work on the revival of Pavlovsk began immediately after its liberation on the initiative of Anna Zelenova, appointed director of the Pavlovsk Palace Museum and Park in August 1941. Restorers had to work in very difficult conditions, but it was in the post-war years that they developed and introduced the world's first method of integrated recreation of architectural monuments of the 18th and early 19th centuries with rich and varied interiors. An important role in the introduction and development of a scientific methodology for the restoration of architectural monuments, which was carried out in Pavlovsk, was played by Anna Zelenova.

Representatives of the restoration school followed the principle of a comprehensive, maximally complete reconstruction of the monuments of architecture destroyed by the war without limiting the tasks of scientific restoration to their protection and conservation. A unique construction and restoration activity was developed on the basis of a careful study of fragments of monuments, and of iconographic and archival materials. The younger generation of professionals

helped the experienced architects, acquiring the necessary skills in the course of the work.

The post-war restoration of the park, exceptional in scale, complexity and depth of scientific research, was the feat of a whole generation of professionals. Over the years, the works of outstanding specialists and restorers have become of independent historical and cultural value. Today, the names of the great architects of the past and of the specialists of the 20th century are in the same row. It is thanks to the mastery and professionalism of the latter that unique monuments are brought back to life. It is important to note that this work is continuing today.

The recreation of the beauty of the suburbs of St. Petersburg deserves an in-depth study and new understanding as an independent fact of interaction with the subject of cultural heritage. Restorers, architects, architectural historians, experts of the Committee on State Control, Use and Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments – because of these people, Pavlovsk managed to survive. Pavlovsk became the school of national restoration and the first suburban palace and park ensemble revived after World War II.

At the London Congress of Architects in 1945, devoted to the problems of military destruction, it was noted: “The whole humanity has become poorer from the loss of such monuments as Pavlovsk.” In those years, the very question whether the restoration of the palace ensemble was possible at all caused serious doubts among restorers and scientists.

At present, the State Budget Institution of Culture “Pavlovsk State Museum-Reserve” is one of the leading institutions not only in St. Petersburg, but also in the Russian Federation.