

Analysis of the Touristic Valorization of Maksimir Park in Zagreb (Croatia)

*Nika Dolenc**, *Renata Grbac Žiković***, *Rade Knežević****

Received: December 2011 | Accepted: April 2012

Abstract

The modern pace of life imposes new needs and demands of the tourist market as well as the need for rest and recreation in areas of preserved nature. Maksimir Park dates from the 19th century, and since 1964, it has been protected as a monument of park architecture. Today, the park is the space for recreation and relaxation with cultural monuments and natural heritage. They make a strong and attractive potential factor that has been underused in the tourist offer of the City of Zagreb. The paper examines the attractiveness of the park for visitors, whilst also making the comparison with some of the parks of London (Hyde Park, Regent's Park, Kew Gardens). The main goal of this paper is to analyze the existing resources of the park and to identify their weaknesses in order to complement and enhance the offer of the park as a tourist attraction. The methodology is based on the analysis of material of the origin and the development of Maksimir Park, the evaluation survey conducted in 2009 and 2010 in the park area (case study) and SWOT analysis of the significant resource for tourism development of the park. The results show that Maksimir Park contains many resources, but they are not recognized as a tourist attraction of Zagreb. Tourist services in the park are not harmonized with visitors' needs and should be complemented with traditional and cultural events, better cuisine, education about resources of the park and improved range of activities throughout the year.

Key words: *Maksimir Park, development, natural and cultural heritage, tourist offer.*

* Public Institution Maksimir, Maksimirski perivoj bb, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia;
info@park-maksimir.hr; nika.dolenc@gmail.com

** Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management Opatija, University of Rijeka, Ika 42, 51410 Opatija, Croatia;
renatag@fthm.hr

*** Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management Opatija, University of Rijeka, Ika 42, 51410 Opatija, Croatia;
radek@fthm.hr

Introduction

Parks are included in the physiognomic structure of a city as a part of the area, and can, as such become a part of the city's recognizable identity. In this way, Kew Gardens or Hyde Park present a part of London's identity, Bois de Boulogne or Bois de Vincennes have the same meaning for Paris, Central Park for New York, Rings for Vienna, and Maksimir and Zelena potkova for Zagreb (Bojanić and Šćitaroci, 1996).

Nowadays green areas inside city areas mostly consist of city parks, sometimes referred to as gardens or city greenery. Parks (lat. *parricus*; bounded area) are parts of a city or settlement that contain methodically installed and maintained vegetation and other functional and compositionally-formed facilities (Knežević and Dolenc, 2011).

Parks and gardens are an important part of green surfaces, and as such present a reflection of the culture of a certain time and the man's relation towards nature. Different traditions and influences of cultures of different nations have changed during the course of history, influencing the way that park surfaces are arranged.

As oldest parks we point out those dating from antique times, such as the parks of Persian kings that functioned as hunting grounds, the Eastern and Chinese Garden and the Hanging Gardens of Semiramis. While the Persian garden lasted until the 7-8th century, it took on a new meaning with the spread of Islam. Islam adopted the garden form, but it imbued it with meaning and symbolism. Persian culture was absorbed by Islam and continued without apparent interruption. To the one it remained the paradise of the Koran; 'For them [the good] the Gardens of Eden, under whose shade shall rivers flow'; to the other a place for contemplation and conversation, where the body and spirit were in repose and the mind liberated from preconceptions. (http://project.eghn.org/downloads/EGHN_Story%20of%20gardens). Their significance comes from the fact that their role was to bring people closer to nature by creating a sensation of pleasure and harmony (Knežević and Dolenc, 2011). The beginnings of park architecture, as one of the most important branches of public green surfaces arrangement, are linked to ancient Romans in western culture, when they appeared as public gardens. In the Middle Ages¹ these are regular geometrical gardens that contain both orchards and alleys, as well as bathing pools, and can be found in France and Italy. Further park development tendency stretches through renaissance² (gardens have regular shapes and smaller dimensions, Belvedere gardens in Vatican, renaissance gardens in Dubrovnik, gardens of the Villa Medici in Castellu near Florence can be set as examples), the baroque³ (examples being regular French gardens such as the park next to Versailles, and English natural gardens based on bringing nature closer to people, that do not use strict geometrical forms and symmetries, but apply organic forms such as in Hyde Park in London, park Ribnjak in Zagreb), classicism and historicism through the 19th century (Zelena potkova in Zagreb). Only in the second half of the 19th century garden architecture gets an important role in urban planning in Paris. Parks are

¹ The Middle Ages was a period of 5 to the 15th century in which the course of development of feudal society, a change in its economic, political and cultural life can be traced through early (5th - 11th century), developed (11th - 13th century), and late middle age (13 - 15th century) (Brandt, 1995).

² The Renaissance (French Renaissance - revival, renewal) period in European culture from the late 14th until the 16th century Features: renewal of the spirit of ancient culture, the flourishing of new art forms, the development of science and philosophy of individualism. High Renaissance in the 16th century (Cinquecento) (Pischel, 1969).

³ Baroque is a style of European art from the late 16th to mid 18th century (comes after Renaissance and develops the Rococo, it lasts until the appearance of classicism), decorative, luxurious, flamboyant detail, restless forms and expressions with many contrasts of light and darkness (Anić et al., 2004,249).

pillars whose function is to improve the quality of life in cities, and at the same time they play a significant role in the city's ecological sustainability, since they have a direct impact on the reduction of the ecological footprint of urban population and an influence on microclimate modifications. Park often stand as a synonym for pleasure (Stiperski, 1997). Related to this, Butorac and Šimleša (2007) state that the goal of urban ecology is creation, preservation and restoration of opened green surfaces in a sustainable way. As a result of the ecological concept in planning landscape surfaces, the term city greenery (Vresk, 1990) appears in the second half of the 20th century, including all city surfaces that are green areas (trees, bushes, ground covers, perennials, season flowers, grass) (Knežević and Dolenc, 2011). Apart from organizing green areas within cities, increased attention is paid to raising the green belts around cities. Their main role is to prevent the cities from widening, but they also play a role in recreation and relaxation of the urban population (parks in the UK) .

Zagreb has a long tradition of park architecture and preserved park heritage. First green surfaces in Zagreb appeared during the Middle Ages in the form of hortulus-gardens of mixed purpose. Fruits, vegetables, medicinal plants and herbs, as well as vines were grown in them and they were maintained until the 19th century. Parks opened for public were erected at the end of the 18th century (Maksimir Park was opened in 1794). In the 19th and 20th century erecting new parks followed augmentation of the city area and the increased number of city inhabitants. According to newer data (2010), Zagreb has a total of 31 parks that have a total surface of 4 000 ha. Among the most representative, along with Maksimir Park, are the parks of "The Lenuci Horseshoe "or" Green Horseshoe ". It is a collective name for a sequence of seven squares that along with the parks and green areas (such as the tripartite framework) border the district of the Lower Town. Zagreb park "Maksimir falls under the category of distinguished romantic gardens. It is the most significant object of garden architecture in Croatia, a monument to park architecture, a cultural-historical monument and one of the symbols of Zagreb "(Butorac, Šimleša, 2007).

The topic of park development architecture, their fields and significance for certain city areas has been pursued by various authors, including Butorac and Šimleša in their work „Green hearts of cities – The importance of gardens in urban areas“, Grgić in his work „Gardens of Split – Genesis and development of city garden architecture“, Paul F.J. Eagles in his work „International Trends in Park Tourism“, M. Walls in his work „Parks and Recreation in the United States“, and the report „The use of public parks in England 2003“ published by English Heritage, Sport England, and The Countryside Agency .

Nowadays the problem of park utilization and development has been awakened through several aspects of selective tourism (eco-tourism, adventurous tourism and nature based tourism). Park tourism development under the stated branches of selective tourism is very significant. Ecotourism is a form of tourism that involves visits to natural and unpolluted environment, especially of areas with a certain degree of environmental protection (Blažević and Knežević, 2006). It includes 7-10% of total world tourism demand. Adventure tourism, combining physical activity, cultural exchange or interaction with nature and engagement (<http://www.slideshare.net>) has a recorded growth rate of 8%. Nature based tourism has an annual growth rate of 10-30%, is based on the idea that travels are undertaken mostly or only with the goal to enjoy nature's attractions and to get involved in various outdoor activities such as bird watching, mountaineering and fishing (<http://www.travel-industry-dictionary.com/nature-based-tourism.html>).

However, regardless which aspect of the theme field of park tourism in the Republic of Croatia is studied, it is insufficiently elaborated, which can be concluded based on the lack of

papers on this topic. The goal of this paper is to analyze the existing resources of Maksimir Park (both natural and social) and to induce further research.

Methodological framework

Work methods include documentation analysis (analysis of the existing literature, Internet sources and former studies, analysis of the history of park origination, history of Zagreb horticulture, Maksimir Park history, its development and manners of utilization).

Field research methods have been conducted directly when visiting the parks of England and the parks of the City of Zagreb. Touristic infrastructure and suprastructure have been evaluated, as well as the manners and customs of space exploitation. Field research included the method of visitors' evaluation of Maksimir Park. Research of the London parks mostly took place in Hyde Park, Kew Garden, while in Zagreb the research was undertaken in the parks Maksimir and Zelena potkova. The research was conducted both during working days and weekends. Using the case study method, Maksimir Park has been studied as a touristic resource of the City of Zagreb.

Research on visitors' needs, expectations and satisfaction with the offer of the park was conducted in 2009 and 2010 using questionnaire evaluation method. Representative pattern involved people chosen by random selection method. A total of 120 visitors' evaluation was done, out of which 111 were processed, as nine questionnaires were inadequately filled out. The goal of the research was to achieve a better understanding of the demand and the advancement of the offer so that it would meet the special requirements of the park with a purpose of its further development. The paper includes SWOT analysis of resources significant for the development of the park tourism, in order to obtain a better insight into the current situation and the possibilities of further advancement of the offer of the park.

Development of Maksimir Park

Park heritage of Zagreb consists of works of the 19th century landscape architecture. In places where the town fortifications stood, gardens, parks and walkways were built. Some were built on private land and later converted into public city parks. The majority of gardens and parks from the first half of the 19th century do not exist anymore, while some, such as Bishop Pond park, were later transformed; a few have been preserved, but their current condition is poor. Walkways also arise in the 19th century. The first regulated public walkway in Zagreb was the South Promenade (now Strossmayer's walkway), founded in 1813.

Maksimir Park was built on the rear southern foothills of Medvednica at the end of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century. It came to existence when the autochthonous forest of common oak and hornbeam was cleared. It is the first public park in southeast Europe, and one of the first in the world. At the time of emerging it was one of the most important park accomplishments of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

The founder of Maksimir Park the bishop of Zagreb, Maksimilijan von Vrhovac de Ehrenberg et Rakitovec (1752 - 1827). The Bishop Vrhovac had the idea to build a park in baroque (French) style. Witnesses of the style are three radial paths, shaped as duck's foot, and made during his time, as it was one of baroque characteristics of a park. Paths constructed by the Bishop Vrhovac in the park are still visible today, and one of them is the main straight axis

of the alley from the main entrance (portal) all the way to the bottom of Vidikovac. Maksimir Park was ceremonially opened for public on April 24th 1794. It was named Maksimilian's peace or shortly, Maksimir, after its founder.

After the death of Bishop Maksimilijan Vrhovec, Bishop Aleksandar Alagović (1760-1837) continued with the work on building Maksimir Park. He abandoned the initiative idea to form the park in baroque style and began opening and forming meadows and individual park complexes.

After his death the work on the renovation of the park was continued by Archbishop Juraj pl. Haulik de Varallya (1788-1869) who hired a group of expert Austrian artists that built emperor's parks in Laxenburg, Schönbrunn, Hetzendorf near Vienna. Head of the group was an expert landscape architect of emperor's gardens, Michael Sebastian Riedl (1793-1872). The other artists were: Franza Schücht, Leopold Philipp, Franjo Serafin Körbler, Joseph K äsc hmman, Antun Dominik Fernkorn, Anton Kothgasser and at that time, young architect Bartolomej Felbinger. Umbrella pavilion (today in its place we can find Mogila⁴), Bellevue pavilion, Public temple (today in its place we can find St. Juraj's chapel constructed in 1863), Glorieta pavilion, Echo pavilion, Fisherman's cottage, Peaceful cottage, Dutch cabin, Swiss house (1842), Gatekeeper's cabin (1847), Gazebo (Kiosk, constructed in 1843), and Tavern (today "Maksimilijan" restaurant constructed around 1860) were all constructed during that period.

In 1839 the name of the park was changed to Jurjaves in honor of Archbishop Haulika 1839, and after his death the park got its old name Maksimir back. Maksimir Park is designed in the style of an English park. Natural difference of terrain altitude in the design of the park's composition was skillfully used to emphasize its plasticity, as well as alternation of vast meadow areas with forest belts, and decorative plantations, which is its exceptional design value and characteristic.

Maksimir Park was protected for the first time in 1948 when it was proclaimed to be a natural curiosity, together with the area of grange, arable land and forest in total area of 316 ha⁵, by the Resolution of former Ground institute for protection of natural curiosities in Zagreb. Today Maksimir Park is protected as a monument of park architecture by the Nature protection law (since 1964) and as a cultural asset by the Law on protection and preservation of natural assets, and is registered in the Registry of cultural assets of Republic Croatia (<http://www.park-maksimir.hr>).

Maksimir Park is managed by the public institution "Maksimir" established in 1994, the City of Zagreb being its founder and owner. Therefore, the park is financed from the budget of the annual financial plan of the city. The remaining funds are gathered on the basis of par' rented spaces to the restaurants and kiosks, the share of renting boats and bikes

⁴ Mogila is a kind of a monument-hill built in 1925 for the occasion of commemorating the one thousand years of Croatian kingdom. Mogila was designed by Aleksandar Freudenreich, and built by Croatian hawkers association as a memorial of III Croatian all-hawkers rally held in occasion of this historical jubilee. It was placed on the location where Umbrella pavilion used to be. It was constructed from lumps of soil brought from 155 different Croatian locations where significant events occurred during thousand years of Croatian history. Items from Croatian historical heritage were buried in the base of the hill, significant books, newspapers, periodicals and memorials of all hawkers association, that participated in construction of Mogila. Description of the place and historical significance that happened in places where the soil for Mogila was taken from is recorded in the memorials (http://www.park-maksimir.hr/Maksimir_hr/Maksimir_znamenitosti2.htm).

⁵ The size of the park is now 316 hectares, which is almost like New York's Central Park, which has 340 acres and more than double London's Hyde Park with 142 acres (http://www.park-maksimir.hr/Maksimir_hr/Maksimir_o_parku.htm)

because entrance to the park is free of charge as are individual tour arranged facilities within its premises. Apart from Maksimir Park as a whole, certain cultural properties are also protected: the new mansion Bishop Haulik, Gatekeeper's lodge, Echo Pavilion, Gazebo, Swiss House, the obelisk, the chapel of St. George, Bishop Haulika mansion, outbuildings of Haulik's mansion, silk factory, and beehives. Natural attractions of the park consist of woods, meadows, lakes and streams which are important habitats for many plant and animal species, thus contributing to biodiversity. Preserved centuries-old oak trees have particular value. More than a hundred species of birds, some of which are significant hole-nesting birds⁶, have been sighted in Maksimir Park. Other species associated with old trees, like squirrels and some species of bats, or globally endangered animals are also significant. Parallely with the growth of modernization and urbanization of the society, the impact of the park on the quality of life in the city (microclimatic impact, ecological footprint, health function) is more and more recognized.

Thanks to the natural and social heritage, and its distribution in the park, there are three distinct zones made based on the number of visitors. The total number of visitors to the park was obtained on the basis of the number of tickets sold for the Zoo in 2009 and increased by the number of visitors by the method of observation, and amounts 1300.000 visitors. The mentioned zones are: zone of intensive visiting, zone of recreational visiting and zone of multi-purpose use.

Zone of intensive visiting includes the historic core of the park located within the most protected cultural objects. It is visited by 85% of the total number of visitors. Among the protected cultural objects are the Gatekeeper's lodge, Echo Pavilion, Gazebo, Swiss House and Chapel of St. George, and many monuments and sculptures (Obelisk, Mogila, Neapolitan fisherman).

Gatekeeper's cottage was built in 1847, and today it represents the home of the Information Centre of the park.

Echo Pavilion is the only preserved pavilion in Maksimir Park, also known as Lantern-Temple, constructed after 1840. Its attractiveness to visitors in addition to the physiognomy comes from the fact that it successfully duplicates and rejects sounds, which creates a special acoustic experience for its visitors. Public institution „Maksimir“ renovated the pavilion in 2001.

Gazebo (Viewpoint) also known by the name Kiosk, was constructed in the period from 1841 to 1843. It is the most notable object, 17 m tall, with paths branching from its center. Main parties of the park are grouped around it. Its tourist function is self explanatory, as its name is viewpoint. Public institution “Maksimir” renovated the Gazebo in 2002.

Swiss house known as Tyrolean house, as well, was constructed in 1842. Haulik's salon gives a special value to the house, made of wooden plating and richly carved baroque ceiling. Windows and balcony doors are decorated with 12 stained-glass windows with scenes from Swiss and Tyrol landscapes after which the object was named. Exhibition about the history of Maksimir Park and information point are located in the salon. The exhibition was set by the Public Institution “Maksimir”, and for park visitors the entrance is free (http://www.park-maksimir.hr/Maksimir_hr/Maksimir_kulturna_bastina.htm).

⁶ In the Maksimir Park, a population density of middle spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos medius*), an endangered species in Europe, is one of the largest in the world (http://www.park-maksimir.hr/Maksimir_hr/Maksimir_oparku.htm).

In this zone there are restaurants (Maksimir restaurant, catering facilities Viewpoint and Swiss house), the administration building of the Public Institution “Maksimir” and the Zoo which was established in 1925. Within the zone there are two playgrounds, and first, second and third lake, out of five. Due to the diversity of the offer, this area records great frequency and interest of visitors. Its purpose is receiving visitors and providing the informative and educational content, as well as recreation and entertainment. The main avenue leading from the main entrance toward the Gazebo records the highest frequency of visitors on weekends as do the areas around the Gazebo and the Swiss house.

Catering in the park is reduced to the restaurant “Maksimir” where one can taste traditional dishes, and two catering facilities located in Swiss house and the Gazebo where only drinks are served.

Zone of recreation includes most of the forest community of Maksimir Park, and the fourth and the fifth lake. The path leading to the fourth and fifth lake records a much lower frequency of people, only 15% of visitors. These trails are mostly used by athletes, cyclists or hikers (in pairs). This zone is intended for reception of visitors of all structures with special emphasis on recreational use, hiking and cycling.

Zone of multiple-use includes the area of the park, which is used for various purposes and is not meant for visitors, although it is integral part of the park. This area belongs to the parish house of St.. Jerome, the area of Agriculture and Forestry University of Zagreb, the area of the Police Academy, and a greenary.

The park, along with so far mentioned elements, offers complement the sport - recreational features. When established, the original purpose of the park was relaxation and recreation. Therefore, various sports events have been organized in the park (in 1853 first ice rink of Zagreb on the Lower (first) lake was opened ; in 1894 ski courses were organized, in 1923 at the Lower (first) lake the first international swimming and water polo match was held; in 1931 the first golf course in the Republic of Croatia was set, the competitions in rowing and international cycling races were held) (<http://www.park-maksimir.hr>). Possibilities that the park today offers to the visitors, thanks to its groomed trails and meadow areas, in terms of sport and recreation, relate to walking through the park down the groomers, Nordic walking, jogging, cycling, rowing boats at the Third lake, and for the youngest there are two modern playgrounds. Members of Athletic club “Veteran,” Huck Finn Adventure Travel, Scout group “Maksimir”, orientation Club “Maksimir”, Mountaineering Association Zagreb and Zagreb Association for sports recreation “Sports for All” conduct their activities.

Public institution “Maksimir” improved the offer of the park by managing and organizing educational programs meant for children (usually school groups).

The synergy between natural and social elements that are the touristic offer of the park, is not used enough for the promotion of tourism in Zagreb. The website of the Zagreb Tourist Board shortly points out some sights of the park, but does not offer any contact information directly from the Public Institution “Maksimir” nor information about directions to the park. On the website parks are mentioned as an attraction, and in recent years are partly involved in travel programs of sightseeing, but this is primarily related to the parks of “Green Horseshoe” that are the part of the city’s cultural identity. Maksimir, in this respect, has not been sufficiently recognized nor affirmed as a tourism resource rich in content and, therefore, isn’t in adequate measure included in the tourist offer. For this reason, the Public Institution “Maksimir” from 2011 began to develop its cooperation with the Zagreb Tourist Board with the aim of better tourist valorization of the park.

Analysis of the tourism resources of Maksimir Park

The modern lifestyle involves less physical work and movement and growth of urban population in the world. This is the influence of the transition process marked by modern life conditions (computer technology, diet, imbalances in the growth of population and infrastructure of the city) and less work places for physical labor. Lack of physical labor that was present in the past has led to low physical activity among people. By visiting parks and recreational venues, people can compensate for the lack.

The average visitor who visits Zagreb parks is aware of his or her position, comes to the park for a reason and knows quite little and about contents of the park. This can be seen from the summary of survey results.

Empirical data about the visitors of Maksimir Park were collected using survey research. This research is the part of a larger project.

The questionnaire requested the respondents' opinion about issues, which provided for the following information:

- The frequency of movement of visitors and their commitment to a recreational site
- Establishing the ecological quality of areas where people gather
- Identifying ways of recreation and relaxation of visitors

The aim of evaluation is to obtain basic information about the visitors, their behavior, evaluation and motivation of their arrival to the park, activities and services are estimated, as are certain strengths and weaknesses in the tourist offer, and the effectiveness of promotion and the ability to access the park were evaluated.

The results of the analysis of the questionnaire shows the structure of visitors according to age and gender. 63% of the visitors were women, according to age the most frequent, 39%, was the group between 10 and 29, then, 31%, was the group between 30 and 59, and almost equally was represented the age group of 60 or older, 30%.

The availability of the park to visitors is presented in Figure 1 which shows that visitors often come to the park on foot (42% of the respondents); the distance between the park and the city center is a 30-minute walk. Visitors also arrive by car (in 32% of the cases) because there are two parking lots in the vicinity of the park, in the system of the third charging zone⁷ and their capacity is approximately 550 parking spaces. Public transport in the structure of arrivals is represented by 24%, and bicycle with only 2%.

From the offered tourist services, materials and infrastructure of the park respondents have mostly (60%) used the services of the catering facility at the Gazebo.

When analyzing the quality of the content offered in the park, Gallery in Haulik's salon, restaurant in Swiss house, Info Center, and bicycle rental are given the highest grade. Restaurant Maksimir was given the lowest grade (Figure 2).

As the most attractive resources of the park respondents pointed out the untouched nature, the gallery of Haulik's salon in Swiss house and boats at the Third lake (Figure 3).

The activities that visitors usually enjoy in the park are walking (35%) and visiting of the gallery in Haulik's showroom (23%).

Visitors rate (low, medium and high quality) the quality of transport infrastructure in the park (access roads, bicycle and walking paths). The entire infrastructure has been evaluated by medium quality.

⁷ Time use of parking at parking areas is limited in the first zone up to 1 hour, at second zone up to 2 hours, the third zone up to 3 hours (<http://www.zgh.hr/default.aspx?id=38>)

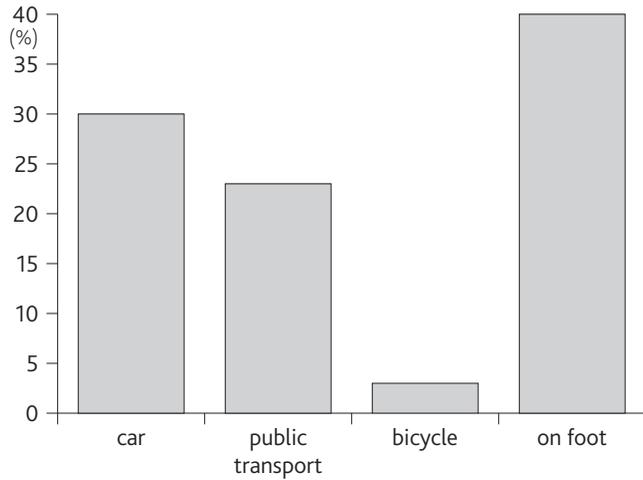


Figure 1. Availability of Maksimir Park to the visitors

Source: Authors' production

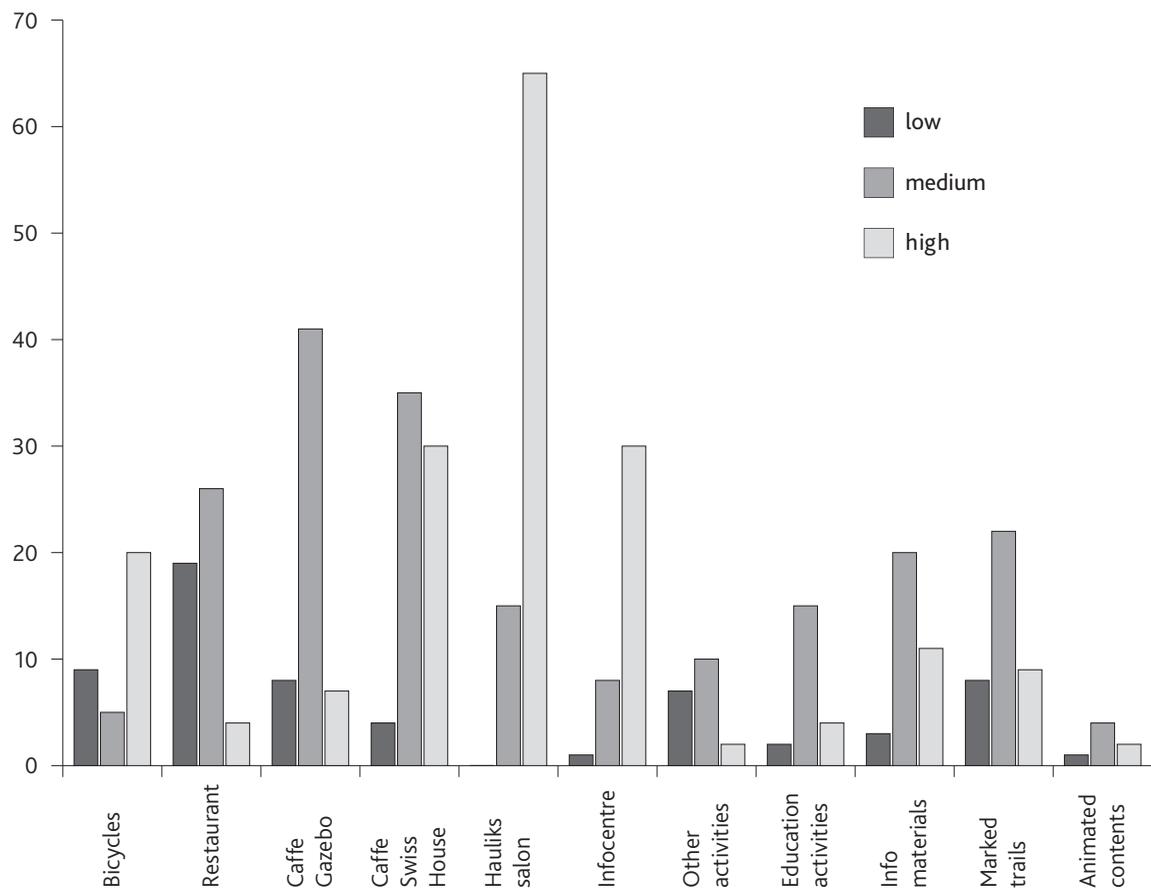


Figure 2. Assessment of quality offer in the park in 2009

Source: Authors' production

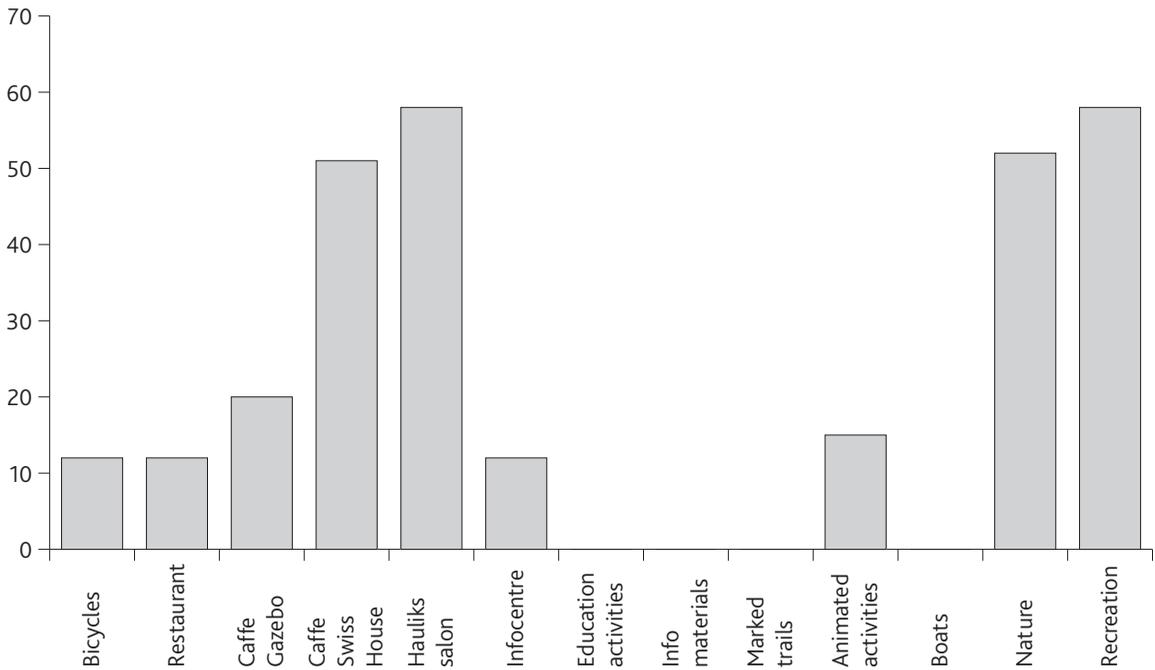


Figure 3. The most attractive resources to the park visitors in 2009

Source: Authors' production

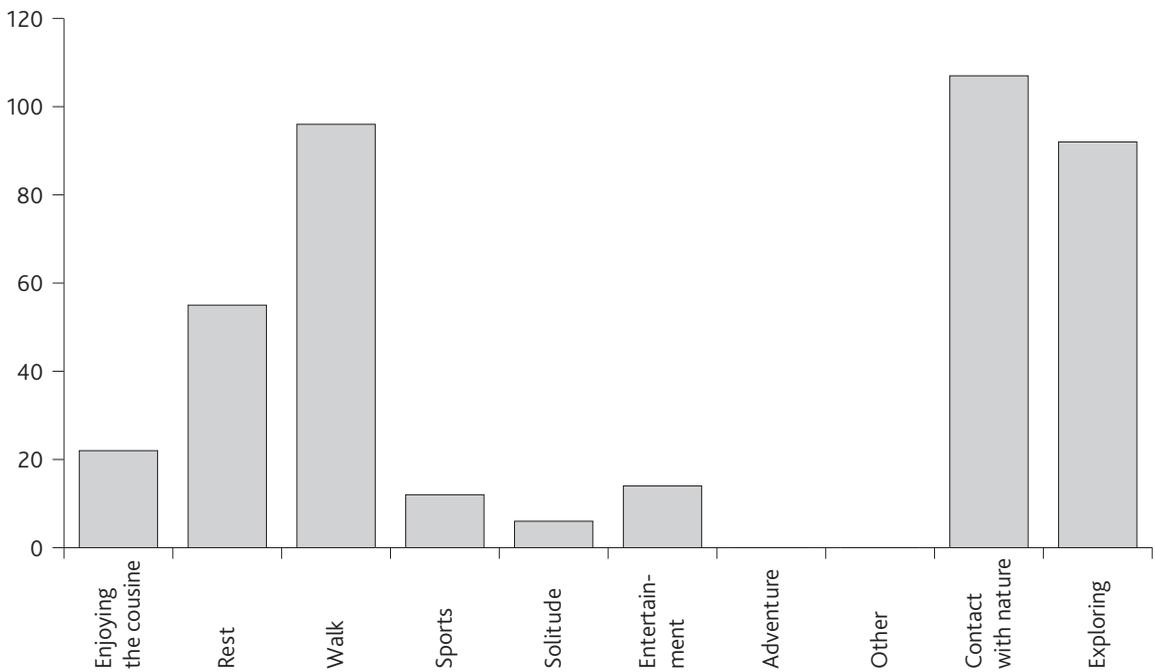


Figure 4. The expectations of visitors from visiting the park

Source: Authors' productio

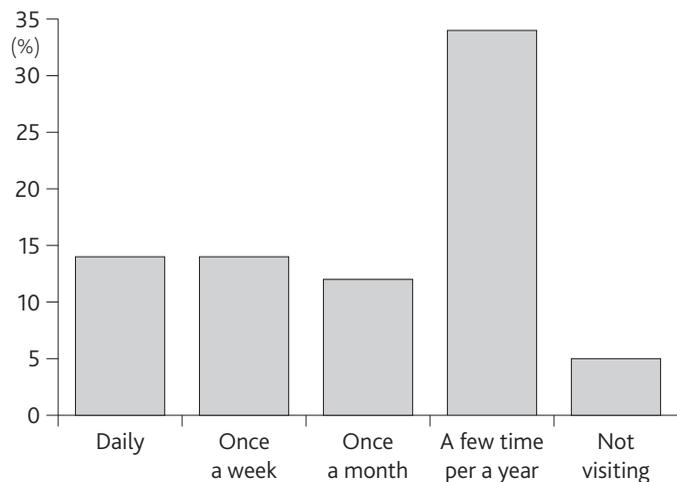


Figure 5. The frequency of arrivals of visitors to the park in 2009

Source: Authors' production

The motive for coming to the park is spending time in nature in 36%, then in 25% recreation, and finally, the need for peace and quiet in 19%. By coming to the park, visitors expect contact with nature and learning about its natural and cultural heritage (Figure 4).

Most of the visitors visit the park a few times a year, 38% (Figure 5) and usually spend two hours there (mainly because of parking fees). Other visitors come every day (18%) or weekly (18%), and once a month 16% of the respondents come.

During their stay at the park the visitors are usually (52% of respondents) are willing to spend 10-50 kn (0.60 – 1.30 euros) for the offered contents. In their opinion in order to improve the quality of offer, trails should be regulated and marked better, the contents of catering facilities would have to be completed and the content expanded by introduction of new activities to animate visitors.

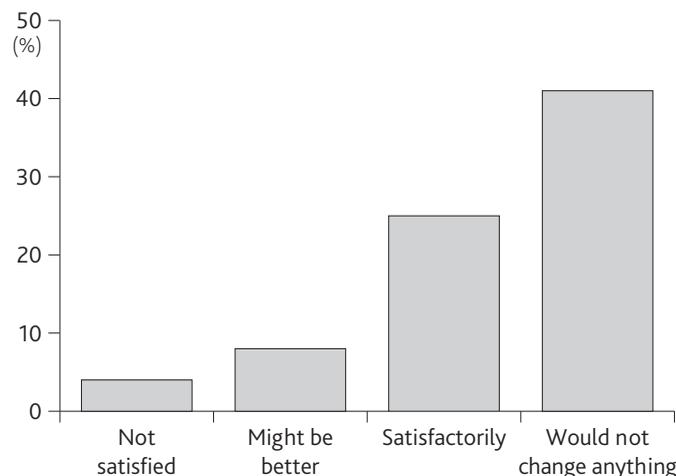


Figure 6. Satisfaction of the visitors by arrangement of Maksimir Park

Source: Authors' production

The majority of the visitors are either satisfied by arrangement of the park (32%) or would not change anything which can be seen in Figure 6.

The survey results show that the park is almost equally interesting to all age groups, and that it is easily accessible (most visitors come on foot), but in spite of that only 36% of the visitors come to the park once a week or more frequently. Motives for coming as well as the most attractive resources have to do with nature (flora and fauna) and recreation, but also with the gallery in Haulik's showroom where it is noted that the visitors are interested in cultural elements that are not sufficiently involved in the offer of the park. Consumption is very low between 10 and 50 kn (0.60 and 1.30 euros), but one should note that the entrance to the park is free of charge as is the entrance to the gallery at Haulik's showroom which again suggests a modest cultural offer. As such, regardless of the variety of natural resources and the existence of cultural resources, Maksimir Park is not recognized as a tourist destination. For this reason it is necessary to regulate the monuments and their environment, set interpretive panels with information, and adjust working hours of cultural sights and promote natural and cultural heritage. It is necessary to create several traditional and cultural events aimed at the presentation of cultural and natural values and entertainment of tourists. It should be mentioned that the cuisine is very important, authentic food and beverage are component of the cultural and historical heritage. Also, the fencing of the park would create a precondition for the financial gain. Collection of symbolic fee for the entrance to Maksimir Park would ensure income and enable reconstruction and modernization. During the process of improving the offer, the quality should be taken into consideration, as well as the ecological footprint of certain content on the park, as shown in the SWOT analysis (Table 1).

Table 1. SWOT analysis of tourism characteristic of Maksimir Park

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accessibility - biodiversity - cultural heritage - different aspects of recreation - vicinity of the Zoo - qualified personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of extra content - lack of marketing and promotional activities - lack of funds - parking charges, which limits the period of stay - land ownership status
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cooperation between public and private sector in development - positive motivation connected to accession to the EU - hiring local employees - development of tourism throughout the year - conversion of unused infrastructure - promotion of the Park as a recognizable tourist destination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - degradation of natural and cultural values because of excessive tourist use - building the infrastructure of poor quality - slow bureaucracy and lack of cooperation among institutions - lack of local initiatives - disrupting the ecological balance of the park

Source: Authors' production

Results of field studies of English parks show that the urban horticulture is an essential element in creating a recognizable image of the city, urban identity and tourism, and what the City of Zagreb is missing. One of the characteristics of tourism in London are the Royal Parks, particularly those in the central zone of London, Hyde Park, then the neighboring, that creates a unified whole, Kensington Gardens and Regent's Park⁸ at the northern end of central London. Closer to the center of town are smaller Royal Parks as Green Park and St. James's Park.

⁸ In Regent's park is located Zoo.

Hyde Park is extremely popular for sport activities, and sometimes it is the host of outdoor concerts and various cultural and sporting events that lack in Maksimir. Several large parks are located outside the center, including other Royal Park, Greenwich Park to the southeast, Bushy Park and Richmond Park to the southwest, and Victoria Park to the east. The parks are fenced which makes the control within the park much easier. There are also several less formal semi-natural open spaces such as Hampstead Heath area of 3.2 km² in north London, which includes Kenwood House, a popular location for the summer lake shore concerts of classical music as well as fireworks; a large number of tourists visits the park every weekend. In London, system of transport and tourism infrastructure is very well constructed and provides very good connections and easy access to parks. Each park has an attractive tourist infrastructure, which includes educational facilities and interpretative natural and cultural heritage, cuisine, variety of sporting and recreational facilities there to serve as entertainment for visitors. In larger parks, such as Hyde Park, people with disabilities or mobility problems can rent electric vehicles to facilitate moving within the park. Green and water areas in parks are used for tourist, educational and recreational purposes. Comparing the knowledge gained in English parks and other parks in the world (Guell in Barcelona, Schönbrunn, Austria), with the situation of utilization of Maksimir Park much weaker, and in some areas completely deficient utilization of natural and social resources has been noted. Maksimir usually serves to the citizens and a small number of tourists for dog walking dogs in areas where it's permitted and for recreational sports. Other segments of the offer in Maksimir Park should be developed.

By doing the field research of Kew Gardens in London, one of the world-famous parks of natural features, it was evident that the combination of landscape architecture and tourism on the example of English parks means creativity, imagination, sensation and attraction. Attractions and facilities are related to modern trends and fashions of today. Content is constantly updated to make this park more attractive and prosperous. Some of these facilities are the Japanese garden and a Chinese pagoda with horses, carriages, horse trails, guard shifts on the horses, the modern children's playgrounds, toilet facilities, labyrinths, modern sculptures, catering, deck chairs by the shores of lakes and numerous other attractions, all in order to increase the fun and diversity of use.

Comparing these English parks with Maksimir Park deficiencies of its tourist attractions (the lack of content that animate visitors), are clearly visible but this can also be a good example of quality and a successful way to improve the offer in the park and take advantage of all potential resources.

Conclusion

Park architecture in Zagreb dates from the late 18th and early 19th the century. During this period Maksimir Park was designed and built. The awareness and the need to organize green areas such as parks, gardens, alleys, etc. that serve the residents for rest and recreation, existed even back then. From that time until today, Maksimir failed to improve its status to become one of the most recognizable symbols of the city of Zagreb, and has remained an area for passive recreation and relaxation. Such state does not respond to the needs of a modern man, not of the tourists coming from cultures that taught them to expect rich gastronomic, entertainment, educational, cultural, and animation contents.

Despite the resources (natural and cultural heritage), Maksimir lags in its tourist offer due to the failure to develop and adjust it to requirements imposed by the modern tourist demand. It is important to improve cooperation with the Zagreb Tourist Board and create a new image of the park as the modern tourist destination for the same reason.

References

- Anić et al., (2004). Croatian Encyclopaedic Dictionary, Novi Liber, Zagreb (*In Croatian*)
- Bennis, E. (2006). The Story of Gardens in Europe: Source Text for European Garden Heritage Network
- Blažević, I., Knežević, R. (2006). Croatian National Tourist Geography, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Opatija. (*In Croatian*)
- Brandt, M.(1995.). Medieval period of historical development, SN Liber, Zagreb (*In Croatian*)
- Butorac, M., Šimleša, D., 2007. The green heart of the city – The importance of gardens and parks in urban areas, the Social Research Vol.16 no.6 (92), 1081 – 1101. (*In Croatian*)
- Knežević, R., Dolenc, N., (2011). Ecological state of Zagreb's parks and their impact on human health, Croatian Academy of Medical Sciences, Committee on health tourism and natural medicinal resources, Zagreb, 123-129. (*In Croatian*)
- Pischel, G. (1969). General history of art, Mladost, Zagreb (*In Croatian*)
- Stiperski, Z. (1997). Synonyms for Comfort and Discomfort in Zagreb, Prostor: a scholarly journal of architecture and urban planning, Vol.5 No. 2(14) 1997. Zagreb, 307-320. (*In Croatian*)
- Šćitaroci, O., Bojanić, B. (1996). Garden Architecture as an Element of the City Image, Prostor: a scholarly journal of architecture and urban planning, Vol.4 No.1(11), Zagreb, 79 – 94. (*In Croatian*)
- Vresk, M. (1990). City in regional and urban planning, Školska Knjiga, Zagreb. (*In Croatian*)

Sources

- http://www.geografija.hr/novosti.asp?id_novosti=645&id_projekta=0&trazi=Lenucijeva%20potkova
- http://project.eghn.org/downloads/EGHN_Story%20of%20gardens
- <http://www.slideshare.net/hillarypjenkins/intro-to-adventure-tourism-op-09-presentation>
- <http://www.travel-industry-dictionary.com/nature-based-tourism.html>
- http://www.park-maksimir.hr/Maksimir_hr/Maksimir_znamenitosti2.htm
- http://www.park-maksimir.hr/Maksimir_hr/Maksimir_povijest_parka.htm
- http://www.park-maksimir.hr/Maksimir_hr/Maksimir_o_parku.htm
- http://www.park-maksimir.hr/Maksimir_hr/Maksimir_sport.html
- http://www.park-maksimir.hr/Maksimir_hr/Maksimir_kulturna_bastina.htm
- <http://www.zgh.hr/default.aspx?id=38>