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Historical Railway Stations on Former Prussian Eastern Railway Lines. Example of Toruń and Iława

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Summary
At present, nearly 600 railway stations serve passengers in Poland. Many of them are historical and are in poor condition due to long-term negligence. However, we have been witness to a change in this situation over the last few years. PKP S.A. is attempting to undertake actions aimed at protecting elements of cultural and sentimental value related to railways. By presenting two examples of the revival of historical railway stations which used to belong to one management, the article attempts to give an insight into the adaptation of historical sites connected with ongoing functional, technological and civilization changes, yet assuming respect for tradition.

Keywords: railway stations, historical sites, revival

1. Introduction

Detailed market analyses conducted by the Rail Transport Office in 2017 confirmed positive trends in freight and passenger transport. Over 303 million travelers used rail transport in the year preceding the report on the 2017 rail transport market in Poland. The trend has been upward for over four years [10]. In terms of the factors which determine changes, there are both investments in rolling stock and passenger service quality changes. While assessing the service level, it is important that we note that many railway sites have been repaired and modernized in the last few years. PKP S.A. manages over 2.5 thousand railway sites, nearly 600 of which serve passengers [14]. PKP's plans (…) in relation to railway stations assume the modernization and construction of railway stations in main cities, and in smaller towns – repairs covered by its own funds or through handovers to local governments [20]. By 2015, PKP S.A. had divided buildings into four categories (from A to D), depending on the number of passengers. In the aftermath of the reorganization, we now have a division into premium, agglomeration, regional and seasonal sites [18, 20]. The article presents two examples of the successful revival of railway stations on the former line of the Prussian Eastern Railway.

2. Prussian Eastern Railway

The emergence and expansion of railways in the 19th century were among the most important factors determining the growth of the industrial revolution. Anticipating the role of a new means of transport in economic growth, the bourgeoisie and a large group of industrialists of that time filed many petitions to the Prussian authorities with a view to having railway lines built. The first stance on the development of railways and the need to create a railway line through East Prussia was presented in 1838 in Królewiec. Four years later in Berlin, during a meeting of the state board, the governmental memorandum concerning the construction of a line linking the capital city with Królewiec was submitted [9]. Back then, three potential variants for the line to Grudziądz were suggested (first: from Frankfurt (Oder) through Poznań and Bydgoszcz; second: from Kostrzyń through Gorzów Wielkopolski, Piła, Bydgoszcz to the Vistula by Grudziądz; and third: from Stargard Szczeciński to the east into Grudziądz, with a side branch to Poznań) and then crossing the Vistula, into the north-east to Królewiec. The final decision was made and the line started in Berlin and went through Kostrzyń, Gorzów and Piła, a mile away from Bydgoszcz (to the east), and then to the north to Tczew where, crossing the Vistula and Nogat, it was

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supposed to reach Malbork and Elbląg, further to Braniewo, and finally Królewiec (ger. Königsberg). The project assumed the construction of bridges in Tczew and a turn-off of the line towards Gdańsk [9]. We need to emphasize that, due to the agricultural structure of production in East and West Prussia, private entities were not interested in building railways, so the state took on the investment due to its military and territorial nature.

The works on this route started with measurements and the organization of facilities for the construction of bridges in Tczew in 1846, and ended in July 1851 covering a 145 km section from Krzyż to Bydgoszcz [1]. A year later, the railway line reached Gdańsk (6/8/1852, 162 km), and the Malbork – Braniewo section (19/10/1852, 84 km) was completed. In 1853, the first steam locomotive arrived in today's Kaliningrad (formerly Königsberg) . The construction of the line moved to the east in order to link Berlin and Russia through Insterburg (formerly Wystruć, today – Chernyakhovsk in Kaliningrad Region) and Chernyshevskoye.

The second international link was supposed to be Warsaw-Bydgoszcz. To do so, initially Bydgoszcz was linked to Toruń (24/10/1861), and then on 4/12/1862 a new link with the Kingdom of Poland through the Kutno-– Toruń line was opened, linked with a border station in Aleksandrów Kujawski. This section, created after an interstate agreement, was an investment made by the separate Warszawa-Bydgoszcz Railway Association [21].

In the 1870s, a second parallel line to Królewiec (formerly Königsberg) was constructed. It started in Toruń and went through Iława, Olsztyn, Korsze, and Gierdawa to Wystruć (formerly Insterburg). According to various sources, by 1895 the total number of about 4 900 km of railway line was subject to the Prussian Eastern Railway Königliche Ostbahn with its management office in Bydgoszcz. The passenger traffic rose from 80 thousand in 1854 to 363 thousand in 1895. With the development of railway links, further railway buildings were commissioned to serve travelers on advanced routes.

In 1880, the railway management in Prussia was reorganized and the Royal Prussian Railway Management was established. The term Eastern Railway was no longer used and the facility was turned into the Royal Railway Management, only to be reorganized again in 1895 into the State Railway Management with its head offices in Bydgoszcz, Poznań, Gdańsk, Szczecin and Królewiec [8].

3. Toruń Główny

The idea of linking Toruń with Berlin and Królewiec through a railway line emerged along with the Eastern Railway concept. Initially, the route was not planned to go through Warsaw, but via nearby Bydgoszcz. Despite this, industrialists from Toruń, with Gustaw Wesse (doyen of the famous family of ginger-bread bakers) as their leader, did their best to make sure the city would become part of the dynamic railway map of Prussia. They achieved their goal when establishing a cross-border link: Berlin-Warsaw. When the first train left Bydgoszcz and arrived in Toruń (1861), the first railway station was ready – the "Thorn" station complex was located relatively far from the city, on the other bank of the Vistula river. This decision arose from defense-related purposes, it was built within the Przyczółek Mostowy Fort, part of the Toruń Stronghold. In the years 1863-66, in order to defend this border point and later railway bridges on the river, a new Railway Fort was constructed as well.

The insular location of railway station buildings and the related arrangement of platforms are typical of large Prussian interchange stations, rare in other regions of Poland. It was similar t the railway stations in Bydgoszcz, Chojnice, Kamień Ząbkowicki, Kłodzko, Krzyż, Leszno, Piła and Poznań. The first half-timbered railway station building was soon, as early as in 1874, replaced with a new brick-structure unit. At the outset of the 20th century, in 1903, it was thoroughly modernized, the result was a spacious arrangement with a corridor along a longitudinal axis, in the center of which was an octagonal two-story room with a skylight. Unfortunately, the location of this plam is now vague on the ground floor (Fig. 1) only walls in the cellar are left. Due to numerous alterations, the nature of the front side changed as well – initially it was not a single space but divided into a series of custom handling rooms. The opposite side of the building accommodated waiting rooms for passengers of 1–4 class, as well as a restaurant. Smooth and quick communication between platforms was possible thanks to crosswise corridors. During World War II, the railway station was burnt. It was reconstructed to restore the pre-war arrangement in 1949, while in the 1960s it was modernized, but with serious mistakes – the facade was painted with emulsion paints, the joinery was replaced and large parts of the decorations were destroyed.

The railway station complex is composed of three uniform buildings – the former post office building (administration), a public toilet building combined with the former telegraph building, as well as the main railway station building (Fig. 2). The element that integrated them all is the facade materials – a face brick combined with a concrete and ceramic detail of decorative friezes, window trims and cornices (Fig. 3).

Fig. 1. Toruń Główny railway station, ground floor, interior, 201; [photo autor]

Fig. 2. Toruń Główny railway station after revival, 2019 [photo autor]

The facade composition demonstrates the strong impact of Mannerism, which was fashionable at that time. The main railway station building intended to serve passengers consists of a two-floor mass which was extended to include a two-level wing from the front. The triaxial main entrance was emphasized on the face of the wall with a small projection. The entire element is decorated with horizontal cornices around the building at the height of the first floor and under the eaves, as well as window panels with flower rose windows. The usage after the War led to the complete wear of the facilities. The degradation of the railway station was critical in some points. In view of the considerable tourist traffic – annually the railway station is used by over a million passengers, many of whom visit Toruń, which is on the UNESCO world heritage list – the city authoritien could not accept such a site as an image of the town. After nearly a year of negotiations, at the end of December 2013, the City ofo Toruń commune authorities signed a notarial deed. The took contro of railway station buildings from PKP Real Estate Management Division in Gdańsk in order to implement the revival project by the end of 2015 [17]. The total cost of the investment in the "design and build" system was 43.5 million PLN, 80% of which was funded by the European Union under the project *Integration of the urban transport system along with purchase of tram rolling stock in Toruń BiT-City* (Fig. 4), funded from the EU Cohesion Fund, part of the Infrastructure and Environment Program [16].

Fig. 3. Toruń Główny, exterior details, 201; [photo autor]

Restoration works started from drying walls and reinforcing the structure, as well as eliminating the causes of wall dampness: rainwater was carried away properly and the facade was cleansed from dirt and paint which accumulated excess damp. The aforesaid removal was a serious challenge as there was no effective method of exposing brick surfaces safely and without secondary damage. In this case, a combined solution was adopted: chemical – with the use of specialist pastes, and mechanical – blasting method (so-called erasing). Unused elements (industrial systems, advertisements, secondary grates, sheds and roofing) were dismantled, while ceramic details were demolished. To prevent dampness

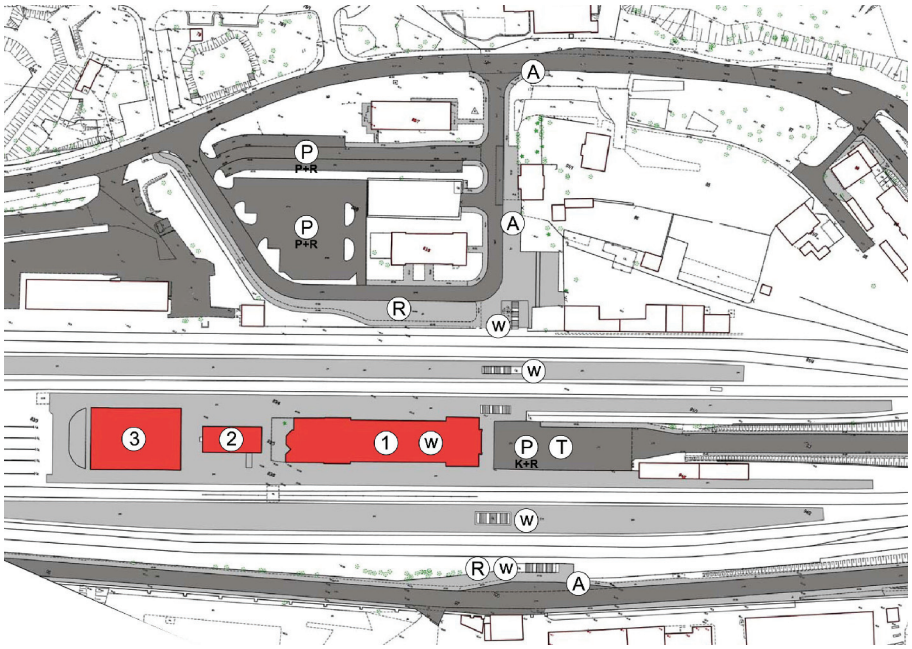

Fig. 4. Interchange junction by the Toruń Główny station [developed by author]: Railway station buildings 1–3: 1) Main railway station building, 2) Former telegraph building combined with a toilet, 3) Former post office building; P – park and ride P+R car park, K+R kiss and ride car park; R – bicycle parking; A – public transportation stops, T – taxi rank, W – disabled lifts

coming from the ground, vertical and horizontal water insulation was installed. Next, the missing elements of the facade face and architectural details were filled, and brick surfaces were blended in terms of colors with the use of glazing coatings based on semi-transparent paints using natural minerals.

Considering the substantial impact deriving from the 1960s, the Toruń Główny railway station is not subject to restoration protection in the form of entry into the register of monuments. It appears only in the provincial and district registers of historical sites. In spite of this, the renovation was initiated with the intention to reconstruct, at least partially, the original interior fittings. Since the original windows and doors have not survived until our times, the decision was made to reconstruct the historical joinery on the basis of patterns from other locations. The solutions from Kowalewo and Janowo Pomorskie were adopted as templates. When it comes to interior decoration, there is virtually no architectural documentation or photographs, whereas the remains of the former decorations were destroyed during improvements in the 1960s. For this reason, designers had to copy the railway station in Chernyshevskoye when using the interior design elements – yet in the historical reconstruction they limited themselves to rooms and floors. The ticket office hall and waiting rooms were enriched with stylized, dark wood paneling and large door portals as well as terracotta flooring. In turn, the floor was arranged in a modern style.

In fact, in accordance with the law of Poland, *revival is a comprehensive process of taking the degraded areas out of the critical condition through integrated actions to the benefit of local* (…) *space* (…) *on the basis of the district revival process* [21], but the Local Revival Program for Toruń in the years 2007-2015 covered only the areas of the Old Town and district called Bydgoskie Przedmieście. However, the new owner of the sites – Miasto Toruń Commune – intended to carry out a comprehensive revival process not only of the railway station but also the adjacent areas. The idea was to construct an interchange junction integrating the urban public and private transport with the Metropolitan Railway BiT-City. The city authorities' actions were not limited to the renovation of buildings and their immediate surroundings. In the neighborhood of the station, from Kujawska Street, a large car park (*Park and Ride)* was designed with those who wanted to use public transport means to commute to work in other towns in mind, while the vehicle traffic space before the main entrance was dedicated for short stops (*Kiss and Ride)*. Additionally, tunnel passages leading to platforms and bus stops located on the opposite side of the station were broadened and modernized, lifts for the disabled were installed, and passenger notice boards were attached.

New functions for railway station facilities were planned too. Aside from obvious railway traffic facilities, Toruń Główny railway station accommodates a restaurant, offices, services and a hostel. Since March 2017, you can also visit a mini-museum – the Railway Chamber of Traditions – where you can explore original accessories reviving the history of railway, prepared by railway enthusiasts. Conference space in the administrative area is made available in the event of cultural events, such as exhibitions or meetings with authors.

4. Iława Główna

Iława played a crucial role in the railway link system when the Malbork-Mława railway was commissioned (1876-77) to cross the Toruń-Wystruć railway track. The first railway station located in the north-eastern part of the city was opened on 1 July 1872 along with the line to Toruń. The current shape of the building is related to the reconstruction of the station complex in 1905, which was required due to the growth in passenger and freight carriages at the outset of the 20th century and the location of barracks for the artillery unit. By 1916, there were two large barracks in Iława, where nearly three thousand soldiers served. The little old building was demolished and a new railway station took over its function (Fig. 5). This concept is attributed to Paul Thoemer, an architect from the Ministry of Public Roads in Berlin, who designed similar buildings in Grudziądz and Kwidzyn, as well as large railway buildings in Gdańsk and Opole [11].

Fig. 5. Iława Główna railway station, 2019 [photo autor]

The set of developments of the station in Iława consisted of the following: a railway station building, water towers located nearby, locomotive bay, post office, free-standing toilet as well as residential and storage buildings. The railway station was designed in a neo-Gothic style, on an elongated rectangle, with a considerably developed shape with a steep gable roof. The facade was finished with a face brick with plastered cornice details and gable decorations. The monolith of the main shape was dissected by a central projection, as it accommodated an imposing main hall which divided the facility into two sections: north – intended for passengers (with a spacious waiting room and restaurant) and south – intended for the ticket office hall and railway service rooms (Fig. 6).

The beautiful spaciouy railway hall is the central point. On both sides it is enclosed with the tops of stairs in which a group of ogival windows decorated with stained glass were embedded. At the top, from the side of the city, there is an emblem of Iława presenting the Mother of God with the Baby in her hands, sitting on the throne in the center of the city gate. A 12-m high space is enclosed with an exposed hanging roof construction supported on corbels. The fields between beams were decorated with alcoves decorated with polychromes in the form of plant twigs in which city emblems related to the Królewsko-Pruska Eastern Railway were integrated. Eight central fields were decorated with the emblem shields of Brodnica, Działdowo, Gdańsk, Kowalewo, Malbork, Prabuty, Toruń and Wąbrzeźno, designed by a famous German heraldist – Otto Hupp. Painted friezes go around the waiting room and ticket offices (plant motifs) and former restaurant (geometrical forms).

Fig. 6. Iława Główna, main hall details, 201; [photo autor]

After the War, the railway station was not renovated properly. In the 1970s and 80s, there were some works which led to the substantial devastation of the building – the brick walls and hall interior were painted, window frames were exchanged but the size of openings was changed and the window sill lining was damaged, new electrical cableo and illumination equipment was mounted directly on the wall. In order to prevent further actions leading to the destruction of the monumental nature of the building, the railway station was entered into the register of monuments in 2006. Four years later, the owner of the facility – PKP S.A. – decided to initiate works aimed at restoring its magnificence. In October 2010, the tender for railway station reconstruction was published, and the value of works was established to be 18 799 044 PLN [15].

The agenda included the removal of the amplification wires and unsightly lighting from the face of walls, restoration of brick surfaces of the facade and hall interior, as well as color blending, polychromy

and paneling conservation, restoration of stained-glass windows, restoration of historical balustrades

by the main entrance and on staircases, replacement of window frames with restoration of the initial shapes (the frames of the railway station in Kwidzyń served as a template) and window sill framing with tiled fixtures, as well as the flashing of gutter covers with restoration of previous decorative forms. With regard to the waiting room and restaurant room, the project assumed the creation of a replica of the terracotta floor. Additionally, during inventory works, they found an original plinth of the main hall made of dark claret ceramic tiles manufactured by Boizenburger Wandplattenfabrik by Hans Duensing. The decision was made to restore the original look of the interior with the use of materials supplied by the same company. It needs to be highlightedd that the original chandeliers and wall lamps decorating the representation rooms were reconstructed.

On 14 November 2017, the Marshal's Office in Olsztyn provided Iława with funds for the task: "Creation of the transportation hub in the south of the city – public space management by the PKP railway station" (Fig. 7). It will be fulfilled on the basis of a competition project (commencement of works in 2019) which assumed the clear connection of the railway station complex with a modernized road system, as well as introduction of the following in the immediate vicinity of the railway station (from the front side): public transport stops and long-distance bus stops as well as short- and long-term car parks and bicycle infrastructure (roofed sheds and bicycle parks) [19]. It is necessary to note that a holistic approach to public transport, combining various means of transport in one place and improving moving conditions without the use of private cars, is likely to result in the successful revival of railway sites.

5. Final remarks

In 2006, Daniel Załuski asked whether the fall of Polish railway stations was inevitable [13]. Much time has passed since then and it seems that the negative trends described over a decade ago have reversed and we can now witness the gradual restoration of the importance of railway transport. The two stations presented in the article serve as model examples of railway space revival. On the one hand, they demonstrate how to approach the issue of monumental site renovation with respect to cultural heritage and care for historical details in order to adapt the function of buildings to a variable reality, but, on the other, they prove that the cooperation of local governments with the railway partner is a key to success. It is necessary to remember that railway station areas expose the entire complexity of urban degradation, referring to sites, public space, as well as social and economic fabric [3]. It seems that only a holistic approach to the issue, combining not only construction works but also the functional integration of sites with the city, is the effective way of shaping railway complexes and related areas.

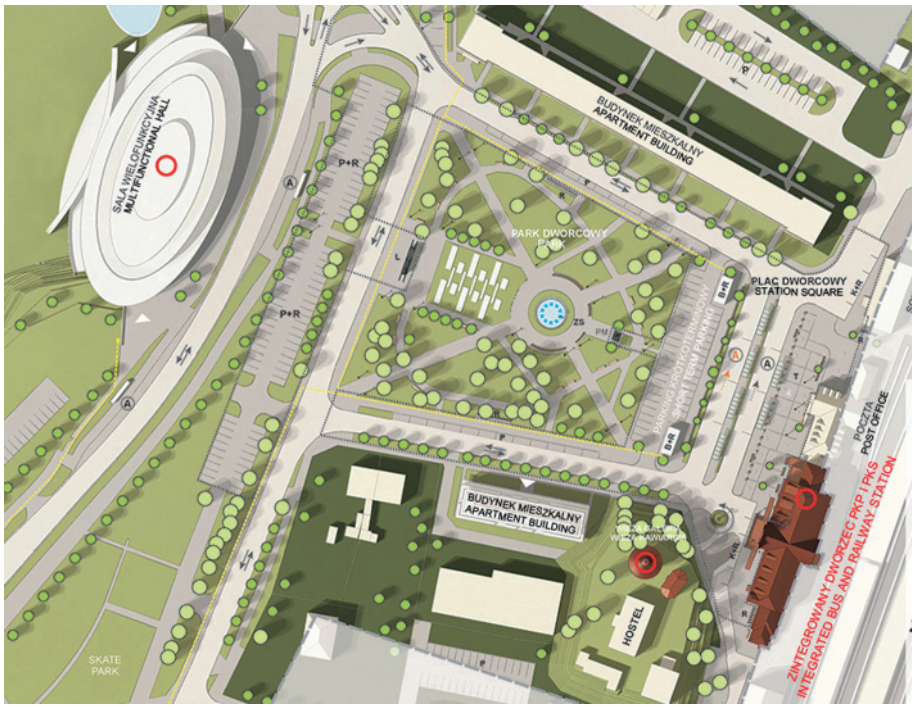

Fig. 7. Iława Główna, transportation hub design, competition project; Spatial Planning KONTRA, [see:] http://www.a-ronet.pl/index.php?mod=nagroda&n_id=4406

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