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The urban transformations of the health resort in Łądek Zdrój before 1945

Łądek Zdrój, one of the oldest and most beautiful Silesian health resorts, today slightly forgotten, was called the “jewel of the Sudety Mountains” before the Second World War and compared to the mythical Arcadia. The only thing that the region “lacks is the Greek sky” wrote not without pathos, the 18th century geologist, Leopold von Buch in the preface to his book on the structure of Łądek area [3, p. 2]. The picturesque location of Łądek Zdrój is still one its greatest values – the town was established in the eastern part of Kłodzko Region at the foot of and on the slopes of the Golden Mountains, in the valley of the Biała Łądecka River. The complex of the health resort comprises the municipal part – located in the broad valley of the river where the old trade routes used to cross, and the spa part – located both in the valley of the Biała Łądecka River and on the slopes of the neighboring hills. The attractive, undulating area with a winding river had the most decisive effect on the urban transformations of the health resort in all stages of its development.

The municipal part of Łądek Zdrój was granted the town charter in the 2nd half of the 13th century, during German colonization of Kłodzko Region, most probably during the reign of King of Bohemia Ottokar II (1253–1278) or Duke of Wrotizla Henryk IV (the Righteous) (1278–1290)¹. It is unknown when the spa part of the town was established; in the oldest preserved chronicle of Silesia by Jacob Schickfuss from 1625, Samuel Schilling, a physician from Nysa, mentions that the first bathing facilities in Łądek were destroyed during the incursion of

Tatars in 1241². It is assumed then that those springs could have been discovered at the end of the 12th or at the beginning of the 13th century [16, p. 13]. Furthermore, it seems that the baths kept operating as Schilling noted that further destruction was suffered in the spa during the Hussite Wars in 1428 and 1431.

The history confirmed by documents dates back to 1498 when George Duke of Ziębice–Oleśnica, one of three brothers ruling over Kłodzko Region at that time, “developed and enclosed of the spring” located at the foot of Świętojskie Hill near the road going along the riverbed from Łądek to Stronie Śląskie and further in the direction of Moravia [4, p. 68]. A new water intake was enclosed within a rectangle 3 by 12 cubits (cir. 1.7 by 7 m), where a “bathhouse” was designed with a chapel and nearby inn [1, p. 193]. St. George (*Georgenbad*) became patron of the chapel as well as of the whole bathing resort. At the same time the Vienna scholar, Konrad von Berge, who was asked to conduct research and determine the chemical composition of the waters from “hot springs”, confirmed their healing qualities [8, p. 80]. However, the duke’s actions did not permanently boost the reputation of the resort which, as the physician from Łądek and chronicler Gottfried Heinrich Burghart put it, “soon started to decline again” [4, p. 70]. The frequent changes of the regents of the County of Kłodzko did not favor the town growth. The situation did not improve either after the sale of the resort in 1544 to the burgher from Kłodzko Franz Kallman who, after obtaining the permit to farm the land and build the residential district on the area

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¹ It is assumed that the town was established on the land of the village of Leśna, former settlement of servants at Karpień Castle, between 1264 and 1290 [8, p. 77], [4, p. 11].

² After Schickfuss [12, p. 22] Burghart presents this information, writing that “it can be presumed that at those times the spring must have been rather known and used because according to all sources already around 1242 [it] was destroyed by banditry and fire and it was ruined” [4, p. 64]. A few years ago J. Dębicki tried to estimate the credibility of the information about the destruction caused by Tatars in Łądek Zdrój, compare [6, p. 20, 21].

who underwent about a two-week-long therapy in Mary's baths in 1765. The actual breakthrough took place after 1782 when the minister of Silesia, Carl Georg Heinrich Count von Hoym personally got involved into the development of the health resort. On the initiative of the minister the Baths Board was appointed that took over the supervision of the health resort and at the same time took steps in order to "improve and rejuvenate the baths" [8, p. 134]. The most important task of the Board was to cause the spatial connection of Old and New Baths that in the 2nd half of the 18th century were still independent facilities separated by farming lands, meadows and private gardens (Fig. 3).

It was decided then to build half way between the thermal springs a bathhouse – "salon" that was used for social meetings of the guests of both baths [14, p. 15]. The building was located by the newly designed maple tree avenue that connected "Old" and "New Baths". On the slope of the hill below the bathhouse, a small garden was designed that was converted into an English park when the "salon" was extended in 1792 and joined St. George's Baths [7, p. 30]. At the same time public walks were designed in the valley of the Jadwiżanka Stream, with a Forest Temple in the form of a small chapel, pavilion for orchestra, and a little later – a Swiss chalet with a restaurant. On the initiative of Count von Hoym the buildings of the baths were also renovated and in 1788 a new bathhouse, so called *douche baths* (*Douchebad*), was built over Frederick's Spring where the patients were offered first in Silesia bubble and shower baths [1, p. 200]. In 1794, the women's baths were extended in St. George's Spring by building a healthcare center in the new section for the poor.

At the end of the 18th century, in the vicinity of the springs – along the maple tree avenue – the first private villas were designed and built for recreational purposes. In 1793, the house of Count Maltzan (minister von Hoym's son-in-law) was built opposite the bathhouse, at the beginning of the avenue; in 1801, the house of general von Rothkirch's wife was built by St. George's bathing house, and the Radziwiłłs' residence – *Hôtel de Pologne* – was built between those buildings in 1820. In 1799, general Gravert's own house was built opposite the Chapel of Virgin Mary in the Desert; a few years later, in the years 1813–1815, he commissioned the construction of another villa located by the linden tree avenue going from Mary's Spring all the way to the bridge across today's Luty Stream [7, p. 36].

As a result of effort of minister von Hoym, in 1800, Queen Louise of Prussia laid the cornerstone for the construction of a new ballroom⁸ located in the complex of the bathhouse [7, p. 34]. After completion of the construction works central park was extended to reach New Baths, connecting them with the bathhouse by a larch tree avenue. Thus, the idea of connecting the baths by recreational paths called Spa Park (*Kurpark*) was finally realized⁹.

⁸ The extension of the building was designed by architect Carl Gottfried Geissler from Wrocław [5, p. 74].

⁹ Today it is called John Paul II's Park (earlier Central Park).



Fig. 4. Hall for walks (*Albrechtshalle*, built after World War II), view from Central Park (photo: E. Trocka-Leszczynska, 2009)

Il. 4. Hala spacerowa (*Albrechtshalle*, zabudowana po II wojnie światowej), widok od strony Parku Centralnego (fot. E. Trocka-Leszczynska, 2009)

One of the most important events in the history of Łądek was the political meeting of the King of Prussia Frederick William III with Tsar Alexander I who spent in the baths about two weeks in August 1813. The visit of the crowned heads greatly affected the popularity of the resort, especially among aristocracy, which in turn further boosted the intense growth of the baths.

In around 1820, the resort visitors were offered over 200 rooms in 18 municipal and 28 private guest houses [8, p. 134]. The appearance of the resort was systematically improved by designing new areas for walks – in 1825, an English park was designed on Świętojaerskie Hill around St. George's Chapel. In 1838, the Douche Baths were extended in Mary's Spring to include, apart from showers, an inhaling hall. Two years later, the main building of the thermal springs was covered with a new dome, and in 1845 another one – made of glass – was installed inside it "to prevent drafts" [1, p. 200]. At the end of the 1830s, the intake of Marianne's Spring was remodeled and in 1842 it was connected with a 146 meter long hall for walks (*Albrechtshalle*) located at the foot of the Chapel of Virgin Mary in the Desert and opened to Spa Park [11, p. 150] (Fig. 4).

Three years later, a new masonry bathhouse was built in the place of the old structure made of wooden that burned down in 1841. Next, in the years 1848–1849, modern baths called Stone Baths (*Steinbad*) – with tubs for water and peat baths – were built in the place of demolished inns, whose construction was commissioned by Hoffmann von Leuchtenstern, south-west of Mary's Baths, [10, p. 31]. The new thermal springs were fed from Meadow Spring (*Wiesenquelle*) which was discovered in 1829¹⁰. In the 1850s, the bathing facilities in the baths in both springs were renovated or replaced with copper piping, wooden tubs were replaced with new marble ones, the pools were extended and their walls and floors were

¹⁰ At present Chrobry's Spring.



Fig. 5. Łądek Zdrój, plan of the town and health resort, 1890 (*Lage-plan von Bad Landeck anschließend Stadt Landeck in Schliesen*, State Archives in Wrocław)

Il. 5. Łądek-Zdrój, plan miasta i uzdrowiska, 1890 (*Lage-plan von Bad Landeck anschließend Stadt Landeck in Schliesen*, Archiwum Państwowe we Wrocławiu)

covered with marble plates. The Bathhouse was also further extended in the years 1853–1854 by adding a reading room and a concert hall.

In 1861, the town's authorities bought from a private person an inn (*Brunnenhof*) with extensive areas of old farmstead located on a hill bordering on Mary's Baths from north-west. Former meadows and arable fields were converted into a park – Morning Promenade (*Morgen-Promenade*) also called Mary's Hill that was an extension of the area for walks in the Spa Park to the north [1, p. 203]. In 1865, a sanatorium for soldiers wounded in the German-Danish War (*Militär Kurhaus*) was built on the eastern slope of the hill, along the road leading to Lutynia [10, p. 33]. Later, the building would be extended into a complex of healthcare centers for the army, whose construction began in 1900¹¹. In the 1860s, another English park, so called Children's Garden (*Kinder-Garten*) was designed behind the eastern border of Mary's Spring.

Apart from the systematic and consistent improvement of the conditions for providing therapies, the 19th-century authorities of Łądek Zdrój tried to acquire and combine the lands around the baths where later green areas were designed. It seems, however, that no coherent development plan of the resort was prepared – consequently, the private houses as well as boarding houses located between the val-



Fig. 6. Mary's Baths, view from John Paul II's Park (photo: E. Trocka-Leszczynska, 2009)

Il. 6. Łazienki Marii, widok od strony Parku Centralnego (fot. E. Trocka-Leszczynska, 2009)

ley of the Biała Łądecka River and the western border of Spa Park were built without any specific layout according to individually granted building conditions for individual buildings. A more comprehensive development plan for new building areas was prepared in 1872, when, on the initiative of a company set up by private investors, the lands by the bend of the Biała Łądecka River, on its west side, on the eastern slope of Dzielec Hill were prepared for construction of an estate of villas. An oval square was then laid out for a carefully designed garden with three streets connecting the estate with the town, St. George's Spring and forest areas for walks. In time, healthcare centers and boarding houses were built around the square and along the streets (Fig. 5).

In 1877, a decision was made to demolish almost two-hundred-year-old Mary's Baths and replace them with a new building which, as in 1881 wrote Aleksander Ostrowicz – the spa physician and author of a guidebook about the resort published in Polish, *in respect of its magnificence and exquisiteness it resembles old thermal springs of Roman Caesars* [10, p. 137]. The building designed by Hermann Völkel – an architect from Nysa – on central plan in the forms of Italian renaissance still today is the symbol of the resort in Łądek (Fig. 6).

In 1902, the process of connecting the resort with the lands of *Ober Thalheim* village to the town began, which enabled the investments aimed at significantly improving both comfort of rest and the quality of life in the resort. The town got its water supply system in the years 1895–1896, power supply system in the years 1898–1899, and in 1897, a railroad connection between Kłodzko and Stronie Śląskie was built [8, p. 84].

At the beginning of the 20th century, on the lands of *Ober Thalheim* village, in the north part of the resort, construction of a new estate of villas was planned on the basis of old layouts of the village roads. However, in order to prevent the stylistic chaos of architecture a competition for the estate was announced in 1907. The participants of the competition were asked to prepare a design of five residential buildings: two detached single

¹¹ Today the buildings designed then belong to the complex of Adam Spa Hospital.

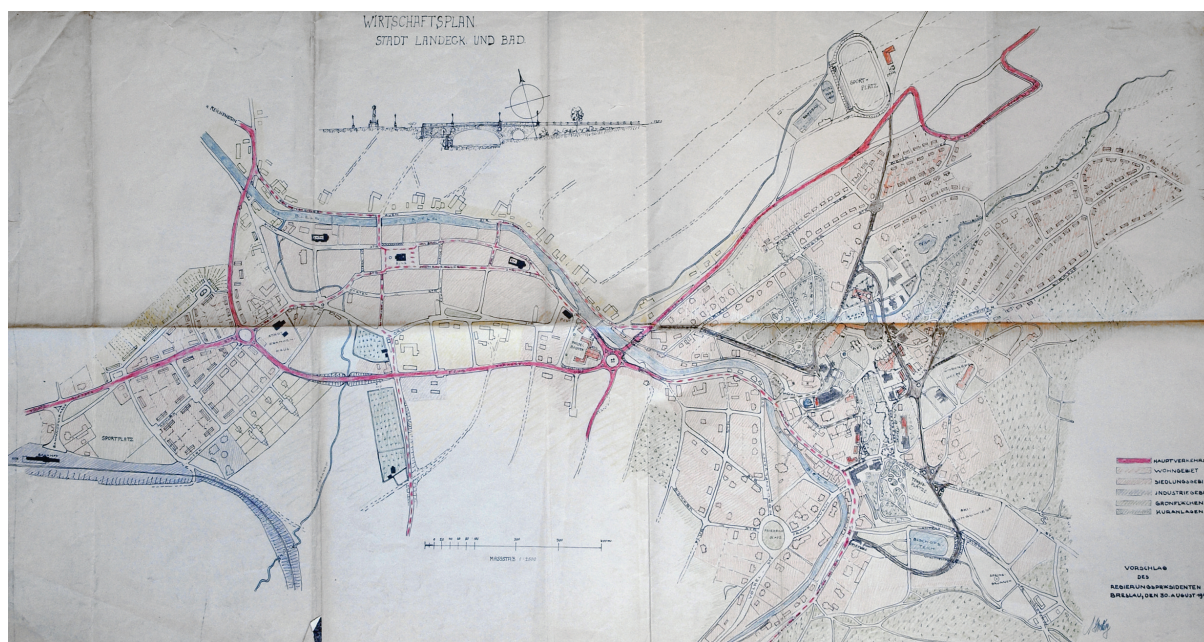


Fig. 7. Łądek Zdrój, extension project of the town and the resort – not completed, 1940 (*Wirtschafts-plan Stadt Landeck und Bad*, State Archives in Wrocław)

Il. 7. Łądek-Zdrój, niezrealizowany projekt rozbudowy miasta i uzdrowiska, 1940 (*Wirtschafts-plan Stadt Landeck und Bad*, Archiwum Państwowe we Wrocławiu)

family houses of different sizes, two boarding houses, and a multi family town house located in a compact settlement area. The conditions of the competition provided that *special attention should be paid to the rejuvenation of local architecture proven in previous centuries which has still been preserved in some parts of Silesia, and especially in the County of Kłodzko* [9, p. 252]. A record number of designs (138) were submitted for the competition, 21 of which were granted awards, however, the new residential estate in Łądek was built only in the 1920s and in the 1930s.

In 1904, it was discovered, and confirmed in 1909, that the thermal waters in Łądek demonstrate radioactive qualities; it was also determined that the radioactivity was caused by radium emanation which was applied in health therapies. Consequently, a pavilion with radium emanatorium was built near St. George's Baths in 1912.

Before the outbreak of the First World War, the construction of new baths started in the place of the oldest guest houses of George's Spring. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Bathhouse underwent another remodeling, and the great ballroom was adjusted for the needs of cinematography in 1922.

Today's appearance of the spa part of Łądek Zdrój is to a large extent the result of reorganization of space development around Mary's Spring which took place in the 1930s. This is when two boarding houses and Stone Baths – located too high in relation to the spring that fed them, were demolished [10, p. 100]. The lower section of the Karpowski Stream was channeled and then a new bathing center called Frederick was built in the lowest point near the hall for walks. At the same time peat baths were annexed to the building of Mary's thermal springs from the north.

The new bathing center, housing a swimming pool, gym, inhalatorium and pump hall, closed the area of Spa Park from the south-west; it was connected with Mary's Spring by monumental steps built in the place of demolished baths. The view on Mary's thermal springs was thus exposed, and Spa Park started to serve additional function of a green "square" in front of the entrance to the most representative building of the resort.

In 1936, Mary's Baths were thoroughly modernized last time before the outbreak of the Second World War; the same year – on the north side of the resort in the valley of the Luty Stream – an open-air swimming pool was built. Later projects, regarding mainly the regulation of the town's communication layout, were never carried out.

In 1940, the first comprehensive project of improvement of communication both in the municipal and spa part of Łądek Zdrój was developed. Earlier, only individual streets were subject to regulation – in 1925, the road linking the resort to the town (today's Kościuszki Street) was broadened and paved. The new plan included a ring road going along the southern border of the town, connecting the old routes leading to Złoty Stok, Kłodzko and Jawornik (Fig. 7).

A new bridge across the Biała Łądecka River with the star-shaped square in front of it, facilitating a better distribution of traffic to the center of the town and the resort, was also planned. The main flow of traffic was planned in the spa to go around Mary's Hill to the south – right behind the building of Mary's thermal springs – in the place where the Ten Commandments houses were demolished and further across the undeveloped area behind Świętojski Hill – to the road leading in the direction of Stronie Śląskie. That plan also included an extension of

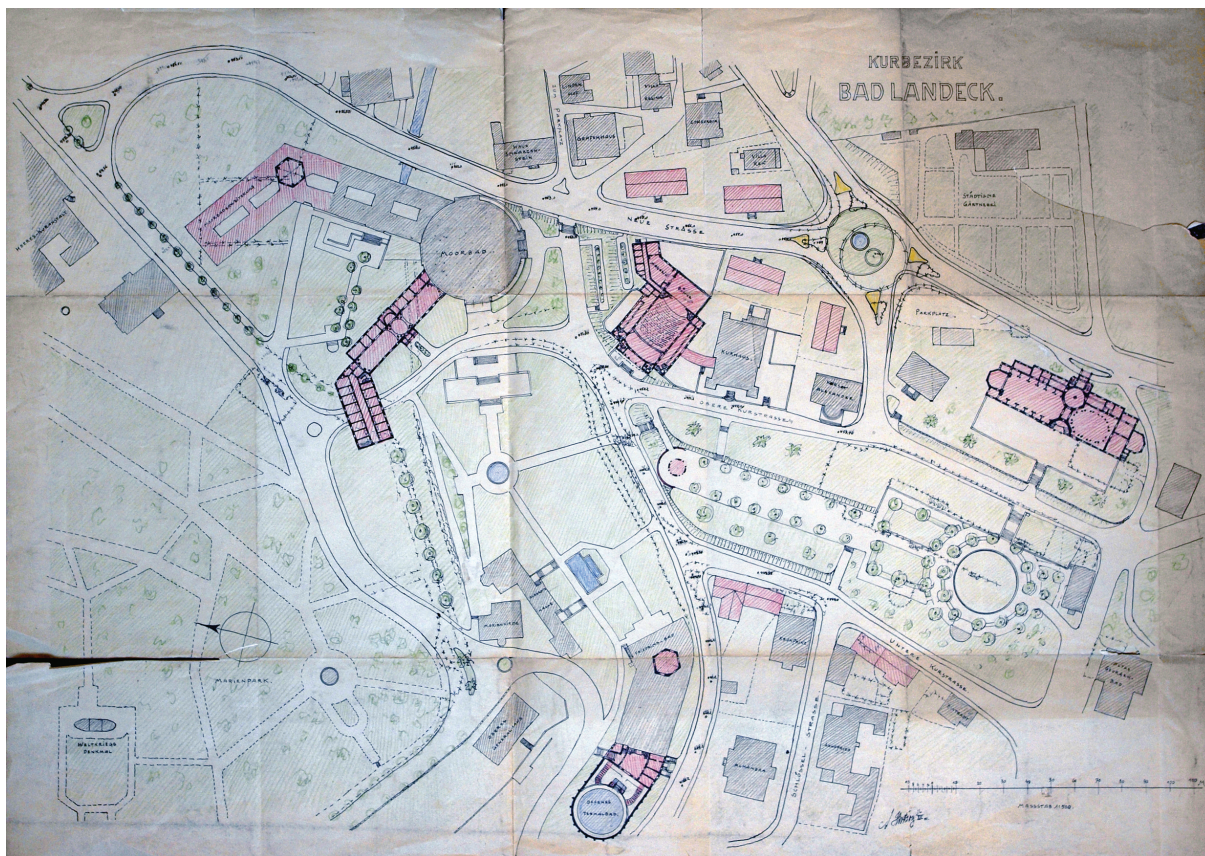


Fig. 8. Łądek-Zdrój, remodeling project of the resort center – not completed, 1941 (*Kurbezirk Bad-Landeck*, State Archives in Wrocław)

Il. 8. Łądek-Zdrój, niezrealizowany projekt przebudowy centrum uzdrowiska, 1941 (*Kurbezirk Bad-Landeck*, Archiwum Państwowe we Wrocławiu)



Fig. 9. Łądek-Zdrój, remodeling project of the town and resort – not completed, 1942 (*Verkehrsplan*, State Archives in Wrocław)

Il. 9. Łądek-Zdrój, niezrealizowany projekt przebudowy miasta i uzdrowiska, 1942 (*Verkehrsplan*, Archiwum Państwowe we Wrocławiu)

the estates of villas and construction of new residential buildings in the western part of the resort. Detailed guidelines regarding the reorganization of the resort center

were presented in the design from 1941 which, apart from the regulation of the layout of the streets, included the remodeling of Mary's and Frederick's Baths as well as

demolition of the Bathhouse and its replacement with public utility buildings along Górna Zdrojowa Street (*Ober Kurstrasse*)¹². It also suggested a demolition of some boarding houses and construction of new houses on undeveloped building plots. Spa Park, previously English in character, was given a “French” layout (Fig. 8).

In 1942, on the basis of the design mentioned above, Erwin Klein – an architect from Wrocław – developed a new plan of reorganization of communication layout in Łądek Zdrój, suggesting a fundamental remodeling of the existing structure of the resort (Fig. 9), which resulted in moving the vehicle traffic from the resort center and removing most of the existing buildings, leaving – except for few houses and boarding houses – Mary’s and Georges’s Baths, Chapel of Virgin Mary in the Desert and part of the Bathhouse.

Instead, a construction of two large scale public utility buildings was suggested along the eastern border of Spa Park.

New boarding houses or healthcare centers were planned around an effectively designed road going from today’s Zwycięstwa Street (*Marienstrasse*) around the valley of Karpowski Stream from the north and Zamkowa Street (*Karpensteinerstrasse*) from the south. An extension of the eastern estate of villas was also planned. The town’s ring road was actually consistent with previous plan, however, the way in which the new communication axis was connected with the existing layout of roads was completely changed. Traffic in the south was directed on the route connecting the municipal part of Łądek Zdrój with Stronie Śląskie, and consequently the roads going through the spa part of the town remained to accommodate local traffic.

Today’s spatial design of the resort is to a large extent the result of the activities of prewar authorities of the town that aimed at constantly increasing the attractiveness of the resort. The town was visited by thousands of patients who were offered not only the most modern healthcare facilities but also a possibility to rest in the picturesque surrounding of green parks and forests.

¹² Today’s Orla Street.

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Przekształcenia urbanistyczne uzdrowiska w Łądku-Zdroju do roku 1945

Łądek-Zdrój, najstarsze kłodzkie uzdrowisko, składa się dziś z dwóch części: zabytkowego miasta – położonego na brzegu rzeki Białej Łądeckiej oraz uzdrowiska usytuowanego po obu stronach rzeki, o swobodnym układzie parkowym, z miękko prowadzonymi drogami, dostosowanymi do naturalnego ukształtowania terenu, z zabudową uzdrowską rozproszoną wśród zieleni.

Lokację miejskiej części Łądku-Zdroju przeprowadzono w II poł. XIII wieku. W podobnym czasie, u podnóża Wzgórza Świętojerskiego zostały odkryte ciepłe źródła, przy których zaczęło rozwijać się uzdrowisko. Pod koniec XVI wieku zarysował się układ funkcjonalny kąpieliska, w którym pozornie przypadkowe rozmieszczenie budynków, dostosowane do naturalnego ukształtowania terenu, zapewniało jego

prawkidłowe funkcjonowanie. Po odkryciu kolejnych źródeł, Fryderyka i Marii, w II poł. XVII wieku założono tzw. Nowy Zdrój (późniejszy Zdrój Marii). Kompozycja przestrzenna zabudowy kąpieliska, będąca wynikiem zaplanowanej, jednorazowej akcji budowlanej, uchodzi za najwcześniejsze tego typu rozwiązanie zrealizowane na Śląsku.

Do dalszego rozwoju uzdrowiska przyczynił się w połowie XVIII wieku minister Śląska, hrabia von Hoym. Był on m.in. inicjatorem zagospodarowania obszaru między zdrojami, gdzie wybudowano dom zdrojowy i założono park angielski. W XIX wieku nadal upiększano i rozbudowywano uzdrowisko; władze Łądku dążyły do pozyskiwania i scalania kolejnych gruntów sąsiadujących z kąpieliskami, na których zakładano parki i lokalizowano zabudowę willo-

wą. Obecny układ przestrzenny uzdrowiska jest, w dużej mierze, wynikiem reorganizacji przestrzeni wokół źródła Marii, którą przeprowadzono w latach 30. XX wieku. W artykule szczegółowo przed-

stawiono kolejne etapy w historii przekształceń urbanistycznych uzdrowskiej części Łądko-Zdrój.

Key words: Silesia, Łądko-Zdrój, health resort, urban development

Słowa kluczowe: Śląsk, Łądko-Zdrój, uzdrowisko, rozwój urbanistyczny