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MARIBOR CITY PARK THROUGHOUT HISTORY

The history of Maribor's City Park is most closely linked to the work of the Embellishment Society in Maribor, which already between the years 1869 and 1872 planted the first trees in the park. In the year 1877 once again the Embellishment Society's (Tourist Association) work was revived in Maribor.

On December 14th 1877 a contract was made between the society and the Maribor township in which the community of Maribor allowed the society to care for all the community's public parks and gardens, for which the society would receive annual financial support from the community, and the town guard would also assist in protecting the parks and gardens!

In the first years the society's main work was the planting and arranging of the town's parks, avenues and park woods. The society took care of further tree planting and arranging of grass in the City Park, which originated on the former land of Count Brandis and the contractor Anton Badel, east of today's central promenade. Part of the town park to the west of the promenade, for which the plan was designed and sent to Maribor as an entry to a public competition by the Viennese landscape architect Dr. Julius Feldbacher, was planted between the years 1889 and 1896 by the society. Already in the year 1883 the society took over the triangle of land that belonged to Baron Twickl, located between Trije ribniki and the western end of today's avenue Tomšičeva drevored, and changed it into a park. In the year 1895 the society repurchased a 5-acre abandoned vineyard below Kalvarija and planted it with 19 thousand fir trees and five thousand other trees. In 1895 an avenue of chestnut trees was planted on the land along the street Vrbanska cesta; the land was donated to the society by the Lavantine diocese.

In the year 1896 the Tourist Association (Embellishment Society) began with the planting of chestnut trees in Tomšičeva drevored; the entire length of the avenue, which extended from the park to the street Partizanska cesta, was completed in 1905.

City Park, which today borders to the south on the streets Mladinska ulica and Maistrova ulica, to the north on Mestni vrh and Tri ribnike, and to the west at the street Trubarjeva ulica and to the east at the street Ulica heroja Staneta, was also in later decades expanded and enriched with rare trees.

In 1884 Maribor's Tourist Association also arranged a park in today's square Trg generala Maistra, by the monument of Admiral Tegetthoff and in 1888 a park on the area of a former gravel pit, opposite the railway station, in today's square.

Then in 1891 after the demolition of the town presbytery in the then square Stolni trg, the association also arranged a small park in what is today known as Slomškov trg.

The association paid for the tending of old and planting of new parks in Maribor with finances from the town community, the bank Mestna hranilnica as well as with their own means, from the sale of flowers, leaves, grass and from entertainment events.

Beside public park areas a private park with rare species of trees and a beautiful fountain was also arranged in the grounds of the newly constructed Scherbaum villa (today's National Liberation Museum Maribor).

In the year 1882 the first monument to Emperor Joseph II was erected by the society in the town park, then in 1883 a memorial to Archduke Johann and then in the year 1900 a memorial to the founder of the German touring club Jahn. In 1883 a memorial was erected to Admiral Teggethoff in the park in front of the grammar school in the presence of Emperor Franz Joseph, in 1890 a memorial was uncovered in front of the town's savings bank Mestna hranilnica in the memory of the savings bank's founder Mayor Andrej Trappeiner. All the memorials we supposed to give the town a German appearance.

After the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire the society adopted the name Embellishment Society for the town of Maribor and in the year 1920 elected a Slovene committee with Dr. Ludvik Brence as the president.

After a few years of being unable to function, due to centralised management from Ljubljana, the Maribor Town Embellishment Society in 1926 was revived once again. The Embellishment and Tourist Society was dedicated to making the town's green and park surfaces more beautiful. The town passed the management of the town nursery, located in Ljudski vrt in today's Mladinska ulica, over to the society. The society also cared for two ponds at Trije ribniki, where during the winter months people skated, and in the summer went boating. In 1927 the town community replaced the ramshackle, wooden boathouse with a beautiful pavilion with cloakrooms and a terrace. The Embellishment Society made two contracts with the nearby restaurant Kliček and the Angling club and thus increased the tourist offer for visitors to the park. During this time they systematically planted the region between Trije ribniki and the hill Mestni vrh. The society earned money by organising promenade concerts, selling hay and they also received a yearly community donation of 1200 dinars for mowing the grass in the parks. In the year 1929 the town council gave permission for a children's playground to be made in the city park. In its most successful years before the Second World War the society numbered about 830 members.

First of all after the war in the year 1946 the Tourist Association was founded, which due to inactivity was closed in 1948. Then in the year 1951 it was once again founded

and its president became the then Maribor mayor Janko Markič. Already the following year the association successfully organised in the park, in the former Park coffeehouse, later a children's milk restaurant, an aquarium, and children's playground with a paddling pool. In the year 1952 a promenade was also opened in the town park for which the association took credit. A few years later "Tihi gaj" – or Quiet Grove – was opened for pensioners in a part of the park, which due to rife card playing for money became known as Maribor's Monte Carlo". In the square Trg Boris Kidrič the association arranged a park and erected beside it a memorial to Boris Kidrič. The association also arranged in the Maribor park promenade concerts, managed the boathouse and skating rink at Trije ribniki and in the 1960s extended the promenade in City Park to Trije ribniki.

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