

Platonovsky Park – Memory of Past and Example for Future

Alexey DYUMIN, Tula Region Governor, paid a working visit to the Platonovsky Park in Tula. Boris SOKOL, President of Shchekinoazot, the company that has taken care of the unique green area, spoke about the restoration of the recreational area and prospects for its development in one of the most densely populated areas of the regional center.



Some background information

THE PLATONOVSKY Park is a famous place in Tula with a rich and interesting history. It is considered to have been founded by Konstantin Ignatyevich, one of the sons of the first-guild merchant and hereditary honorary citizen Ignaty Kozmich Platonov.

The family's patriarch, petty bourgeois I. K. Platonov, settled in Tula with his family in 1852 and registered as a third-guild merchant. His business ambitions were bigger than his initial claims: the Platonovs were engaged in fishing and shipping on the Volga River. They supplied fish to the Volga Region and Tula and owned rental houses in the provincial town. But Ignaty Platonov's commercial activity wasn't the only reason why he earned great esteem among his fellow countrymen. In 1857, he was elected an elder of the Tula Sretensky Cathedral, and seven years later – an elder of the Uspensky Cathedral. While donating to these cathedrals, he did not forget about the Staronikitskaya Church. However, the Platonovs' charity work went way beyond this.

The first significant Tula charitable project implemented by I. K. Platonov was the hospital of the Tula Medical Society, founded on the initiative of V. I. Smidovich in 1862.

It brought together almost all doctors of the provincial town by the end of the XIX century. In 1864, a hospital was opened, where all members of the Tula Medical Society saw patients free of charge. The hospital was initially located in a rented house, which wasn't suitable for medical purposes. A new hospital was built in 1889 at the corner of Ploshchadnaya Street and Kashinsky (Central) Lane (now – 32 Kaminsky Lane). It is worth noting that in 1887, I. K. Platonov not only donated 10,000 rubles for the construction of a new hospital but also took care of all paperwork related to the site, project preparation and supervision of its implementation. Monitoring by Tula Medical Society members yielded the desired result – the building fully complied with requirements and the highest standards of that time. "According to contemporaries, the hospital was second to none among provincial town hospitals and was as good as Moscow's medical institutions," writes Tula local historian S. Demidov.

Another building, well known to Tula residents as the building of the Tula Municipal Duma, later as the Youth Center and now the municipal budgetary institution for supplementary education "Youth Center", could be considered a prototype of the modern-day shopping malls. The first floor housed the Platonovs' fish shop.

Above the shop were premises for rent – residential and commercial. However, the active public work of Platonov, who was also a Municipal Duma councilor, and his sincere desire to be of service to his native Tula prompted him to hand over the building to the city.

S. Demidov believes that the Platonovs' houses in Tula were surprisingly lucky – almost all of them have survived. A more challenging fate awaited the family's country estate. At one time, the owners bred trotters and cattle there. The system of ponds also allowed the Platonovs to conduct in fish-farming. After the death of I. K. Platonov, his business was inherited by his sons, with Konstantin being the administrator. He did a lot to improve business activities and maintain charity traditions established by his father. It is largely thanks to him that the Platonovsky Park has become a gem on the outskirts of Tula.

The isle of bad luck

HOWEVER, AS S. DEMIDOV WRITES, after the revolution of 1917, Konstantin Platonov's trail went cold, and his fate is unknown. The park and estate facilities survived. Efforts by the new authorities to use them for economic purposes were unsuccessful. A crew of fishermen, who had tried to continue the Platonovs' business, did not last long. And the number of fish in the ponds dwindled year after year...

After World War II, one of the military units was located there. After its relocation, the territory remained unserved. All attempts to use it for commercial purposes failed.

However, Tula residents and guests have never forgotten this quiet corner of nature. Unfortunately, as the green area was defiled and overgrown with low forest cover, walks lost their civilized nature, and antisocial elements became the prevailing category among the park's visitors. The city administration drew up plans for the park's reconstruction from time to time, but they were never implemented.

Revival

SIGNIFICANT changes occurred in May 2016, when Alexey Dyumin, then-Provisional Governor of the Tula Region, considered Tula residents' request to improve the park's area. Thanks to the political will of the Governor, property issues were resolved. Socially responsible businesses took care of the material, technical and organizational part of the project. Shchekinoazot representatives implemented the first part of the Platonovsky Park improvement project in the shortest possible time. The "Culture and Recreation" zone opened in the fall of the same year, in time for the 870th anniversary of Tula. A year later, the "Nature and Walks" zone got a new look. Today, meadows and zones of the forest, connected by picturesque paths and walkways, are available for quiet walks. Scenic viewpoints, as well as a cascade of streams (which maintain the water balance of ponds) decorated with flowers, decorative shrubs, trees, and crude stones imported from the Urals, attract selfie lovers. The stones, besides aesthetic purposes, perform an important function – they strengthen the ground. Many new mature trees were also planted in Platonovsky Park. Among them are not only lost valuable species, such as oak and ash, but also coniferous species like spruce, pine and larch. The arboretum, the foundation of the cultural and educational sector, was also laid out and is developing here.

On the side are sports venues – a playground and workout areas. It is noteworthy that they are never empty, even in winter. And fans of winter entertainment can enjoy an ice rink and a slide for safe tubing instead of the previous overgrown and pretty littered wasteland. And closer to high-rise buildings, there is a dog training and walking area. And it is not just a meadow. It is, in fact, a well-zoned area with a fenced training ground, multilevel dog walking paths and, of course, comfortable and vandal-proof benches for pet owners.

The park is proud to announce that it has the largest area for pets in Tula – it covers around 2,000 square meters.





The result

"TODAY, Platonovsky Park is one of the favorite places of Tula residents and guests," said the Governor while inspecting this recreation area. "There are all conditions here for healthy lifestyle advocates, children and seniors. You can meet athletes, young mothers with baby strollers and families in the park. And it was not always like that..."

The Governor of the region reminded about the enormous work that had to be done by the working group. During the first year, over 400 KAMAZ trucks took out garbage and about 10 kilometers of walkways were laid. And that was just the beginning...

"I would like to express my gratitude to the leading chemical company that is developing rapidly and has become one of the largest chemical exporters in Russia," said Alexey Dyumin. "This is how the task set by the President of the Russian Federation is being fulfilled, and the economic potential of the region is being developed. Today, the company is building and putting into operation new production facilities, creating new jobs and manufacturing new products. Shchekinoazot is a major taxpayer and a company with a high level of social responsibility. Its President – Boris Sokol – is a true patriot."

In his turn, Boris Sokol noted the Governor's important role in the interrelated development of the economy and social sector of the Tula Region.

"With the support of the Governor and the government, we have reached a new level of methanol production – one million tons per year. And in 2021, when we launch a new production unit, the capacity will reach 1.5 million tons," said the President of JSC Shchekinoazot. "It is clear that the company, in addition to economic responsibilities, has also undertaken social responsibilities, which we try to fulfill in any circumstances. The Platonovsky Park reconstruction project was one of the items in our social responsibility program. We've already completed three stages. I think the working team has done its best. It has not only invested money but also put its heart and soul into this project. However, its efforts and results will be evaluated by Tula residents."

Boris Alexandrovich has also said that this year workers will continue to improve the Platonovsky Park. Shchekinoazot representatives, in collaboration with the Tula administration, will work on restoring the dam, clearing the big pond and improving the area around the pond. And the working group, which has already gained some experience during the revival of the Platonovsky Park, faces a new challenge.

"We are undertaking new enhanced commitments: we'll create two new beautiful parks in Shchekino," explained Boris Sokol.



When place graces humans

THE PLATONOVSKY PARK is full of people even in winter evenings. The paths are perfectly cleared here, and there is good lighting all around. The traditional lighting is complemented by festive illumination, which is done with imagination and taste. A huge Christmas ball, beckoning children and adults to join, sparkles with lights next to the Christmas tree. Its small copies are scattered around the area.



Alexander Pavlovich always walks here with his granddaughter, Marina, when he visits his children. He remembers well the desolation of the recent years. And every time he comes here, he finds some beautiful and convenient improvements and innovations in the park. He likes to spend time here. And Marina, who is going to school this year, is a big lover of walks. She has gone down a slide on the tubing and joined the conversation.

"Marina, what do you like the most in the park?"

The child, looking at the snow-covered area, is suddenly embarrassed.

"I like flowers..."

Soon, the renewed park will be green and blooming. Flowerbeds here are arranged to please visitors all year round. Park workers say there is no threat to the plants.



"The visitors of our park are very intelligent and cultured," says **Vladimir BAKULIN, Assistant Director General of UCC Shchekinoazot**, who has been supervising Platonovsky Park project from the beginning.

"I just look at their faces and feel joyful. I am glad that many people praise our work and give us their suggestions about the further development of the park."

The Platonovsky Park is a non-profit project. The maintenance of the park costs a bundle: staff salaries, constant renewal of the territory and its maintenance require more and more funds from Shchekinoazot. The park hosts different entertainment events, art and children's festivals, which also involve expenses. However, Boris Sokol, President of Shchekinoazot, considers it normal. He likes to emphasize: "A company is truly successful only when it benefits society and people." This idea is a continuation of Platonov's traditions and an example for new generations of entrepreneurs.

Nataliya ZELINSKA

The material was prepared based on the article *The Platonovs in Tula*, written by S. Demidov. Photo: tularegion.ru and "Molodoy Kommunar" (The Young Communar).



www.mk.tula.ru

Intelligent Transport

The Tula Region has become one of the pilot regions where an intelligent transport system is being introduced.



RECENTLY, Rodion Dudnik, Minister of Transport and Road Facilities of the Tula Region, visited the control center and inspected the first stage of the intelligent transport system (ITS), which is part of the "Safe and Quality Roads" national project. According to the Minister, our region took second place in Russia in the ranking of applications and became one of 22 pilot regions for the implementation of the system. Last August, 300 million rubles were allocated for this project from the federal budget.

ITS will make it possible to create a unified platform for transport management, generalize all uncoordinated existing systems and offer more efficient solutions for transport problems, thanks to the application of modern methods of analysis. ITS is already automatically controlling traffic and monitoring parking space.

"Once the system is implemented," said Dudnik, "the traffic speed should increase, especially in places where traffic jams are common. Thanks to smart solutions, we will be able to respond promptly to the changing situation on the road. And this will reduce accidents and places of their concentration. The ultimate goal of the ITS is to improve the comfort and safety of all road users."

The project implementation will take five years, until 2024, inclusively. Last year, during the first stage, 29 new and 23 existing smart traffic lights were installed and integrated into the system: 37 – in Tula, 13 – in Novomoskovsk,

2 – on regional roads. Thanks to special sensors, the traffic lights independently select the appropriate mode of operation depending on traffic congestion. This helps get rid of traffic jams and speeds up traffic flow in the cities. In combination with traffic cameras, the system increases the consciousness of drivers and, consequently, road safety.

Three smart pedestrian crossings with controlled traffic signs are now operating in Tula, Novomoskovsk and on the Tula-Novomoskovsk Highway. The equipment automatically detects approaching pedestrians and displays a warning on the information board.

There are ten smart stationary parking control systems installed in the regional capital, which monitor correct parking.

According to the representative of MosTrans-Project, who participated in the development of the ITS, the Tula Region currently has the most advanced system in the country. Its efficiency will increase with new modules and data being added.

At the second stage, special attention will be paid to the efficiency of the transport system management. It is planned to install new traffic lights, a dynamic information board and controlled traffic signs. The system will also include new modules for managing road works, predicting emergencies and monitoring environmental parameters.



BY THE WAY, there are two new illuminated areas on the Tula – Novomoskovsk Highway. At the entrance to the village of Bolshaya Yelovaya, Tulaavtodor engineers installed 21 additional poles with lights. They also installed 11 more poles near the village of Stakhanovsky. A total of 121 km of regional roads will be illuminated this year. Reducing the number of accidents is one of the key goals of the "Safe and Quality Roads" national project.

New Bus Route

was launched in Tula on January 26.

THE ROUTE, CREATED at the instruction of Dmitry Milyaev, Head of the City Administration, to improve the quality of transport services, connects two new bus stations – "Severnaya" and "Vostochnaya".

Bus No. 8 "Bus Station 'Vostochnaya' – 18th Passage" travels through the following streets: Staronikitskaya Street, Oboronnaya Street, Sovetskaya Street, Oktyabrskaya Street, and Karpova Street.

There are five medium-sized buses with fare discounts. The average wait time during peak hours is twenty minutes.

The timetable is available on the website of the Tula administration: see section CITY > FOR CITY GUESTS > TRANSPORT.

