

## RESUMÉ 4/15

### Heritage protection of prefabricated housing estates?

Matyáš KRACÍK

*Keywords: Prefabricated housing estates, heritage protection, socialist realism, theory of heritage preservation*

In the Czech Republic, there are currently only a few housing estates from the second half of the 20th century that are heritage protected. These are the estates Poruba in Ostrava, estate Vítězného února in Kladno, an estate in Havířov, and the estates of Labská kotlina 1 in Hradec Králové. The first three were built in the 1950's in socialist realism style. The Labská kotlina estate is from the late 1940's and ties into inter-war functionalism. All these estates were built using traditional brick technology. Based on several years of extensive interdisciplinary research on prefabricated housing estates, we would like to show that even these housing estates have historical value. Prefab housing estates represent a widespread realization that emerged based on progressive urban plans which reflected the international modernist tendency. They are therefore valuable as a testimony to architecture and urbanism. In the Czech Republic, these units form an entirely new type of city, fundamentally different from the previously known block developments of apartment buildings or neighborhoods of family houses and villas. Housing estates are also the result of socialist policies, without which such extensive plans could not have been created. It should be noted that after the Great Depression in the 1930's, architecture often gained more of a social than an artistic role. Housing estates should therefore be appreciated for their functionality, rationality, and new urban vision rather than for any traditional artistic qualities. The most important housing estates in the Czech Republic are Solidarita, Invalidovna and Ďáblice in Prague, Sítná in Kladno, Březenecká in Chomutov, Šanov 2 in Teplice, Polabiny and Dašická in Pardubice, Lesná in Brno, and Jižní Svahy in Zlín.

### Post-war apartment construction and heritage preservation using the example of Great Britain and Scandinavia

Eva NOVOTNÁ

*Keywords: post-war construction, housing estates, heritage protection, Scandinavia, Great Britain*

Following WWII, Scandinavia and Great Britain focused strongly on building a welfare state with a great emphasis on the construction of municipal or cooperative apartments and housing estates.

Together, they applied the general concept of affordable and modern housing built on the principles of industrialized construction, the use of precast concrete, and standardized architecture. The greatest expansion was reached with mass construction in the 1960s, when England and Scandinavia built vast housing estates with panel houses and huge tower blocks. Since the 1990's, England has begun to apply heritage protection to the housing estates of the 1940-1960's, despite lingering resistance to modernist architecture. Today, the list of cultural heritage in England alone holds around thirty protected housing estates and apartment buildings. Sweden and Finland also protect selected examples of mass housing which they consider symbols of the formation of the welfare state, which they are even proud of. Danes hold a similar pride as well, although as yet no examples of post-war construction have been included in their inventory of cultural heritage.

### The issue of heritage preservation for prefabricated housing estates using the example of Ďáblice

Hana ŘEPKOVÁ

*Keywords: Residential complex, Ďáblice housing estate, architect Viktor Tuček, urban composition, superblock, heritage protection*

The residential complex of Ďáblice from the 1970's epitomizes the fulfillment of nearly all of the ideals of modernity that were ever associated with this kind of construction. The Ďáblice housing estate bears important attributes of the 1960's and 70's while extending beyond the normal production of the time. Even today, the qualities that set this housing estate apart can be found in the quality and comprehensibility of its urban design and its rigorous compliance, the exceptional quality of the architectural design of its residential buildings and the quality of their realization including details and atypical elements, the accessibility and quality of its individual sections (numerous generously sized passages, grandiose entrance halls, covered walkways, arcades, walkways around the bases of the buildings, a rich network of paths), the generosity of greenery design, the well thought-out composition including terrain slopes and ponds, the valuable backdrop with its natural and cultural sites, the frequency and thoughtful placement of artworks, the high design of its ancillary buildings, excellent transport accessibility, and numerous job opportunities (the Academy of Sciences in the direct vicinity of the housing estate).

The construction of the Ďáblice residential complex for 28,500 residents was launched in 1968, and a substantial portion of the apartments was completed in 1975. The urban design, won through a competition, was the work of architects Vlastimil Durdík and Jiří Novotný from 1963, then the design

was further developed by architects Josef Polák, Vojtěch Šalda, and Viktor Tuček, who became the complex's chief architect.

The housing estate is spread over the gentle southern slope of the northern terrace of Prague at the foot of the Ladví hill. The residential complex is the successful result of the architectural and urban potential of the 1960's. The concept of this estate includes the very best of modern architecture – the simple elegance of urban design, houses with relaxed parterres, greenery richly pervading the entire complex, the grandiosity of its entrance halls, the subtlety of its construction, and artworks tied in with the architecture. Unlike most housing estates in the Czech Republic, it is apparent here that the satisfaction of its future population was important during the designing process, and the economy of construction was not the sole priority.

There are three main types of residential buildings in the Ďáblice housing estate, completed in 1968–1975. The authors of the panel houses are architects Vilém Hess and Viktor Tuček, and the author of the three 18-storey tower blocks is architect Jiří Kulišťák. The author of the five 12-storey houses south of Střelničná is Ing. Kocián. Even though the houses were built of panels and were based on common standardized sets, they still managed to achieve a remarkable plasticity of expression. Both types of tower blocks achieve almost sculptural forms using two basic geometric shapes, the cube and the prism. The skeleton of the housing estate consists of eighteen panel buildings with eleven, thirteen, and fourteen floors with receding first and last floor, atypically designed gabled sections, and an airy parterre. The facades, horizontally articulated by strip windows, are complemented by strong vertical elements. The houses are articulated not only by balconies but also by lesenes covering the panel joints and giving the houses a noble expression of high order.

Even seemingly trivial technical features enjoy a timeless design, such as the transformer station near the playground complemented by a L-shaped simple flat roof supported by slender steel columns. This covered pergola integrates the transformer station into green space and provides shade and protection from the rain. This airy and economic structure represents one of the great elements of modernist style which the housing estate is equipped with.

Why should the Ďáblice housing estate be protected? This residential complex still stands out even after years of repairs, interventions, and changes. In its time, it was well above the average quality, and many of its qualities have still not been surpassed today. The design of the Ďáblice estate works very imaginatively with a small amount of elements and uses the block and street

archetype. The urban concept of semi-open square blocks in the southern part of the estates reflects traditional urban courtyards, while pairs of superblocks reflect streets. At the same time, both forms are blended together and surrounded by vast green areas.

The plasticity, originality, and degree of preservation of its original expression and furnishing of the parterre of the houses of the Ďáblice housing estate, enhanced by its unique concept and the quality of greenery that we do not see in any other modernist housing estates in the Czech Republic, fully justifies its inclusion among the most valuable residential complexes and its claim to heritage protection as a municipal heritage zone.

When considering forms of protection, the degree of preservation of the individual elements on the buildings of the housing estate was explored, and it was noted that none of the houses have been preserved entirely intact. All the same, one house stands out which has retained the most important attributes – both open passages and the arcades under both gables. The house on Kyselova Street is located in an exposed position in the heart of the residential complex, and its protection through registration onto the list of cultural properties would be of great importance in preserving its values as well as for presenting the qualities of the housing estate.

Given that the majority of the ideas embodied in this complex are unique and alive even after more than 45 years, it is clear that the complex is worthy of protection. This should especially focus on the preservation of its architectural and urban qualities and in the rectification of inappropriate interventions.

#### **Residential Complex Lesná. The thorny path of a panel housing estate towards heritage protection**

Jana KOŘÍNKOVÁ

*Keywords: heritage preservation, municipal heritage zone, housing estate, mass apartment construction, public art, Lesná housing estate*

This article is focused on the presentation of the group of artworks located within the Lesná housing estate, on previous attempts at protecting the heritage of this unique collection of urban art including its artistic realization, and on the role of local civic initiatives in this effort. Within the Brno housing estate of Lesná (1962–1970), built on the design of the Brno Stavoprojekt architects František Zounek, Viktor Rudiš, Ladislav Volák, and Miroslav Dufek, there are nearly thirty artistic realizations located in public spaces and ten works in the interiors of public buildings. In 2004, architect Rudiš submitted a proposal for the declaration

of this urban complex as a cultural heritage property. The Ministry of Education, however, refused to support this effort, referring to the inappropriate reconstruction of the original buildings and the previous demolition of civil amenities.

Nonetheless, it did recommend that a proposal be drafted for the declaration of Lesná as a municipal heritage zone. This was done in 2009 by Nataša Zounková, the daughter of the estate's chief architect. In 2011 the NHI ÚOP in Brno, at the instigation of civic initiatives in Lesná, drafted a list of the exterior design elements within the housing estate and a draft for declaring it as a cultural heritage property. Due to the inseparability of the artistic design of the housing estate from its architectural and urban concept characteristic for the 1960's, the two proposals will be considered together in the coming months as part of their application for the declaration as a municipal heritage zone. It is likely, however, that the Department of Heritage Preservation of the Czech Ministry of Culture will finally recommend protecting the urban concept of the housing estate through a regulatory plan.

#### **Artistic decoration of housing estates in Czechoslovakia during the 1960-80's**

Pavel KAROUS

*Keywords: housing estates, art of the second half of the 20th century, public spaces, heritage protection*

This article is an overview of artworks in public spaces placed there as part of housing estate construction from the 1960's to the 1980's. The first part of the article deals with the role of art in public space and presents two examples of systems from abroad – in France and in Chicago – where the placement of works of art as part of public construction were dealt with conceptually through a series of laws. These examples serve for comparison with the “four percent law” which applied in Czechoslovakia from the 1960's, earmarking a mandatory amount for the construction of works of art. The paper also addresses the issue of the censorship of art in this context, noting that the area of exterior monumental art was affected by censorship to a surprisingly small extent, and that authors otherwise persecuted by the regime were able to present their works within housing estates.

The second part of the study focuses on specific works of art, discussing examples of three Prague housing estates that show different positions of monitored works of art. The Invalidovna housing estate is presented as an example of an exceptional and high quality collection, both conceptually and artistically, then the Prosek housing estate as an example of average artworks for the period which, however, thanks to the participation of several

outstanding artists, still maintained a high standard, and finally the Barrandov housing estate as an example of late works at the very end of the regime in which artists could express themselves in public spaces, essentially free from persecution.

The article closes with a reflection on the existing state of protection and care of the works in question. It turns out, unfortunately, that public works of art from the 1960–1980's are essentially not historically protected at all, and that due to their alleged ideological defectiveness, the finest artefacts are still being destroyed and removed. Not even the National Heritage Institute has grasped the topic more conceptually as of yet, and the care for this specific art today is almost entirely in the hands of enthusiasts and the civil society.

#### **Systematic approaches to housing estate areas and their relationship to the original concept of constructional development**

Michal KOHOUT, Filip TITTL

*Keywords: housing estate, urban morphology, adaptation, heritage protection*

The article mainly addresses the fundamental questions of the spatial design of housing estates and their semantic consequences in relation to possible future interventions, and is also a summary of two research projects conducted at the Faculty of Architecture of the Czech Technical University since 2009. This is both a morphological and compositional analysis of selected structures of Prague housing estates, conducted by the authors together with Master's degree students, as well as a currently ongoing multiannual research project entitled “What's next with housing estates” (Sídliště, jak dál?), which examines the transformative models of housing estates corresponding to contemporary ideas of a socially and economically sustainable urban structure. This is based on the specifics of the social structure, ownership structure, and economic reality of the Czech environment while striving to maintain the quality of the housing estate construction and the maximum volume of the existing buildings as much as possible. Yet, inevitably, this is a serious intervention into the original modernist concept which entails difficulties in terms of the protection of certain cultural and documentary values that housing estate construction represents.

#### **Old cities, housing estates, and the daily press, 1960–1989**

Rostislav ŠVÁCHA

*Keywords: housing estates, daily newspapers, Kutná Hora, Olomouc regeneration of historic cities*

The article examines how the daily newspapers of the cities of Kutná Hora (Úder), Olomouc (Stráž

lidu), and Liberce (Vpřed) during the period from 1960 to 1989 reflected a collision of two ambitious and ultimately unfulfilled programs of the socialist state: the regeneration of historic towns and solving housing problems through the tools of industrialized construction. The paper draws attention to the obvious fact that there existed a mutual bond between the two programs which had a negative impact on the regeneration program. Newspapers from the 1960's and especially the 1980's depicted this situation quite realistically.

#### **Prefab housing estates caught between attitudes of adoration and revulsion**

Karel KUČA

*Keywords: housing estates, heritage protection, estate-lovers, estate-haters, architecture and urbanism of the second half of the 20th century*

The essay summarizes the main themes and issues related to the heritage protection of housing estates. The introduction recalls the historical preconditions of the formation of housing estates – attempts to find a new urban structure associated with the demolition of traditional city blocks had already been carried out in the 1920's. Several significant "pre-housing estate" realizations are mentioned here from the interwar period (e.g. Zlín, brněnský Táborec), the war period (Osada in Horní Litvínov), and in the immediate post-war period (housing estate Solidarita).

The next part focuses on massive housing and estate construction projects after 1948. The article shows that this was not motivated by a real lack of housing, but by a massive wave of resettlement related to the restructuring of Czech industry – the population shifted from traditional settlements to the newly established areas of heavy industry which needed to be equipped with mass housing.

The essay goes on to discuss the actual value of housing estate architecture. It stresses that a large part of this architectural fund falls within the range of architectural average and below average, mainly due to the industrial standardization of the projects and by the low quality of their execution. The article proposes making a differentiation in the quality of a housing estate by the quality of its urban representation, diversity of mass composition, integration into the urban and landscape backdrop, and by the quality of the architectural representation of its individual buildings. It also discusses criteria for the assessment of their quality and summarizes the issues and challenges that efforts to protect their heritage often encounter.

The conclusion discusses the question of the authenticity of the current state of housing estates and the possibility of their heritage

protection. It mentions problems that may stand in the way of more effective protection of more valuable estates as well. The first problem is the low authenticity of the architecture due to massive reconstruction works after 1989. Another fundamental problem is the expired service life and unsatisfactory condition of the materials, greatly reducing the possibility of recovery with respect to their original condition. The article points out that it is not only the preserved urban structure which is critical to the declaration of overall heritage preservation, but also the originality of the preserved architecture. For many valuable housing estates, heritage protection should therefore be subject to coordinated reconstruction work carried out in the spirit of the original design. In the meantime, it is therefore appropriate to devote attention to less demanding methods of protection as well, such as protection through building regulations, territorial planning, etc.

#### **The Palace of Culture in Prague, its history, architecture, art, and heritage potential 35 years after its construction**

Matyáš KRACÍK, Hedvika KRÍŽOVÁ, Anna SCHRÁNILOVÁ

*Keywords: Prague, Palace of Culture, architecture, artworks, 1980's*

The Palace of Culture in Prague was completed at the end of 1980 and ceremonially opened on 2 April 1981. Its authors were the architects of the Military Project Institute Jaroslav Mayer, Vladimír Ustohal, Antonín Vaněk and Josef Karlík. The building became one of the most pompous buildings of this period, including its rich artistic decoration numbering up to two hundred works of art. On 31 May 1982, the Department of Culture of the National Committee of Prague declared the Palace of Culture to be a cultural monument. This status lasted until 1991, when its owner requested the cancellation of its declaration as a cultural monument. After more than thirty years since the completion of the building, the question of its assessment and possible protection is raised again.

#### **Initiatives for the preservation of the historical character of Litomyšl before the First World War**

Anna ŠUBRTOVÁ

*Keywords: Litomyšl, the Club for Old Prague, Karel Polesný, Zdeněk Wirth, František Páta*

From the beginning of the 20th century, the small East Bohemian town of Litomyšl faced insensitive construction works in its historic areas which brought about an increasingly strong need to protect its historic environment and ancient character. Neither the scale nor the overall architectural design of the ostentatious new buildings, which had caused the demolition of historically and artistically valuable

architectural monuments, corresponded to the architectural rhythm of the small town, thus necessitating the formation of heritage preservation associations.

The first to seize this initiative in Litomyšl was the local professor Karel Polesný, a member of the Club for Old Prague. He consulted his intentions for the preservation of the town's ancient character with his Prague colleagues Zdeněk Wirth and František Páta, who were associated both professionally and personally with Litomyšl, and who themselves had actively participated in the rescue of endangered Litomyšl buildings, whether through the institutionalization of new preservationist associations or through the publication of demonstrative articles in local and professional journals. Their main concern, the establishment of a branch of the Club for Old Prague in Litomyšl, ended in failure, however, due to the prevailing conservatism of the local citizens.

Despite this failure of the members of the Club for Old Prague, they continued to monitor the local events and fought against the demolition of buildings of a practically "commercial" nature (mill, riding school, wooden tub making facility, burgher houses), which they valued as distinctive heritage properties for the bourgeoisie and peasantry. They thus limited their work in contrast to previous "selective" preservationist practices which, in their efforts to protect old towns, focused only on isolated objects such as churches, aristocratic palaces, and occasionally town halls, thus leaving the rest of the town to the risks of ruthless modernization.