

**ČESKÝ BROD:
HUSOVO SQUARE &
ARNOŠTA Z PARDUBIC SQUARE**



The town of Český Brod announces an open two-phase architectural competition for the re-design of their square in the town's urban conservation zone.

Český Brod's double-square Arnošta z Pardubic and Husovo Square, which forms a large area covering most of the medieval area of the town, today lacks coherence and a representative value. The potential of the square is currently not fully exploited and the town centre often appears empty and unattractive. It is thus necessary to breathe new life into the area and offer the citi-

zens of Český Brod a place they enjoy going to and that they can be proud of. The main goal of the competition is to create a lively public space that will re-establish the historic core as a stage and a catalyst for urban action in a contemporary and respectful way. It should be remembered that the square is located in the city's conservation area, which means it is protected from radical change. However, the revitalisation of the square should be approached with contemporary trends and ecological aspects in mind, as well as its wider context. Last but not least, it is also important to consider its relevance in today's society.





[1] Historical context



ČESKÝ BROD

The town of Český Brod was probably founded in the 1230s as a market settlement with a small Romanesque church of St. Gothard founded by Bishop John I of Prague. The settlement was situated on the so-called "Trstenická" provincial trade route connecting Prague with southern and south-eastern Europe. It passed at the ford (in Czech "brod") over the river Šembera on the border of the original Czech state formation and the Slavonic territory, bypassing the muddy forest complex to the north and south. It is assumed that the extent of this settlement was more or

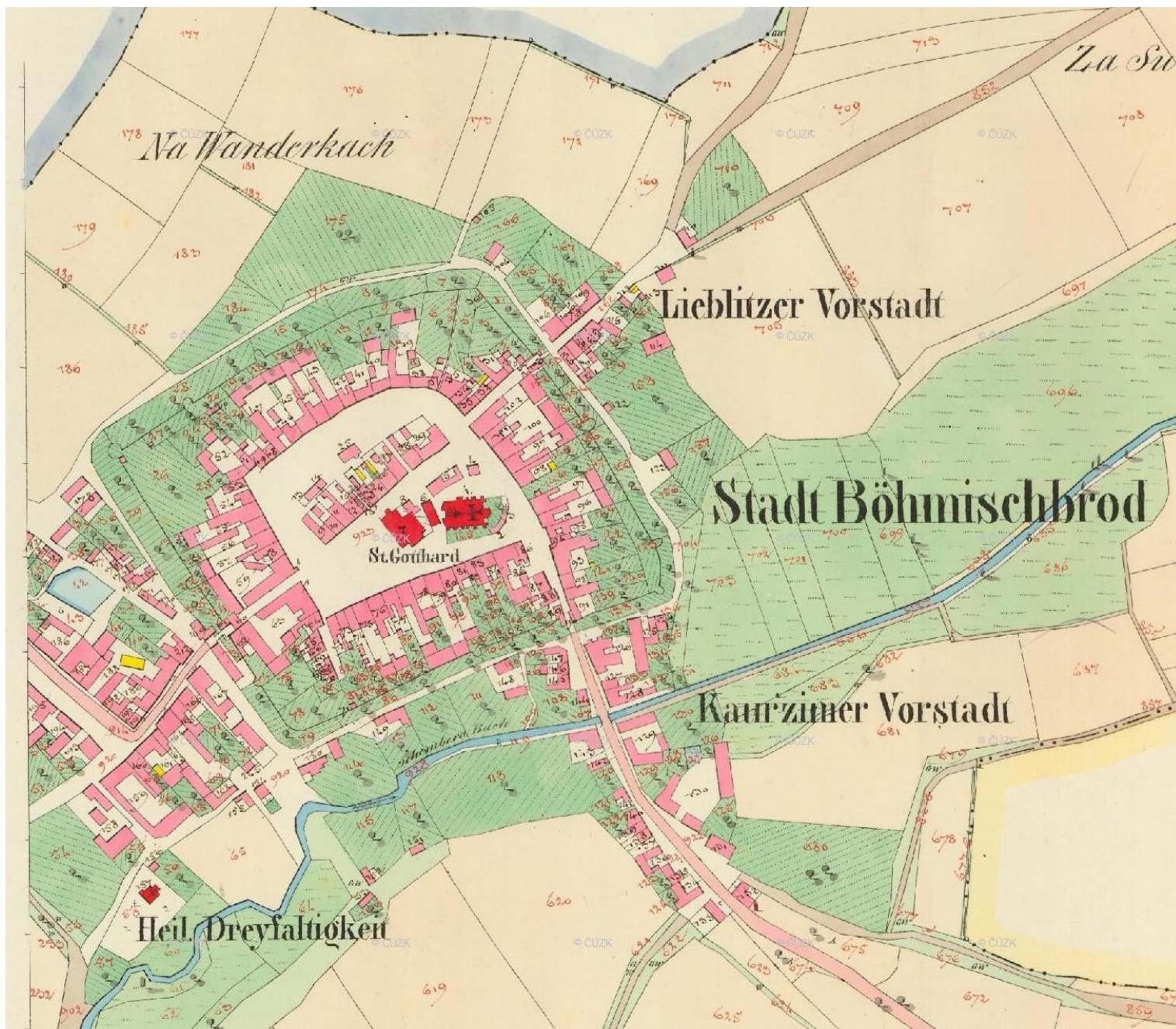
less identical to the southern square of Arnošta z Pardubic and that the longitudinal block of houses in the middle of the square formed the original northern development. Apart from the church, there was also a bishop's customs house and a spacious market. Around 1268, the Bishop of Prague, Jan III of Dražice, promoted the settlement to a town with the right of inheritance, the right of town-wall and other urban freedoms. The original settlement was expanded by the area of today's Husovo Square. The strategic location, commercial activities, and accommodation possibilities have caused the town to flourish since



the 13th century. In the mid-14th century, with the help of Archbishop Arnošt of Pardubice, ramparts were erected, the fortress was repaired and the three-aisled church of St. Gotthard was built. Further, a local school, a hospital with the Church of St. Mary Magdalene and the Chapel of St. Nicholas were established. At the beginning of the 15th century, the town hall (building No. 1) was built, which provided premises for the town council and the town court. Český Brod became the first serf town in Bohemia and Moravia to have its own town hall and local government. In 1512, a large part of the original buildings burnt down, but were rebuilt short after. In 1690 the

town burnt down again. In the first half of the 18th century, some of the town houses and public buildings were repaired, but many of them were destroyed by another fire (1739). In 1786 the town of Český Brod was designated a free royal town. The railway, which started operating in 1845, played an important role in the development of the town. From 1850, Český Brod was the seat of the district court and later (1868) of the district governorate.

Today Český Brod is the second largest town in the Kolín district with about 7,400 inhabitants. Thanks to the railway, a large part of the population commutes to Prague and Kolín for work.





SQUARE

Today's historic core of Český Brod corresponds to the area that was originally surrounded by a walled circuit with the centre formed by the two squares Arnošta z Pardubic and Husovo. In the Middle Ages and partly also in the early modern period, the town had three suburbs, but most of the town's intramural area formed the square. The square complex, divided by a built-in row of houses, was thus used for all public events until the 19th century. The character of these spaces is determined not only by the material composition and internal subdivision of the built-up areas, resulting from the historical urban development, but above all by the historical communication routes. In Brod, the long-distance route from Prague split to Plaňany, to Sadská and to Kouřim. The historical route to Kouřim, which crosses the square diagonally, left the most significant trace.

Until the end of the 18th century, there were cemeteries for the local residents around the churches of St. Gothard and St. Mary Magdalene. There was also the town hall, the pillory, meat and bread shops, forges and a fountain. It was busiest during the town's markets, which were still held twelve times a year at the beginning of the

20th century. Their dates were historically fixed so as not to compete with markets in neighbouring towns.

During the 19th century, parts of the square were gradually paved, with the main thoroughfares being paved with a different material to the other areas and raised walkways. Trees also began to appear in the square from the second half of the 19th century. Historically, there was no greenery in squares, as there was plenty of it in the town gardens and outside the town walls. The first trees (lime trees) were planted around the former Town Hall No. 1, and later trees (probably elms or maples) with rounded crowns were added around the perimeter of the square. In both cases the trees grew out of the paved surface, not the grass areas. Despite the greater proportion of greenery, the square retained its main function as a gathering place. The open, paved area around the sculpture of the Holy Family continued to allow for markets, various gatherings and festivals.

In the course of the 20th century, the historical concept of greenery disappeared and (mainly coniferous) shrubs were planted. Gradually, the





ageing trees were cut down, the area around the sculpture of the Holy Family and the area around building No. 1 was grassed over and most of the area was sealed with tar. At the same time, several Gothic-Baroque houses were being demol-

ished, in particular the historic brewery building next to the new town hall, which has been replaced by a temporary park.

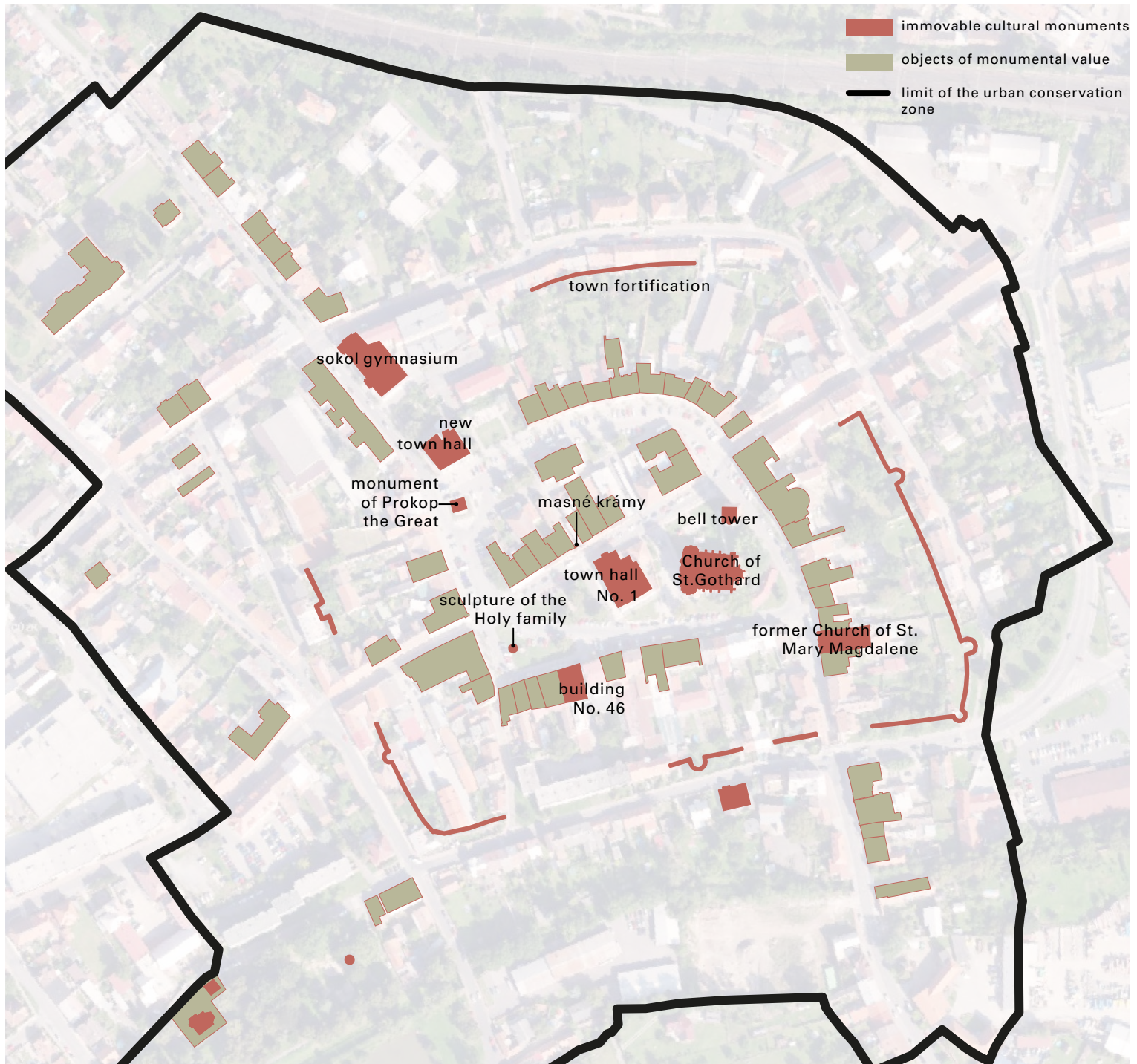


[2] Heritage care

The urban conservation zone in Český Brod was declared by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic on 26.9.1990. The most important historical monuments of the town include the Church of St. Gothard, the late Gothic detached bell tower and the old town hall No. 1. The cultural and historical values of the buildings include the underground parts of the individual buildings and the connection between the original Gothic

cellars of No. 1 and No. 12.

The important monuments of the historical centre further include the Baroque sculpture of the Holy Family from the workmanship of Jan Jiří Šlanzovský, the monument of Prokop the Great, the work of sculptor Karel Opatrný, the former monastery church of St. Mary Magdalene, the Kouřim foregate and meat shops.



[3] Competition area



The area in question comprises the entire open, unbuilt surface of both squares, which covers an area of almost 21,700 m². In addition to the square area itself, four streets radially linked to the square and their associated traffic solution are also included in the competition area - the streets Suvorovova, Tyršova, Krále Jiřího and Arnošta z Pardubic towards Kouřimská gate.

Buildings and objects that are located within the area in question or are directly adjacent to it are not part of the assignment per se, but their role within the overall concept must be addressed. It should be taken into account that the ground floors of the buildings around the perimeter of

the square and along the central road offer the possibility of an extension of the public space.

The gap next to the new town hall building in the northern part of the square, which is now used as a small park with a playground, is also part of the competition area. This area is supposed to be developed in the future to close the street frontage. The future new building is not subject to this competition. However, a suitable temporary use for the area is sought.

The green space to the east of St. Gothard's Church is owned by the parish and is not part of the competition area.



[4] Brief

Thanks to the preservation of its cultural monuments, town houses and original spatial composition, the historic centre of Český Brod has retained its historical character, which impresses with its friendly human scale with a natural hierarchy of buildings. Unfortunately, the square is nowadays perceived mainly as a functional place that does not offer many opportunities for lingering and leisure. It is mainly used for running errands at the town hall or post office, visiting the library, or doing a little shopping.

The nearby retail park with a spacious car park largely replaces the function of the square as a shopping area. In recent years, the square has thus become primarily a pass-through for both pedestrians and motor vehicles. For cars, there is a direct route through the square connecting the railway station in Český Brod and Palackého Street (which leads on to the road connecting Prague and Kolín). Moreover, the current traffic layout and the high number of parking spaces located means that a large part of the area is

dedicated to cars - at the expense of public pedestrian space. Especially in the evenings and on weekends, the square has low attendance, which is attributed, among other things, to the lack of services, activities and overall attractiveness of the place. The quality of the signboards does not always correspond to the historical character and the square lacks a quality visual and graphic uniformity. The purpose of the competition is to transform the area into a lively and representative square where people like to stay, do things and meet. The square should be perceived by residents and visitors as pleasant to be in and offer a diverse range of activities and places to be. The challenge, therefore, is to design a high quality public space including a basic strategy for its use. The revitalisation should not only be about the physical form, but be also about revitalising the original function of the square as a central place of action. The design should embody timelessness, quality and sustainability, both in material and conceptual terms.





Public space:

The character of the square should be primarily aimed at pedestrian users, their comfort and safety. The intention is that the area currently used for vehicular traffic (this applies to roadways and parking spaces) should be reduced to increase the use value of the public space for pedestrian and non-motorised traffic. The square should offer a range of spots and corners with different characters to allow people to stay longer with opportunities to sit and spend time. Emphasis should also be placed on sun conditions to provide both sunny and shady places. It is important that the overall space is designed as barrier-free as possible, allowing easy accessibility for all potential users.

Greenery and rain water:

The proposal should offer a comprehensive blue-green infrastructure solution that responds to the current trend of climatic conditions. The number of trees should be increased, existing trees will ideally be retained or gradually restored.

Historically there were no grass areas in the square, these were only created in the last century. The extent to which grass areas should be retained, or where new grass areas should be created, is a matter for the competitors to decide. The green space concept should bring aesthetic qualities to the public space and at the same time provide the basis for a favourable micro-climate and associated pleasant living conditions.

The design will necessarily include a concept for rainwater management. It is important to stress here that the retention areas should not be located above basement.

Surfaces:

The choice of surfaces should respect the historic character of the square and be in line with the NPU guidelines, but should also respond to contemporary mobility needs and allow for an easy use by different users. It is recommended to use mainly granite for paved surfaces (see Visual

Manual). Surface materials that are currently used in the square, but are also not in compliance with conservation management, should be replaced.

Traces of history:

The proposal for the revitalization of the square should offer solutions to work with the traces of the original buildings and historical routes.

The area of the square is packed with historical layers, which gives the place its genius loci, and it is therefore important that these layers are commemorated. This does not refer to visible historic buildings, but to those that have disappeared and should remain part of the square in some form: In particular, the original buildings around St. Gothard's Church (see Imperial Prints 1841) or the former cemetery. Another historically valuable element is the road crossing Arnošt z Pardubic Square diagonally (plot 923/2), which was an important link to Kouřim. If this road is dissolved, at least a trace of this route should be kept. These traces of history should get sufficient attention, at the same time, however, they should not dominate the new design and reduce the utility of the square.

View:

The bell tower is currently not open to the public. In the future, the city is considering making it accessible again. An ascent to the bell tower will then allow a view of the square from above, giving visitors a new perspective. We recommend to take this aspect into account in the design..

Gap:

According to the current planning documentation, the gap east of the new Town Hall should be developed with a building or buildings that preserve the scale of the original historic development in substantial volumes. Following the demolition of the historic brewery that stood on the site, a temporary park has been created here. It is not part of the brief to propose a new building



for the site. The space will be treated as part of the square area within the competition. As the gap should be redeveloped in the foreseeable future, from an economic and environmental point of view, it is not advisable to propose a complex solution requiring costly construction work. A suitable solution should be found to allow temporary use and thus provide a quality space that complements the square's programme.

Traffic:

The aim of the competition is to find a traffic solution that avoids transit through the square and reduces the areas designated for motor vehicles. Passing through the square is not necessary in context to the city's street network. The street network offers opportunities to avoid the square area and direct passages (especially on the Suvorovova - Krále Jiřího axis) have the potential to be reduced. At least, traffic should be slowed down and pedestrian safety improved within the competition area. The access streets are partially very narrow and there are problematic situations at the entrance to the square. The design should therefore include a traffic solution for these streets, including their directionality. The Kouřimská gate at the south-east corner of the square should not be used for regular passage for motor traffic, for reasons of conservation and the spatial limits of the gate.

Emphasis will also be placed on cycle traffic solutions, which should be an integral part of the square. It is important that the cycling infrastructure respects the pedestrian space. Adequate space should be left for all users with an emphasis on minimising conflicts. The locations of primary schools (Tyršova 68, Husovo náměstí 19), which are not negligible in terms of traffic, should also be taken into account. Especially in the morning, when parents bring their children to school, there is a lot of traffic. The safety of pupils should be the first priority here.

Keeping the possibility of supplies and access of emergency services in the area of the whole square is essential.

Supply:

To ensure supply to shops and businesses it is essential that lorries continue to be allowed to enter the centre.

There are two basic types of supply in the square area. Regular supply of businesses (restaurants, shops), requiring longer intervals and appropriate choice of surfaces for potential heavy weight pallet truck movements. In addition, irregular supply of parcel shops, which are often approached several times a day by a van for loading and unloading packages. From experience it is not possible to define specific times for the supply. Rather, there is a need to provide conveniently located supply parking spaces at short intervals free of charge.

Parking:

Currently, there are approximately 239 parking spaces in the area (including Šafaříková Street), of which almost 70 are resident parking spaces. The aim is to reduce the total number in favour of a high quality public pedestrian space. Long-term parking and non-conceptual spaces should be reduced. Mainly resident and short-term parking (reserved for the town hall, post office, pharmacies,...) should be retained.

It is important that there are enough spaces for disabled people in the square, especially in front of public institutions (offices, post office) and health services (doctors, pharmacies). It is not the aim to cluster the disabled parking spaces in one place, but rather to suitably distribute them throughout the square.

The city anticipates reducing the total number of parking spaces to approximately 150, with the understanding that the parking areas should be designed as flexible, multi-purpose areas that can be converted and used as needed for larger events. The current evolution of society's approach to mobility suggests a possible reduction in the need for parking spaces and areas for vehicular circulation. The proposed parking spaces should therefore allow for their investment-free



transformation for other uses.

In the future, the city is considering the use of the firehouse (Tyršova 73) for the construction of a new parkhouse, but its eventual realisation would take place independently and significantly later than the reconstruction of the square itself. Conceptually, however, this eventuality can be included in the proposal.

Activities:

The square of Český Brod should allow its users a wide range of both individual and community-based uses. The square should offer space for meetings with friends, spending free time, relaxing, sitting in the sun and shade, exercise and walking, but also for larger social and cultural events. Due to the large area of the square, it is proposed to dedicate different parts of the space to different qualities supporting a variety of uses and thus allowing for a large range of activities. The city's aim is for the square to offer space for markets, cultural and social events (including the possibility of a stage), a Christmas tree and possibly an outdoor ceremonial space including the necessary infrastructure such as electricity, water, waste or lighting. Furthermore, the square should provide a range of commercial (cafes, shops,...) and non-commercial leisure spaces. It is important that the space takes into account all potential users, both in terms of interests and mobility (pedestrians, cyclists, scooters, strollers,...). Diversity and openness should also be reflected in the choice of surfaces.

Lighting:

The design should include a unified lighting concept, especially for historically valuable objects.

Ground Floor:

The current layout of the public space around the perimeter of the square does not provide suitable conditions for the expansion of cafes or restaurants into the public space. The intention of the competition is to find an ideal form of sharing

and using the space at this imaginary interface between private and public property. The design should offer the maximum possible support to existing and future business owners as well as users. The square offers sufficient space for innovative, flexible and variable solutions. At the same time, emphasis should be placed on safety and minimising physical and mental barriers.

Water element:

An important part of the reconstruction of the square will be the incorporation of water features, which are currently missing in the area. In particular, a water element that will offer refreshment on hot summer days and that can also function as a play element for children. There should also be one or more drinking fountains. It is recommended to design the water features with the utmost attention to economy and efficiency of maintenance..

Furniture:

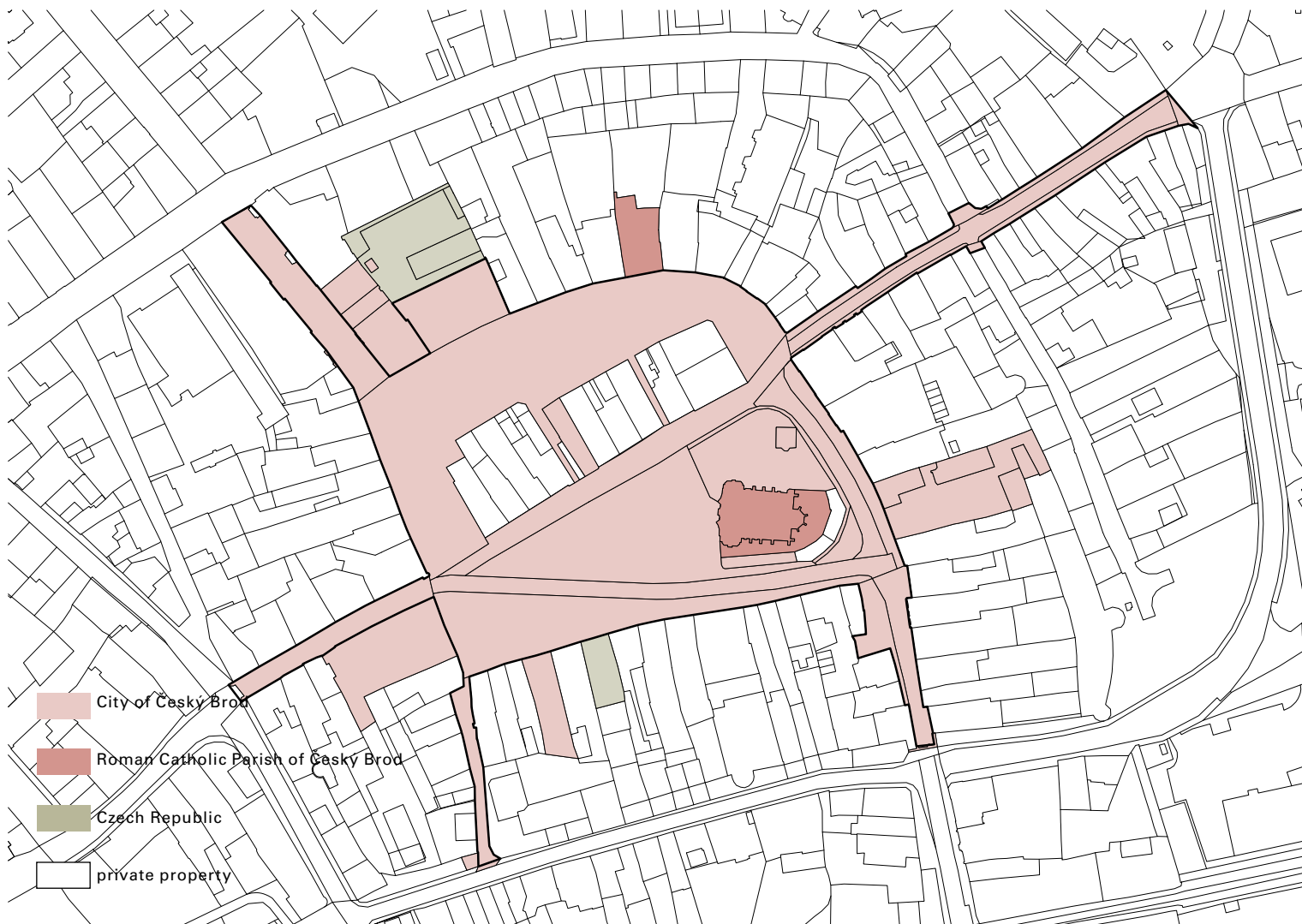
Furniture is an integral part of the revitalisation. The area should be equipped with high-quality urban furniture of an appropriate aesthetic and utility level, allowing for different modes of use of the square. The individual elements should harmonise visually and in terms of purpose. The principles for the selection and arrangement of furniture are specified in the Visual Manual of the City. The design of the furniture should address basic amenities such as benches, litter bins, bicycle racks, lighting, a navigation and orientation system, as well as flexible elements. This could be, for example, a modular system of elements that can be assembled into different variations according to the current need (market stalls, different types of seating, a stage, etc.)

General recommendation:

The proposal should not conflict with the city's Visual Manual, which was prepared for the City in 2018. This manual can also serve as a source of inspiration.



[5] Property





[6] Jury

Independent part



Štěpánka Endrle

Landscape architect and founder of the ŠMÍDOVÁ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS studio. She graduated from the Czech University of Life Sciences with a degree in Agricultural Engineering - Horticulture. At the Mendel University in Brno she studied Garden and Landscape Architecture. She tries to show to professionals and the public that landscape architecture is increasingly influencing our everyday life. She and her team designed Herold's Orchards or parts of Letenské sady for Prague.



Eliška Málková

Architect and co-founder of the Prague studio Taktika, which focuses on public space. They work focuses on sustainable as well as socially responsible design. They won second prize in the competition for the design of a square in Příbram. Apart from her work in the studio, Eliška Málková is also involved in regional planning and is currently the urban architect of the Libuš district of Prague.



Luboš Klabík

He is the municipal architect of Benešov and co-founder of the urban planning and architectural studio Tečka. He focuses on the design and revitalization of public spaces, but also on the creation of urban concepts, regulation plans and manuals for cities and municipalities.



Tomáš Sklenář

As a landscape architect, he is involved in both private gardens and the design of public spaces. He has collaborated with MS architects and Flera landscape studio and since 2020 has been running his own landscape architecture studio. He teaches at the Institute of Landscape Architecture at the Czech Technical University. Since 2020 he has been a member of the board of the Czech Association for Landscape Architecture.



Hana Špalková
- alternate

Architect Hana Špalková runs her own studio at the Institute of Landscape Architecture at the Czech Technical University. She is the co-author of the project for the revitalization of Kostnický náměstí in Prague, which is located in the urban conservation zone of Vinohrady, Žižkov, Vršovice. Together with Radmila Fingerová they designed a sensitive adaptation of the square with respect to its historical form.

**Dependent part****Tomáš Klinecký**

mayor of Český Brod

**Markéta Havličková**deputy mayor of Český Brod,
architect**Milan Majer**

deputy mayor of Český Brod

**Vladimír Jakub Mrvík**
- alternatemember of the City Council of Český Brod,
historian**Jiří Pavlíček**
- alternate

Municipal architect of Český Brod



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