

# Competition Brief

The RaumScape  
competition invites  
innovative solutions that  
perceive public space and  
architecture as a fluid,  
interlocking, layered urban  
landscape.

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Application deadline  
|02|06|2025|



The competition concerns the design of the space in front of the Fairmont Golden Prague Hotel (a former InterContinental hotel) in Prague's Old Town.

The design focuses on a contemporary-quality public space for Prague residents and visitors, incorporating service, technological, and rental areas. This is combined with the context of a conservation area, the neighborhood of a late modernist hotel, and the now commonplace requirements of adaptability, sustainability, and blue-green infrastructure.

The competition aims to find a partner with whom the client can develop a quality project from the finalisation of the design to its successful implementation and transform a long-standing indeterminate space into an attractive public place.





### **RaumScape: A Unique Piazzetta in Old Town Prague**

RaumScape aims to connect public space with new programming to create a vibrant and dynamic urban landscape. This architectural and landscape competition seeks visionary solutions that reimagine public space and architecture as a layered, interconnected whole within the urban fabric.

### **RaumScape = Raumplan + Landscape**

The competition's approach is based on the unique Raumplan concept introduced by Adolf Loos in Villa Müller, built in Prague in 1930. Loos brought a new way of working with space that goes beyond the traditional concept of floors and instead uses different heights and intermediate levels to create fluid and interconnected spaces. RaumScape takes inspiration from this philosophy in the context of contemporary landscape architecture and urban design.

The InterContinental Hotel (now Fairmont Golden Prague), a symbol of post-war modernist architecture, is located in the heart of Prague. The piazzetta was originally designed in accordance with the architectural principles of its time - it served as the roof of an underground car park and included multi-level technological elements, including a raised green area and a ramp to the car park. However, a third of this space was not accessible to the public, limiting its potential as an open urban space.

The newly completed renovation of the hotel preserves its original artistic and craft values while responding to current technological and environmental requirements. This transformation affects not only the building itself, but also the wider area of the so-called Old Town Gate and the urban context, starting with a new vision of the public space in front of the hotel. The aim is to optimise public accessibility, promote the blue-green layer and integrate new functions and activities that will strengthen its significance within the city.

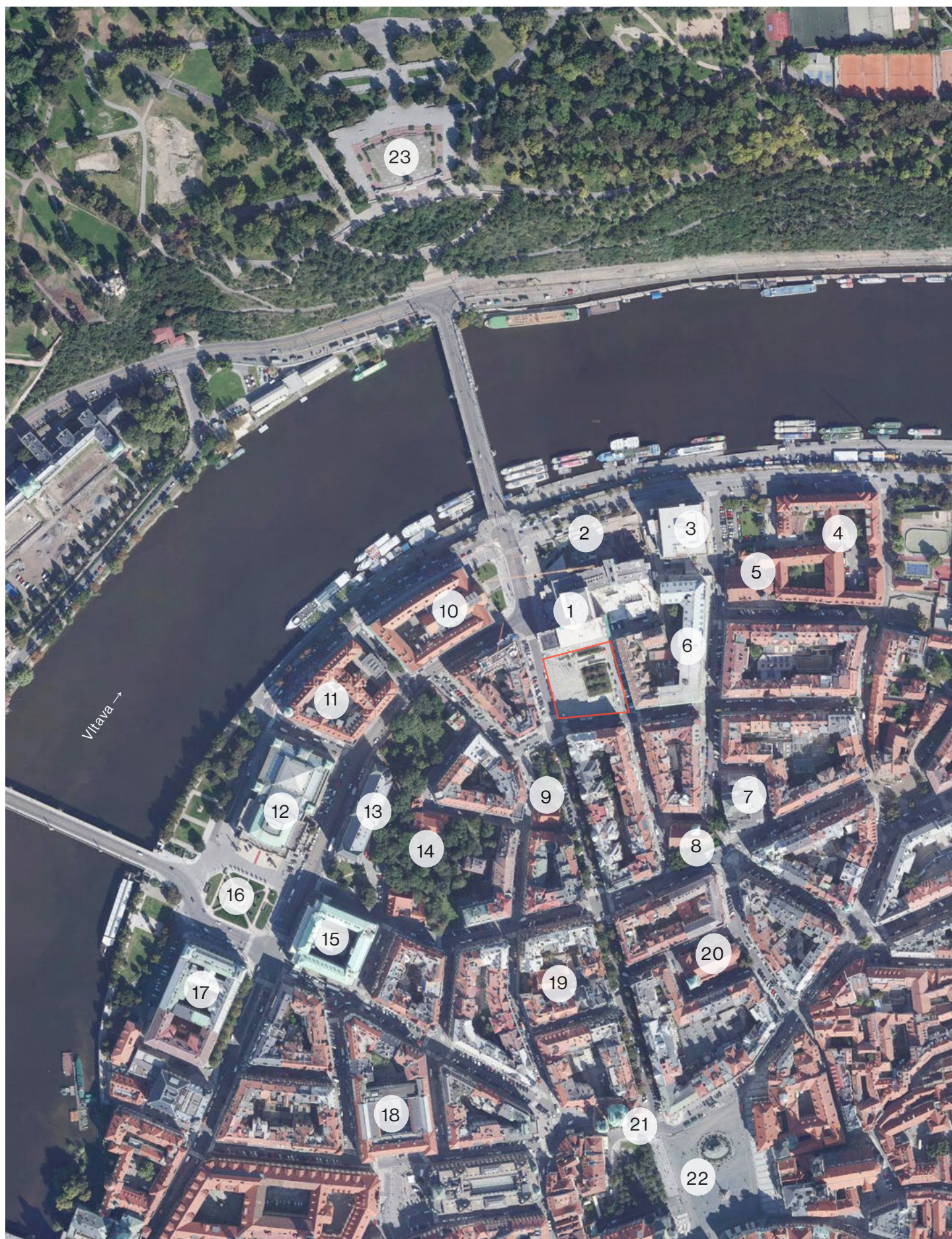
This competition seeks to revitalise an important public space in the historic centre of Prague. For architects, landscape architects and urban planners, it represents not only a challenge but also an opportunity to deepen the dialogue between the past, present and future of this place. Emphasis will be placed on respect for cultural heritage, the needs of local residents, the significance of the site, the integration of new programmes and environmental sustainability.

**We invite creative teams from all over the world to join this exceptional project and take advantage of a unique opportunity to participate in shaping the future of Prague's city centre - to create a space that will inspire and bring joy to residents and visitors alike.**



Vladimír Štulc, Jan Vrana, decorative wall in SE part





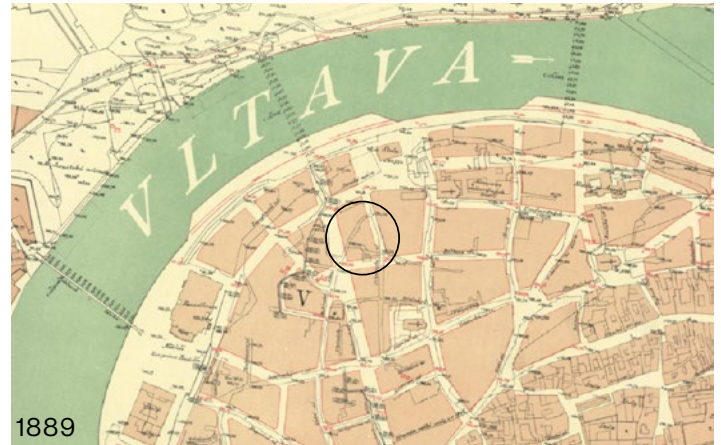


### Context



Competition area

- 1 Fairmont Golden Prague Hotel
- 2 The Curies Square, connected to the Vltava riverbank via an underpass
- 3 Hotel President
- 4 Na Františku Hospital
- 5 Church of Sts. Simon and Jude, Brothers Hospitallers Monastery
- 6 The Curies Elementary School
- 7 Spanish Synagogue
- 8 Church of the Holy Spirit
- 9 Old-New Synagogue
- 10 Faculty of Law, Charles University
- 11 Prague Conservatory
- 12 Rudolfinum
- 13 Museum of Decorative Arts
- 14 Old Jewish Cemetery
- 15 Faculty of Arts, Charles University
- 16 Jan Palach Square
- 17 UMPRUM – Academy of Arts, Architecture & Design
- 18 Municipal Library
- 19 Maisel Synagogue
- 20 Church of the Savior
- 21 Church of St. Nicholas
- 22 Old Town Square
- 23 Prague Metronome, viewpoint





### **Context of the heritage-protected area**

The site in question lies within the Prague Conservation Area, declared by Government Decree No. 66/1971 Coll. and inscribed on the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List in 1992 for its outstanding universal value. This value lies particularly in the fact that the area is an exceptional example of continuous urban development, preserving elements from all historical periods from the Middle Ages to the present, some of which were unique urban planning achievements of their time. At the same time, Prague ranks among Europe's most beautiful cities due to its location on both banks of the Vltava River, its urban landscape of burgher houses and palaces accentuated by characteristic towers. It contains an extraordinary concentration of historic monuments of outstanding architectural quality from all periods. It boasts exceptional architectural excellence in major buildings that served as models for Central Europe. These attributes were decisive for its inscription on the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List.

The affected area is part of an exceptionally valuable historic environment in the northeastern section of the Old Town. It borders Josefov, where preserved traces of the medieval Jewish Quarter meet the representative buildings constructed during the urban clearance of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, alongside a bold architectural intervention of the 1960s in the form of the InterContinental Hotel (now Fairmont Golden Prague). The site features prominent urban axes – Pařížská Street and Dvořák Embankment – intersecting with remnants of the original medieval street network that once connected the Jewish Quarter and the early Christian core near the Convent of St Agnes and the Na Františku area.

The piazzetta between Pařížská and Bílkova Streets, referred to as Miloš Forman Square, represents an incomplete 1960s zoning plan intended to balance the mass of the hotel and open an important city passage towards the Vltava. Today, this space holds value in the centre of Prague as a place that has preserved the potential to become a high-quality public area – an open, habitable urban interior of cultural and historical importance.

Within the Prague Conservation Area, in addition to declared cultural monuments, heritage protection also covers buildings and spaces that, while not designated as cultural monuments, possess architectural or urbanistic values affecting both interior and exterior forms. Contemporary interventions into the existing historic fabric must not disrupt the mass or spatial composition of historical structures, nor harm the environment of the Historic Centre of Prague.

Thus, protection concerns not only individual buildings, but also street spaces, historical layout, building volumes, and the urban landscape as a whole. The current situation, resulting from unfinished public spaces during the normalization period, has led to a loss of spatial clarity. However, in this case, the area holds value not only in historical terms but also as an urban composition. Its future transformation should respect this specific context.

## **Hotel InterContinental**

In the 1960s, during a period of political easing and growing openness to the West, the socialist government of Czechoslovakia sought ways to present the country as a culturally developed and welcoming destination. A major step was the decision to bring the international hotel chain InterContinental to Prague, offering services of global standards and serving as an icon of modern Czechoslovak architecture.

A strategic site on the right bank of the Vltava River was selected for the project, near the Old Town and Pařížská Street, then one of the last underdeveloped parts of the city's historic core. The location offered exceptional urban potential but also posed a major challenge, given its position in the heart of historic Prague.

Construction of the InterContinental Hotel took place between 1968 and 1974. It was commissioned to Karel Filsak, head of the Epsilon studio under the Association of Design Studios (SPA). His core team included Karel Bubeníček and Jaroslav Švec, with Irma Dvořáčková (Steinocherová) and initially Jiří Gebert, who focused on façades but emigrated in 1968 and was replaced by Václav Hacman. For the interiors, Filsak brought in other prominent architects including his longtime collaborator Jan Šrámek and his Beta team, as well as Jana Bočan, Zdeněk Rothbauer, Oldřich Novotný, and Zbyněk Hřivnáč. A second team included František Cubr, Zdeněk Pokorný, and Zdenka Nováková.

The building was designed as a Gesamtkunstwerk – a total work of art. Elements of both interior and exterior were created not only by architects but also by renowned artists, designers, and craftsmen. The hotel became a showcase of contemporary Czech art, design, craftsmanship, and engineering. A striking feature was its ceramic cladding, designed by sculptor Zbyněk Sekal, giving the building its unique character. Public spaces also featured chandeliers by René Roubíček and works by other leading artists.

Though ambitious in concept, the project faced challenges typical of the time: limited access to modern technologies, quality materials, and precise workmanship. Construction took place under a centrally planned economy that often fell short of technical standards. As a result, the building suffered from structural flaws, makeshift solutions, and geometric inaccuracies that later complicated restoration efforts. Still, the hotel became an iconic structure of its era, a symbol of openness and cultural confidence.

When it opened in 1974, the InterContinental Hotel was considered one of the most luxurious hotels in Central Europe. It hosted numerous prominent guests and became a fixture of the Prague hotel scene. After 1989, during the wave of privatization and transition to a market economy, the hotel changed owners and operators several times.

In the 1990s and early 21st century, the building underwent numerous insensitive renovations, often disregarding the original architectural intent. Some interior parts were rebuilt or completely removed, with commercial and operational needs prioritized over authenticity and artistic value.





Approx 1974 (archive Karel Filsak jr.).

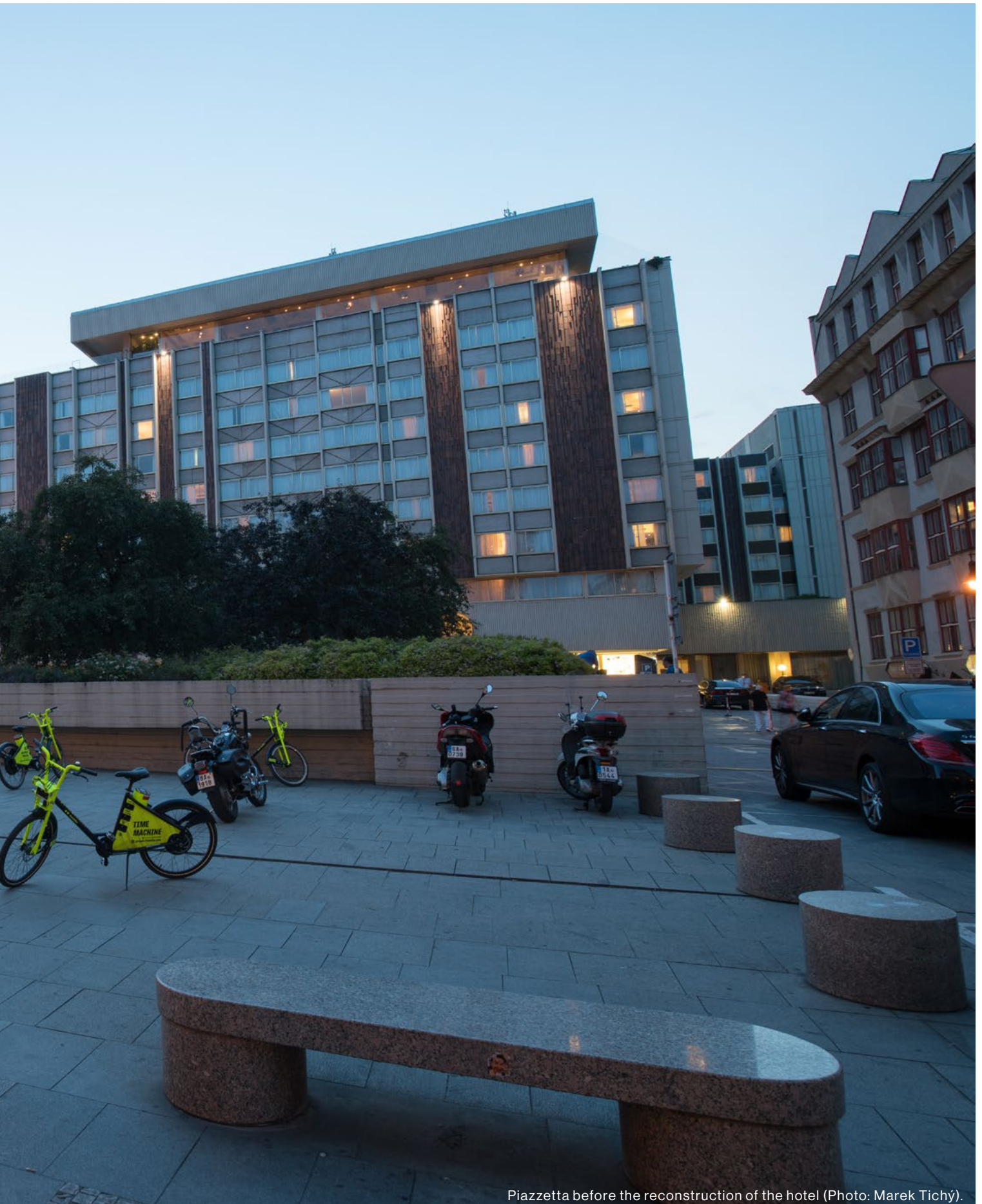


Approx 1994 (Photo: ČTK).



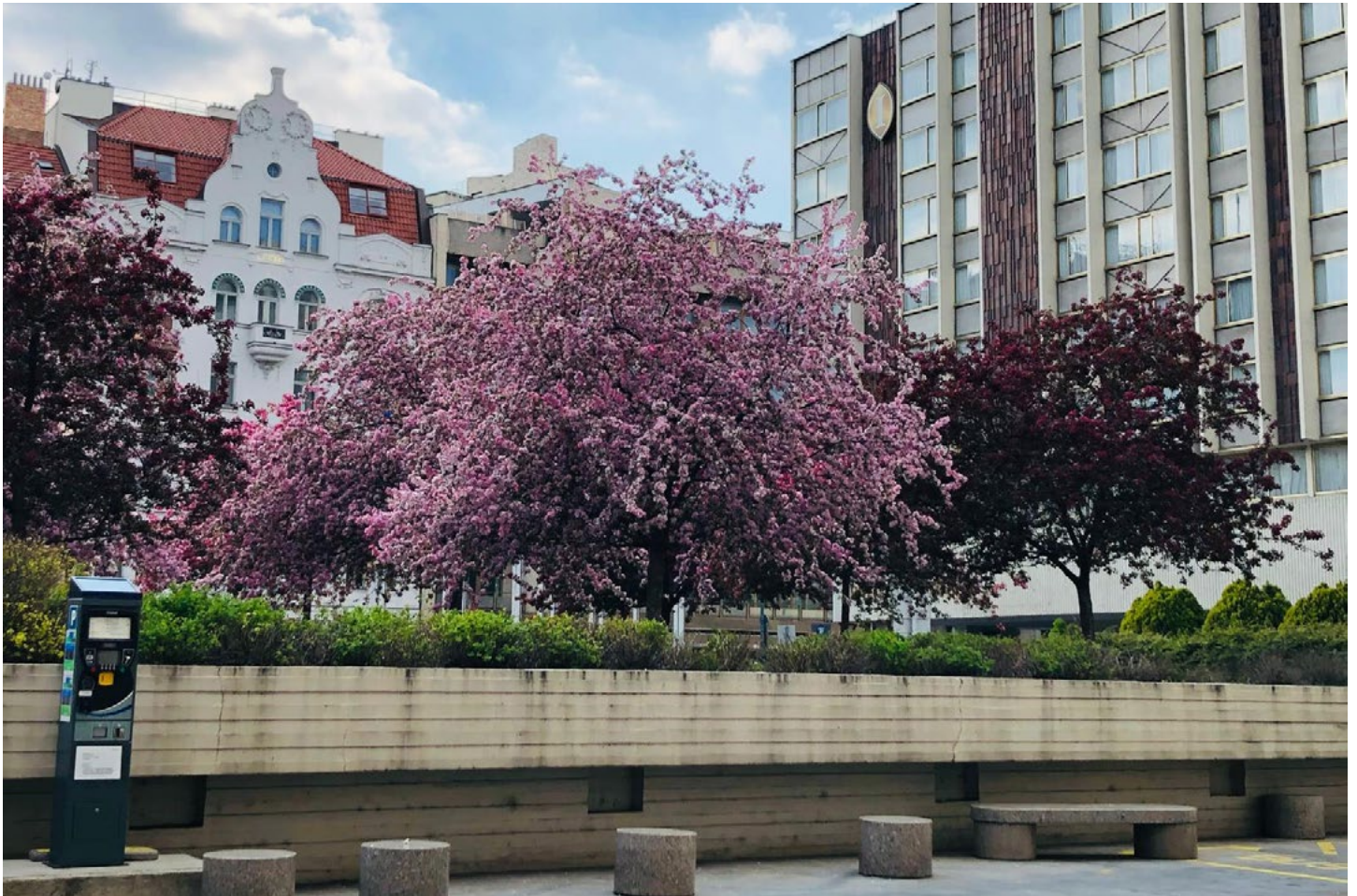






Piazzetta before the reconstruction of the hotel (Photo: Marek Tichý).









Piazzetta before the reconstruction of the hotel (Photos: Citizens of Prague 1).



### Old Town Gate

In 2019, the building was acquired by a group of Czech investors associated with the family investment office R2G (Oldřich Šlemr, Pavel Baudiš, and Eduard Kučera), who committed to a comprehensive renovation project with a strong emphasis on preserving the building's authenticity and historical significance. That same year, they invited five local architects to participate in a private design competition for the hotel's renovation and its immediate surroundings. The winning proposal, the Old Town Gate (Staroměstská brána in Czech), was submitted by architect Marek Tichý.

The renovation has been underway since 2020 and is exceptional in both technical scope and conceptual depth. It encompasses not only the restoration of the hotel itself—reopening under the name Fairmont Golden Prague Hotel—but also the broader revitalization of the surrounding area.

The Old Town Gate project includes:

- Structural reinforcement of the reinforced concrete frame, which had shown serious deterioration
- Restoration of the ceramic façade, mosaics, and original artistic works
- Renovation of interiors using traditional artisanal techniques
- Technological upgrades, including sustainable energy systems and environmentally conscious solutions
- Creation of a new direct connection to the riverbank (náplavka)
- Development of a new public space between the hotel, the Faculty of Law, and the river, featuring a pavilion (gallery)
- Revitalization of the public area in front of the hotel—subject of this RaumScape competition





The main objective of the Old Town Gate project was to connect the hotel with its surroundings and open it to the public. A key urban intervention was the redesign of the area facing the Vltava River—a new passage now links the embankment with a publicly accessible garden. The proposal also included a new building on the piazzetta in front of the hotel (now Miloš Forman Square), covering 2,500 m<sup>2</sup> and housing retail units, air-handling systems, and a new entrance to the underground garage. The central ramps were removed, and service access was relocated to Dvořák Embankment.

The project was first presented to the public in 2021 and sparked wide debate. Its main opponent, the Citizens of Prague 1 association, launched a petition against the proposed building on the piazzetta. In June 2022, Prague 1 District Council, as part of its comments on the Metropolitan Plan, called for maintaining the non-buildable status of parcel no. 987/1 in the Old Town cadastral area.

In response, the investors divided the initiative into two phases: (1) renovation of the hotel, including its connection to the riverside public space (now Fairmont Golden Prague), and (2) revitalization of the piazzetta as an independent project.

The hotel renovation included complex restoration work—some original elements were removed and rebuilt using archival documentation. A new entrance from Pařížská Street toward the river now offers the public direct access to the embankment.

After the 2022 municipal elections, the issue of piazzetta development reached ministerial levels. Both the Ministry for Regional Development and the Ministry of Culture issued negative opinions on the proposed structure. The City of Prague, however, defended its right to determine the site's future as a self-governing body, not as state administration.

Investors and architects attempted revisions—reducing the building's volume and proposing an artistic competition for the façade. Even so, this approach failed to gain support from local authorities. Both the City of Prague and Prague 1 then recommended an open architectural-urban competition for the full redesign of Miloš Forman piazzetta.

In 2024, in response to this call, the investor commissioned the CCEA MOBA team to prepare a concept for the open competition, concluding the Old Town Gate project. The international competition, RaumScape, seeks a solution that integrates public space with a new program, creating a dynamic and sustainable urban landscape focused on connectivity, blue-green infrastructure, and long-term livability in the city center.

The competition has received support from both the Prague 1 District and the City of Prague. All three parties (the City of Prague, Prague 1 District, and the investor) negotiated a Memorandum on the development of the Miloš Forman Piazzetta, which anticipates the launch of the competition. In January 2025, the Prague 1 District approved the Memorandum, followed by the City of Prague in April 2025. The Memorandum has been signed by all three parties. The brief now reflects:

- public demands for a high-quality public space,
- investor requirements for integrating service and rental facilities,
- the shared priority of both the district and the city to revitalize this key public area in Prague's historic center.



### Competition area – red line

The competition site for RaumScape is the piazzetta along Pařížská Street (Miloš Forman Square) in Prague's Old Town. The area is part of the larger parcel no. 987/1 (Old Town cadastral area 727024) and covers 3,200 m<sup>2</sup>.

Prior to the renovation, 1,030 m<sup>2</sup> of the piazzetta was occupied by ramps and a plinth housing ventilation for the underground parking. These structures were topped with 600 m<sup>2</sup> of inaccessible greenery. As a result, only 2,170 m<sup>2</sup> were originally accessible to the public.

### Extended area – red dotted line

Broader area to consider within thinking about and creating the competition design. Include the small nearby park to the South in these ideas, as well.

#### Note:

*The Josefov area was redeveloped during the urban clearance of the late 19th century, with rubble infill resulting in heterogeneous and less stable subsoil. Any new intervention must be sensitive to the surrounding historic structures.*



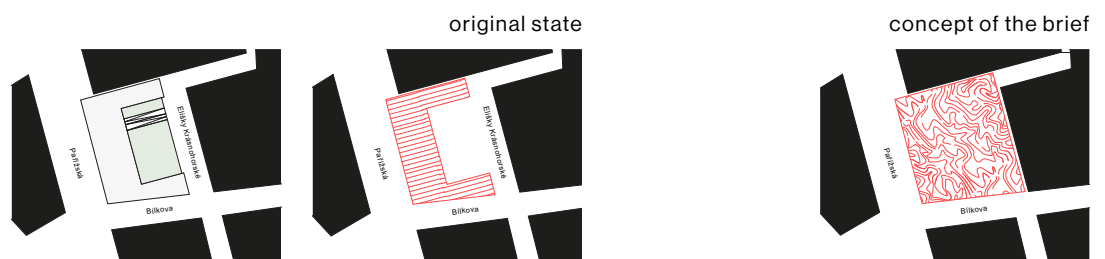


### Brief – Parameters

The competition brief calls for the design of the 3,200 m<sup>2</sup> piazzetta area to include:

- 1,200 m<sup>2</sup> for vertical circulation (stairs and elevator; ramps have been relocated) and the necessary technical infrastructure for the underground parking and commercial rental space (this refers to the total area, without presupposing a single structure as the solution),
- a minimum of 3,000 m<sup>2</sup> of publicly accessible space, of which at least 600 m<sup>2</sup> must be dedicated to greenery/vegetation.

The proposed design should not exceed the cornice height of the ground floor along Pařížská Street in the section facing Miloš Forman Square.



### **Brief – Intervention to the heritage-protected area**

Competition proposals should not treat the site as an empty plot for new construction, but rather as a layer of urban landscape that has retained its openness and ability to absorb contemporary needs—without losing identity. Urban, architectural, and landscape solutions should build on the value of openness and permeability, both physical and visual—including the preservation of key sightlines and sensitivity to the surrounding scale.

New elements should be created with the awareness that they are part of a setting of extraordinary cultural value. At the same time, the area has potential to accommodate high-quality contemporary architectural expression—one capable of engaging the context with both respect and ambition. From a heritage perspective, it is crucial that the new design responds naturally to the existing structure, develops its values, and contributes to the cultural continuity of the place.

### **Brief – Removal of Barriers and Site Permeability**

Barriers resulting from the current urban layout must be removed in the proposed design, while retaining the functional elements necessary for the operation of the underground garage (e.g., ventilation), albeit relocated within the site. In addition, new pedestrian entrances to the garage must be created directly from the site through architecturally appropriate interventions. The existing entry and exit ramps may be removed, as vehicle access to the underground parking will be newly provided from Dvořák Embankment.

Today, the space reads like a blind map—closed off, unclear, and fragmented. The urban design of the 1960s reflected a different relationship to the city and the public. The goal now is to restore natural flow through the area—on foot, with a stroller, by bicycle, and visually. The emphasis is on seamless movement, barrier-free access, and the thoughtful integration of technical and circulation elements needed for garage operations and rental spaces.

The brief calls for an architecturally bold yet non-aggressive intervention that opens the space to the public. New interventions should become an organic part of the urban ground plane—not an add-on, but a coherent element of the cityscape.

### **Brief – Expanding Public Space**

The aim is to create a higher-quality public space that exceeds the area of the currently accessible surface at street level. The outcome must serve not only the general public but also reflect the needs of the hotel and its guests.

Public space is above all a matter of quality and atmosphere. This site has the potential to become a refined place in the modern metropolis—lively, inviting, and culturally active; a space that is accessible, pleasant, and dignified.

The design should go beyond the static function of a "pass-through" and create opportunities for pause, sitting, and social interaction. The new solution should be generous to the public and considerate of existing neighbors, including hotel operations—private and public realms are expected to coexist here in harmony, not in competition.

### **Brief – Shaping the Space in Context with Pařížská Street**

The design is expected to explore the urban and spatial relationship with Pařížská Street, with the goal of perceptually extending it to Dvořák Embankment and enhancing the overall urban quality of its northern section. The vibrancy of Pařížská, from the visitor's perspective, is diminished by the open, unresolved space between Bilkova Street and the southern façade of the hotel. This area has been



unsatisfactorily addressed since the 1960s, when the InterContinental Hotel complex was integrated into the Josefov district. The original urban concept of Pařížská envisioned a “square” at its intersection with Maiselova and Břehová Streets, while the competition site was occupied by a block of buildings until 1956.

A key aim is therefore to examine solutions that reintegrate this section into the continuity of Pařížská as a commercial street, terminating at its intersection with 17. listopadu Street. The proposed design should be in proportional dialogue with the architectural character of the hotel’s surroundings, which—typical of late 20th-century architecture—layer public spaces and functions vertically. It should also reflect the grandeur of Pařížská as a boulevard shaped by the redevelopment of Josefov. The site is expected to be approached comprehensively, with innovation and a contemporary architectural language—not by simply replicating the form or height of adjacent block structures. The task is to reconnect with Josefov’s original urban logic, which emphasized generosity of space, a thoughtful hierarchy, and accessible public areas. The design should embrace the layered nature of the site and welcome contemporary architecture that is both sensitive and confident.

### **Brief – Traffic Adjustment & Placement of Appropriate Greenery**

The design should improve the traffic situation in the immediate vicinity of the site, addressing the operational needs of the hotel complex and surrounding buildings. A key objective is the removal of perpendicular parking spaces along Elišky Krásnohorské Street, which currently obstruct smooth and calm traffic flow toward the hotel’s southern façade. The proposal must also meet current and future demands for electromobility by incorporating parking spaces equipped with electric charging stations that comply with fire safety regulations and support the appropriate scale of electric vehicle use in this area.

In parallel, the urban and transport solution should accommodate bicycle traffic—by providing stands or shared bike facilities—and become part of the city’s blue-green infrastructure. It should include elements that help cool the space and offer appropriate shading for Miloš Forman Square through well-integrated greenery.

The approach to the space should be urban—not merely functional in terms of traffic. The goal is to cultivate the streetscape: fewer cars, more people, more life. The solution should balance the necessary service access and a high-quality public realm. Greenery here is not decorative—it is a functional element of the design. Trees, water features, and shade are tools to cool, enliven, and make the space welcoming. The proposal should incorporate components of blue-green infrastructure. Architects and landscape designers have the opportunity to shape a space that is climate-resilient, functional, and poetic.

### **Brief – Economic Feasibility of the Proposal**

All proposals must include a demonstration of economic viability, taking into account both the estimated investment costs (150,000,000 CZK) for the transformation of the entire competition site and the long-term operational and maintenance sustainability of the area once completed.

High-quality public space is not at odds with economic sustainability—on the contrary. Investment in a thoughtful design pays off through long-term operational efficiency, increased public appeal, and enhancement of the city’s image. The proposal should be based on a realistic budget, where strategic value management plays a key role. Participants are expected to present not only a visually compelling design, but also a well-considered concept for maintenance, management, and operation—factors that often determine the long-term success of a place after completion.

**Jury / Dependent**



Petr Hlaváček  
1st deputy mayor, City of Prague



Karel Grabein Procházka  
councillor, Prague 1 District



Marek Tichý  
architect, TaK Architects



Tomáš Pek – alternate  
assembly member, City of Prague



Michal Müller – alternate  
councillor, Prague 1 District



Kateřina Hálová – alternate  
WIC Prague a.s.



Luboš Křižan – alternate  
IPR Prague



Jan Brabec – alternate  
urban development, Prague 1 District



Michal Šlemr – alternate  
WIC Prague a.s.



Jury / Independent



**Mette Skjold**

As CEO and partner in landscape studio SLA, she works on sustainable urbanism and bringing nature back into the city.



**Sarah M. Whiting**

Dean at Harvard GSD and co-founder of WW Architecture. Focuses on ties between architecture, cities, and society.



**Magdalena Juříková**

Since 2012, she has led the Prague City Gallery, focusing on contemporary art and its role in public space.



**Petr Burian**

For decades co-creator of the footprint of the DAM studio (Euro, Apartment House with Gym Lodecká, Main Point Pankrác), now Nextline architekti.



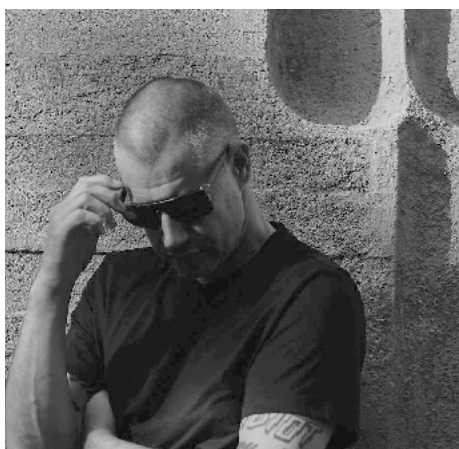
**Štěpánka Endrle – alternate**

Landscape architect and founder of L&SCAPE studio. Focuses on public space and promoting landscape architecture.



**Jana Moravcová – alternate**

Architect and urbanist focused on participatory planning and the development of urban environments.



**Vladimír 518 – alternate**

Multimedia artist, rapper, and author on architecture. Explores connections between urban culture and visual art.



**Štěpán Valouch – alternate**

Co-founder of ov-a studio. Focuses on contemporary architecture with an emphasis on context and detail.