

LIBUŠE'S DREAM:
HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN PRAGUE, THE CZECH REPUBLIC

by

RAMONA MURPHY BARTOS

(Under the direction of JOHN C. WATERS)

ABSTRACT

This study deals with the issue of historic preservation as practiced in Prague, Czech Republic. A developmental history of the city prefaces a discussion of the city's history of historic preservation practice. Historic preservation in Prague has precedents in medieval law, but formally coalesced in the late nineteenth century, marked by the creation of the Austro-Hungarian governmental agency Central Commission for the Study and Preservation of Built Monuments, and the founding of the Club for Old Prague. This study also analyzes the century of historic preservation legislation in the Czech lands from the Austro-Hungarian empire to the Communist era. Finally, this study examines the legacy of the Communist era and the challenges of post-Communism in regards to historic preservation, and makes recommendations for improvement of both the official and private historic preservation movements in Prague.

INDEX WORDS: Prague, Czech Republic, Czechoslovakia, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Historic Preservation, Monument Care, Architectural Conservation

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DEDICATION

To my husband Omar Bartos—how could I have ever done this without you—and to the memory of Josef Nádvorník, Master Builder.

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A FEW WORDS ABOUT CZECH VOCABULARY AND PRONUNCIATION

Czech historic preservation terminology does not track precisely American or English-language uses. Although Czech phrases parallel similar concepts in the English language and American practice, I have chosen to be faithful to the original Czech and use as literal translations as possible. Therefore, I include the following list of common Czech preservation words with their Czech definitions and my English translations. For example, I have translated *památkové péče* as “monument care”, although the concept tracks the American phrase of “historic preservation” or the British “architectural conservation”; I use the two phrases “monument care” and “historic preservation” interchangeably, unless I quote or cite from source material that uses one phrase or another specifically. A review of these terms will be helpful to grasp the concepts discussed throughout this study. The thesis of Veronika Aplenc of the University of Pennsylvania’s Master of Historic Preservation program has been particularly useful with its compilation of commonly occurring preservation terms. The 1967 American edition of the Czechoslovak Academy of Science’s *Dictionary of the Czech Literary Language (Slovník spisovného jazyka českého)* is the Czech version of *Webster’s Dictionary*; its definitions are listed under *Slovník*. The *English-Czech Czech-English Dictionary* by Fronek is perhaps the best dictionary of its kind to emerge in the post-communist period; its definitions are marked *E-C*.¹

¹ Veronika Aplenc, *Conservation of Cultural Identity Through the Care of Monuments: Guidelines for the Lednice-Valtice Monument Zone*, Master of Historic Preservation Thesis (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 1997), 73-92; Československá akademie věd., Ústav pro jazyk český, *Slovník spisovného jazyka českého* [*Dictionary of the Czech Literary Language*] (University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1967); Josef Fronek, *English-Czech Czech-English Dictionary* (Praha: Leda, 1999).

asanace

- **E-C** (632): redevelopment, renovation, urban renewal. *Asanace* is related to the verb *asanovat*, which means to “rehabilitate, renovate, redevelop, clear (as in slums)” as well as to “clean up, decontaminate, detoxify”.

demolice

- **E-C** (678): demolition, pull-down

dostavba

- **E-C** (694): ***dostavět***: finish building something
 - **NOTE:** Aplenc notes that *dostavba* connotes an “addition” to an existing historic structure.¹

novostavba

- **E-C** (896): New building/ house; building under construction

obnova

- **Slovník** (Vol. III, 252): *oprava, úprava něčeho sešlého...o. zámku...renovace* (repair, treatment of something dilapidated, ex. renovation of a country house)
- **E-C** (902): *Obnova* is derived from the verb *obnovit*, which means literally “to make anew” and is a synonym for the English word “renewal”.

ochrana

- **E-C** (921-922): protection, care, charge, safekeeping. *Ochrana památek* is translated here as “preservation of monuments”. *Ochrana* is derived from the verb *ochranit*, which means to “preserve, save, protect”.

oprava

- **E-C** (929): repair(s); repair work. *Oprava* is derived from the verb *opravit*, which means literally “to put right”; the root *-prav* also creates such words as *pravo* (“law”) and *pravda* (“truth”).

památká

- **Slovník** (Vol. III, 494): 1. *co připomína lidi vzdálené... vzpomínka* (that which reminds people or calls to their mind the remote, distant...[or a] memory, recollection); 3. *věc někoho, něco připomínající, vzbuzující vzpomínky...pozůstatek* (a thing which for someone reminds, arouses, stirs up memories...a remnant, relic, survival); 4. *něco starobylého..., co*

¹ Aplenc, *Conservation of Cultural Identity*, 71.

připomíná dávno minulou dobu: stavitelská, umělecká, přírodní památka (something vintage or age-old..., that which reminds one of long-past times: architectural, artistic, natural sight).

- **NOTE:** The idea of *památka* as an all-encompassing reminder and remainder of the past influences to this day the work of Czech preservationists. The focus of their efforts is quite the opposite of narrow parochial concerns as architecture only, but embraces both immovable and moveable reminders of the past, including the built world and plastic arts.
- **E-C** (942): 1. memory, remembrance; 2. keepsake, souvenir; 3. (historic) site, historic building; 4. relic. *Památka* here is given most significantly in its third definition the idea of *pamětihodnost*, or “landmark, sight” and literally “memory-position” or “memory-rank”. Related words include *památník* (literally “memorial”, but also translated as “monument”), and *pamatovat* (to “remember” or “recall”).
- **NOTE:** *Památka* is often translated into English versions of official Czech publications as “monument”.

pamatkář

- **Slovník** (Vol. III, 494): *pracovník v oboru ochrany starých památek, zejm. stavitelských* [worker in the profession of protection of old monuments, especially of the built world, or architectural].
- **NOTE:** This 1967 definition addressed only the professional. Today, over thirty years and one government later, however, *pamatkář* could arguably be defined more broadly, and include persons such as members of the Club for Old Prague, a private preservation organization. Czech newspapers often refer to those interested in protecting historic resources, regardless of their profession, as *pamatkáři*, the plural form of the word.

památkové péče

- Adjective *památkový* (-á, -é, -í)
- **Slovník** (Vol. III, 494): *souvisící a ochranou památek, zejm. stavitelský: p. péče* (relating to the care of monuments, especially those of the built world, or architectural).
- **NOTE:** *Památkové péče* is often translated by Czech sources as “monument care”.

péče

- **Slovník** (Vol. III, 544): *snaha o prospěh, blaho, zdárný vývoj někoho, něčeho* (efforts for the benefit, welfare, successful development of someone, something).
- **E-C** (949): care, solicitude (for children or the ill); maintenance, upkeep (machines, house).

přestavba

- **E-C** (1018): reconstruction, rebuilding.

regenerace

- *E-C* (1039): regeneration.

rekonstrukce

- *E-C* (1040): reconstruction.

restaurovat

- *E-C* (1042): to restore, renovate.
 - *Restauratorství* is the corresponding noun for “restoration”.

údržba

- *E-C* (1153): servicing, maintenance. *Údržba* is derived from the verb *udržet*, which means in one sense to “keep, maintain, preserve” such various things as customs, peace, and freedom.

zachovávání

- *E-C* (1229): preservation; maintenance; conservation, preservation (of historic monuments).

zachovat>zachovávat

- *E-C* (1229): preserve, keep.

A note on Czech pronunciation

For the non-Czech speaker, Czech pronunciation can seem daunting. However, many Czech sounds are present in English or appear in daily discourse. Take, for example, a famous Czech composer—Antonín Dvořák. The letter and sound “ř” is one of the most difficult sounds for a human to make, and some native Czech speakers cannot even manage it (including President Václav Havel). Yet on a daily basis, announcers at classical music radio stations present us with the combination of a rolled “r” and a French-sounding “zh” as they present a Dvořák serenade or symphony, and that pronunciation is perfectly adequate. For the convenience of the non-Czech speaking reader, below is a list of the unfamiliar characters in the 31-character Czech alphabet. The hooks and accent marks over the characters are known to students of phonetics as diacritics, and to Czechs as “háčky” and “čárky” respectively.

Consonants

- č** corresponds to English “ch” as in *chocolate* or *Charlie*
- ch** corresponds to the Scots *loch* or the German *Bach*, a light guttural sound
- ř** pronounced as a rolled “r” with a coincident “sh” or “zh”
- š** corresponds to English “sh” as in *Shhh!* or *shock*
- ž** corresponds to “s” in the English *leisure* or *pleasure*

Vowels

- a, á** The acute accent over any vowel lengthens the vowel about 1¾ times as long as its short (unaccented) vowel partner. “a” and “á” correspond to the Boston pronunciation of *Harvard*.
- e, é** Corresponds to the “e” in *bed*
- ě** This vowel is dependent upon selected consonants (t, d, n, b, p, f, v, and m) and requires a speaker to press his or her “front half of the tongue against the back of the upper gum and above the front teeth to produce sounds like...*tune, dune, and onion.*”
- i, í** Corresponds to the “i” in *bit*
- o, ó** Corresponds to the “o” in *hot*
- u, ú, ů** Corresponds more or less to the “oo” in *good*
- ý** Corresponds to the Czech “i” and is used to make a soft “i” hard following a consonant.²

² David Short, *Czech: A Complete Course for Beginners* (Chicago: NTC Publishing Group, 1994), 5-8.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORY OF THE CITYSCAPE AND ARCHITECTURE OF PRAGUE

Prague from its Origins to the Middle Ages

Until the arrival of industrialization and its accompanying urban growth in the nineteenth century, Prague did not spill outside of its medieval center, serving as a testimony to the wise urban planning of Charles IV. Only in the last one hundred and fifty years has the population grown dramatically with the size of the city matching this increase in turn. Until that time, its plan originated in the patterns of its medieval growth as well as instances of royal planning.

Legendary Foundations

Czech schoolchildren learn of the legendary Libuše and her humble husband Přemysl, the plowman. The granddaughter of Father Čech, the progenitor of the Czech tribe, Libuše became the leader of her people in her father's place and ruled from the castle at Vyšehrad on the Vltava River. Given to prophecy and serious contemplation, Libuše became renowned for her divination and wise decisions. The image of her future husband, Přemysl, appeared to her in a vision; they married soon after; their descendants were to rule the land forever, indeed, the last Habsburg ruler claimed descent from this pair. In due time, Libuše stood with Přemysl on the cliff overlooking the Vltava at Vyšehrad and declared in characteristic fashion:

I see before me a large city, whose glories shall reach the heavens! I see a spot above the river, where the brook Brušnice makes a bend. A steep cliff rises above it. When you come to the woods above this cliff, you will find a man there, cutting a threshold for his house. There you will build a castle and call it Praha [*Prah* is Czech for 'threshold']. And just as people stoop when they enter a house, so will they bow to the city around my castle. It will be a noble one, respected by all the world.¹

¹ Alois Jirasek, *Old Czech Legends*, Trans. Marie K. Holecek (London: Forest Books, 1992) 3-14.; Franz Heinrich Lützow, *The Story of Prague* (London: J.M. Dent & Co., 1902), 2-3; Peter Demetz, *Prague in Black and Gold: Scenes from the Life of a European City* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997), 3-5. In addition, modern Czech nationalism owes a great deal to the Libuše legend as a foundation for Czech autonomy and exalted origins.



Figure 1 “Libuše Prophesizes the Glory of Prague”, mosaic based on a drawing by Mikoláš Aleš in the vestibule of the Old Town Hall; Mráz, *Prague: The Heart of Europe*, 16.

This tale (see Figure 1), never fully substantiated by scholars as wholly based on truth, begs for interpretation. Peter Demetz suggests that the Libuše/Přemysl account represents “the echo of a distant fertility cult, uniting a virgin of great powers and a tiller of the earth,” hearkening other legendary origin stories. Others have focused on the etymology of the word “Prah”, or what English speakers know as Prague. V.V. Tomek, a noted nineteenth-century historian of Prague, maintained that the word referred to the cleaning of the forest by fire, from the word *pražiti*, or from *prahy*, or eddies in the river. More recent scholarship proposes that the phrase *na praze*, or a barren place relentlessly bathed with sun, is the origin for the name. Still others hold that *prah* is derived from an ancient Slavic word meaning “knob, a little hill”, or a “terrace near the river” and raise the question of what Prague first denoted—the high place on the river, or the little market below it.² Some have interpreted the shape of the earliest settlements of the late Stone Age in the Prague valley—in the letter “P”—as a “symbolic monogram” of the future city of Prague.³

² Demetz, 13.

The Lay of the Land and Who Came to Live There

The Vltava River, a tributary of the Elbe, cuts a valley through the rolling terrain of the Central Bohemian Plateau. After millions of years, the river has eroded the layers of rock in the Prague region, resulting in a unique topography with hills and outcrops rising above the river. A great hooked meander of the Vltava River loops to form a large peninsula in the northern reaches of the city. On the left, or west, bank lies an elevated formation anchored in the south by the hills of Barrandov, running to Petřín (now a hilltop park), rising a bit to the west at Strahov, and culminating at the northern end with the mass of Opyš, the site of the Hradčany, or Prague Castle. Behind the Hradčany, the elevation drops to the relative level ground of the Letna Plain. On the right bank, the Braník heights run to the north to Kavčí hory (Kavčí hills) and the rocky outcrop of Vyšehrad, Libuše's capital, where the deep Nusle Valley gorge separates Vyšehrad from the other historic centers of Prague. North of Vyšehrad, the hills recede from the river, leaving only a few bumps in the terrain. The plain then leads off to the northeast towards Žižkov hill, the highest in the city (see Figure 2).⁴ Archaeological evidence shows that human settlements were present in the Prague basin as early as 3000 BC (see Figure 3). Even this early on, Prague found itself at the intersection of an east-west trade route connecting Regensburg, Krakow, and Kiev that forded the Vltava near the present-day Charles Bridge. With scattered villages throughout the heights of the hills surrounding the present-day Prague, the settlement pattern did in fact resemble the letter "P"—a wide arc sweeping from the modern suburbs of Liboc in the west to Bubeneč in the north, then east and south to Liben, Vršovice, and Krč. The flood potential of the Vltava represented a real and present danger and encouraged settlement on the high ground. A series of tribes, including the Celts and Germanic tribes, continued to inhabit the Prague area until the arrival of the Slavs from the east around the fifth and sixth centuries AD. Because of its location above the Roman frontier of the Danube, Prague never experienced direct Roman

³ Joseph Wechsberg, *Prague: The Mystical City* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 94.

⁴Rostislav Švácha, *The Architecture of New Prague: 1895-1945* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 4-5.

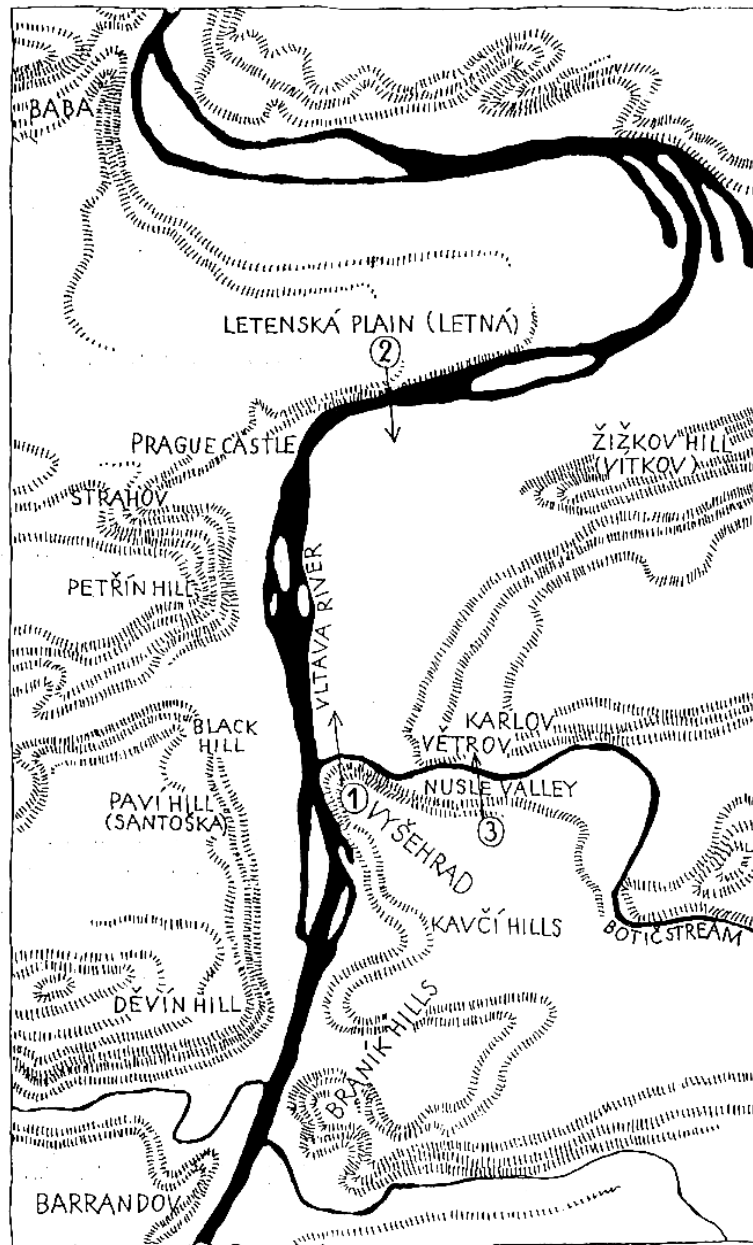


Figure 2 Topographical map of Prague; Švácha, *The Architecture of New Prague: 1895-1945*, 10.

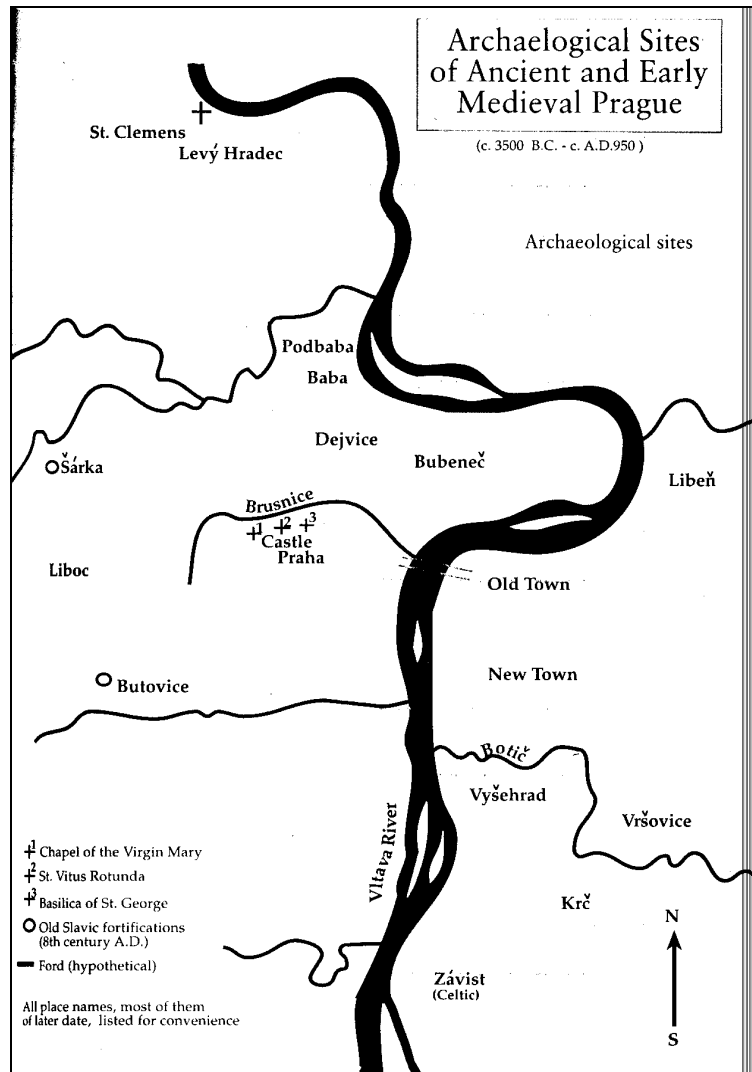


Figure 3 Archaeological Sites of Ancient and Medieval Prague; Demetz, *Prague in Black and Gold*, 15.

influence, although Rome was aware of the cosmopolitan Celts. It would be up to the Slavs and their descendants to begin to lay the lasting foundation for the city.⁵

The Evolution of the Form of Prague

In the early 1990s, the historic core of Prague was placed on the World Heritage List of UNESCO as a “world historic place.” For our purposes, it is interesting to note that the perimeter of the honored sections corresponds almost exactly to the boundaries of medieval Prague. Today, tourist maps designate the Prague ‘to visit’ as the conglomeration of five ancient towns—the fortified castle complex of Hradčany, the Little Side (*Malá Strana*) in the shadow of the heights of the Hradčany, the Old Town (*Staré Město*), the fortress Vyšehrad, and the New Town (*Nové Město*) established by Charles IV in 1348 (see Figure 3.1). In these critical early years, Prague,



Figure 3.1 1971 Historic Reservation in the Greater City of Prague, corresponding to the original five boroughs: Hradčany, Malá Strana, Staré Město, Nové Město, and Vyšehrad; Buřival, *Koncepce*, 25.

⁵ Demetz, 6-7; Edith Ennen, *The Medieval Town*. Trans. Natalie Fryde. Europe in the Middle Ages: Selected Studies 15 (New York: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1979), 49-53; Members of the Union of Architects of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, “Czechoslovakia.” *Urban Development in East-Central Europe: Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary*. International History of City Development 7 (New York: The Free Press, 1972), 130, 200; Wechsberg, 94-97.

“or rather its constituent parts, approached their modern shape by topographical expansion, social diversity, and architectural transformation, ecclesiastic and secular.”⁶ Let us examine each of these sections in turn.

Hradčany—The Castle

According to modern archeological evidence, construction of the Prague Castle, the focus of the Hradčany settlement, began in earnest in the late ninth century, when Duke Bořivoj, a descendant of Přemysl, chose Opyš hill on the Brušnice brook as the new seat of the dynasty. The shape of the castle followed the contours of topography, taking on the elongated, narrow shape of the ridge (see Figure 4). The characteristic inner ward and outer ward of the castle betray its roots in the construction of old Slavonic tribal strongholds. Bořivoj’s descendants, in turn, further developed the fort with new fortifications, most notably in 1135 in the German manner, and a series of churches and convents began to dot the area surrounding the castle, including Strahov and St. Mary under the Chain. These religious settlements would serve as an impetus for the further development of neighborhoods in time. The late tenth-century report of Ibrahim Ibn Jacob, the accredited ambassador of Caliph Al Hakam II, has survived and lends support to archeological excavations that characterize Prague as a budding tradeport and commercial center with substantial edifices:

The city is built of stone and chalk and it is the great trading center of the land. Russians come here from Krakow, as do the Slavs with their wares. From the land of the Turks (Hungarians), Moslems, Jews, and Turks come with their wares and with minted coins. They export slaves, tin, and various hides....One can buy enough wheat for a penny to last a month, and for another penny one can buy enough barley to maintain a riding horse for forty days. Ten hens cost a penny. They manufacture saddles, bridles, and solid shields in the city, which are used in these lands....⁷

⁶ Ivan Plicka, *Prague 93: Metropolitan Area Report, Urbanistic Development of the Town* (Prague: City Architect’s Office of Prague, 1993), 7-8, VII; Vladimír Soukup, *Prague* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 1994), 14-15; *Prague [map]* (Prague: SHOCart, 1997); Demetz, 30.

⁷ *Hrad* is Czech for ‘castle.’ Bohumír Mráz, *Prague: The Heart of Europe* (Prague: Aventinium, 1992), 16-17; Demetz, 30-31; Wechsburg, 93-94; Ennen, 54-55; Members, 200-201; Helena Mandelová, *Na úsvítu českých dějin (At The Dawn of Czech History)* (Prague: Albatros, 1993), 38-39; Švácha, 5; Wechsburg, 99-100.

Until quite recently, it was presumed that the marketplace spoken of by Ibrahim was the large square that was later known as Old Town Square (*Staroměstské náměstí*) on the right bank of the Vltava. Rather, archeological evidence has shown that the market known to Ibrahim was most probably a market that grew up in the immediate vicinity of the outer bailey of the Castle. Old Town Square did not yet exist in the late tenth century, although trading areas did nearby at one time or another before that time. The market adjacent to the castle as well as nearby religious

communities point to the growth of a neighborhood south of the Hradčany complex on the left bank of the river. This contiguous settlement would become known as Little Side, or *Malá Strana*.⁸

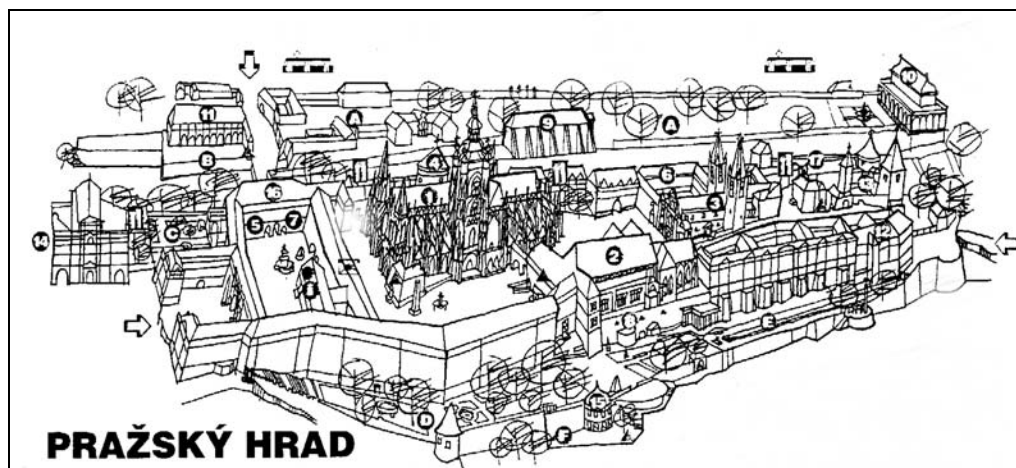


Figure 4 Prague Castle, or Hradčany complex; *Pražský hrad*, tourist brochure in author's possession, no bibliographical information, 1995.

Malá Strana—The “Little Side”

Malá Strana is a classic example of the process of neighborhood creation. The proximity of the Castle to the neighborhood of the “Little Side” offered protection in times of upheaval, and in times of peace, a focus for trade. Modern scholars speculate that the marketplace mentioned by Ibrahim indicated the growth of the nascent *Malá Strana*. Earlier settlements had been located

⁸ Mráz, 25.

on the site below the castle along the road leading to the river ford, and it follows that the growth of Malá Strana was the logical result of these old settlement patterns. However, Malá Strana was not formally recognized as a constituted settlement until the reign of Přemysl Otakar II in the late thirteenth century. Malá Strana was at no time during our focus period an agent independent of the Castle, and in no way equal to other sections of Prague; it existed as a symbiotic entity with the Castle above. Sometime after 1257 Přemysl Otakar II enclosed Malá Strana while refortifying the Hradčany. Despite rugged terrain and the existence of an older community, the plan of Malá Strana is rather regular; some scholarship suggests that it may have been the first instance of Gothic town planning in the Czech lands. A spacious rectangular market square, known quite originally as Little Side Square (*Malostranské náměstí*) formed the center of the Malá Strana neighborhood; buildings were constructed in the middle, dividing it in half, while a gallows and pillory stood in its lower part. By this time, Queen Judith's Bridge had connected the two banks of the river since 1172, giving greater impetus to the growth of a coalescing neighborhood. Gated in the same year at the bridge's edge, Malá Strana grew along the line from the castle to its bridgehead. However, sieges in 1105 and 1142 brought with them a set of conflagrations that enveloped Malá Strana. Although the neighborhood recovered and was enlarged by Charles IV in 1360, many residents decided to relocate to the right bank of the river, where the trade routes crossed, a move made easier by Queen Judith's Bridge (*Juditin most*, see Figure 5).⁹

Staré Město—The Old Town

Prior to the construction of a bridge to connect the two banks of the Vltava, the right east bank had been only sparsely populated. Before the arrival of the Přemyslids, the site was the intersection of long-distance trade routes. Commerce along these roads continued unabated until the time of the Přemyslids and contributed tremendously to Prague's development. A marketplace, Old Town Square (*Staroměstské náměstí*), developed in time and grew with the

⁹ Demetz, 30-32; Mandelová, *Na usvitu*, 52-53; Members, 200-201; Mráz, 27, 37; Lützwow, 8; Wechsburg,, 98-99; Plicka, 8.

construction of the bridge over the Vltava. To encourage a larger urban population, the monarch extended special privileges to new settlers, a practice continued by later kings. Germans, Czechs, and even Italians, merchants all, settled around the market square, making this rapidly one of the most densely populated areas of the Prague area. Mendicant orders joined the merchants, and by 1230, over twenty ecclesiastical structures catering to both Christians and Jews stood on the right bank, nearly twice as many as on the left bank.

With streets radiating out from the market square towards the river crossings, the Old Town exemplified the organic process of medieval towns; a nineteenth-century era Haussmannization—or carving up of a medieval labyrinth neighborhood following the example of Baron Haussmann in Paris—of the area obliterated some of the pattern. Václav I enclosed the

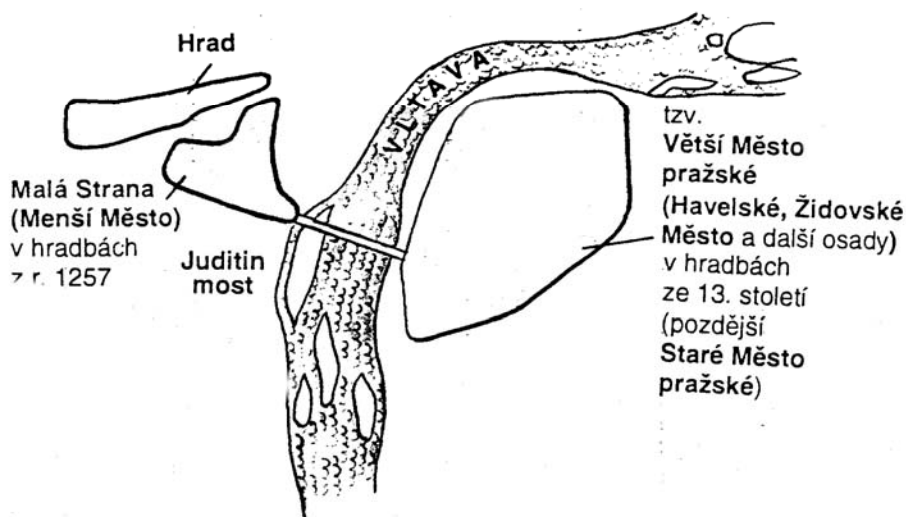


Figure 5 Prague and the Judith Bridge (*Juditin most*), Hradčany, Malá Strana, and *Větší Město* (the "Larger Side", now Old Town); Helena Mandelová, *České země za vlády Lucemburků* (*The Czech Lands under the Reign of the Luxembourgs*) (Prague: Albatros, 1993), 22.

area with a moat, now traced out by the modern streets of *Národní* (National), *28.října* (28 October), *Na příkopě* (On the Moat), and *Revoluční* (Revolutionary); the fortifications also followed along the river with over a dozen gates, including two surviving ones at the intersection of Revolutionary and On the Moat at Square of the Republic (*Náměstí republiky*) and at the

bridgehead (see Figure 6). A Jewish ghetto was located in the northwestern corner of the fortified town and was separated by gates from the rest of the town; this area, known in modern times as Josefov, suffered from the Hausmann-inspired slum clearances of the late nineteenth century. One church found itself in the midst of this construction and was separated from the small community that had cropped up around it and was known from then on as the Church of St. Martin in the Wall. Within the southeastern, southern, and northern stretches of the wall, large undeveloped spaces remained, waiting to be settled. Within just a year after the initiation of the walls' construction, a settlement emerged in the southeastern corner of the town. Centered on a marketplace, St. Gall's Town (*Havelské Město*) represented the early growing pains of the Old Town (see Figure 7). The marketplace of St. Gall's extended to both the coal and fruit market

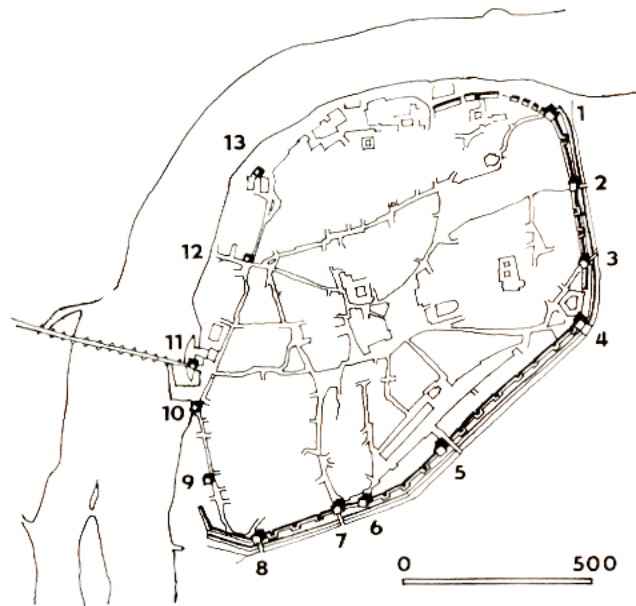


Figure 6 Old Town (*Staré Město*) and its medieval fortifications, Jaroslava Staňková, Jiří Štursa, Svatopluk Voděra, *Prague: Eleven Centuries of Architecture* (Prague: PAV, 1996), 32.

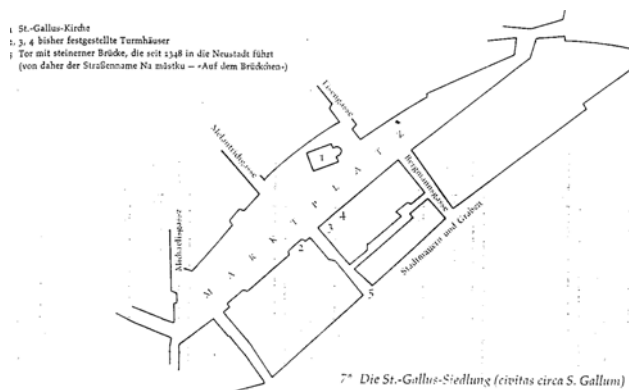


Figure 7 St. Gall Town (*Havelské Město*); Josef Janacek, *Das Alte Prag* (Wien: Hermann Böhlau Nachf, 1983), 33.

(*Uhelný trh* and *Ovocný trh*), which survive to the present-day. The town began to spill outside of the walls; cattle, horse, and hay markets developed at three separate gates. Soon, the walls would be inadequate for the protection of Prague, the settlements of which had begun to the east would be inadequate for the protection of the people of Prague, who spilled to the east of the Old Town and south towards Vyšehrad.¹⁰

Vyšehrad

In the midst of all manner of expansion and enclosure elsewhere in Prague, the fortified complex of Vyšehrad stood quietly to the south on a sharp outcrop of rock overlooking the Vltava. Although legendary due to its association with the Libuše and Přemysl tale, the Vyšehrad complex was in all likelihood not built until the tenth century, at least a century after the Hradčany to the north. Literally, the word “Vyšehrad” means “higher castle, or acropolis”. The site of several chapels, a ducal residence, and a mint, Vyšehrad withstood a siege in the year 1000, and became the residence of the Přemyslid ruler before the turn of the century. Vratislav II (1061-1092) built the Romanesque rotunda of St. Martin as well as the Basilica of St. Peter and

¹⁰ Demetz, 32-34; Lützwow, 6-8; Švácha, 5; Mráz, 22-35.

St. Paul, setting it as a viable rival to the Hradčany up river (see Figure 8). Vratislav’s successors did not continue his efforts and moved the royal abode back to the Hradčany in the early 1100s. From that point until the reign of Charles IV some two centuries later, Vyšehrad stood almost abandoned at the southern end of the Prague area (see Figures 9 and 10 for illustrations of Vyšehrad from the reign of Charles IV and the eighteenth century). In the meantime, a plethora of small settlements sprouted up between the bounds of Old Town to the walls of Vyšehrad. These included a fisherman’s village as well as a number of churches or monasteries. Some Hebrew documents of the time refer to these communities as *Mezigrady* (Between the Castles). Very soon, though, this area would have a new name—New Town.¹¹

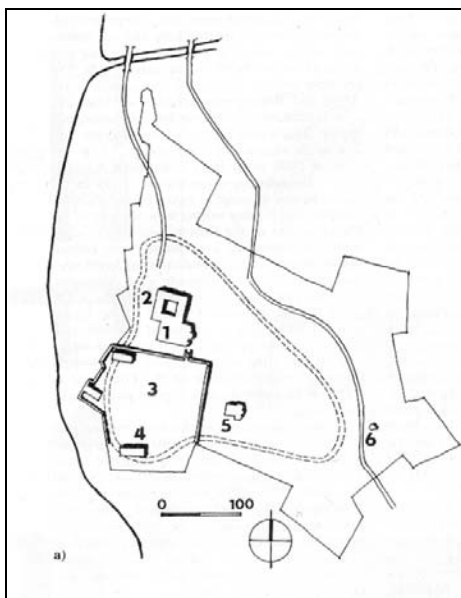


Figure 8 Vyšehrad in the 11th century; Staňková et al., 16.

¹¹ Plicka, 7-8; Sykora, Ludek, and Vit Stepanek. “City Profile: Prague.” *Cities* 9.2 (1992): 91; Lützwow, 1-5; Demetz, 31-34.

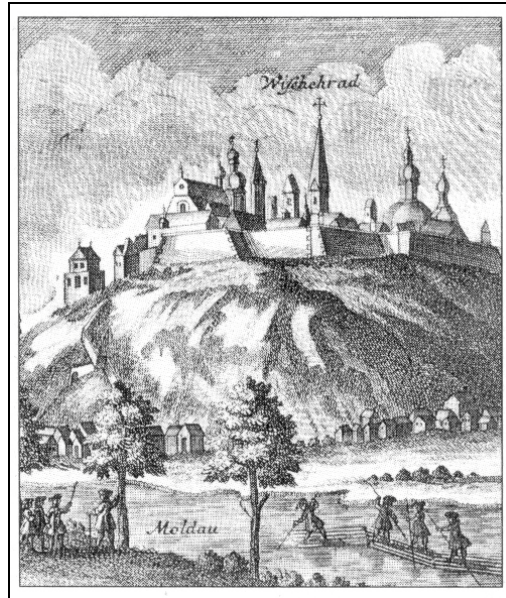


Figure 9 18th-century engraving by I.G. Ringle, showing Vyšehrad and the Vltava; Vladimír Soukup, *Prague* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 1994), 178.

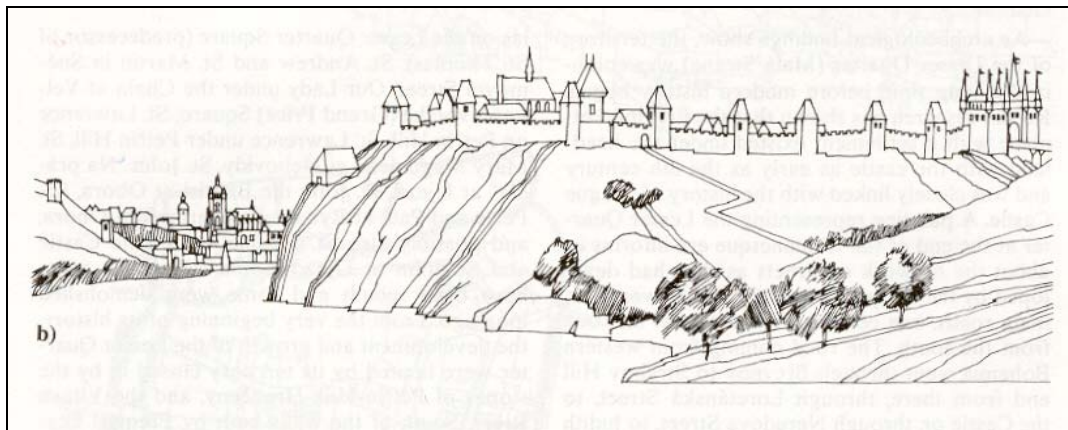


Figure 10 Vyšehrad in the reign of Charles IV, view from the south, looking towards the Hradčany; Staňková et al., 51.

***Nové Město*—The New Town**

It is said by some that the New Town was an expression of a son's love for his mother. Charles IV was a descendant of the Přemyslids though his mother Eliška, and loved Prague for that reason. At his father's death in 1346, the teenager Charles ascended to the throne of Rome (as King of Rome, not Holy Roman Emperor) and of Bohemia. His building tendencies as prince

had foreshadowed the work he accomplished as king: at sixteen, he began to rebuild Prague Castle, uninhabited since a devastating 1304 fire, and only two years before his coronation, laid the foundation stone for the new Gothic Cathedral of St. Vitus on the crest of the Hradčany. Losing no time after his investiture as king, Charles founded the first university in central Europe, the University of Prague (later to be named Charles University after him) and began the construction of the New Town. The document, dated April 1347, commanding the latter project read in part, “Bowling to the advice and the will of the burgomaster, the town council, and the entire community, [I will build a New Town] to increase their honor, freedom, well-being, joy and protect them against all violent conflict.” In a series of steps that resemble modern comprehensive urban planning, Charles outlined his rationale for the New Town and the procedure for its execution. Demetz speculates that Charles had seen enough of misled urban planning in Avignon, France, where the demands of the papacy and its entourage taxed the form of the small town; Prague would not be beset with such difficulties. In fact, Charles offered tax relief for a dozen years for new residents, if they completed their homes in less than eighteen months and built them of fire-proof materials.¹²

The plans called for a doubling of the size of the existing city from about 600 acres to an overall size of approximately 1300 acres; the size of the New Town was at least three times the size of the Old. Great care was taken to include all the existing settlements between Vyšehrad and Old Town in the plan as well as an area, known as Poříč, located on the eastern approach of the Old Town. The layout of the walled section on the right bank, soon to be known as the Old Town, would not be touched. The New Town attached itself to the Old Town as a purposeful neighborhood with three and a half kilometers of new fortifications, extending from the Botič brook and Vyšehrad meeting at the wide curve in the river near the Old Town (see Figure 11). A heavily patrolled tower and three strong gates provided access to the consolidated right bank.

¹² Demetz, 78; Members, 200-202; Mráz, 51-64; Lützow, 15-17.

Built in less than two years, the completed wall signaled an unemployed army of workmen; the king engaged them in a medieval version of a WPA project and instructed the construction of fortification system on the left bank to complement the right bank. The Hunger Wall, as it was known, extended from Strahov to the west of the Hradčany across Petřín Hill to the Vltava. New religious centers were to act as anchors for new seed communities in the New Town. Markets that had been around since the first fortification of the Old Town, developing *extra muros*, were now formally planned. The cattle market became Charles Square (*Karlovo náměstí*), the swine market survives as Barley (*Ječna*) Street, and Wenceslaus Square (*Vaclavské náměstí*), once a horse market, became the extended transverse axis of St. Gall Town and later the site of numerous protests and revolts. In addition, Vyšehrad was renovated and refortified, as Charles resurrected the Přemyslid past and the origins of Prague.¹³

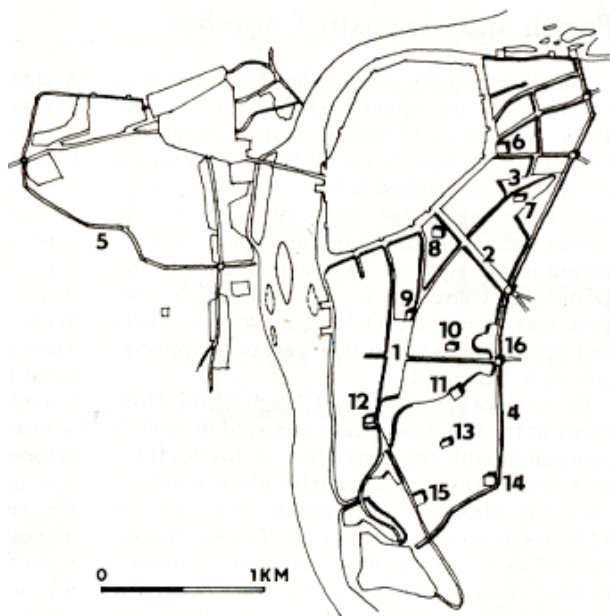


Figure 11 Plan of the New Town (*Nové Město*) circa late fourteenth century showing its landmark markets, churches, and gates; Staňková, *Eleven Centuries*, 55.

¹³ Demetz, 77-82; Members, 200-202; Lutzow, 12-22; Mráz, 51-67, 185.

The City of Prague

Although the founding of the New Town marked an important era in the history of the city plan, Prague still could not call itself a true city. The five settlements—Hradčany, Malá Strana, Old Town, Vyšehrad, and New Town—now resembled more of a city, but the literal and figurative connection had yet to be established. German and Czech language, culture, and commerce competed against one another, and Charles recognized the trend as counterproductive to the overall health of his city and kingdom. Demetz argues that the unification of the constituent parts of Prague by Charles was partly an effort to counter such tendencies as well as the fulfillment of Charles' master plan. In 1367, walls between the two towns of the right bank were ordered destroyed; the two settlements were to be one. However, the sharp differences in the two areas persisted, and the old division returned. If for nothing else, at least Charles' intentions for unification by enclosure should be acknowledged as an important moment in the coalescing of Prague (true consolidation would not come until the seventeenth century). In the same year, Charles commanded the rebuilding of a bridge across the Vltava, over a decade after the abandonment of Queen Judith's Bridge, which had been damaged beyond repair by ice, to replace the temporary wooden structure that had spanned the river in the interim.¹⁴

At Charles' death in 1378, the crescent that arched across the Vltava formed the city of Prague. For nearly six centuries, the city of Prague remained within its medieval boundaries (see Figure 12). Scattered settlements in the countryside surrounding Prague always existed to one degree or another, but only towards the end of the eighteenth century and the rise of industrialization did true suburbs begin to dot the horizon. But Prague waited, and chose to reach beyond its bounds only just recently, to fulfill the dream of Libuše.¹⁵

¹⁴ Demetz, 80-81; Mráz, 62.

¹⁵ Plicka, 8, VI; Mráz, 195-209.

Prague from the Middle Ages to the Modern Age

To the English-speaking world, the name of Wenceslaus brings to mind the song of Christmas, which recounts the story of the good king who provided for his less fortunate subjects. But to a Czech, Wenceslaus is *Václav*, the patron saint of the homeland and the subject of the anchoring statue found in the square of the same name in the capital city of Prague. The area known in modern times as Wenceslaus Square, or *Václavské náměstí*, was established

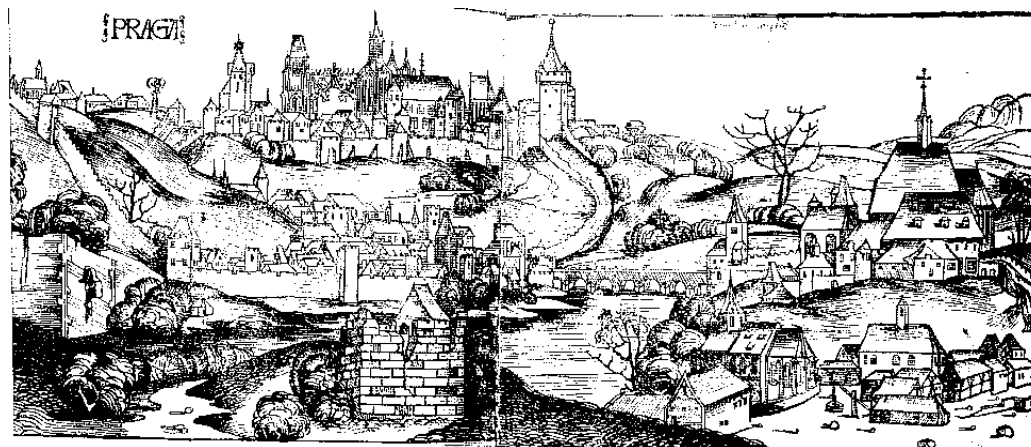


Figure 12 1493 panorama of Prague; Janacek, *Das Alte Prag*, 9.

by Charles IV as one of the key elements of the New Town, his 1348 expansion of the existing city (see Figures 13 and 14). The New Town area doubled the size of the original city core; the new Prague covered some 2000 acres and was home to an estimated 40,000 residents, giving it after Rome the second largest urban population of the fourteenth century. Three rectangular areas radiating out from the Old Town church of St. Havel anchored the New Town—the Hay Market (now *Senovážné náměstí*, or Haymarket Square) to the east-northeast, the Horse Market (*Vaclavské náměstí*, or Wenceslaus Square) to the southeast, and the Cattle Market (*Karlovo náměstí*, or Charles' Square) to the south. At the present upper end and southeastern side of Wenceslaus Square, the site of the saint's statue and National Museum, stood a Gothic gate, guarding the approach to the new fortifications encircling Charles' New Town.

That gate, not demolished until the latter half of the nineteenth century, would witness the changing function of the square from horse market to the focal point of an awakening Czech consciousness. Nineteenth-century Czech nationalists who used the space as a place of congregation and discussion first suggested its change of name to honor Saint Wenceslaus, the patron of the nation, and to reflect its new identity as the literal and figurative center of the Czech nation.¹⁶ At the same time, the city of Prague began to outgrow its medieval walls as industrial development intensified, initiating a surge in urban population. Meanwhile, Prague took on more of a role as a Czech capital, rather than merely an Austrian provincial town, as imperial Vienna accommodated the Czech national revival to some degree through concessions over the official use of the Czech language.¹⁷ As the square transcended its original function as a marketplace gateway, so did Prague, expanding far beyond its medieval boundaries and provincial status. The shift in function over some six centuries of Wenceslaus Square, that space so vital to Czech life, tracks the evolution of Charles' Prague to modern world capital.

Religious upheaval: Czech Protestantism and the Counter-Reformation

The advent of the New Town by Charles IV brought with it the importation of numerous religious orders from abroad—Benedictines from Milan and Croatia, Augustinians from France, and Servites from France—to populate the various churches that would serve the new areas of the city. Following the inspired city planning of the king, many of these religious structures, churches, monasteries, and convents alike, were purposely sited on the highest crests and points

¹⁶ “Wenceslaus Square, the History and the Spirit of the Place,” *The Wenceslaus Square Planning Weekend*; available from <http://www.lucerna.cz/weekend/eng2int.htm>; Internet; 28 December 2000; Plicka, 8; Eva Vojtová, and Jarmila Menclová, “Územní a demografický vývoj Prahy (Territorial and demographic development of Prague),” *Staletá Praha XX: Památky pražského venkova (Ancient Prague XX: Monuments of Prague's countryside)* (Praha: Panorama, 1990), 13. Interestingly, the dimensions of the Cattle Market, the present-day Charles' Square after King Charles IV himself, are said to match the measurements of the temple district and its immediate vicinity in ancient Jerusalem. The medieval surveyors in charge used the “land string” unit of measurements, with one string equivalent to approximately 31 meters. Charles' Square itself measured eighteen by four strings. The “Wenceslaus Square Planning Weekend” source suggests that Charles IV obsessed about the second coming of Christ, and attempted to recreate the “Eternal City”—Jerusalem—on Earth through his expansion of the city of Prague.

¹⁷ R.J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 1995), 12-14.

to dominate the skyline of the new quarter; the reconstructed towers of the Emmaus monastery (damaged during a World War II bombing) and the domes of the Karlov monastery still serve as landmarks of the modern Prague landscape. (See Figure 15.) However, the very efforts of Charles IV to provide for the religious edification of his subjects would within two generations come to threaten the very existence of the city itself.¹⁸



Figure 13 Wenceslaus Square, circa 1830, depicted on a veduta by V. Morstadt, looking west from the present-day site of the National Museum; Mráz, *Prague: The Heart of Europe*, 200.



Figure 14 Wenceslaus Square looking to the east towards the National Museum and the “top” of the square, circa 1890; Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 101.

¹⁸ Mráz, 63-66.

Although the political influence and affluence of the Church was a given in the Middle Ages, the extent of the Church's power in Prague was, in the estimation of at least one scholar, to be "exceptional".¹⁹ Prague's accommodation and funding for a large number of clergy and religious, who seemed to enjoy a lifestyle of ease as compared to that of the secular population, coincided with an regional economic downturn as the city ceased to be a primary royal residence. Prague was ripe for religious reform, and its leader was Master Jan Hus, a charismatic Czech-speaking preacher. The First Defenestration of Prague took place in 1419, when residents of the New Town sympathetic to Hus' reformist stances threw town councilors out of the windows of the New Town Hall. Court intrigue brought about a sharp division of loyalties within Prague itself—the New Town siding with the radicals, the Old Town holding more conservative views. Revolution ensued throughout the Czech lands, pitting those loyal to the Church against the Hussite stalwarts. A series of battles throughout the greater Prague area wreaked havoc. Malá



Figure 15 Conjectural bird's eye view of the New Town, fourteenth century; Staňková et al., *Eleven Centuries*, 55.

Strana south of the Hradčany castle complex suffered complete destruction, and the Hradčany and Vyšehrad citadel fell to siege. Most of the religious houses sponsored or patronized by Charles IV endured looting and structural damage.²⁰

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 76.

An uneasy peace settled over the Czech lands with the ascension of the election of Vladislav of Jagellon as king. The new monarch could thank his predecessor George of Poděbrady, another appointed ruler, with the revival of building activity in Prague following the Hussite conflicts; George ordered rebuilding of the Little Side, destroyed early on in the war, and the construction of one of the bridge towers for the Charles Bridge. New building projects included refortification of the Hradčany complex, rebuilding of the royal palace, and the erection of the Powder Tower (*Prašná brana*) to replace the dilapidated Odraná gate in the eastern wall of the upper Old Town (see Figure 16). In addition, a public green space, known alternatively as the King's Park (*Stromovka*) was established complete with late Gothic pavilion on the left bank of the Vltava River to the north of the city.²¹

The election of the Habsburgs to the throne of Bohemia in 1526 following the death of Louis of Jagiello, the last of Vladislav's line, did not signal a decline in the urban improvements initiated by their predecessors but rather spurred even greater royal renovations. Ferdinand I continued with upgrades of the Hradčany complex, adding the Renaissance-era, Italian-inspired Belvedere Summer Palace and a series of Italian-style royal gardens. Another fire devastated the Little Side once again in 1541, stimulating a rebuilding wave of palaces for Bohemian nobles, including those for the Lobkowitz and Schwarzenberg families. Italian architects, masons, bricklayers, and plasterers were imported to construct these houses in the prevailing style favored by the king (see Figure 17).²²

However, despite the apparent political tranquillity found in Renaissance Prague, the undercurrent of religious discontent that fueled the Hussite wars still existed as a potent threat.

²⁰ Ibid., 76-86; Lützow, *Prague*, 42-80. This era of Prague and Czech history, suffice it to say, is a good deal more complex than this superficial treatment may suggest.

²¹ Švácha, 14; Staňková, et al., 52, 67, 72.

²² Hruža, Jiří, and Dobroslav Líbal, "Prague." *Urban Development in East-Central Europe: Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary*, International History of City Development 7 (New York: The Free Press, 1972) 201-202; Mráz, 99, 105-109; Staňková et al., 91-99. The Royal Gardens would undergo a succession of renovations over the years, from the original Italian design to a geometrical French style in a Baroque overhaul, and finally, an English romantic park during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Mráz, 108.



Figure 16 Powder Tower, or *Prašná brána*; Mráz, *Prague: The Heart of Europe*, 84.

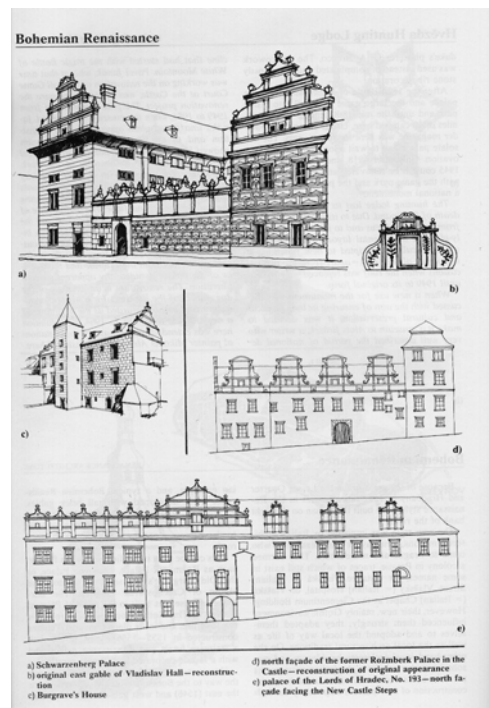


Figure 17 Typical Renaissance palaces, Staňková, *Eleven Centuries*, 92.

By the early 1600s, the peace was no longer tenable, and the Second Defenestration of Prague ushered in the Thirty Years War. This conflict, unlike the relatively localized Hussite Wars, would envelop the continent in a struggle for religious supremacy. Prague, as a focal point of Protestant rebellion, suffered grievously the disastrous consequences of this conflict.

Depopulation, epidemics, looting, and confiscations were not rare during this period as Prague was occupied alternatively by Catholic troops loyal to the Habsburgs, then the ally Saxon army, and finally the Protestant Swedes. Time and time again, the armies looted the city, taking what plunder they desired. From the outset of the war, the religious tolerance known in Prague under earlier Habsburg rulers was replaced by a simple ultimatum—claim allegiance to the Catholic faith or emigrate abroad. As a result, many of those fleeing were forced to abandon their homes and other property; others had their property confiscated by the authorities.* Loyalists benefited immensely, often purchasing these holdings at a pittance or had the properties awarded to them as spoils of war. These shifts in property ownership set the stage for the construction of urban estates for the new Catholic elite throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Figure 18 shows the distribution of Baroque palaces in Prague, a large number of which trace their origins to the religious upheavals and rewards of the aftermath of the Thirty Years Wars. Most notable was the massive palace complex built by Albrecht of Wallenstein, the notorious warlord of the Thirty Years War, in the heart of the Little Side District (see Figures 19 and 20). Consolidating some twenty-three residential lots, three gardens, and a brickwork site in a largely middle-class district, Wallenstein had his builders erect a monumental early Baroque structure that featured an Italian-style *sala terrena*, substantial enclosed courtyard, and a riding school.

The Little Side was transformed by the activities of Wallenstein and his contemporaries from a

* The core group of Czech nobles who refused to renounce their Protestant faith and who failed to emigrate were executed on the Old Town Square in 1621, following the Protestant defeat at the Battle of White Mountain (located to the immediate northwest of Prague). Their large holdings were most notably confiscated and redistributed to loyalists. Wallenstein, at one time, owned a quarter of Bohemia through such arrangements. See Rob Humphreys, *Czech and Slovak Republics* (London: Rough Guides, 1996)

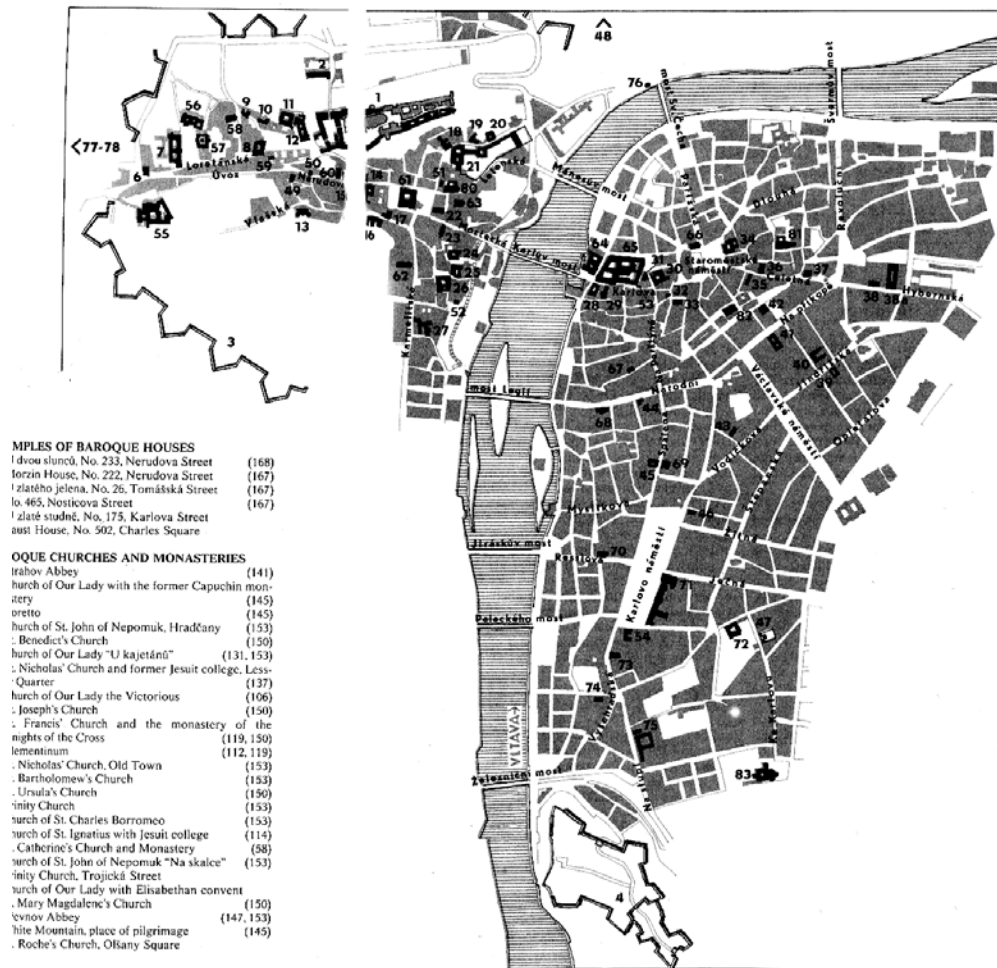


Figure 18 Distribution of Baroque Palaces; Staňková et al., *Eleven Architecture*, 104-105.

modest district to what Mráz terms an “enclave of the aristocracy” by the end of the seventeenth century. Many of these palaces have survived to serve as the home of many foreign embassies and national ministry offices (see Figure 21). Likewise, the accompanying terraced palace gardens that took advantage of the steep topography of the Little Side continue to co-exist

symbiotically with the built environment and still offer the fine vistas of the city that their founders once enjoyed.²³

Because the secular in Prague profited from Catholic victory, the Church found, as Ivan Plicka stresses, an “ideological basis” for its own architectural projects as a means to express its status and to emphasize its victory.²⁴ While many Prague religious orders acquired new churches or conducted extensive renovations of existing facilities in the period following the Thirty Years War, the Jesuits arguably did the most to further the Counter-Reformation policy of the Church in Prague by their wide-ranging building program. When the learned Jesuits arrived in Prague in 1556 at the invitation of Ferdinand II, their community had only six colleges and two residences in the city, yet by 1653, the order could boast of twenty-three colleges, and seven residences within Prague’s walls. Begun the following year, their fortress-like Clementinum complex, which took shape on the east bank of the Vltava immediately adjacent to Charles Bridge, replaced an area where once stood some thirty houses, three churches, a Dominican monastery, and two streets. Like Wallenstein, the Jesuits did not blanch at the wholesale demolition of entire urban blocks to further their building and ideological objectives. This ensemble included two churches, several chapels, a college and school, an observatory, and a theater (see Figure 22). Built over a century and a half, the Baroque Clementinum was the work of F.M. Kaňka, Carlo Lurago, and Francesco Caratti. Jesuit projects could also be found in the New Town quarter; there they built the church of St. Ignatius and an accompanying college, which replaced well over twenty houses and extended one-half the length of the large Charles’ Square (see Figure 23).

²³ Lützwow, 128-132; Hruža et al., 203; Plicka, 8-9; Staňková et al., 103-106, 108-109; State Institute for Care of Historic Monuments and Nature Conservation, ČSSR (ICOMOS Bulletin 4. Prague: Czechoslovak News Agency, 1976), 28-32. The core group of Czech nobles who refused to renounce their Protestant faith and who failed to emigrate were executed on the Old Town Square in 1621, following the Protestant defeat at the Battle of White Mountain (located to the immediate northwest of Prague). See Kubů, *České země v době renesance*, 56-57; and Lützwow, 124-127. Among the palaces constructed in the years following the Thirty Years War include the Schönburn Palace and its gardens, which now houses the American Embassy in Prague. See Humphreys, *Czech and Slovak Republics*, 75.

²⁴ Plicka, 8-9;

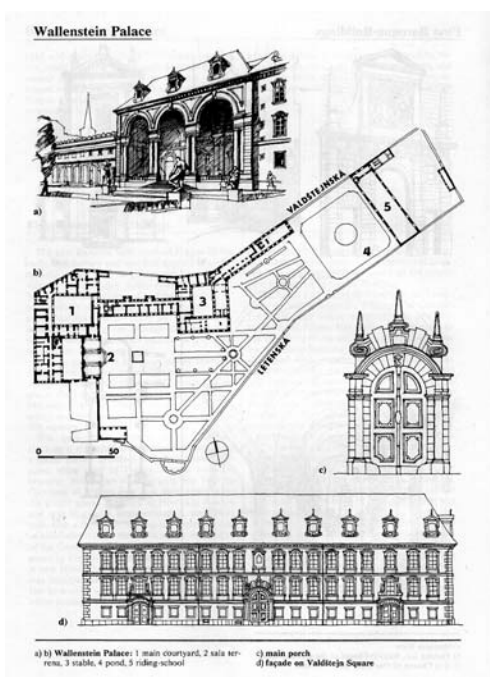


Figure 19 Wallenstein Palace; Staňková et al., *Eleven Centuries*, 108.



Figure 20 Modern postcard of the Wallenstein Palace complex.

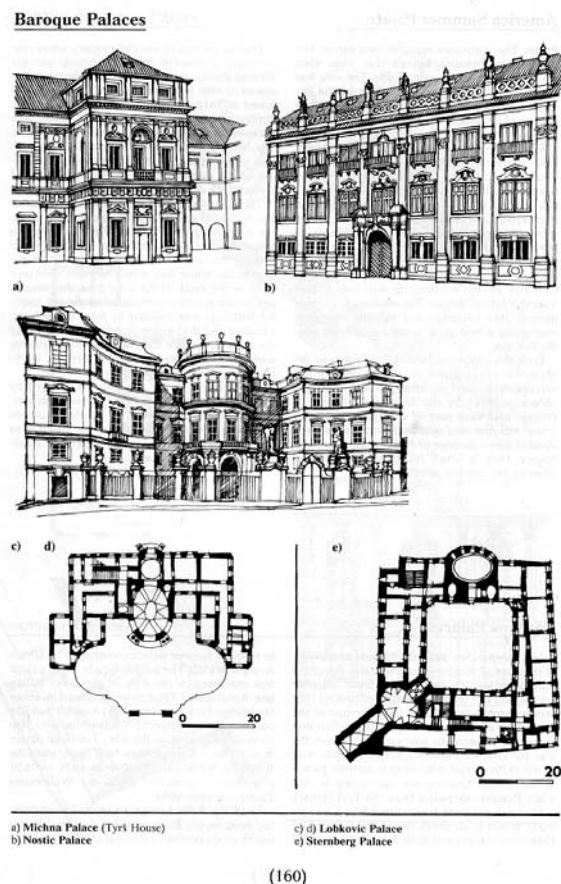


Figure 21 Some examples of Baroque palaces; Staňková et al., *Eleven Centuries*, 160.

The very war that brought about the conditions so favorable to the building activity of the new aristocrats and the triumphant Church plainly demonstrated the inadequacy of the city's medieval fortifications; after all, the city was overrun on three separate occasions during the thirty years of warfare. The new defense system was begun in 1654 and called for a strip of new town walls to be built in front of the older fortifications and to enclose the city completely. Thirty-nine pentagonal bastions reinforced the new walls at intervals, following the French model. Old gates were either updated or replaced in the Baroque architectural style. The ancient citadel of Vyšehrad received special attention, as it had played a key role in two battles for the city during the Thirty Years War, ceased to have any civilian residents, and was transformed into an

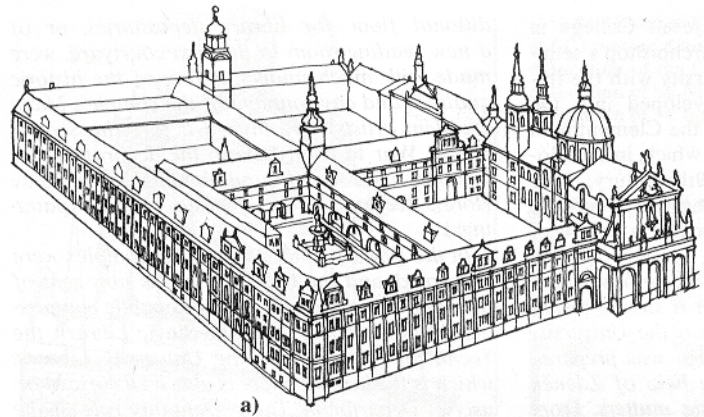


Figure 22 Clementinum complex; Staňková et al., *Eleven Centuries*, 113.

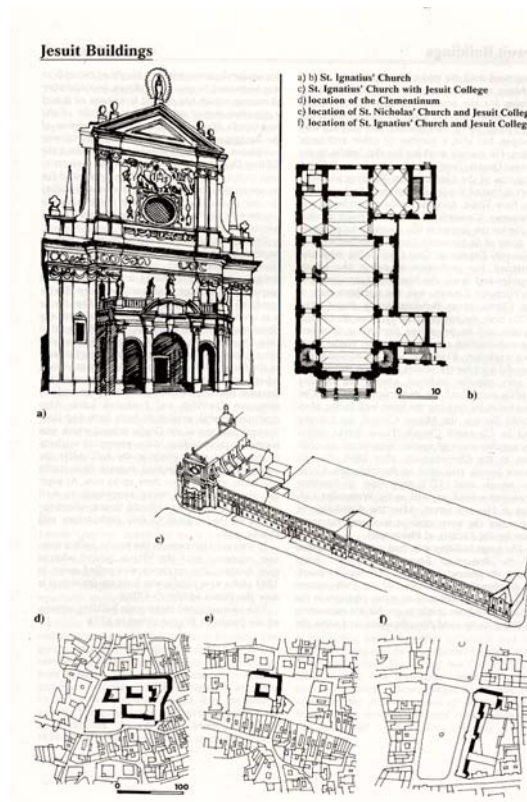


Figure 23 Examples of Jesuit building projects; Staňková et al., *Eleven Centuries*, 115.

exceptional example of a Baroque military stronghold with the addition of an armory, two extra gates with both inner and outer chambers, and extra bastions.²⁵ Even with the large scale building projects underway throughout seventeenth-century Prague, its depopulation and urban decline in the aftermath of armed conflict relegated to the status of a provincial town, losing its rank as seat of the imperial residence to Vienna, and remaining such for the next 150 years.²⁶

Prague awakens...to industrialization and migration

The legacy of the building activity in seventeenth-century Prague was selective redevelopment. Structures erected by aristocrats and religious authorities were scattered throughout Prague, with some concentration in a few neighborhoods, especially so in the Little Side district, but the overall result was a mismatched ensemble of contradictory designs and isolated projects. This situation grew out of the city-planning concept of “demolish and build anew”, practiced in the aftermath of the Thirty Years War, that was responsible for monumental structures like the Wallenstein Palace and the Clementinum. The architecture did have a marked effect on the appearance of the city. Staňková notes:

In the course of the following two centuries [seventeenth and eighteenth] the Baroque totally changed Prague’s architecture by creating dominant buildings, giving the streets and squares both a festive and intimate atmosphere, and enriching them with a number of beautiful details...As the development went on, more and more attention and respect were paid to the surroundings of the new buildings. Streets and squares were enriched with new façades displaying the beautiful architecture of early and particularly of [the] high and late Baroque. These façades were full of both plain and refined, carefully calculated charms, taking advantage of curves, irregularities, sloping streets, and sloping or terraced squares. The geographic situation of Prague offered many chances for creative architects to show their art.²⁷

However, by the end of the century, leading Prague architects, namely Jan Santini-Aichel and the Dietzenhofer family, began to follow what Švácha terms a “more sensitive approach” to city

²⁵ Mráz, 153; Staňková, 110-112; Švácha, 14-15.

²⁶ Švácha, 14-15; Luděk Sýkora, and Vít Štěpánek, “City Profile: Prague,” *Cities* 9.2 (1992): 91.

²⁷ Staňková et al., *Eleven Centuries*, 169-170.

planning by skillfully inserting Baroque architectural design into the existing urban fabric, and attempting to blend the new developments into a more unified, coherent appearance.²⁸

Ultimately, the great rebuilding efforts of the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century resulted in little more than a reorganizing of the same urban fabric within the walled city. Building lots were consolidated, the scale of buildings increased, and the natural topography stressed to dramatic advantage with the deliberate planning of perspective views from various points. Valena concludes:

Prague is a city which has not merely a rich topographical setting and an [sic] exuberant architectural qualities, but it is also a place where the man-made and the natural, the architecture and topography meet with a rare grace and harmony, where the one element enhances the other, creating a whole which is incomparably more than the simple sum of the two.²⁹

In terms of city planning activity, most of the eighteenth century proved to be little changed from the situation of the Baroque period. The 1757 siege of Prague during the War of Austrian Succession resulted in great damage to the Hradčany castle complex. The empress Maria Theresa took steps to reconstruct the destroyed portions and to modernize the surviving elements. The renovations stripped Prague Castle of a good deal of its superficial medieval appearance inside and out; the uniform three-part Neoclassical façade that faces the Little Side to the south, dating from the Theresian era, still screens the remaining older structures from view (see Figures 24 and 25).³⁰

²⁸ Švácha, 15.

²⁹ Hruža, 204; Mráz, 153; Staňková et al., 169-170; Thomas F. Valena, "Prague—Urban Morphology: A Contribution to Comparative Urban Studies," *Vance Bibliographies*. (Architecture Series: Bibliography #A 248), 1. Staňková et al. and Valena point to the church of St. Nicholas Church built in the "basin" of the Little Side by the Dietzenhofer family (Christoph and Kilian Ignaz) as a prime example of the tendency to incorporate new structures into the existing urban fabric and in doing so to enhance the townscape's appearance. St. Nicholas continues to punctuate the complex skyline of the Little Side. See Staňková et al., 137-139, 170; Mráz, 204; Valena, 3.

³⁰ Mráz, 182-184; Staňková et al., *Eleven Centuries*, 173-174.



Figure 24 Hradčany complex from a 1940s postcard. Postcard in author's possession.

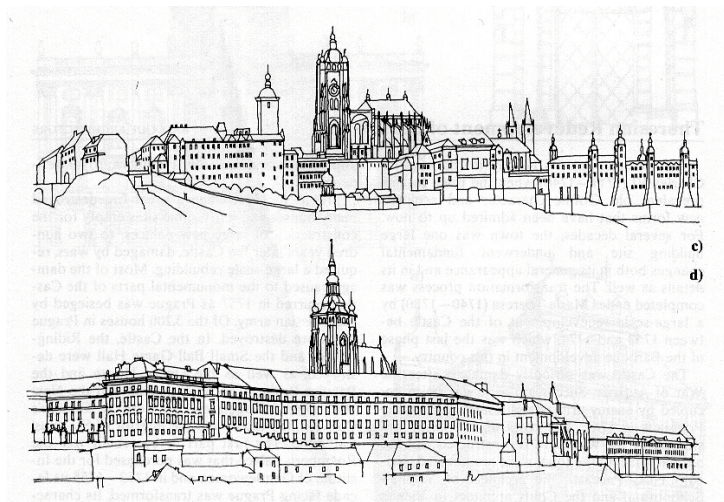


Figure 25 Maria Theresa's work on the Hradčany complex; Staňková et al., *Eleven Centuries*, 174.

Besides royal restorations, the reign of Maria Theresa also brought with it modernized building regulations and codes. The centralized Imperial hierarchy of building supervisors with codes to enforce came to govern new construction as well as reconstruction. For example, the Fire Regulations of 1785 called for the replacement of Gothic-style, street-facing gabled roofs

with roofs that turned gutters to the street, as well as the construction of firewalls between structures. Such rules had a direct impact on future building activity and architectural design.³¹ The end of Maria Theresa's reign in 1780 also marked the end of Prague's nearly five-century containment within its medieval walls (see Figures 26, 27, and 28). In 1784, her successor Joseph II joined the four main districts—Old Town, New Town, Little Side, and Hradčany—into a unified administrative entity (the fifth district, Josefov, would be added in 1850). Just a year before, Joseph had also abolished serfdom, making possible the free movement of his subjects within the empire. Added to that event was the coming of the nascent Industrial Revolution to Bohemia, and the city began to strain against the confines of its masonry boundaries. The leading industrial fields at the beginning of the nineteenth century included general, machine tool,

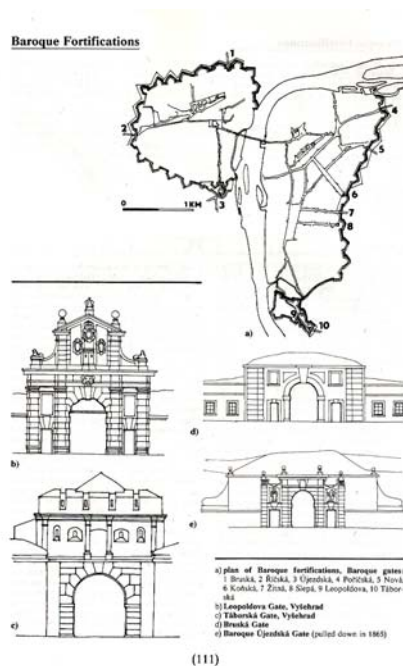


Figure 26 Baroque fortifications; Staňková et al., *Eleven Centuries*, 111.

³¹ Otakar Nový and Tibor Zálčík, "On the Eve of the Industrial Revolution," *Urban Development in East-Central Europe: Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary*. International History of City Development 7 (New York: The Free Press, 1972), 191.

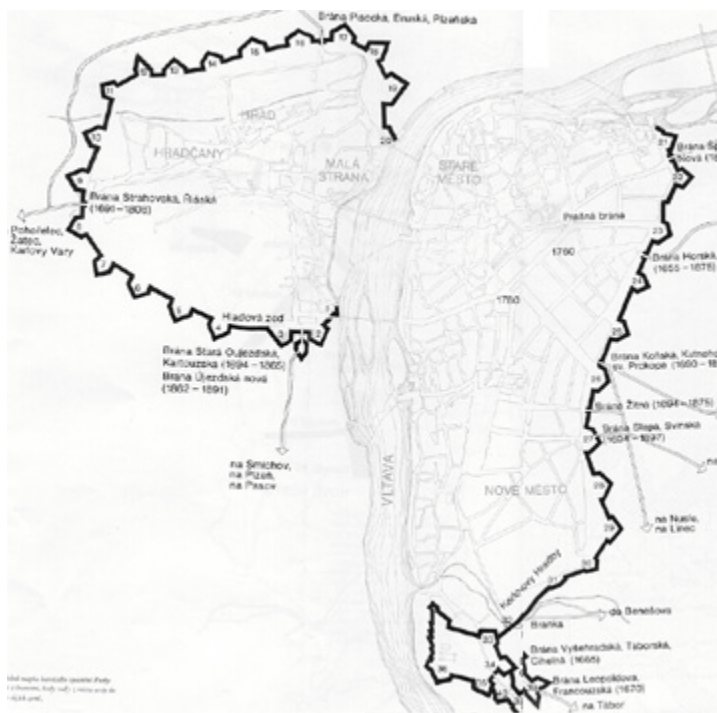


Figure 27 Map of Baroque-era Prague, featuring the various bastions and gates; Kohout, *Technické proměny*, 16-17.



Figure 28 The Nová Újezdská gate, circa 1862; *ibid.*, 50.

and chemical manufacture, as well as foodstuffs, and building. Before the end of the century, laundries, brickwork, and textile factories would join the industrial mix.³²

Industrial growth initiated a reciprocal rise in suburbs. While farmsteads and small villages had surrounded Prague from time immemorial, true suburbs were a new feature to the landscape beyond the city proper. At first, the building pattern was without structure. From 1817 on, the first planned suburb Karlín arose on the northeast flank of the city walls between the Vltava River and Vítkov hill (see Figures 29 and 30). Built on the foundation of a medieval settlement known as Poříčí, Karlín incorporated an existing public garden along the city walls and featured soon a river port, paper-mills and granaries, and tenement houses. New regulations governing the layout of new towns were added to the existing Imperial building codes and mandated a grid formation for streets. The city blocks are among the largest, even in modern-day Prague, and the broad avenues and streets still manage to accommodate the demands



Figure 29 The port at Karlín in the middle of the nineteenth century; Mráz, *The Heart of Europe*, 203.

³² Jiří Kohout and Jiří Vančura, *Praha 19. a 20. Století: Technické proměny (Prague, 19th and 20th Centuries: Technical Advances)* (Praha: SNTL, Nakladatelství Technické Literatury, 1986), 26, 41, 74; Švácha, 15; Sýkora et al., 92; Vojtová, 14-15.

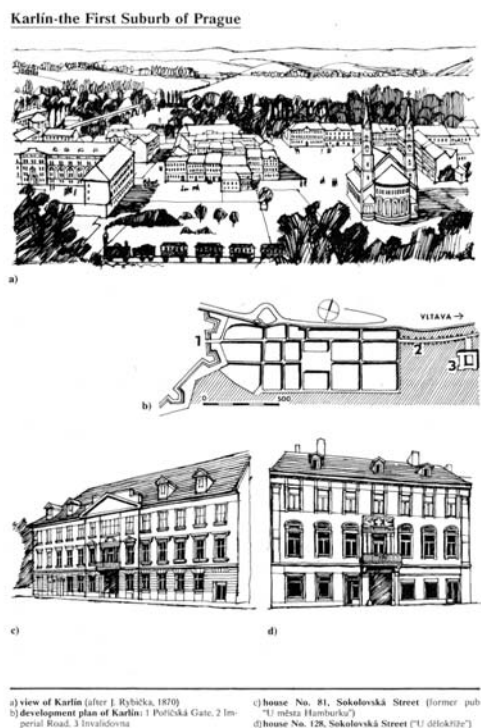


Figure 30 The industrial suburb of Karlín; Staňková et al., *Eleven Centuries*, 198.

of modern traffic. Karlín can boast of a number of Prague's technical firsts, including a textile factory (1818), a steam engine works (1833), steamboat (1841), gasworks (1847), horse-drawn tramlines (1875), electric street lighting and electric tramlines (1895). Today, Karlín survives as a central suburb, retaining much of its Neoclassical residential and industrial architecture.³³

Karlín was the first, but certainly not the last of Prague's industrial-age suburbs. As a foil to the deliberately planned Karlín, the suburb of Smíchov sprouted up as a motley collection of houses and factories on the left bank of the river in a former area of gardens, orchards, and small villages (see Figure 31). From a 1785 count of 60 houses, the settlement contained 200 with

³³ Staňková et al., 179-180, 197-199; Švácha, 16. One of the few extant farmsteads is Bertramka in the Smíchov district; this little sixteenth-century estate has been preserved as one of W.A. Mozart's primary Prague residences. Most farmsteads or villages were demolished to make way for new factories or tenement buildings. See Staňková et al., 179-180; Mráz, 189. Today, the Karlín area enjoys protection

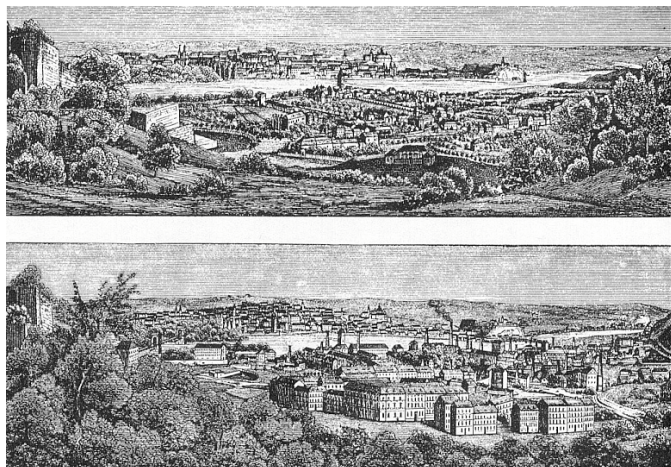


Figure 31 1835 and 1875 views of Smíchov; Kohout, 72.

3,500 residents by 1836, and by 1880, some 25,000 inhabitants. Not surprisingly, this large concentration of workers led in 1844 to the first labor riots in Bohemia. Other suburbs developed in short order; among them, Žižkov to the east, and Holešovice and Liben to the north followed the Karlín layout, while Vinohrady, more of an upper-middle class residential settlement than industrial suburb followed an existing street system encircled by the public Wimmer Gardens. Despite the official directive to follow certain street layouts, the same codes did not address the aesthetic nature of the architecture, particularly within the industrial suburbs, built by busy land speculators. The rapid population growth of the city required the quick completion of construction projects; the result was in Hrůza's estimation "formless, clumsy tenement houses" that reflected very obviously the socio-economic achievement of its inhabitants. Other commentators are more kind, such as Staňková, who notes the "attractive" Neoclassical architecture of these houses. Over time, the competition among building contractors brought about a gradual increase in the quality of these residences. Unlike the earlier courtyard/gallery design utilized in the first tenements, such as the Platýz tenement in between Old and New Towns

from its state historic designation as the first Prague suburb and is undergoing a series of renovations. See Šárka Visková, "City unveils new plan for Karlín," *Prague Post*, 9 September 1998.

(see Figures 32 and 33), later buildings would employ something more along the lines of a row house design, most often with three floors and one- to two-room flats.³⁴



Figure 32 Platýz tenement house, contemporary photograph; Mráz, *Prague: The Heart of Europe*, 197.

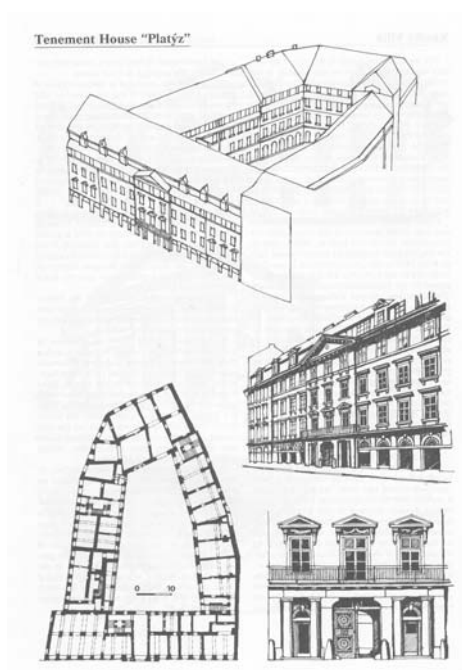


Figure 33 Platýz tenement house; Staňková et al., *Eleven Centuries*, 202.

³⁴ Hruža, 207; Mráz, 195-196, 207-209; Plicka, 9; Staňková et al., 203-205, 241; Švácha, 16. The Wimmer Gardens were located between Wenceslaus Square and the Square of Peace (*Náměstí míru*). See Švácha, 16.

Along with the growing industrial sector came regional and internal transportation links necessary to transport raw and finished goods and to move people throughout the region as well as within the city. The first railway leading from Prague, to the Moravian city of Olomouc, was finished in 1845, followed soon after by an important connection to Dresden. City engineers built the Neoclassical railway station, now known as Masaryk station, by punching through the Baroque fortifications at the border between the New Town and Karlín (see Figure 34). Only the third bridge built across the Vltava after the long-serving medieval Charles Bridge and the 1841 Emperor Francis I chain bridge, the railway bridge at Karlín was built from 1845 to 1851 by Alois Negrelli, the future engineer of the Suez Canal. Negrelli also built the two-track railway viaduct for the Prague-Dresden route; this viaduct still handles railway traffic, and is currently the second oldest, surviving Prague bridge after Charles Bridge (see Figure 35). A steel-truss railway bridge built in 1871 but redesigned in 1900 has crossed the river at Vyšehrad since that time to accommodate the traffic from Smíchov and points west (see Figure 36). Likewise, metropolitan officials erected bridges across the Vltava for foot and horse traffic. The aforementioned Francis I Bridge, which was placed immediately downstream of Charles Bridge, was replaced by the present-day *most Legií* (Legion Bridge), while the Francis Joseph I Bridge, dating from the 1860s, spanned the Vltava immediately west of the railway bridge and was replaced by today's Šverma Bridge in 1941. Horse-drawn trams began to operate in 1875, superseded by electric trams in 1891; the pulling down of the city's fortifications in 1874 aided in linking the historic core to the outlying suburbs through this form of public transportation, which continues to serve a good deal of the modern city.³⁵

Periodic river floods threatened these new bridges and often resulted in urban deluge (see Figure 37). Combined with a new aesthetic that favored the river as urban adornment, the development of an embankment system for the Vltava River was underway by the 1840s (see Figure 38). Imperial authorities purchased river lots on the east bank of the Vltava, which

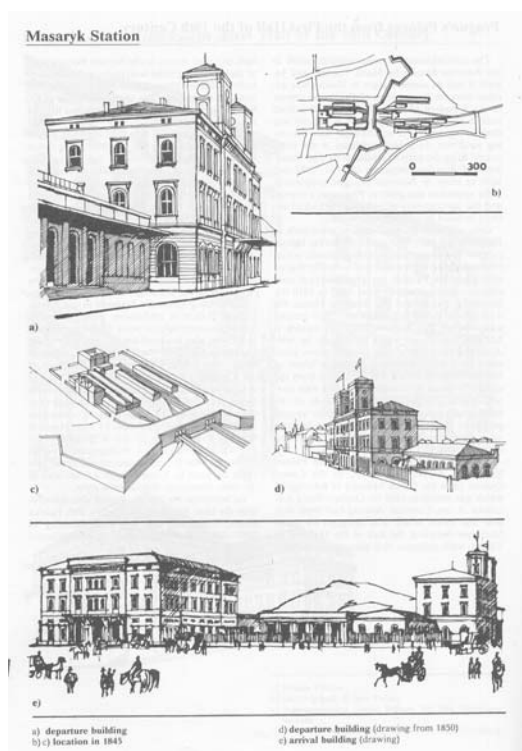


Figure 34 Masaryk Station, Staňková et al., *Eleven Centuries*, 210.



Figure 35 The Negrelli viaduct; Kohout, *Technické proměny*, 58.

³⁵ Kohout, 46-49; Mráz, 205, 210-211; Staňková et al., 211, 265; Švácha, 16.



Figure 36 View north towards the Hradčany from Smíchov railroad bridge. Photo in author's possession.

included a number of bath and wash houses, mills, fishermen's huts, and timber yards, and began the construction of an embankment of hewn granite ashlar blocks. Known originally as the Francis Embankment, after the ruling Austrian emperor, the embankment's name over the years has reflected the political scene; during the Nazi occupation, it was given the name of the German SS boss Reinhard Heydrich; for the Communist era, its namesake was President Gottwald, the first Czechoslovak Communist president; and, in a democratic Czech Republic, it has reverted to an association with T.G. Masaryk, the founder of modern Czechoslovakia. Subsequent river improvements included shipping canals on the north side of the Vltava meander and in the Karlín vicinity and the erection of a series of embankments on both sides of the river.³⁶

The 1866 occupation of Prague, which had been declared an open city, by the Prussians at the close of the Austro-Prussian War marked the end of the city as a fortress town. The ring of Baroque fortifications that encircled the town had become simply obsolete, and had furthermore become a physical obstacle to the consolidation of the growing city. Because of political tension between the crown and the municipal government, Prague did not receive an imperial donation of the walls, but was forced to buy them at an exorbitant price. Demolition began in 1874. As in similarly situated European cities of the time, Prague dedicated much of this newly acquired



Figure 37 Charles Bridge & 1890 flood damage; Kohout, *Technické proměny*, 48.

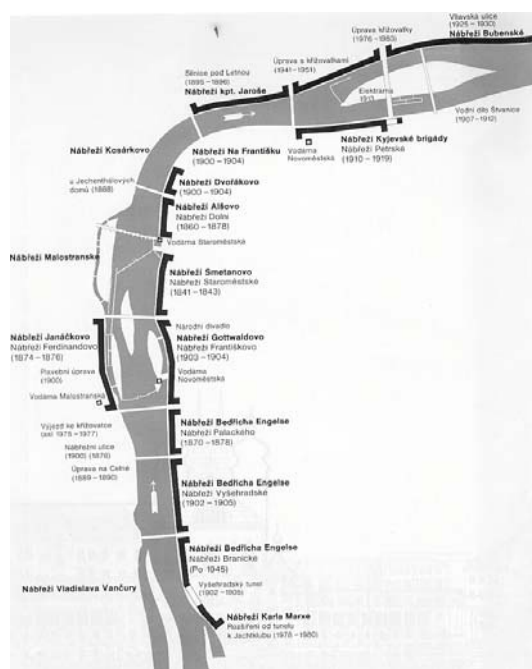


Figure 38 Prague river embankments as of 1989; *ibid.*, 80-81.

urban space to park use. This move followed the private initiatives of certain aristocrats, who since the early part of the century had established large areas of green space for public use within their own properties. The municipal authorities followed their lead and converted former waste

³⁶ Kohout, 80-81; Mráz, 205; Staňková et al., 205-207.

areas, such as in Karlín and Charles Square into park space; former moats had been featured garden follies, including the Chinese Pavilion at the Cibulka garden and the Temple of the Night in Klamovka Park (see Figure 39).³⁷

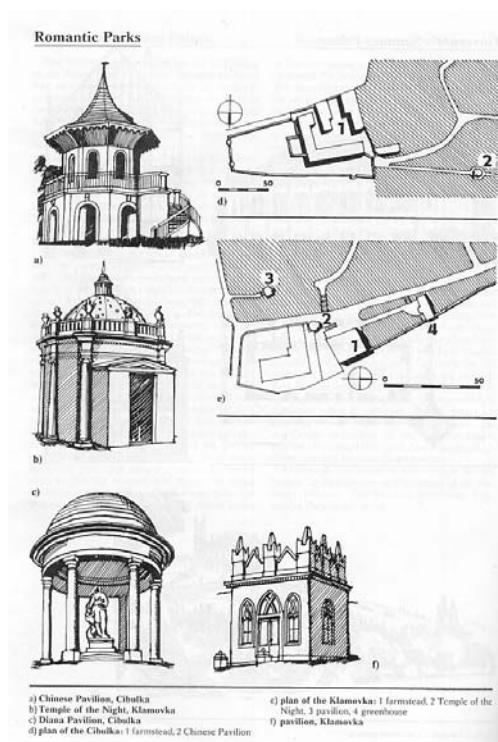
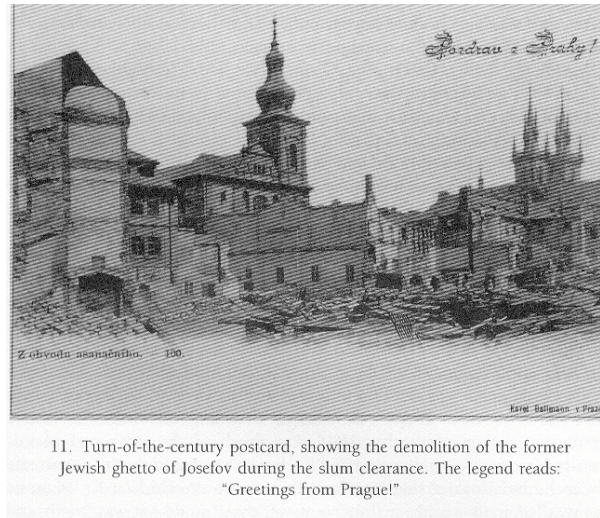


Figure 39 Prague garden follies; Staňková et al., *Eleven Centuries*, 228.

More of the same sort of trendy and necessary demolition that gave Prague a great deal of its urban green space followed in the last decade of the century. What Demetz has called “the far more incisive phase of [nineteenth-century] modernization” was the wholesale demolition of a substantial portion of the northern section of the Old Town. The outcry of intellectuals, students, and architects did not stop the slum clearance (see Figure 40). (Admittedly, the district was among the most dilapidated and diseased in the city.) The result was a leveling of the Jewish

³⁷ Demetz, 314; Mráz, 196-197; 210; Staňková et al., 197, 227-229. Count Chotek was a leading aristocrat in the establishment and protection of green space.



11. Turn-of-the-century postcard, showing the demolition of the former Jewish ghetto of Josefov during the slum clearance. The legend reads: "Greetings from Prague!"

Figure 40 Slum clearance, "Greetings from Prague" postcard; Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia*, 117.

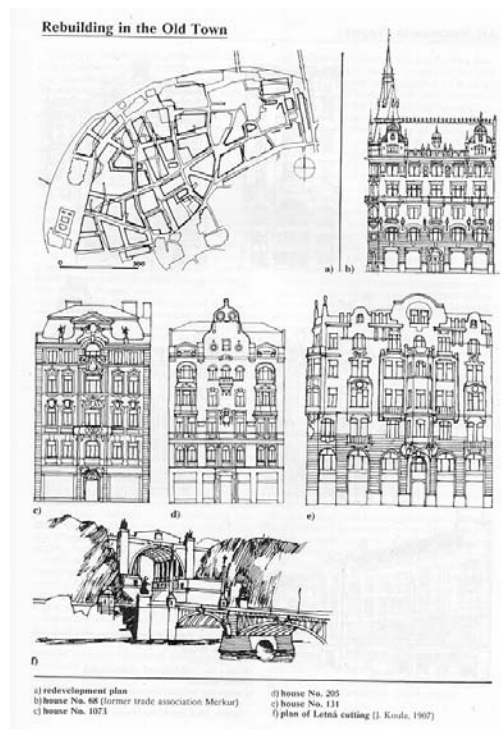


Figure 41 Asanace map, redevelopment facades; Staňková et al., *Eleven Centuries*, 271.

ghetto, Josefov, or Joseph's Place, saving only a few synagogues, the Jewish cemetery, and the district's town hall (see Figure 41). Some 21,000 wagonloads of rubble were hauled to the river to shore up the embankments. A new grid of spacious boulevards replaced the district's medieval maze of streets, while new blocks of fashionable neo-traditional buildings and art nouveau architecture lined the fresh avenues. The influence of Haussmann's urban restructuring of Paris is clear; the new main street leading from Old Town Square to the river is Pařížská Street—or, Paris Street.³⁸

By 1900, the population of central Prague stood at nearly 200,000 inhabitants, nearly double its size in 1800; estimates that included the industrial hinterlands and suburbs put the number at closer to half a million. In that time, two competing ethnic groups, German and Czech, had come to live side by side. This was not without significance. Czech-speakers, usually former peasants or only one generation from the soil, crowded into Prague, seeking the opportunity the newly industrialized city offered. In a matter of a few decades, the city which had exuded Teutonic allegiance (Joseph II had made German, not Czech, the only language of officialdom and higher education) saw its German-speaking population shrink to only 41% by 1850; by 1900, that number shrank to a mere 7%. Czech dissatisfaction with persistent German dominance of commerce and civic institutions grew. The 1848 Revolution that called for democratization within the Empire had a certain element of ethnic nationalism. Despite its failure to achieve the goal of constitutional monarchy, Vienna did grant Prague self-government in 1850. Subject to German control during its first decade, the municipal government was won by Czech interests in 1861, and Czech replaced German as the official language of municipal offices; as a result, at least within the confines of Prague, Czech nationalism could express itself through the various

³⁸ Kateřina Bečková, "Asanace—zatrácovaný i obdivovaný projekt obce Pražské," *Pražská asanace*, Ed. Jiří Hruza (Praha: Muzeum hlavního města Prahy, 1993), 35-56; Demetz, 314-317; Akos Moravanszky, *Competing Visions: Aesthetic Invention and Social Imagination in Central European Architecture, 1867-1918* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 52; Mráz, 222-223; Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 117.

architectural and urban planning schemes put into action by sympathetic municipal authorities. Cultural and educational institutions were founded by and for Czechs in the last quarter of the century: the National Theatre (1868-1883) (see Figure 42); the Czech Polytechnic (1872-1873); the Rudolfinum Palace (1876-1884), housing concert and gallery space (see Figure 43); and the National Museum, which enclosed the upper end of Wenceslaus Square. Also built at this time were churches with Czech patron saints, as well as schools and colleges for Czech-speakers only, in itself an expression of the modern revival of the Czech language. Statues of notable Czechs drawn from both modern and ancient history were erected throughout Prague as well as in lesser Czech towns—leaders of modern Czech nationalism, Havlíček, Palacký, and others, took their place next to Jan Hus and the Czech saints. New architectural fads took advantage of the interest in typical Czech forms. The Bohemian Neo-Renaissance style applied sgraffito and Renaissance-like gables to the facades of new residences, apartment houses, and schools, while the 1895 Ethnographic Exhibition in Prague made Bohemian and Moravian folk architecture a popular source for new suburban detached homes. (See Figures 44 and 45.) By the first decades of the twentieth century, Czech names for streets and squares, honoring the heroes of the national movement, replaced their German predecessors; even the language of the street signs were Czech only by 1893. These urban symbols of a growing Czech consciousness would stand witness to the culmination of the efforts of Czech nationalists—the declaration of the independent Czechoslovak Republic in 1918.³⁹

³⁹ Plicka, X; Sayer, 67, 85-86, 90, 100-101; Staňková et al., 242-243, 276-278; Švácha, 18-19; Vojtová, 14; “*Zrod Moderního Velkoměsta* (The making of the modern great city), *Historie Prahy* provided by the Informační server hlavního města Prahy (Information server of the main city of Prague). Online. Internet. 28 December 2000. Available: <http://www.prague-city.cz/cgi-bin/verze.cgi/samet.htm>. The churches of St. Wenceslaus in Smíchov and St. Ludmila in Vinohrady honor two of the most well known Czech saints. See 250, 258.

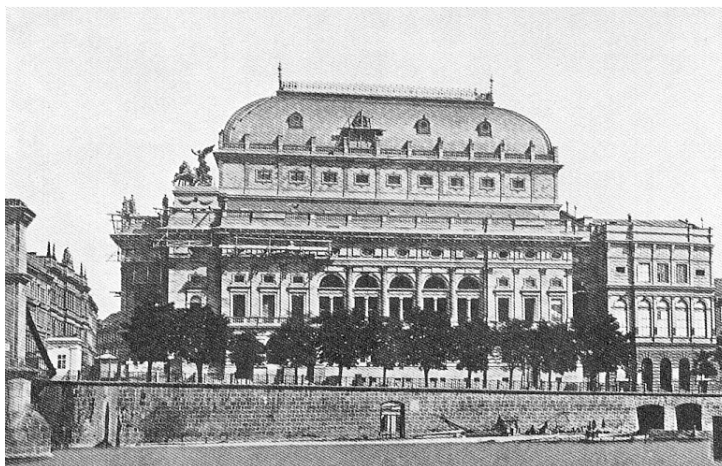


Figure 322 The National Theatre; Kohout, *Technické proměny*, 81.

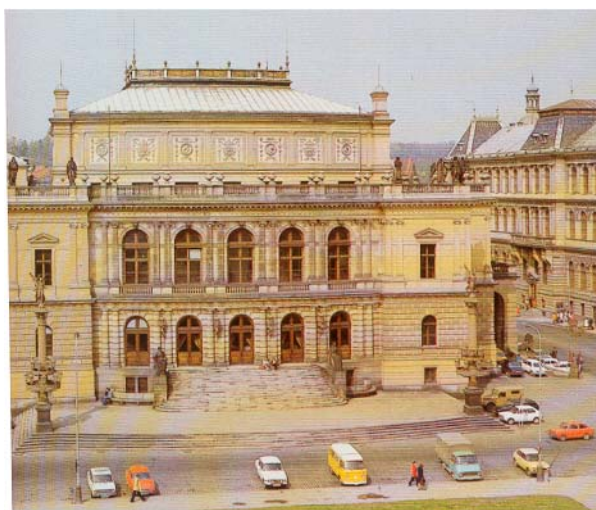


Figure 43 The Rudolfinum; Mráz, *Prague: The Heart of Europe*, 74.



Figure 44 Neo-Renaissance apartment building at Vratislavova 10; photo in author's possession.

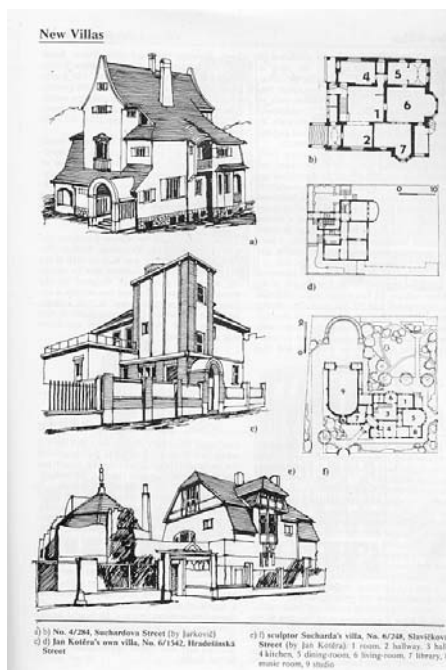


Figure 45 Examples of folk architecture in detached suburban houses; *ibid.*, 276-278.

Early twentieth-century Prague

For the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Prague was a bright star in its economic constellation. With the advent of an independent Czechoslovakia at the close of the First World War, Prague

became its capital and the center of its economic and cultural life. To fulfill its new role, Prague underwent a building boom:

...Here were to be found the government and ministries, the sessions of parliament took place here, the ambassadors and consuls of foreign countries worked here, all central authorities were located in the town, the headquarters of the political parties, and their publishing houses, the leading economic, scientific, technical, social and cultural institutions, banks, universities, art unions and sports facilities. And every one of these authorities, enterprises, and institutions needed buildings that might suit their purpose and represent them adequately....⁴⁰

The assortment of designs chosen for these new structures reflected the competing threads of contemporary architecture. For example, rondocubism, a rounded and bright variant of the Cubist style popularized in the 1910s, was hailed as the Slavic answer to the sharp edges and neutral palate of contemporary German and Austrian architecture; this style was applied to the Czechoslovak Legion Bank in central Prague, as well as suburban apartment buildings (see Figure 46). Likewise, traditionalism, a style owing much to historicism, was used as the basis for a number of ministry and educational buildings, including the Ministries of Agriculture and Railway, and the Law Faculty of Charles University (see Figure 47).⁴¹

At the same time, though, construction of privately owned buildings adopted the most avant-garde architectural designs; office buildings, department stores, and residential blocks and homes featured constructivist and functionalist plans. Prague contractors took from the English the concept of the garden city and built several of these residential districts throughout the greater Prague area in the 1920s and 1930s; the concept of the garden city had captivated Czech planners for some time, but especially after the translation of Ebenezer Howard's landmark work on

⁴⁰ Mráz, 237.

⁴¹ Staňková et al., 288-293.

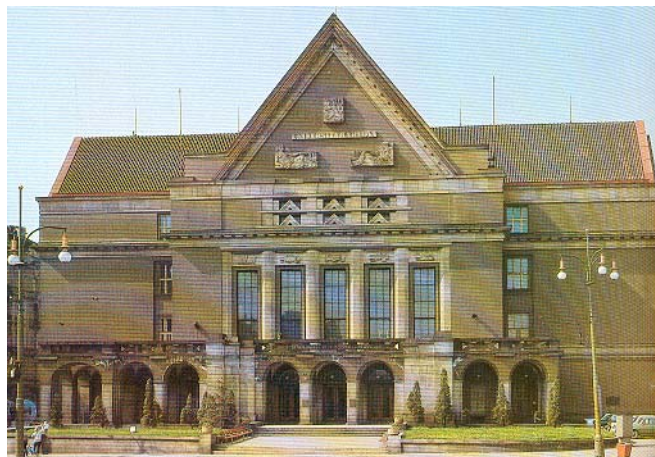


Figure 46 An example of Prague traditionalism: the Law Faculty of Charles University; Mráz, *Technické proměny*, 232.



Figure 46 Detail of rondocubism in Prague, an apartment block at Kamenická 7 in the near northern suburb of Holešovice; Ivan Margolius, *Prague: A guide to twentieth-century architecture* (London: Ellipsis, 1996), 221.

the subject from English to Czech in 1924, as a method of responding to rapid urban growth.⁴² Developed by the Savings Bank of Vinohrady, the Spořilov neighborhood was a planned community to the southeast of the city's center (see Figure 48). Approximately 1000 two-story detached houses and villas made of prefabricated materials surrounded the central Roztylské Square, which included a church, shops, and restaurants; tree-lined avenues formed the main transportation arteries, and back lanes divided individual gardens. The Ořechovka neighborhood in the northeastern suburb of Střešovice was quite similar (see Figures 49 and 50); the Barrandov development (1932-1935) south of Smíchov also followed the same scheme, while additionally featuring extensive terracing, swimming facilities, and the Czechoslovak Film Studios. The Baba housing estate (1928-1932), located to the north of suburban Dejvice, was a Czechoslovak Werkbund project and a microcosm of Czech intelligentsia (see Figures 51 and 52).⁴³

The problem of uniform municipal administration that had plagued the city under Viennese rule—suburbs had their own administrations and more often than not held the status of royal towns themselves—was improved to large degree by the declaration of “Greater Prague” (*Velká Praha*) in 1920. This law defined the administrative boundaries of the capital city and effected the merger of all neighboring communities and settlements within a seven-mile radius of the city's center with the historic core to form “Greater Prague”. This act applied especially to townships that had enjoyed self-governing status under the Austrians, including Karlín, Smíchov, Vinohrady, Zbraslav, and Žižkov. A further 1923 law divided the city into 20 districts, each delineated by a Roman numeral and established a regional planning commission, whose tasks included the first comprehensive plan for the city (see Figures 53 and 54).⁴⁴

⁴² Richard Hammersley and Tim Westlake, “Urban conservation policy in the Czech Republic,” *Planning Practice and Research* 9, No. 2 (1994), 140.

⁴³ Mráz, 239-240; Staňková et al., 296-299; Stephan Templ, *Baba: The Werkbund Housing Estate Prague* (Boston: Birkhaeser, 1999), 10-17. The Czechoslovak Legion Bank's name honored the Czech legions who fought against Austro-Hungary in the First World War.

⁴⁴ Kohout, 136-139; Mráz, 238; Švácha, 19; Sýkora, 92-94.

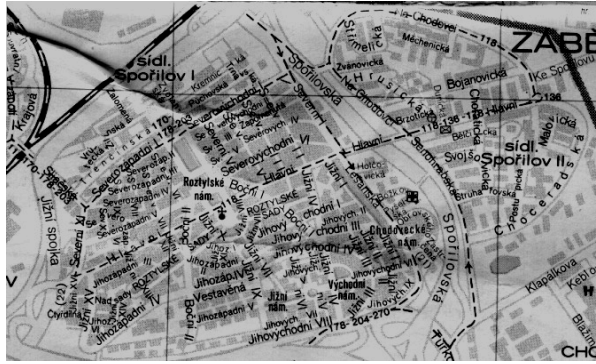


Figure 48 Contemporary map of Spořilov, from 1994 Freytag and Berndt map of Prague.



Figure 49 Contemporary map of Ořechovka, from 1994 Freytag and Berndt map of Prague.



Figure 50 View of a typical Ořechovka street, Akos Moravanszky, *Competing Visions: Aesthetic Invention and Social Imagination in European Architecture, 1867-1918* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 60.

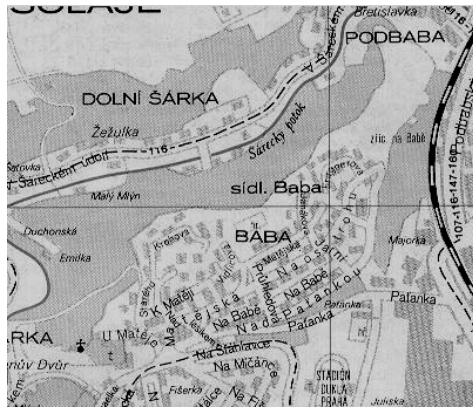


Figure 51 Contemporary map of Baba, from 1994 Freytag and Berndt map of Prague.



Figure 52 View of Baba during construction, Stephan Templ, *Baba: The Werkbund Housing Estate Prague* (Boston: Birkhauser, 1999), 4-5

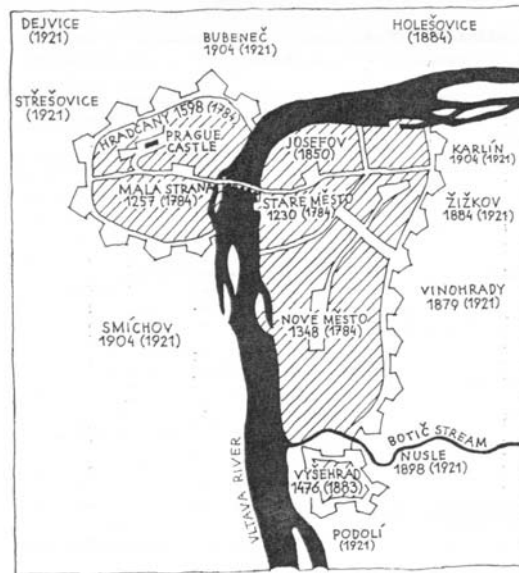


Figure 53 A chronology of Prague's suburb consolidation; Švácha, *The Architecture of New Prague*, 17.



Figure 33 Greater Prague 1921-1938 during the First Republic. Municipal areas are in capitals, important local names in lower case; *ibid.*, 20.

By World War II, Prague enjoyed a population of approximately 985,000 residents, and with economic and demographic growth, the future seemed bright for the burgeoning nation. But the conflict that would soon envelop the globe set Czechoslovakia and Prague on a grossly altered trajectory.⁴⁵

Prague under occupation: Fascism and Communism

The Second World War came early for Czechoslovakia, when German troops crossed the borders on March 15, 1939. The crisis of Munich sealed the nation's ultimate wartime role—that of an occupied nation. The city took on the odd status as seat of the *Reichsprotektor*, the infamous Reinhard Heydrich, whose assassination in 1942 initiated heinous reprisals and atrocities against the Czech people, including the obliteration of Lidice, a village outside of Prague, and the liquidation of its residents. As a main source of German war materials, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (as the Czech portion of the occupied nation came to be known) experienced rationing and shortages; new construction projects were either delayed until after the war or never realized. Liberated by the Soviet army on May 9, 1945, a day after the official German surrender, Prague had been the week before the scene of fierce street fighting between the remaining Germans and Czech partisans. The Old Town suffered the most with the firing of the medieval Old Town City Hall, city archives, and its astronomical clock by retreating German forces (see Figure 55). However, compared to other European capitals, Prague emerged relatively unscathed from the destruction of World War II. Yet understandably, as a result of the various shortages and dangers found in the capital city, the population of Prague declined and did not recover its pre-war figures until 1957.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Sýkora, 93.

⁴⁶ Crampton, 76-77, 192-193; Mráz, 246; "Osud města ve 20. století" (Prague's fate in the 20th Century), *Historie Prahy* provided by the Informační server hlavního města Prahy (Information server of the main city of Prague). Online. Internet. 28 December 2000. Available: <http://www.prague-city.cz/cgi-bin/verze.cgi/republika.htm>; Sayer, 231-232, 235-236; Sýkora, 93; Vojtová, 19. The New Town monastery of Emmaus, also known as the Abbey "Na Slovanech" (at the Slavs) founded by Charles IV in 1347, was seriously damaged during the Valentine's Day 1945 air raid of the city; several Allied bombers headed to Dresden mistook Prague for their target and dropped their loads on Prague instead. The church was rebuilt with a striking set of modernist steeples. See Staňková et al., 60-62 and figure that follows.



Figure 55 Old Town City Hall in 1945; Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia*, 236.

With the exception of a brief democratic period from 1945 to 1948, Prague remained an occupied nation as the Red Army that had liberated it stayed...and stayed. The 1948 Communist coup led by Klement Gottwald launched the building of a “socialist society”, and the new regime employed urban planning and architecture, especially in the construction of monuments, new housing, and transportation to make that goal a reality. However, over time, the idea of Prague as a modern socialist “Great City” would find itself in sharp contrast to the existing reality.⁴⁷

Unlike other new Communist capitals, such as Warsaw or Budapest, Prague had been spared the great urban devastation of the war, and little cause existed to rebuild the city’s core in the image of socialism. An alternative that could establish socialist authority in the urban landscape was to build a great monument to honor Stalin’s 70th birthday (in 1949). While sister capitals had the same plan, Prague’s tribute to the Soviet leader took on a much more grandiose scale—after all, as Aman points out, the goal was “to make the new political cause visible”. The site chosen was Letná plain, a high ridge located to the north of the Old Town that had been

⁴⁷ “Pod vládou komunist ✦,” (Under communist rule.] *Historie Prahy* provided by the Informační server hlavního města Prahy (Information server of the main city of Prague); available: <http://www.prague-city.cz/cgi-bin/verze.cgi/socialismus.htm>; Internet; accessed 28 December 2000.

transformed from a military exercise ground to a park in the late 1890s. The granite colossus, one of the largest Stalin monuments in the world at thirty meters high, was placed on axis with the elegant Pařížská Street and the Old Town Square, so significant in Czech history (see Figure 56). Completed in 1953, the infamous new landmark intentionally dominated the northern Prague skyline and competed with more ancient reminders of the nation's history, such as the Hradčany complex. With the liberalization of the Czechoslovak Communist party in the early 1960s, Stalin became an embarrassing symbol; in an effort to disassociate itself with his excesses, it was decided to blow up the monument. Since 1962, an empty plinth has remained, silent witness to totalitarian overindulgence and its practice of what Aman terms *damnatio memoriae*—obliteration of the memory.⁴⁸



Figure 56 Stalin monument on Letná Plain; note the proportion between man and monument; Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia*, 272.

⁴⁸ Anders Aman, *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era: An Aspect of Cold War History* (New York: The Architectural History Foundation, 1992), 197, 198, 199-203, 204; Sayer,

More enduring than Stalin has been the equally substantial monument of Vítkov. Overlooking the city as well on a high ridge of the same name, Vítkov began in 1927 as a military shrine, honoring the Hussite forces of Jan Žižka, the Czechoslovak Legions (seen as liberating the nation from Austrian rule), and the Czechoslovak military in general. Appropriately enough, Vítkov itself was the site of a great Hussite victory in 1420. The complex as originally planned would have housed a Legionnaire's and Czech military museum and archives in addition to the Žižka equestrian statue, the largest in the world, and memorial pantheon (see Figures 57 and 58). The Czechoslovak Communist Party, eager to mimic the example of Lenin's Red Square mausoleum, co-opted the site as the burial chamber for noted Party officials and members and various "unknown soldiers". Since the collapse of Communism, the remains of its various leaders—including the ashes of Gottwald, whose corpse did not respond well to a Lenin-like embalming treatment—have been removed.⁴⁹



Figure 57 The Vítkov monument and mausoleum; note the Communist star on the Czech state seal; Mráz, *Prague: The Heart of Europe*, 239.

270-277; Staňková et al., 258-260.

⁴⁹ Sayer, 274-277; Staňková et al., 294. I visited this site in 1997 and peered into the depths of the open mausoleum; other than a dozen or so pensioners enjoying the promenade behind the monument, the site was completely deserted. The view of the Vltava valley—and its ever-present smog layer—was spectacular.

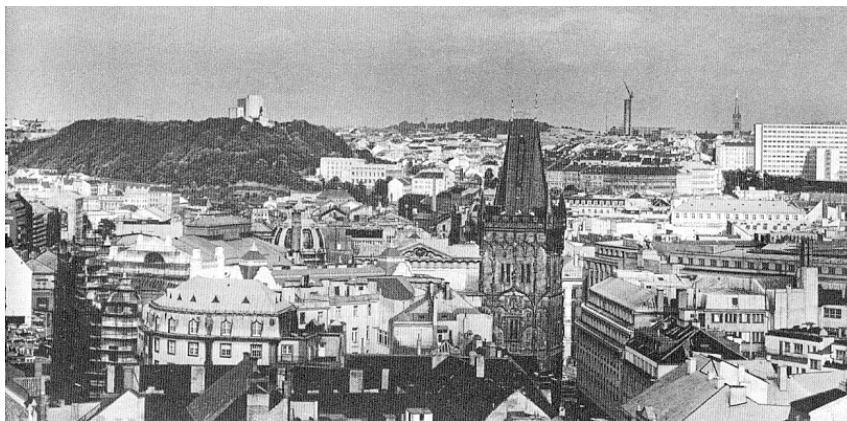


Figure 58 Northeastern skyline of Prague, view towards east, punctuated by Vítkov Hill; Kohout, *Technické proměny*, 267.

A housing shortage brought about by the wartime construction standstill combined with a unique socialist housing policy fueled a housing boom in the years after the war. As Sýkora emphasizes, the Communists proclaimed the right of each and every Czechoslovak citizen to a subsidized, affordable government housing. The immediate reaction of the government to their program in the 1950s was slow, and the answer was in-fill construction mostly on previously vacant lots. These developments included both some detached houses and low multi-story buildings of three to four levels, as in the early Solidarita housing estate in southwest Prague; some larger apartment complexes were built, both in terms of quantity and size, like in the Petřiny district to the northeast of the city, which included twelve-story buildings and 4,000 apartments for 13,000 residents. However, the need for housing soon outstripped the leisurely pace of the state in the 1950s in providing it, and the initial approach of building small groups of residences was discarded. New technological advances in construction techniques along with an embracing of the ideas of Le Corbusier and his disciples served as the foundation of the government's new tactic—the high-density housing estate.⁵⁰ As opposed to the smaller residential developments built during the 1950s, the Corbusian-style housing estates built from the 1960s on had target

⁵⁰ Mráz, 247; Plicka, 11-12; Staňková et al., 309; Sýkora, 94.

populations of 100,000. Across the board, these projects featured uniform apartment plans, prefabricated panel construction, shopping centers and service facilities, as well as some sort of cultural or entertainment center. At least one Czech architectural historian, Jaroslava Staňková has vilified the designs of this period as architecturally unfulfilling and “monotonous” (see Figures 59 and 60). With the exception of the Invalidovna project, all other developments of this era were built on the outskirts of the central city, and their collective image is the first sight that greets an arriving traveler. Referred to as “paneláky” (paneled houses) by Czechs, many of these high-density apartment blocks now suffer from a lack of maintenance and modern systems, and the search for a solution for their shortcomings is a perennial one.⁵¹

Unsurprisingly, the 250,000 Communist-era units scattered far from the center of Prague created more than a few transportation and traffic problems. To some degree or another, the regime addressed these challenges with modern answers, such as an underground subway and highways. The problem of intra-city linkages had plagued Prague ever since its imperial days. The existence of multiple suburbs with separate governing authority and the resulting lack of uniform administration had been solved by the consolidation of the city in the early 1920s. But with the growth of new suburbs through the government’s high-density housing projects, the same problem in some ways came up again. Because of the centralized nature of communist rule, the further addition of outlying suburbs to the overarching authority of Prague was little more than a formality; today, it makes Prague a true modern metropolis. From 1968 to 1974, some 51 suburbs were incorporated into the city, making Communist Prague three times larger at 496 km² than the 1922 Greater Prague. The challenge of connecting all of these constituent parts grew

⁵¹ Kohout, 220-223; Mráz, 248; Plicka, 11-13, 24-26; Staňková et al., 309-313, 314, 315.

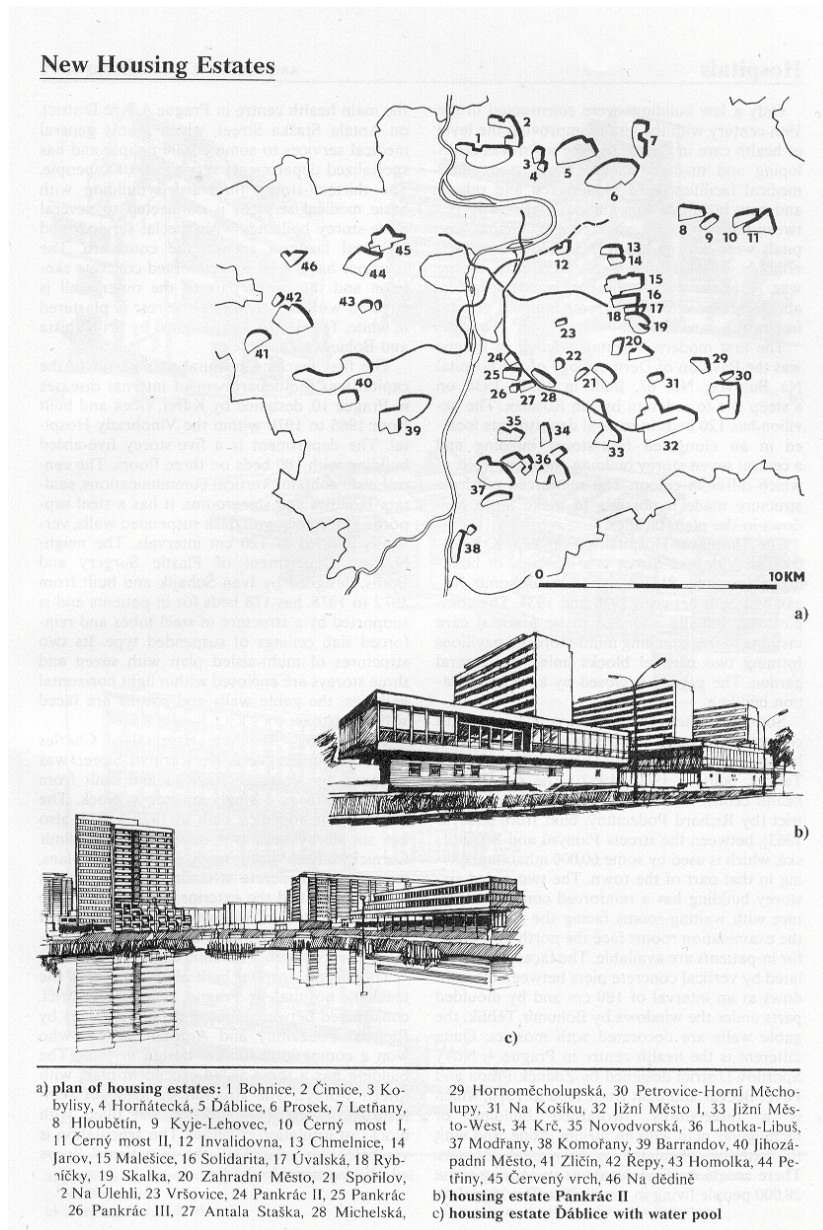


Figure 59 Distribution of Communist-era housing estates in Prague; Staňková et al., *Eleven Centuries*, 314.



Figure 60 Novadvorská housing estate (#35 on preceding map); Kohout, *Technické proměny*, 220.

ever more difficult. The operation of the first subway line, proposed in the late 1920s, began in 1974; by 1985, three lines (green A, yellow B, and red C) extended to the suburbs. Trams, operated since the nineteenth-century, have continued to serve as an important secondary system.⁵²

Until 1841, the medieval Charles Bridge was the only means to cross the Vltava River. Although a series of bridges was completed prior to the Second World War, street capacity had increased to the point that new bridges had to be added to existing stock. The deep Nusle valley is formed by Botič Creek, a tributary of the Vltava, and until the Communist era, never spanned by a bridge. Begun in 1965, the Nusle Bridge (*Nuselský most*) serves as an important connection to the southwest of Prague and as a major thoroughfare for highway traffic. Crossing the 120-foot deep valley, the bridge not only conducts motor traffic but also the subway across; the bridge

⁵² Staňková et al., 338-341; Sýkora, 95.

deck itself sits atop a hollow five by eleven meter prism, which contains the subway tracks (see Figure 61). Interestingly, the bridge's original namesake was none other than the first Communist president, Klement Gottwald. Like so much else in Prague, the name of the bridge was changed in the early 1990s to a less provocative designation. The Nusle Bridge was not an isolated project, and other bridges, including the Barrandov and Barricade Fighters (*Barikádníků*), were also constructed in the 1970s.

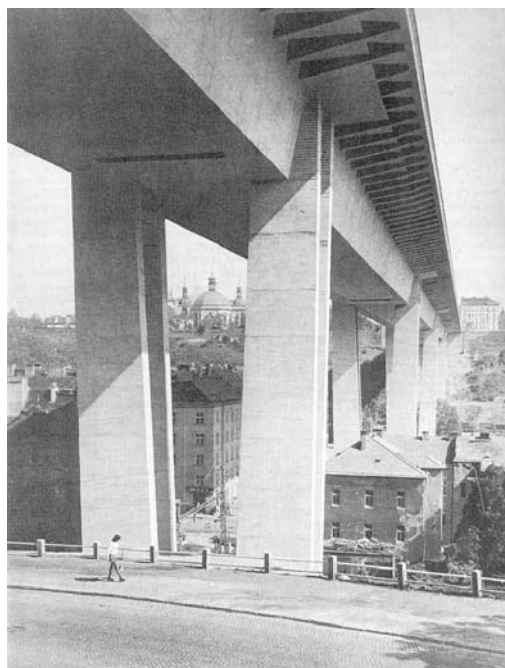


Figure 61 Nusle Bridge as it spans the Botič valley; Kohout, *Technické proměny*, 192.

Bridges, however, were not the only answer to Prague's traffic woes. Beginning in the 1970s, the North-South expressway cut across the city, approximately parallel to the old medieval walls. Now known as Wilson Street, it has received much criticism from many quarters because of its deep penetration of the historic core. At times, the highway deviates from its path by only a few yards to miss one important landmark or another; for example, the entire surroundings of the Central Train Station were changed, and Wenceslaus Square cut off from the National Museum

(see Figure 62).⁵³ The urban expressway, slashing an angry swath across the historic fabric of the capital city of Prague, remains a constant reminder to citizen and visitor alike of the

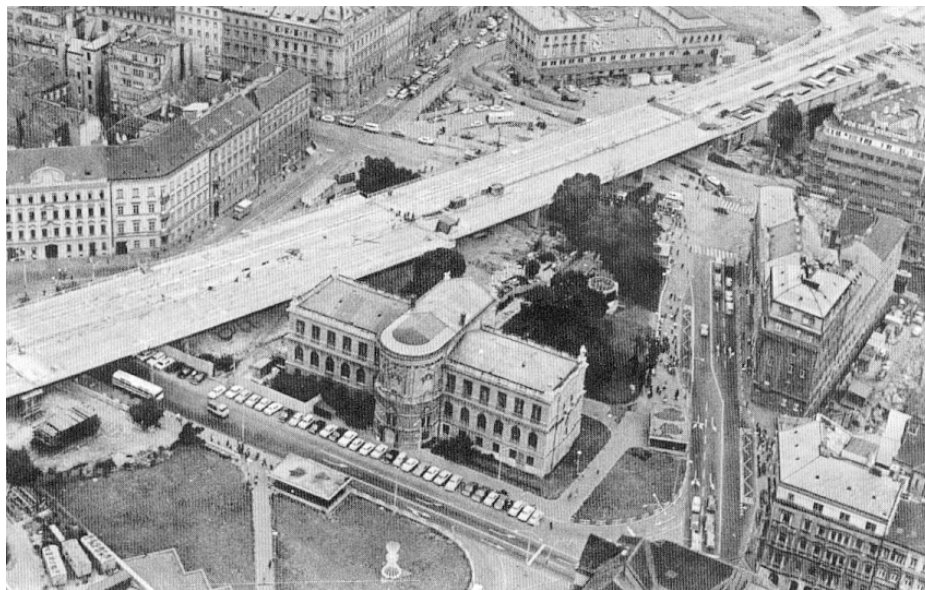


Figure 62 Wilson Street with the Museum of the City of Prague (in foreground); Kohout, *Technické proměny*, 221.

necessity of historic preservation and sensitive development and planning. With this historical background, this study will next explore the history of historic preservation in the Czech lands and in Prague in Chapter 2, and attempt to account for the current state of affairs in Prague in Chapter 3.

⁵³ Kohout, 271; Staňková et al., 336-338.

CHAPTER 2
HISTORY OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN PRAGUE PRIOR TO THE VELVET
REVOLUTION OF 1989

As an ancient capital, Prague has had the good fortune to enjoy centuries of official historic preservation protection in one form or another. The earliest recorded preservation regulations in what is now the Czech Republic appeared in the Middle Ages, and were followed by Papal edicts in 1462 and 1474. These ecclesiastical proclamations prohibited the destruction and damage of religious buildings, including their marbles, urns, inscriptions, as well as their exterior and interior ornamentation.¹ These decrees paralleled similar regulations in other European principalities. For example, from the beginning of the sixteenth century, Venice instituted systematic protection for monuments of art, and beginning in 1630, Swedish authorities established an imperial agency for the protection of archaeological finds.² In addition, renovation of existing historic fabric was not without precedent in the Czech lands. Charles IV's 1348 founding of the New Town of Prague also called for the rebuilding of the fortress complex of Vyšehrad, and the young king ordered the construction of new fortifications, royal palace, and the restoration of the cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul.³ Centuries after Charles IV's efforts, the Counterreformation brought about a renewed cycle of rebuilding and "planned preventive protection" of religious institutions, especially monasteries and convents, which had suffered from the effects of the numerous fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Central European holy wars.

¹ Dušan Lesaj and Ján Svák, "State Care of Monuments," *Bulletin of Czechoslovak Law* 27, no. 1-2 (1988): 8.

² *Státní ústav památkové péče*, "Vznik a organizace památkové péče (Origin and organization of monument care)," Unpublished manuscript, obtained from Mr. Václav Váňa of the *Státní ústav památkové péče v Praze* (State Institute for Monument Care in Prague) 29 May 2000.

³ Demetz, 80.

The architect Giovanni Santini-Aichel, known especially for his unique Gothic-Baroque churches and religious institutions throughout Bohemia (including in Sedlec, Žďár nad Sazavou, and Kladruba) was instrumental in fulfilling the requests of abbots to rebuild their war-damaged churches in “an old and antique manner...modo gottico.”⁴ Together with such restorations and renovations, these early directives were important first steps in creating a foundation for the modern codification and administration of preservation policy in the Czech lands, but were far too focused and limited to be of much benefit. Modern historic preservation would not come to Prague until the nineteenth century when administrative reforms, nationalism, and romanticism emerged as vital influences.

Historic Preservation under the Austro-Hungarian Empire

By the turn of the nineteenth century, the Romantic obsession with the past and national identities fueled the establishment of organizations in Prague such as the Patriotic Friends of Art (*Společnost vlasteneckých přátel umění*) in 1796, and the Society of Friends of the Patriotic Museum in Prague, the predecessor to the present-day National Museum, in 1818. Both organizations concerned themselves with “historic antiquities of the Czech motherland” and focused more on moveable art objects than architecture.⁵ Contemporary with the rise of such civic groups were the late eighteenth-century “reforms” of Emperor Josef II, who dissolved numerous churches and monasteries and assigned new uses to the vacated structures. For those buildings without a use, reconstruction or demolition was their destiny, despite the aforementioned Renaissance-era protection of ecclesiastical architecture. Interest in historic architecture, however, was not without its proponents. In 1823, guidelines for the care of religious institutions, and in 1824, for the repairs of old castles and country houses, were issued,

⁴ Viktor Kotrba, “The Historicism of Arts and the Beginnings of the Care of Monuments in the Czech Lands during the Baroque Period,” *Staletá Praha: Sborník Pražského střediska státní památkové péče a ochrany přírody*, ed. Zdislav Buřival (Praha: Orbis, 1966), 297-298.

⁵ “Vznik a organizace,” 1; the Czech term for “historic antiquities of the Czech motherland” is *historických starožitností vlasti*; *starožitnost* is also the term for “antique”. The term *vlast* is a subjective expression that

perhaps in reaction to the policies of Josef II.⁶ In the 1840s, the Patriotic Museum and its archeological commission concentrated on an inventory-register of monuments and on efforts to prevent their export abroad.⁷ By the mid-point of the century, these grass roots organizations were joined in their work by an official Imperial agency, the first governmental agency devoted entirely to historic preservation in Austria-Hungary.

The Central Commission

On New Year's Eve 1850 the world welcomed two new arrivals—the year 1851 and the *Central-Commission für Erforschung und Erhaltung der Baudenkmale*. Created by Imperial decree, The Central Commission for the Study and Preservation of Built Monuments was charged by the Austro-Hungarian Emperor with the care of built monuments within the Austrian empire.⁸ The passage of time and the demands of a modern industrialized society had brought about the destruction of many significant structures and threatened still more. The Commission was an answer to these issues as much as it was a product of Romantic preoccupations with the past and nationalistic tendencies unleashed in the revolutions of 1848. Likewise, the founding of the Commission complimented the private work of the Society of Friends of Art as well as of the Patriotic Museum in Prague.⁹

Placed under the aegis of the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Public Buildings, the Commission developed a multi-layered bureaucracy and an ambitious agenda. Members of the

includes the meaning of “motherland” as well as “native country” and is not so much a neutral term for a location as for more of a philosophical turn of mind.

⁶ Jiří Hruža, “Pražské proměny (The metamorphoses of Prague),” *Pražská asanace (Prague Clearance)*, (Praha: Muzeum hlavního města Prahy, 1993), 14-19, 120.

⁷ “Vznik a organizace,” 1.; Marie Benešová, “Starobylý ráz Prahy a úsilí o jeho zachování (The ancient character of Prague and its preservation efforts),” *Pražská asanace (Prague Clearance)* (Praha: Muzeum hlavního města Prahy, 1993), 30-31, 120-121.

⁸ Lesaj, 8. The Czech translation of the German is *Cisařsko-královská centrální komise pro výzkum a zachování stavebních památek*. The Commission and its mission were authorized only in the Austrian lands, including the present-day territory of the Czech Republic, and not in the Hungarian portion of the Empire. See Josef Hobzek, “Vývoj organizace státní památkové péče v českých zemích (Development of the Organization of Monument Care in the Czech Lands),” *Památková péče 1945-1970 (Monument Care 1945-1970)* (Praha: Státní ústav památkové péče a ochrany přírody, 1973), 46.

⁹ Benešová, 30-31, 120-121.

Commission worked pro bono and were responsible for making recommendations to the Ministry, including decisions regarding the appointment of regional conservators, as well as directing the compilation of a buildings registry and archives. The commission's work concentrated on two related goals—research and documentation, and repair and maintenance. Research was a top priority. The Commission investigated existing monuments, classifying them according to their level of significance and noting their current state, needed repairs, and the level of the repairs' necessity. Local building authority officials were required to make plans and drawings, including ground plan, cross-sections, and perspective. In 1853, a Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Public Buildings' proclamation emphasized that the mission of the Commission related only to buildings with well-known or recognized artistic and/or historic value. The research and documentation set the standard to rate the value of the building. As part of its research and documentation activities, the Commission published a yearly report beginning in 1856, and later on, its own journal. The goal was to propagate the need for historic preservation among the subjects of the Empire. The architectural plans, drawings, and other historical records gathered by the Commission eventually evolved into a substantial archival resource, very similar to the work of the Historic American Buildings Survey. The Commission also played a role in monitoring new construction. If the proposed structure endangered built monuments, the Commission issued a required expert opinion. In the event that the elimination of a monument could not be avoided, and if relocating the structure was impossible, the Commission was required to document the structure with precise architectural drawings and notes on its original state. For the repair of damaged or neglected buildings, owners had to contact the Commission's regional representatives for comment on proposals for restoration work. In addition, the Commission also gave guidance as to the education of skilled workers as to the requirements of sensitive preservation, restoration, and renovation methods. As part of the Commission's original mandate, a fund was established to provide financial assistance for the upkeep and necessary repairs of monuments.

Individual “conservators” (*konzervatoři*), appointed by the Ministry on the recommendation of the Commission itself, undertook these “practical” activities on the ground. Conservators were assigned to individual administrative territories or “regions”, which were determined by the historic importance and architecturally valuable distinctiveness of the region. Depending on the density of the territory’s architectural treasures, the region could be limited to a municipality, county, or entire crown land. Each conservator had the responsibility for the management and cataloging of the monument register, care of identified monuments, and the discovery of old objects, graves, and roads of antiquity. Additionally, each conservator was required to inform the Commission periodically of their progress. In emergency situations, where a monument was threatened with demolition, the conservator had to turn the case over to the regional governor or president of the regional political administration in the interest of the preservation of the monument. If a conservator had not been appointed to a region, the region’s building authority members had to fulfill their duties with the same spirit of monument protection a conservator would have had. Conservators were to provide technical consultations to private landowners for the repair of historic buildings, when the conservator found the work insufficient to protect or maintain the historic integrity of the building. From 1854, the conservators were assisted in their work by subordinate clerks (*korespondenty*). By 1855, 58 conservators and 41 *korespondent* clerks were at work. The Czech-speaking lands of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia had a total of 17 conservators at this time. Interestingly, the guidelines governing the jurisdiction and authority of the individual conservators also provided for the reimbursement of all postage, transportation costs, and necessary expenses related to their work.¹⁰ By 1872, the Commission,

¹⁰ Hobzek, 46-47; Vratislav Nejedlý, “Počátky státem organizované ochrany památek v rakouské monarchii a dnešek (Origin of state organized protection of monuments in the Austrian monarchy and today),” *Zprávy památkové péče (Monument Care News)* 43 (1993), 15-20; “Vznik a organizace památkové péče,” 1. A crown land was the largest administrative area; for example, Bohemia (or in German *Böhmen*) was an Austrian imperial crown land and now makes up the northern half of the Czech Republic. See Kristoslav Řičař, *Občanská genealogie* (Praha: Ivo Železný, 2000). The modern Czech Republic consists of the three lands of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia; in 1855, 14 conservators operated in Bohemia, one in Moravia, and two in Silesia.

which by then had been moved to the Ministry of Culture and Education, had expanded its scope to embrace moveable monuments, such as *objets d'art*, as well as immoveable monuments, i.e. buildings. Its new name *Der Zentral-Kommission für Erforschung und Erhaltung der Kunst- und historischen Denkmale* (the Central Commission for the Study and Preservation of Artistic and Historical Monuments). The official modern Czech historic preservation establishment continues that protective dualism of its predecessor. Additionally, the next year in 1873, the Commission expanded its scope of activities to the full range of historic and artistic merit, covering prehistoric to eighteenth-century objects regardless of whether they were either secular or religious.¹¹

For nearly the first quarter-century of its existence, the Commission and its activities operated through a unified administration, but an 1874 decree divided it into three individual sections. The First Section dealt with archaeological discoveries, and reserved the right to be informed about every change or repair to prehistoric or Roman sites and to comment on those modifications. In addition, the first section continued with the research and publication mission of the Commission and sought to prevent the export and destruction of archaeological objects found within the Empire. The Second Section directed its efforts towards the research and protection (*ochrana*) of a range of monuments (*památky*), including architectural, pictorial, sculptural, and handicraft, dating from the Middle Ages to the end of the eighteenth century. Its efforts included the assessment of the value of monuments (as they fit within a given circle) and the collection of archival sources and historical materials. In addition, the Second Section also assessed and gave expert opinion about restoration projects at request. The Third Section concentrated exclusively on written historical monuments and collected source documents, such as statutes, guild rules, certificates, deeds, and ledgers related to the history of created art in Austria. The goal was to create an extensive archive to assist the First and Second Sections in

¹¹ Hobzek, 46-47; Nejedlý, 18-20.

their preservation efforts.¹² However, despite the meritorious work of the reorganized Commission, the Commission itself suffered from a fatal flaw—the ultimate inability to stop the destruction of cultural resources—tragically exposed by the Prague *asanace*.

Asanace and the Club for Old Prague

As the nineteenth century wore on, pressures for urban modernization grew in Prague as they did throughout Europe. The example of Hausmann’s transformation of the medieval Parisian street network was not lost on the Prague city administration. Likewise, the realities of modern warfare—in Prague, the 1866 occupation of the city by Prussian forces—had made urban fortifications obsolete, and by 1874, demolition had begun to accommodate a growing industrialized city. Notwithstanding the existence of the Commission and its mission to protect the historic resources of the Empire, Prague embarked on a systematic alteration of the city’s historic fabric, and along with it, the irreversible obliteration of a substantial portion of its ancient core.¹³

In the early portion of the century, Prague burgrave Count Karl Chotek actively promoted a “productive collaboration of urban architects and new industrialists” and the construction of new avenues, a second bridge over the Vltava, and a right bank quay. Yet at the same time, Chotek guarded historic green space and churches from developers.¹⁴ However, by the close of the century, official Prague rejected the sensitive development advocated by Chotek and his allies and in 1888 embraced what Demetz rightly calls a “radical plan to ‘sanitize’ the most decrepit parts of the Old Town”—parts which just happened to contain a significant portion of the medieval core and the ancient Josefov Jewish quarter, one of the oldest settlements of Prague—known to us as the “*Pražská asanace*”, or the “Prague slum clearance” (see Figure 63).¹⁵ In all

¹² Nejedlý, 18-20. “Monuments” here is used in the extensive sense of “památká”; see the list of vocabulary.

¹³ Benešová, 30-31, 120-121.

¹⁴ Demetz, 314-317. See Chapter 1 for discussion of Prague Romantic parks.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 314; Arno Pařík, “Židovské Město pražské (The Prague Jewish town),” *Pražská asanace (Prague Clearance)* (Praha: Muzeum hlavního města Prahy, 1993), 20-30, 120-121.

fairness, the “structural and hygienic neglect of Josefov” was without question; “slum” would not be an unwarranted description¹⁶:

...by 1885, the Josefov district...with 186,000 inhabitants was the most overpopulated of all Prague quarters; in the Old Town, 644 people lived on one hectare of housing space, but 1,822 in Josefov, and even in proletarian Žižkov the number had been 1,300. Overall in the city the proportion of one-room apartments was 53 percent, which was bad enough, but in Josefov it was as high as 64 percent; in one small house more than 200 people were found living together. On the average, one toilet served five to ten apartments. The mortality rate for infectious diseases in the Old Town in 1895 was 18.13 per thousand, in the Minor Town [Malá Strana] 20.61, and in Josefov, a quarter without clean water, sunlight, or gardens, however, small, 30.61.¹⁷

Besides the arguably legitimate justification for the clearance—to combat disease and overcrowding—Demetz and Bečková point to two other related motives: first, the embarrassing fact of its location next to the exclusive “salon” neighborhood of the Old Town Square, and second, the growing desire to Hausmann-ize Prague in a modern, attractive fashion, complete with broad avenues and grand neo-architecture. The Imperial Council consented to the winning rebuilding proposal of A. Hurtig in 1893, after four years of revisions. Imperial Code Act no. 22 gave the city powers similar to eminent domain and authorized the seizure of the land in question. Meanwhile, affected residents, who had been asked by the city to comply with the clearance plan within two years, organized themselves. Municipal authorities rejected the residents’ pleas, and most had to sell their homes or let expropriation measures proceed. The clearance plan called for a new street layout and block arrangement; the broad avenue of *Parižská* (Paris) leading to Letná Plain from the Old Town Square today is the most obvious reminder of the project.¹⁸ However, Svatopluk Voděra maintains that

...the intrusion into the Old-Town [sic] proved to be less brutal and antagonistic to the historical image of Prague than in other European cities. The formal, classicist or grid pattern for the allocation of new streets applied elsewhere was not used here. On the

¹⁶ Bečková, 121-22.

¹⁷ Demetz, 315.

¹⁸ Bečková, 121; Demetz, 315-16.

contrary, the new lay-out shows a considerable degree of understanding and respect for the historical pattern of the day.¹⁹

Yet, the loss of more than 500 buildings—in Josefov, of the original 288 buildings, only the Old-New, High, Pinkas, and Klaus Synagogues, the Jewish Town Hall, and the Jewish cemetery remained²⁰—and the recarving of the medieval labyrinth, in hindsight, could have been prevented, and disease and overcrowding still mitigated with a less invasive solution than the wholesale clearance of the area. Such was the charge raised by concerned citizens' groups—voices that would ultimately coalesce into the *Klub Za starou Prahu* (Club for Old Prague), founded in 1900.

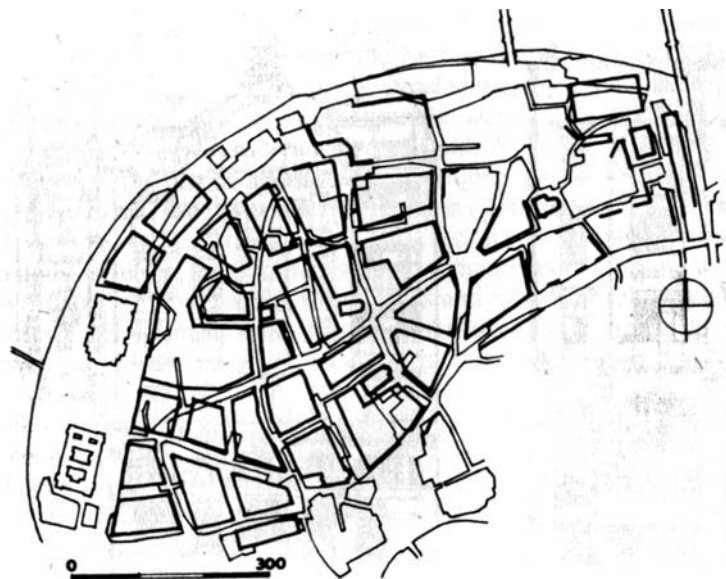


Figure 63 Prague "asanace" redevelopment plan, with new streets superimposed over the old. Staňková et al., 271.

Public criticism over the planned clearance of Josefov and adjacent lots was swift and sharp. The Easter Manifesto, also known as the Manifesto "To the Czech People", published in

¹⁹ Svatopluk Voděra, "Architektonicko-urbanistické zhodnocení výsledků asanace (The merits of the rebuilding project)," *Pražská asanace (Prague Clearance)* (Praha: Muzeum hlavního města Prahy, 1993), 121-22.

April 1896 was the brainchild of the writer Václav Mrštík, and “using severe words...attacked the intention to destroy the monuments of the Old Town in the name of upgrading the sanitary conditions and defended the picturesque quality of the mediaeval town”; some 150 noted Czechs signed. This Manifesto was the embryonic founding declaration of the Club for Old Prague by the Friends of Old Prague.²¹ The City of Prague set up an Art Commission (*Umělecká komise*) in response to the public outrage, and the Commission attempted to rework the plan to save important structures, such as churches and palaces. However, many of the Commission’s plans came under attack from the same quarters as ineffectual. After two years, its members had resigned due to the city’s neglect of the Commission’s proposals, and it was for practical purposes disbanded by 1898. Prague students, too, lent their voices to the chorus of outrage, meeting in two assemblies, one in 1898 and another in 1899. The second public protest in 1899 at Žofín, a palace located on Slovanský Island in the middle of the Vltava, marked the culmination of civic outcries for the demolition to stop.²² That meeting produced a searing resolution, which indicted the ignorance and arbitrariness of city decisionmakers, who operated under the negative influence of business and development interests; called for an impartial building authority and the passage of stiffer preservation laws; and declared Prague the property of the Czech nation to be treasured for its spiritual as well as artistic merits.²³

Within a few months, on January 28, 1900, the *Klub Za starou Prahu*, or the Club for Old Prague, was officially founded as an association of lovers of old Prague, who decided to join together to defend its “historical architecture and urbanistic qualities against all building plans and projects which would interfere with and violate the irreplaceable appeal, appearance, and distinctiveness of Prague” (see Figure 64).²⁴ Its preferred methods of advocacy would be

²⁰ Mráz, *Prague: The Heart of Europe*, 223.

²¹ Bečková, 121-122.

²² Ibid, 122; Benešová, 31, 120-121.

²³ Benešová, 32.

²⁴ “Sto let Klubu za starou Prahu [100 Years of the Club for Old Prague],” *Časopis Praha*, October 1999, available from http://www.praha-mesto.cz/casopis_praha; Internet; accessed 18 February 2001.

carefully orchestrated protests as well as petitions and personal lobbying of municipal officials. Within the first few decades of its founding, the Club grew in prestige and influence, having among its members architects such as Pavel Janak, the mind behind the sensitive interwar renovations of the Clementinum and the Belvedere Palace; Antonín Engel, who converted the Rudolfinum into the Czechoslovak Parliament; and Josef Chochol, designer of the Cubist villas at Vyšehrad. In its first decade and a half, its office employed two to three workers and sent out some 1200 letters annually. Members had at their disposal a darkroom as well as a reading room full of professional literature. In its century-long history, the Club has carefully followed and publicly commented on various renovation projects as well as the compatibility of new construction in Prague. Even under the Communist regime, when independent citizen



Figure 64 Logo for the Club for Old Prague (*Klub Za starou Prahu*), depicting the Judith Bridge Tower on the Malá strana end of the Charles Bridge, site of its headquarters. Klub Za starou Prahu, "Publikace"; available from <http://www.klub.za.starou.prahu.cz>; Internet; accessed 18 February 2001.

associations were prohibited for the most part, the Club managed to maintain a great deal of its independence and autonomy, and protested most successfully against the construction of intrusive sub-surface tram and metro lines through the historic core. Since 1989 and the accompanying freedoms of expression and free association, the Club has become even more active and outspoken in regards to Prague's groundswell of new construction and renovations. To date, having just celebrated its centennial in 2000, the Club remains the foremost private preservation advocacy group in Prague, and exists thanks largely to the institutional weakness of the Central Commission for the Study and Preservation of Built Monuments, demonstrated so painfully in the loss of much of Prague's extant medieval center through the process of *asanace*.²⁵

An emerging preservation philosophy—the Denmkultus of Alois Riegl

By the turn of the twentieth-century, the launch of the Club for Old Prague had added the facet of citizen advocacy to historic preservation in Prague. At about the same time, the work of a Viennese art history professor introduced a new philosophy for monument care, one that would become a key component of Czech historic preservation practice. Alois Riegl (1858-1905), educated at the University of Vienna and the Austrian Institute for Historical Research, was a student of the art historian Rudolf von Eitelberger, one of the moving forces behind the establishment of the Central Commission.²⁶ Named as editor of the journal of the Central Commission in 1902, Riegl became increasingly involved in state monument care, when in 1903 the government appointed him as the first Conservator General of Austrian Monuments. In these roles, Riegl “used his influence to encourage cautious and conservative treatment of historical monuments”. In his first year as Conservator General, Riegl submitted a draft for supplemental historic preservation legislation, accompanied by an essay dealing with the history and meaning of the “cult of monuments”.²⁷ This theoretical study *Der moderne Denkmalkultus (The Modern*

²⁵ Ibid.; Benešová, 33; Staňková et al., 86, 114, 237, 282.

²⁶ Margaret Iversen, *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 3, 16-18.

²⁷ Margaret Olin, *Forms of Representation in Alois Riegl's Theory of Art* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 175.

Monument Cult) emphasized the monument's original "backdrop", so to speak, and defended principles of monument conservation in terms of maintaining the "patina of age".²⁸

Underlying this basic premise of *Denkmalkultus* was a complex conception of the meaning and value of monuments and the *raison d'être* for their care and preservation. Riegl offered a new approach to the traditional classification of monuments, i.e. the distinction drawn between "artistic" versus "historic" monuments, as applied by the Central Commission, and based his assessment of their worth on "subjective" values.²⁹ A "memorial value" (*Erinnerungswert*), said to be influenced by John Ruskin's "Lamp of Memory", complemented "present" values, such as "utility, the relative artistic value of the present, and the value of newness for its own sake".³⁰ "Memorial value" was further divided into "intentional" (*gewollte*) and "unintentional" (*ungewollte*) values: intentional monuments are valuable only if "the conditions that brought them into being prevail", while unintentional monuments "are preserved either for their historical value or for the signs of the ravage of time, including the destructive or reshaping human hand."³¹ The subjectivity of this approach relied on a "hierarchy" that emphasized a "historical development in values...pertinent to the cult of monuments". For example, ancient peoples only acknowledged intentional monuments, while the Renaissance brought recognition of unintentional monuments, and only recently had civilization embraced the pure "value of age". Eventually, man would come to appreciate natural as well as man-made monuments as examples of the "passing of time".³² The logical outcome of this emphasis on age was what Iversen refers to as the "aesthetics of disintegration"³³, which had a building "live out its natural lifetime and [exhibit] more subtle signs of disintegration owing to normal wear". Riegl seems to have opposed the wholesale restoration of monuments advocated by Viollet-le-Duc and his followers,

²⁸ "Vznik a organizace památkové péče," 1.

²⁹ Olin, 176.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Iversen, 33.

and favored rather a practice of non-intervention.³⁴ Declaring that “all monuments are equal”, Riegl worked these principles into his draft law, which defined monuments as “works of the human hand whose inception took place at least sixty years ago.”³⁵ Ultimately, the value of monuments and the basis for their care rested beyond their individual values, but also as examples of the march of time. “Eventually, the process, the signs of dissolution into the environment, of unity in time, become more valuable than the object itself.”³⁶ In practice, Riegl’s theories came to mean

in its extreme results consisted of the monument being first subject to efficient probe research, coupled with extensive uncovering of its older developmental phases through the consistent removal of younger layers of plasters, brickwork and screens, and the building, thus dissected to detail, frozen in the condition in which the research left it, without the possibility of any completeness-imparting or reconstructive fillings.³⁷

The hoped-for effect was *Stimmung*, “the pleasure one receives from gazing at the signs of age”. “The pleasure of merging with one’s environment joins the pleasure of the union with the past, while the pleasure of the tactile protects the individual from dissolution into space and time.”³⁸ Historical value generated objective memory “by grasping individual events and establishing their sequence.”³⁹ Thus, Riegl’s abstract ideas would translate into an elemental underpinning for the next century of historic preservation practice in Prague, and continue to serve as an important guidestone for this generation of Czech preservationists, who would emphasize the “necessary aesthetic whole of a monument...[as] a historical document as well as work of art”.⁴⁰

³⁴ Olin, 177.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Josef Štulc, “K současnému stavu metodologie údržby a obnovy stavebních památek (Towards the current state of the methodology of maintenance and renovation of constructed monuments),” *Památky a přírody (Monuments and Nature)* 12, no. 3, (1987), 137-138. Quoted in Veronika Aplenc, *Conservation of Cultural Identity Through the Care of Monuments: Guidelines for the Lednice-Valtice Monument Zone*, Master of Historic Preservation Thesis (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 1997), 77.

³⁸ Olin, 178.

³⁹ Ibid., 179.

⁴⁰ Aplenc, 73-81. A larger discussion in Czech about the impact of Riegl’s theories on Czech historic preservation can be found in Václav Richter, “Památky (Monuments),” *Památka a Péče (Státní ústav památkové péče: Praha, 1993)*, 9-24. Quoted in Aplenc, 79.

The First Republic (1918-1938), the Protectorate (1939-1945), and Post-1945 Developments

The work of the Central Commission, enhanced by the advocacy of such civic groups as the Club for Old Prague and the philosophy of Riegl and his followers, continued in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The 1911 administrative reorganization of the Central Commission established the functions of provincial conservators (*zemští konzervatoři*) and placed two in Prague—one for the territory of Bohemia and the other for linguistically mixed areas. By 1918, similar provincial offices existed for Moravia and Silesia, the other two regions, which along with Bohemia, make up the present-day Czech Republic. In addition, the Commission's work was administered through the newly instituted State Monument Bureau (*Státní památkový úřad*) in Vienna, which placed a renewed emphasis on records, documentation, and scientific research. The office of the provincial conservator for the Bohemia was known as the Provincial Monument Office for the Czech Kingdom (*Zemský památkový úřad pro Království české*). Additional proposals for further administrative reform were floated in 1909 and 1912, but were not acted upon. The First World War interrupted other efforts for revised legislation. Concurrently, Max Dvořák, a colleague of Alois Riegl, became an instrumental force in the administration of monument care, and the State Monument Office was among the leading historic preservation agencies in Europe at the time.⁴¹

The First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-38)

The First World War was as much of a nation creator as it was empire destroyer. By either proclamation or treaty, a clutch of new states had emerged from the empires and territories of East Central Europe—Yugoslavia, Turkey, Hungary, Austria, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. The formation of the Czechoslovak National Council in June 1918 paved the way for its ultimate

⁴¹ Hobzek, 46-47; Ministerstvo Kultury České republiky, "Nástin vývoje právní úpravy a organizace ochrany památek v českých zemích do roku 1987 (Outline of the development of legal adaptation and organization of protection of monuments in the Czech lands to 1987)," *Věcný Záměr Zákona o Ochrane Kulturních Památek a Památkové Péče (Future Plan of the Law of the Care of Cultural Monuments and Monument Care)*, (Praha: Ministerstvo Kultury České republiky, 1999), 80-81; "Vznik a organizace památkové péče," 1.

transformation as the provisional government of an independent Czechoslovak republic on October 28, 1918. Filling the vacuum of collapsed Austro-Hungarian authority, a Czechoslovak national committee had by November 1918 made itself into a parliamentary body and issued a provisional constitution.⁴² On October 29, 1918, a day after its declaration of Czechoslovak independence from imperial rule, the Czechoslovak National Committee, as the supreme governing authority of the state, issued as its *third* official decree—the first was the founding document of the independent state, and the second, the assertion of the authority of the Committee—a proclamation that placed all artistic and historical monuments and relics under its care.⁴³

All artistic and historic monuments are under the protection of the National Committee and its organs. Their export and transport are prohibited, whether or not they are privately or publicly owned, whether entrusted property, property of corporations, or of an institute, located or not in the territory of the Czechoslovak state, or listed here by inventory. Violation of this decree will result in the punishment of the exporter and those who aid him, with a penalty of appropriate cost of the things, which had been transported or removed.⁴⁴

Very telling is the commitment to historic preservation exhibited by an independent Czechoslovakia so very early in its history—indeed, one day after its founding. The former imperial Provincial Monument Office for the Czech Kingdom was converted into the State Monument Bureau (*Státní památkový úřad*), an independent Czech agency modeled after the Vienna-based imperial office of the same name with a mandate for the entire Czechoslovak

⁴² Crampton, 12-14, 30, 57-61. In an odd historical twist, the Czechoslovak equivalent to the American Declaration of Independence was not declared in either Prague or Bratislava as one would expect, but in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania by members of Czech and Slovak exile groups. This document is known as the “Pittsburgh Declaration” and formed the National Council. Crampton, 14.

⁴³ František Siegler, “Care of Cultural Monuments under Czechoslovak Legal Regulations,” *Bulletin of Czechoslovak Law* 19, no. 1-2 (1980), 62.

⁴⁴ The original Czech of the National Committee Decree is as follows: *Všecky umělecké a historické památky jsou pod ochranu Národního výboru a jeho organů. Vývoz jejich a zavlčení je zakázáno, a to at' nalézají v majetku veřejném nebo soukromém, at' jsou v majetku svěřenském či korporaci či ústavů, nacházejí se neb nacházely se v území státu československého, nebo sem inventurně náležely. Za překročení tohoto nařízení bude trestán vývozce i ten, kdo mu pomáhá, pokutou přiměřenou ceně věci, jež měly býti zavlčeny neb vyvezeny.* See “Nářízení Národního výboru československého ze dne 29. října 1918 č. 13 (Decree of the Czechoslovak National Committee from 29 October 1918, no. 13),” *Sbírka zákonů a nařízení státu československého, Ročník 1918* (Collection of laws and decrees of the Czechoslovak State, Annual 1918) (Praha: Státní tiskárna, 1919), 2.

Republic and its constituent territories (Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Slovakia, and Ruthenia). The Bureau was placed under the authority of the Ministry of Schools and National Enlightenment (*Ministerstvo školství a národní osvěty*), which named conservators for individual counties (*okresy*). From April 1920, the activities of its divisions for its Moravia and Silesia proper were directed by the Bureau's Brno Office (*Státní památkový úřad pro Moravu a Slezsko v Brně*), while parallel work under the Governmental Commission for the Protection of Monuments in Slovakia (*Vládní komisariát pro zachování památek na Slovensku*) had already started for Slovakia in October 1919 by decree of the Ministry. Likewise, the founding of the State Archaeological Institute in 1919 maintained the imperial practice of a separate archaeological division within the state historic preservation bureaucracy.⁴⁵

While the Bureau's work and organization with its league of conservators and regional administration paralleled that of its predecessors, the Central Commission and the imperial Monuments Bureau, the Czechoslovak agency did differ in some ways from its imperial antecedents. For one, the new Bureau had conservators in individual counties, a much smaller administrative unit than the regions and districts under the imperial conservators. (Interestingly, the Ministry of Education and National Culture made a request to Charles University, still the premiere institute of higher education in Prague, to appoint an instructor of "the study of the preservation of historic and artistic monuments."⁴⁶ In addition, the new Bureau benefited from the work of a new collaborative organization, the State Photo-survey Institute (*Státní fotoměřičský ústav*), which had as its task to build a documentary archive of reports, photographs, plans, models, and castings.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Hobzek, 47; Ministerstvo kultury, 81; "Vznik a organizace památkové péče," 1-2.

Separate administration for Slovakia should come as little surprise, given that the work of the imperial Central Commission omitted portions of the Hungarian kingdoms, which included Slovakia. See footnote 8 of this chapter.

⁴⁶ Ivo Hlobíl, "Počátek samostatní výuky památkové péče na Karlově univerzitě (Start of independent instruction of monument care at Charles University)," *Památky a příroda* 11, no. 7 (1986), 408. Quoted in Aplenc, *Conservation of Cultural Identity*, 20.

⁴⁷ "Vznik a organizace památkové péče," 1-2.

Aside from these initial steps, monument care in the first two decades of the new Czechoslovak nation did not have the benefit of a comprehensive over-arching legislative framework, despite the drafting of several potential laws.⁴⁸ Rather, the Prague of the new Czechoslovakia seemed to regard monument care as a necessary component of its efforts to establish itself as the capital of a new nation, and not merely for the sake of preserving historically and architecturally significant structures. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the new role of Prague as a national capital required the construction or renovation of ministry and other governmental buildings. For example, Slovenian architect Jože Plečnik was recruited as Architect of the Prague Castle—the Hradčany complex—with the assignment to make it an acceptable seat of government. His renovations of the Presidential Apartment, courtyards, and gathering halls, especially the Column Hall, were innovative and harmonized with the existing historic fabric.⁴⁹ On the other hand, as Demetz suggests, “the new Czechoslovak Republic wanted its own ministries, not merely old Baroque shells for new files,” and sponsored numerous architectural competitions, favoring avant-garde modern designs.⁵⁰

In addition, sites that represented key Czech historical movements or figures also received attention. The Agnes Convent and Vítkov Hill exemplify this trend. Founded by the Přemyslid princess in the early 1200s as a center of Franciscan spirituality, the Agnes Convent was one of the first Gothic structures in Bohemia. In 1874, Pope Pius IX beatified the Princess-Abbess Agnes as a patroness of the Czechs, and devotion to her was encouraged by Czech nationalists. Threatened by the slum clearances of the 1890s, the Agnes Convent was spared, and

⁴⁸ Siegler, 62. However, the Standing Committee of the Czechoslovak National Assembly issued in 1938 a decision that reiterated the spirit of the 1918 monument care decree—protection of “objects of special artistic or memorial value”, and limitations on their export abroad (i.e. only with permission of the Ministry of Education). See Siegler, 62; and law’s text: *Opatření Stálého výboru Národního shromáždění č.255/1938 Sb.*

⁴⁹ Demetz, 344-345. Staňková et al., 86. Plečnik is sometimes referred to alternatively as Jože or Josip. Sayer reports that the renovations of the ancient Hradčany complex in the 1920s marked the first time it had been opened to the public—at least since the days of the early Habsburgs and signaled a “renewed identity between state and subjects”; Sayer, 183.

⁵⁰ Demetz, 344.

renovations were carried out during the First Republic, and completed only in the 1980s.⁵¹ As for Vítkov Hill, described in Chapter 1, the building of the Memorial of Liberation (*Památník osvobození*) celebrated the site's history as the spot where Czech Hussite forces defeated royal troops and ensured the protection of the hill from encroaching development.⁵² Meanwhile, the new republic also welcomed a not insignificant building boom, represented by a great deal of cutting edge modernist architecture as discussed in Chapter 1. As a result, the Club for Old Prague, which had celebrated its silver anniversary by 1925, continued to speak out for the protection of Prague's architectural heritage. Successful in its fight to save important buildings on Wenceslaus Square, the organization failed in its efforts to prevent the demolition of buildings on Na Příkopě, former site of city ramparts and a key commercial stretch of First Republic Prague.⁵³

The Protectorate (1939-1945) and Post-1945 Developments

The halcyon days of a free Czechoslovakia came to an end with the arrival of German troops in Prague on March 15, 1939, and the ensuing seven-year Nazi occupation of the nation. Understandably, historic preservation is not considered a vital concern in times of war. It was no different for Prague, now the head city of the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, where preservation of self rivaled that of architecture. A 1941 government decree, issued by the German authorities, covered only the protection of archaeological monuments, and was the only preservation legislation to come out of the occupation.⁵⁴ Although Prague was spared much of the destruction of World War II experienced by many of its sister cities, pockets of damage still marred the capital after its liberation by Soviet forces. The combined effects of the February 14,

⁵¹ Demetz, 52-53; Vlastimil Kybal, *Svatá Anežka Česká* (Praha: L. Marek, 2001), 203-206; Staňková et al., 36-38.

⁵² Sayer, 274-277.

⁵³ "Sto let Klubu za starou Prahu".

⁵⁴ Siegler, 62. For the German and Czech text of the decree, see *Narízení vlády č. 274/1941* (Governmental decree from 12 June 1941 about archaeological monuments, no. 274)," *Sammlung der Gesetze und Verordnungen, Jahrgang 1941 / Sbíрка zákonů a nařízení, Ročník 1941* [Collection of laws and decrees, Annual 1941] (Prag: 1942).

1945, air raid and May 1945 street fighting took its toll on a number of Prague landmarks, as mentioned in Chapter 1. Physical destruction combined with another less obvious concern—the removal of Sudeten Germans and Jewish owners of historic buildings by expulsion or extermination. The result was abandonment of many properties and maintenance neglect. (As a side note to the matter of the Sudeten German expulsions, National Socialist leader Prokop Drtina in a May 17, 1945, speech in Prague declared, “Our new republic cannot be built as anything other than...a state of only Czechs and Slovaks....The Germans were always a foreign ulcer in our body...we must expel the Germans....[and] Every one of us must help in the cleaning of the homeland.” Not surprisingly, the “cleaning” has been a perennial thorn for Czech-German relations ever since.⁵⁵) In this vacuum of ownership, title to these properties went to the state under a series of 1945 confiscation and expropriation decrees.⁵⁶ Returning from its exile in Great Britain, the newly restored Czechoslovak government responded to this problem with a 1946 law to regulate the state’s management and use of cultural property, as declared by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This law, the *Act Concerning National Cultural Commissions for the Administration of State Cultural Property*, established a short-term, provisional historic preservation administration, based in Prague and Bratislava, and

expertly administered and used for cultural, educational and scientific purposes property of cultural character which had come into the possession of the state under different legal titles and was proclaimed by the Ministry of Education and Culture to constitute state cultural property (e.g. objects of artistic or historical value, such as castles, forts, country manors, urban palaces with adjacent parks and game preserves, and moveables of artistic, historical or scientific value, etc.).⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Sayer, 240.

⁵⁶ The presidential decree of June 21, 1945, č. 12 Sb., ordered the confiscation and accelerated division of agricultural property of Germans, Hungarians, as well as traitors (*zradců*) and enemies (i.e. enemy collaborators) of the Czech and Slovak nation. A October 25, 1945 presidential decree, č. 108 Sb., spoke to the confiscation of enemy property, specifically moveables and the Fund for National Renewal, while the August 23, 1945 decree of the Slovak National Council, č. 104 Sb., paralleled the June presidential decree, but for Slovak territories specifically. See § 2 of Zákon č.137/1946 Sb., o *Národních kulturních komisích pro správu státního kulturního majetku*. These decrees were accompanied by others authorizing the resettlement of Czechs and Slovaks in the recently vacated Sudetenland (July 20, 1945), and depriving ethnic Germans and Hungarians of Czechoslovak citizenship (August 3, 1945). By December 1946, an estimated 3 million ethnic Germans had been forcibly expelled from Czechoslovakia, see Sayer, 242-243.

⁵⁷ Siegler, 62-63.

This law also provided for a 1,000,000 Czechoslovak crown penalty or a one-year prison sentence for not handing over identified state cultural property to the National Cultural Commission. The most significant castles, country houses, and cloisters were named as cultural monuments and their administration entrusted to the National Cultural Commissions; approximately 130 of these select monuments were designated to be made gradually accessible to the public for cultural and educational purposes.⁵⁸

The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (1948-1989)

The liberation of Prague by Soviet forces in May 1945 set into motion a series of events, including a pluralistic government that included a strongly-positioned Communist Party, culminating in the February 1948 resignation of non-Communist government ministers because of their disagreement over Communist use of the police. The details of the bloodless coup are beyond the scope of this study, but suffice it to say that by June 1948, the democratic government in Czechoslovakia that had been restored in 1945 ended, and was replaced by forty-one years of totalitarianism and Communist rule.⁵⁹ The drastic shift in political authority swept through Czech society, and in the midst of this great sea change, radically transformed the field of historic preservation by introducing a new theory of historical interpretation and bringing into being a new legislative and administrative framework for the profession.

The Communist Subjugation of Czech History

Historic preservation is much more than ensuring that old buildings and landmarks survive the ravages of time; the interpretation of historic resources is a key element, and this author would dare to say, life's blood of historic preservation practice. One of this author's first memories is a geography lesson on the Communist nations of the Eastern bloc, namely the Soviet

⁵⁸ Lesaj and Svák, 8; Ministerstvo kultury, 81; Siegler, 62; "Vznik a organizace," 1-2. World War II cost Czechoslovakia an estimated 3,014 buildings destroyed and another 10,000 damaged. See John F. Bradley, *Czechoslovakia: A Short History* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1971), 3, 147. For the text of the law, see Zákon č.137/1946 Sb., *o Národních kulturních komisích pro správu státního kulturního majetku* (Act concerning National Cultural Commissions for the Administration of State Cultural Property), *Sbírka zákonů a nařízení (Collection of laws and decrees)* (Praha: Státní tiskárna, 1947), 1001-1002.

Union and the Warsaw Pact countries—lands of little girls with large hair bows and red scarves about their necks. Those scarf-wearing children in my schoolbook were members of the Pioneers, the Communist youth organization and replacement for the Scouts, and their primers were full of loaded political catchphrases, such as ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’, ‘petty bourgeoisie’, ‘bourgeois-democratic’, ‘enemies of the republic’, ‘reactionaries’, and ‘capitalism’s imperialist stage’, and ‘radiant communist future’.⁶⁰ But Communism brought with it more than a new economic and democratic system and Pioneer campouts—it introduced what Sayer refers to as “state-sponsored amnesia”.⁶¹ In short, the Communist historical agenda radically departed from prior Czech approaches to historical interpretation, particularly the work of Alois Riegl, who emphasized the chronological totality of a monument, allowing its history to speak for itself whatever that past may be. Marxist historiography took a different tack, instead holding that human civilization and history progressed through a series of recognizable steps to reach a unified, classless society:

The communist takeovers, or to use their terminology, the socialist revolutions, had brought the working class to power. However, that class was seldom in the majority and so, according to marxist laws, it had to establish the means for consolidating and perpetuating its authority: the socialist state. During the first stage of post-revolutionary development, namely the dictatorship of the proletariat, the class struggle would intensify as the last vestiges of bourgeois rule were eliminated. In this process the working class would be guided and led by its vanguard: the communist party.... At this stage the state was usually called a ‘people’s democracy’. As the dictatorship of the proletariat progressed, the non-proletarian social groups would be removed and a unified society would appear. From the dictatorship of the proletariat would emerge the socialist state of the whole nation under the leadership of the working class, a change which would be signified by a change of name, the state usually becoming a ‘socialist’ or ‘people’s republic’. The next stage would be to develop an advanced, or mature, socialist society in which state and non-state forms of social organisation would combine in what would be the first step in the creation of that communist society to which all human society was inevitably moving. In theory this was entirely logical, since it was a basic marxist tenet

⁵⁹ Crampton, 235-239.

⁶⁰ Václav Král, *Lessons of History* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1978), 6, 8, 54, 59, 79, 108. Král, a history professor at Charles University in the late 1970s, wrote about contemporary Czechoslovak history; this little book, detailing the rise of Communism in Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, was published in the Soviet Union and exemplifies the sort of Communist-era history, full of references to the revolutionary struggle and the Marxist interpretation of history. I selected the quoted phrases by opening to pages randomly; the book is chocked full of such rhetoric.

⁶¹ Sayer, 257.

that the state is the mechanism which one class uses to exercise domination over another; if society has become unified, i.e. classless, there can be no domination of one class over another and therefore there is no need for a state; it can, in the classic phrase, ‘wither away’.⁶²

To make Czech history correspond to this overarching Marxist historiographic model, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (*Komunistická strana Československa, KSČ*) went about excising chapters of tricky history—that is, history that threatened the regime’s authority or ran counter to or complicated the Marxist outline—as if it were removing various tumors from the country’s past. What was not deleted from the historical record was caricatured or falsified.⁶³

How did the Party carry out this task? First, it reordered the cultural and physical landscape, and then assembled a legislative framework that suited state ideology. For example, library collections were screened for objectionable materials, particularly those that dealt with the democratic origins of First Republic Czechoslovakia, including the first president Tomáš Masaryk or his family, his successor Edvard Beneš, as well as religious and literary texts. This inspection occurred on an ongoing, periodic basis, and even began to cull out works produced by Communist authorities, as individual party members were purged or fell into disfavor. Those same books and documents might return if the individual in question was rehabilitated at a later date, as if nothing had ever been amiss. Sayer refers to these practices as “an ongoing, authentically Orwellian process; the past was routinely updated.”⁶⁴ The plunder of the libraries

⁶² Crampton, 241.

⁶³ An example of the falsification of the past is 1950s Communist accounts of the presence of “American” soldiers in liberated western Bohemia in 1945. The official Communist line for some time was that the liberating forces were actually members of the Soviet Red Army, who were dressed up as American soldiers; this assertion corresponded to the Soviet claim that Czechoslovakia was saved from fascism by the victorious Red Army. The Czech population knew better and remembered well the English spoken by their redeemers as well as the Hershey chocolate bars generously passed out by the American GIs. See National Committee of Plzeň Information Department, *American Army of Plzeň, Czechoslovakia, May 1945 / Americká Armáda v Plzni, Československo, Květen 1945* (Prague: Neubert and Sons, 1945); and *Americká armáda v Plzni* (Plzeň, Czechoslovakia: Západočeské muzeum v Plzni, 1990). By 1978, the Czechoslovak Communist government admitted that the liberators of western Bohemia were Americans with the caveat, “the US Army command was in no hurry to recognize the national committees as the new organs of power in the Czechoslovak state.” Král, 55. Note, interestingly, it was the National Committee of Plzeň which published the 1945 souvenir booklet for American soldiers cited above, a copy of which is in the author’s possession.

⁶⁴ Sayer, 247, 259-264.

was accompanied by Communist alterations to the “landscapes of ordinary life.”⁶⁵ For squares, bridges, and embankments, the names of the founders of democratic Czechoslovakia—Presidents Masaryk and Beneš, Rašín, Štefáník, and Švehla—yielded to approved Communist monikers. In Prague, the Square of the October Revolution replaced Beneš Square, the Square of the Soviet Tank-Crews succeeded Štefáník Square, and Legions’ Bridge became Bridge of the First of May. Street and embankment names commemorating Czech Communists appeared—the author Fučík and President Gottwald were so honored. An entire Prague neighborhood’s street pattern echoed the geography of the Soviet Union with Baikal, Omsk, and Yalta Streets, to name a few. Statues of these Czech leaders also disappeared from public view. While the Communists were perhaps the diligent in their efforts, this sort of name switching, and by extension historical reordering, however, was not new to Prague.⁶⁶ A passage from Milan Kundera’s *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* illustrates the point of “the transience of Prague’s street names and the ephemerality of the city’s memorials”:

The street Tamina was born on was called Schwerin. That was during the war, and Prague was occupied by the Germans. Her father was born on Černokostelecká Avenue—the Avenue of the Black Church. That was during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. When her mother married her father and moved there, it bore the name of Marshall Foch. That was after World War I. Tamina spent her childhood on Stalin Avenue, and when her husband came to take her away, he went to Vinohrady—that is, Vineyards—Avenue. And all the time it was the same street; they just kept changing its name, trying to lobotomize it.⁶⁷

The Bethlehem Chapel and the Gottwald Museum, and other Communist Sites

At the same time, while the Communists busied themselves erasing elements of Czech history offensive to their ideological purposes and legitimacy, they were equally active in reconstructing the past to adhere to Communist historical theories. Communist changes to Vítkov Hill and the building of Stalin’s monument were discussed in the prior chapter. However, the Communist-era renovation of the Bethlehem Chapel merits discussion as well as an example

⁶⁵ Ibid., 269, 275.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 269; *Prag, Praha*. Map. Vienna: Freytag & Berndt, 1994.

⁶⁷ Sayer, 286-288.

of the historical reconstructionism, literal and figurative, employed by the Communists. The establishment of museums to honor leading Communists, such as Klement Gottwald, the first president of a Communist Czechoslovakia, Vladimir Lenin, and the Communist Party itself made their own contributions to the reordering of the past.

The Bethlehem Chapel acquires much of its notoriety from its association with Master Jan Hus (or known to English speakers as John Huss), an early Church reformer of the 1400s. Built in 1391, the chapel was purposely built in a plain, almost vernacular Gothic style, said to express the “progressive” ideas of its congregation, and played an important role in the religious wars of the Renaissance. Closed in 1786, the chapel was replaced by a neo-classical residence by 1837. The 1869 quincentenary of Hus’ birth awakened a new interest in the chapel, and research conducted in 1919 and 1920 identified three intact exterior walls, used in the construction of the adjoining buildings, and other traces of the chapel. Proposals for its reconstructions began to emerge early in the First Republic, but it was only after the February 1948 Communist takeover that definitive plans were approved.⁶⁸ Not surprisingly, the final product of the reconstruction was very much like the Governor’s Palace at Williamsburg—the result of some old descriptions, plans, and drawings, and a lot of conjecture. For example, no one is really certain if the texts on the interior are accurate or not. But as Sayer so aptly puts it: “the true betrayal of authenticity is not of an architectural kind.”⁶⁹ The chapel’s reconstruction can be considered a noble effort to reinstate a significant historic landmark to Prague, but its interpretation under Communist historiographical demands was anything but, little more than a creative interpretation of historical fact.

As part of its efforts to rewrite history, the Czechoslovak Communist Party recast the fifteenth-century Hussite wars as a Czech precursor to modern Marxist-Leninist revolutions. Czech Communist historian Král characterized these early pseudo-Protestant reform efforts as

⁶⁸ Staňková et al., 70-72.

⁶⁹ Sayer, 277, 278.

“the anti-feudal and anti-Catholic national liberation Hussite movement”, and further stated, “the progressive and patriotic Czech forces were formed over the centuries on the basis of the glorious Hussite traditions.”⁷⁰ Declared a “national cultural monument” in 1954 at the pinnacle of historical designations in Czechoslovakia, the Chapel stood as a shrine to the native revolutionary tendencies of the Czech people. Its dedication plaque reads:

Master Jan Hus
 waiting in prison for death
 laid down this charge on the 10th of June 1415
 to all faithful Czechs:
 Be kind to the Bethlehem Chapel.
 In fulfillment of this bequest,
 we restored this cradle
 of the Czech people’s movement
 under the government of the people
 and by its will
 in the years 1948-1954.⁷¹



Figure 65 Bethlehem Chapel, photograph taken by author, 1995.

⁷⁰ Král, 3-4.

⁷¹ Sayer, 278. Sayer obtained this quote from Alois Kubiček’s *Betlémská kaple v Praze*, published in 1954. The terms “Czech people’s movement” and “government of the people” are typical loaded Communist-era political catchphrases. A list of national cultural monuments as of 1975 is found in Jakub Pavel, “Národní kulturní památky v České socialistické republice (National Cultural Monuments in the Czech Socialist Republic),” *Památková péče 1945-1970 (Monument Care 1945-1970)* (Praha: Státní ústav památkové péče a ochrany přírody, 1973), 10-24.

Interestingly, the official Communist line does not mention who laid the chapel's foundation stone in 1391—the Catholic archbishop of Prague, who is said to have initially approved of the reform efforts on which the Chapel was literally and figuratively built.⁷² The great irony behind the reconstruction of the Bethlehem Chapel is that the same regime that authorized, bankrolled, and lauded the project was without question atheist, persecuting all measure of clergy and religious institutions, both Catholic and Protestant.⁷³

The establishment of museums to honor the leading figures of Czech Communism—Klement Gottwald, Czechoslovakia's first Communist leader, and Vladimir I. Lenin, the father of the Soviet Union—came as an inevitable step in the Communist reordering of the recent and distant past and acted as anchors of Communist propaganda in Prague.⁷⁴ First opened in 1954, the Klement Gottwald Museum took the place of the former Prague City Savings Bank just off of Na Příkopě street, a central pedestrian thoroughfare. A 1962 guidebook promised that the museum ““by its arrangement and individual exhibits...leads the visitor on the trial of the glorious revolutionary traditions of our nations from the Hussite times up to the history of our glorious Communist Party.... The visitor educated by traditions, will more easily and fully comprehend today.””⁷⁵ Its first floor dealt with the “Hussite Revolutionary Movement”, and its exhibits further developed the themes one would encounter at the Bethlehem Chapel: ““The rural and urban poor here for the first time tried to realize their ideas of a classless society. The Hussites, however, did not struggle only for the realization of a socially just order, but strove to safeguard the happy development of our homeland.””⁷⁶ Other revolutionary movements in Czech history rounded out the displays in this section—peasant uprisings, the 1848 national uprisings, and other

⁷² Demetz, 129.

⁷³ Sayer, 279.

⁷⁴ The proliferation of museums and renovations of sites associated with the Communist movement was a nation-wide trend. The Workers' House in the blue-collar neighborhood of Židenice in Brno, the main city of Moravia and the homes of Dr. Bohumír Šmeral and Josef Hybeš in the provincial towns of Třebíč and Dašice are just a few other examples. See *Muzea a Galerie v ČSR (Museums and Galleries in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic)*, Praha: Olympia, 1985.

⁷⁵ Sayer, 283.

similar events leading to the present. The second floor emphasized the struggle of the Czechoslovak Communist Party during the First Republic and its anti-fascism in World War II; the third floor's exhibitions proclaimed the "Victory of Socialism in Czechoslovakia".⁷⁷ As Sayer points out, the message with which one is left is that "the history of the nation is the history of the construction of socialism, and by the same token, the history of the construction of socialism is the history of the nation."⁷⁸

The Gottwald Museum was just one star in a Communist constellation of monuments in Prague. Joining the shrine to Gottwald, the Stalin Monument (at least briefly), and the Vítkov complex was a collection of other so-called "monuments of the Workers' Movement". The following is a list of the top sites in Prague as of 1975:

- Museum of Lenin, Hybernská Street 7: The Lenin Museum followed the Gottwald model, and lauded the revolutionary thought and life of Vladimir Ilych Lenin. Featured exhibits included "the theory and practice of the leading role of the Communist Party in all historical eras", "the blossoming of international workers' and national liberation movements", and "the influence of Leninism and the origin and formation of the Czechoslovak Communist Party." Housed in the baroque Los Palace, having been a Workers' Party stronghold since 1907, the Lenin Museum was also the site of a secret 1912 international Party meeting, attended by Lenin himself, as well as the first printing operation in 1920 for *Rudé právo* (or *Red Right*), the official Communist newspaper. The palace was renovated and repaired by the government in 1951 and 1952, reopening that year as the Lenin Museum. Its renovations, which uncovered and preserved eighteenth-century painted timber ceilings, were declared to exemplify the "socialist state's care of monuments."⁷⁹ Along with the Bethlehem Chapel, and true treasures of Czech culture and

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ *Muzea a Galerie v ČSR*, 137; Otilie Svobodová, "Péče o památky dělnického hnutí [Care of Monuments of the Workers' Movement]," *Památková péče 1945-1970* [Monument Care]. Praha: Státní ústav památkové péče a ochrany přírody, 1973. 25. The Lenin Museum's listing in the 1985 *Museums and*

heritage, such as the Hradčany complex and the Czech crown jewels, the Lenin Museum was listed under its earlier title of the People's House (*Lidový dům*) as a national cultural monument.⁸⁰

- House at the Chestnut Trees (*U kaštanů*), in the Prague suburb of Břevnov: Notable for its association with the origins of the first political organizing of Czech labor in 1878, this Neoclassical house was also listed as a national cultural monument. Interestingly, the adjacent ninth-century Břevnov Abbey, the oldest settlement in present-day Prague, was not renovated until the late 1970s and was named a national cultural monument itself only in 1991.⁸¹
- Millesimo Palace, Celetná Street 13: Like the Los Palace, the Millesimo is an example of the Prague Baroque. Following renovations, it was converted into the *Městské poradně a studovně marxismu-leninismu*, which functioned as a resource center and reading room for the Marxist literature and the history and problems of the Workers' Movement.⁸²
- National House (*Národní dům*) in Karlín: In May 1921, Czech Communist Bohumír Šmeral announced the 21 conditions of the Communist International, laying down the foundations of a "lasting and strong Party".⁸³
- House at Sokolovská Street 13: From 1923 to 1938, this building was the headquarters of the Secretariat of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and the center of the first "historic phase" of the domestic Party. Klement Gottwald himself worked here and "fought for the liberation of [the Czechoslovak] people."⁸⁴ With the exception of the publication of *Rudé právo*, the building was also the center of the Czech Communist printing presses.⁸⁵
- House at the Barriers (*U Zábranských*) at Křižikova Street 89: The Workers' Council met

Galleries guide does not mention the Los Palace's aristocratic origins. Interestingly, the author's surname is a derivative of the Czech word for "freedom".

⁸⁰ Pavel, 16, 19, 21.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 21; Staňková et al., 147-149; Svobodová, 25-26.

⁸² Svobodová, 26.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

here, and in a historic gathering, prepared for the founding of the Czechoslovak Communist Party.⁸⁶

- Goltz-Kinsky Palace, Old Town Square: A Rococo design by Kilian Ignaz Dientzenhofer, the palace was once a German gynasium, which schooled Franz Kafka, and was damaged in the street fighting during the May 1945 Prague uprising. In February 1948, Klement Gottward addressed a crowd of supporters from one of its balconies overlooking the square, and set into motion the events leading to his coup d'etat later that year.⁸⁷

Derek Sayer interprets the efforts of the Communist Party to mold history to its fixed agenda and interpretation:

Historic sites and public monuments, popular festivals and national holidays, coins, postage stamps, the designs of book covers and the names of their publishers, the shops on the street...these are the everyday media that routinely bound social identity. They give shape and meaning to the surrounds, delineating the spatial and temporal parameters of the community within which individuals live their lives and in terms of which they locate themselves...These little mutations in the landscape of the everyday bear eloquent witness to what Czechs call the *totalitní* [total] character of the KSČ's revolution, its determined penetration into every nook and cranny of human existence...it comprehensively reshaped the legacy of the past. Traditions were reordered. Its elements were comfortingly familiar, but they were newly related to one another to form a totality that was barely recognizable.⁸⁸

With this mandate—the cultural and physical infiltration of Communist ideology and historical interpretation in Prague and all of Czechoslovakia—the regime would next reinforce its agenda in the sphere of historic preservation with a comprehensive legislative and administrative structure.

Communist-era Monument Care Legislation and Administration

Just as the switch in government from the Austro-Hungarian Empire to the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918 brought about a reordering of administrative structures, so did the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia in 1948. However, unlike the organizational changes of the First Republic, the alterations wrought by the new Communist authorities were grounded in ideological necessity. Broad centralization of the various divisions of government under the

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Svobodová, 25-28.

authority of the Communist Party and its governing apparatus was a necessary component of implementing Communist rule, and historic preservation agencies were not immune from this process. While an exhaustive discussion of the fine points of Communist party organization is beyond the scope of this study, a brief examination would be helpful to understand how the eventual rearranging of historic preservation agencies was part of a system-wide reconceptualization of both state and society.⁸⁹ A useful departure point is Crampton's observation that "the leading role [of the Communist Party in Soviet bloc nations] meant the subjugation of the state and society to the party".⁹⁰ Although the Communists officially sanctioned other parties, these political organizations had only nominal influence over the affairs of government. Rather, the Communist Party was the only true power, organizing the state according to its own party structure of Leninist "democratic centralism". Party hierarchy became the basis of governing structure—"democratic centralism" called for a top-down central pyramid, with each level subordinate to its immediately supervisory unit. Although party congresses made up of elected representatives in theory set policy, in practice decision-making powers rested in the upper echelon of the Party, most specifically the Presidium of the Central Committee, who depended upon the lower levels of the Party apparatus to realize these decisions. The Presidium was synonymous with the executive branch and included the president, premier, deputy premiers, and ministers.⁹¹ In Prague, as throughout Czechoslovakia, the Communist Party depended on a system of national committees to carry out the mandates of the highest Communist authorities at the Presidium level. At the highest echelon were the regional national committees, followed by the district, municipal (in major cities), and local national committees. The National Committee of the Capital of Prague operated as the capital's regional national committee, and each district

⁸⁸ Sayer, 282.

⁸⁹ Crampton, 243.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 242-246; Library of Congress, "Czechoslovakia—A Country Study [1987], The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia"; available from <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/cstoc.html>; Internet; accessed 7 August 2001.

within the city had district national committees. This administrative scheme formed the underpinning for the implementation of historic preservation legislation, as will be discussed later, particularly for the first Communist-era law, Act No. 22 passed in 1958.⁹²

Besides these overarching administrative reconfigurations directed by the Communist Party, state monument care, that is, official historic preservation, had to deal with another Communist measure—the nationalization of private property, including historic resources.⁹³ Not surprisingly, the impact of this policy was particularly hard on large landholders and Czech aristocrats. For example, the Communist authorities confiscated from the Lobkowicz family, perhaps the most well known of all Czech nobles, over 200 properties from castles to forest cottages.⁹⁴ Furthermore, Communist ideology dictated “the people are today the owners of monuments and therefore also in their part bear responsibility for them”. Communal ownership meant the shared task of caring for them, an ideal that was not always achieved in reality, but that was nonetheless by the late 1950s codified into a comprehensive historic preservation law.⁹⁵ Moreover, the Party had at its disposal a ready commodity for its patronage needs—those same confiscated palaces, country houses, and their contents—to be awarded to faithful Party members, in effect creating a Communist elite in a supposed classless society.⁹⁶ As a result of the policies of property nationalization and centralized administration, historic preservation agencies under Communist rule were given new tasks and responsibilities as well as a reorganized administrative structure.

As early as 1948, the Communist government began to implement its approach to historic preservation by creating regional national committees that were responsible for not only

⁹² Zbyněk Kiesewetter, *The Capital of Prague and Its Administration* (Prague: The Press and Publicity Department of the Prague National Committee, 1967), 17-18.

⁹³ Sharon L. Wolchik, *Czechoslovakia in Transition: Politics, Economics, and Society* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1991), 22.

⁹⁴ Michael Ryan, “What Would You Do With a Palace?” *Parade Magazine*, 22 December 1996, 9.

⁹⁵ Zdislav Buřival, *Koncepce Dalšího Rozvoje Státní Památkové Péče v Hlavním Městě Praze (Conception of the Further Development of State Monument Care in the City of Prague)* (Praha: Státní ústav památkové péče a ochrany přírody, 1975): 6.

“education, enlightenment, and physical edification”, but also the care of cultural monuments and nature.⁹⁷ This initial legislation was supplemented in 1951 by a government decree that reorganized the state monument care activities, placing regional and national committees under the Ministry of Education, Sciences, and the Arts, changing the 1946 National Cultural Commission into a board of the aforementioned Ministry, and combining the Prague and Brno State Monument Bureaus into the State Monument Institute (*Státní Památkový Ústav*). The State Monument Institute was charged with providing expert assistance, especially in preservation work and in the promotion and publicizing of monuments, further scientific evaluation of monuments, and the study and development of conservation methods.⁹⁸ Only two years later, in 1953, this institute merged with the State Photo-survey Institute and the National Cultural Committee into the State Monument Administration (*Státní Památkový Správa*) as a single central expert agency for official historic preservation.⁹⁹ These administrative agencies were but temporary and were superseded by those created by the first comprehensive historic preservation legislation, which was passed in 1958.

Act No. 22/1958

Although a 1934 study committee had published its findings as to the need for comprehensive historic preservation legislation in Czechoslovakia,¹⁰⁰ Act No. 22/1958, the first truly comprehensive monument care legislation since the days of the Central Commission, was not approved until April 1958, and had as its purpose

to govern the protection of cultural monuments...their utilization and care of them because of their cultural-political importance, so that such monuments are preserved, duly administered, effectively utilized by society and made accessible to the public, and thus become an important part of the cultural and economic life of socialist society.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Crampton, 246.

⁹⁷ Hobzek, 49. See Zákon č. 280/1948 Sb.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 49-50. See *Vládní nařízení* č. 112/1951 Sb.

⁹⁹ Ministerstvo kultury, “Nástin vývoje právní úpravy,” 81.

¹⁰⁰ Hobzek, 51.

¹⁰¹ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 1(1) Sb. Published in English translation in *Bulletin of Czechoslovak Law* 19, no. 1-2 (1980): 139-150.

Thus, this law codified the official role of historic resources as instruments of the Communist approach to history, i.e. as a key component of “the cultural and economic life of socialist society”, and superseded all prior enactments.¹⁰² Consistent with the Communist view of the preeminent role of the State, this law further conferred upon the State the ultimate responsibility for the protection of historic resources and invested in it the power to implement their authority through government agencies dedicated to historic preservation.¹⁰³ However, each citizen had as his or her “civil duty...to assist in the protection of monuments”.¹⁰⁴ The policy of property nationalization by Communist authorities theoretically gave each person an ownership interest in all property. However, the “collective responsibility” bestowed upon “the people” usually translated in practice into neglect and decay, because everyone, and yet at the same time, no one, owned state property.¹⁰⁵ In addition, “monument” (*památká*) was legally defined as

a cultural value which documents the historical development of society, its art, technology, science and other areas of human work and life, or the preserved historical environment of human settlements and architectural conglomerations, or an object which relates to outstanding personalities and events of history and culture.¹⁰⁶

In addition, a monument could also consist of a “set or conglomeration of cultural values, some of which may not be monuments”.¹⁰⁷ In line with historic preservation practice dating to the

¹⁰² Zákon č. 22/1958 § 27 (1) Sb. The 1958 Act abolished the following laws: Measure of the Standing Committee No. 255/1938, Concerning Protection of Objects of Special Artistic or Historical Value (*opatření Stálého výboru č. 255/1938 Sb.; o ochraně věcí umělecký nebo památkové zvláště hodnotých*); Government Decree No. 274/1941, Concerning Archaeological Monuments (*vládní nařízení č. 274/1941 Sb.; o archeologických památkách*); Act No. 137/1946, Concerning National Cultural Commissions for the Administration of State Cultural Property (*zákon č. 137/1946 Sb., o Národních kulturních komisích pro správu státního kulturního majetku*); and Government Decree No. 112/1951, Concerning the Re-Organization of State Protection of Monuments (*vládní nařízení č. 112/1951 Sb., o reorganizaci státní památkové péče*).

¹⁰³ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 1(2) Sb.

¹⁰⁴ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 1(3) Sb.

¹⁰⁵ Josef Štulc, “The Current and Future Prospects for Conserving the Architectural Heritage of the Czech Republic,” *Architectural Conservation in the Czech and Slovak Republics* (New York: World Monuments Fund, 1993), 62.

¹⁰⁶ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 2(1) Sb.

¹⁰⁷ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 2(2) Sb.

Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Central Commission, the 1958 Act covered both moveable and immovable objects.¹⁰⁸

Building on the why and what of historic preservation, the 1958 Act established a framework for monument designation and administration. In terms of designation, individual monuments as well as monument ensembles were protected. At one end of the spectrum, those monuments “which form the most important component of the cultural wealth” could be created “national cultural monuments” (*národní kulturní památky*).¹⁰⁹ By 1970, at the direction of the Government through the Ministry of Education and Culture, some 33 national cultural monuments had been designated; nearly half (16) were in Prague.¹¹⁰ The 1958 Act also provided for the designation of “groups of immovable monuments and their environment” as “historical reservations” (*památkové rezervace*) with the approval of the Minister of Education and Culture and officials of the State Committee for Construction, State Planning Office, and the Minister of Finance, who were to specify “conditions for building activity” within the reservation.¹¹¹ “Protective zone” (*ochranná pásma*) designations, designed to supplement protection efforts of a particular monument, made possible the restriction or prohibition of activities within the zone that would endanger the monument as well as permitted the “removal or modification” of structures and landscaping of the zone.¹¹² A protective zone was intended to be a component of regional planning and zoning. Act. No. 50/1976, which dealt more specifically with planning issues, supplemented the provisions of the 1958 Act governing protective zones.¹¹³ To assist in the identification and designation of national cultural monuments, historical reservations, and

¹⁰⁸ Siegler, 65.

¹⁰⁹ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 3(1) Sb.

¹¹⁰ Pavel, 16-22. Prague’s national cultural monuments included: the protected region of Prague Castle (*Hradčany*); the Czech coronation jewels; Vyšehrad; the Charles Bridge; Old Town Square with the Old Town City Hall, Týn Church, and Kinský Palace; the Carolinium; the Bethlehem Chapel; the New Town City Hall; White Mountain; the Estates Theatre; the National Theatre; the National Museum; the House at the Chestnut Trees; the People’s House; the Duchcovský Viaduct; and the National Monument at Vítkov. See Pavel, 16-22.

¹¹¹ Siegler, 64-65; Zákon č. 22/1958 § 4(1) Sb.

¹¹² Zákon č. 22/1958 § 5(1) Sb.

¹¹³ Siegler, 65.

protective zones, the 1958 Act also set a high priority for the registration of both immovable and moveable monuments in a state register or index (*státní seznam*) kept by both regional and national authorities.¹¹⁴

The 1958 Act instructed both the state as well as the individual to take responsibility for the care of monuments. Although over 90 percent of farmland had been collectivized by 1960, individual homes and smallholdings were still held to a certain extent as private property.¹¹⁵ Such owners had to absorb the costs of maintenance for all monuments located on their properties, following the instructions of the regional national committee, and report all damage or threats to the monuments to the same committee. Likewise, the regional national committee had to approve any adaptations or restorations undertaken by the owner. Administrators of nationalized property, that is to say, their superior agencies, were responsible in like manner for the expenses of upkeep. In addition, the regional national committee had the authority to order both private persons and public entities to take whatever steps it so decreed to preserve the monument in question at the owner or administrator's cost. However, the Act provided for an economic hardship exception for those owners who were unable to "meet [their] obligations" for maintenance. These persons could ask for a government subsidy to underwrite their expenses.¹¹⁶ In the event of neglect of or threat to a privately owned monument, the regional national committee further had the power to "take the measures necessary for the protection of the property" or expropriate it without compensation to its owner.¹¹⁷

Interestingly, the 1958 Act also provided for the appropriate use, administration, and accessibility of monuments. "Monuments may be used only in a manner which is in keeping with the principles of protection and which corresponds to the character and technical condition of the

¹¹⁴ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 7(1)-(5) Sb.

¹¹⁵ Rick Fawn, *The Czech Republic: A Nation of Velvet* (Amsterdam: OPA, 2000), 15-17.

¹¹⁶ Siegler, 66; Zákon č. 22/1958 § 8(1)-(5) Sb.

¹¹⁷ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 9(1)-(2) Sb.

monument.”¹¹⁸ A regional national committee, or the State Institute for the Protection of Monuments and Nature for national cultural monuments, could order that a monument not be employed for a particular use. Agencies who had monuments, whether an entire building or rooms, at their disposal had to cooperate with the regional national committee and the Ministry of Education.¹¹⁹ Monument owners and administrators were also required to provide access to employees of state preservation agencies for survey and documentation purposes as well as to the public at no charge for scientific study or exhibitions.¹²⁰ Along with these provisions mandating public access, the 1958 Act also forbade the removal of monuments located in “publicly accessible places” without the permission of the regional national committee.¹²¹ Only in exceptional cases on “extraordinarily important grounds” could a monument have its status removed, and its legal protection curtailed by agreement of the Ministry of Education and Culture at the suggestion of the State Institute for the Protection of Monuments and Nature, and for national cultural monuments, by the Government.¹²²

Most importantly, perhaps, the 1958 Act established a new central agency for historic preservation in Czechoslovakia. The State Institute for the Protection of Monuments and Nature (*Státní ústav památkové péče a ochrany přírody*, SÚPPOP), unlike its predecessors since 1918, was not an ad hoc, provisional body. Rather, SÚPPOP functioned as a comprehensive agency, operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Culture and dedicated to the care of both the built and natural environment.¹²³ SÚPPOP replaced the existing state historic preservation structure of the State Monument Administration¹²⁴ and had among its tasks:

¹¹⁸ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 10 (1) Sb.

¹¹⁹ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 10(1)-(3) Sb.

¹²⁰ Siegler, 66; Zákon č. 22/1958 § 11 Sb.

¹²¹ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 12 Sb.

¹²² Zákon č. 22/1958 § 13 Sb. Sections 15 through 17 dealt with the exploration and excavations of archaeological monuments, which still remains an important component of the Czech historic preservation administrative structure and mission.

¹²³ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 18 (1)-(3) Sb. The provisions governing SÚPPOP’s environmental protection activities were set aside in Act No. 40 (Concerning State Protection of Nature) of the same year. See zákon č. 40/1958 Sb.

¹²⁴ Ministerstvo kultury, “Nástin vývoje právní úpravy,” 82

- organize and carry out study, survey, documentation, scientific evaluation and popularization of monuments,
- deal with theoretical and practical problems of protection, conservation, reconstruction and cultural utilization of monuments, and
- provide professional and methodological assistance in the realization of monument protection, particularly in the case of national cultural monuments, as well as the realization of the exceptionally important tasks of conservation, reconstruction and cultural utilization of monuments.¹²⁵

Assisting SÚPPOP in implementing its mission was a hierarchy of regional, district, and local monument protection agencies, modeled on the structure of the Communist Party and its governing bodies. Immediately below the national level, regional national committees administered monument care at the territorial level by setting up an advisory body charged with registration of the region's monuments, their protection, maintenance, and utilization, and publicity and youth education about the "proper relationship to monuments."¹²⁶ At the next level below, district national committees had a "professional agent" who acted as the "district conservator of state protection of monuments" on a voluntary basis, and who was appointed by the executive board of the district national committee. In addition, the district national committees established a district commission made up of "voluntary workers who have a positive approach to protection of monuments", who were to examine the condition of the district's monuments and make recommendations for their protection to the executive body of the district national committee.¹²⁷ Within communities with a large inventory of monuments, the 1958 Act made possible the establishment by the local national committee a "local commission". The local commission's responsibilities paralleled those of the district commissions (see Figure 66).¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 19(1) Sb.

¹²⁶ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 20(1)-(3) Sb.

¹²⁷ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 21(1)-(3) Sb.

¹²⁸ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 22(1)-(3) Sb.

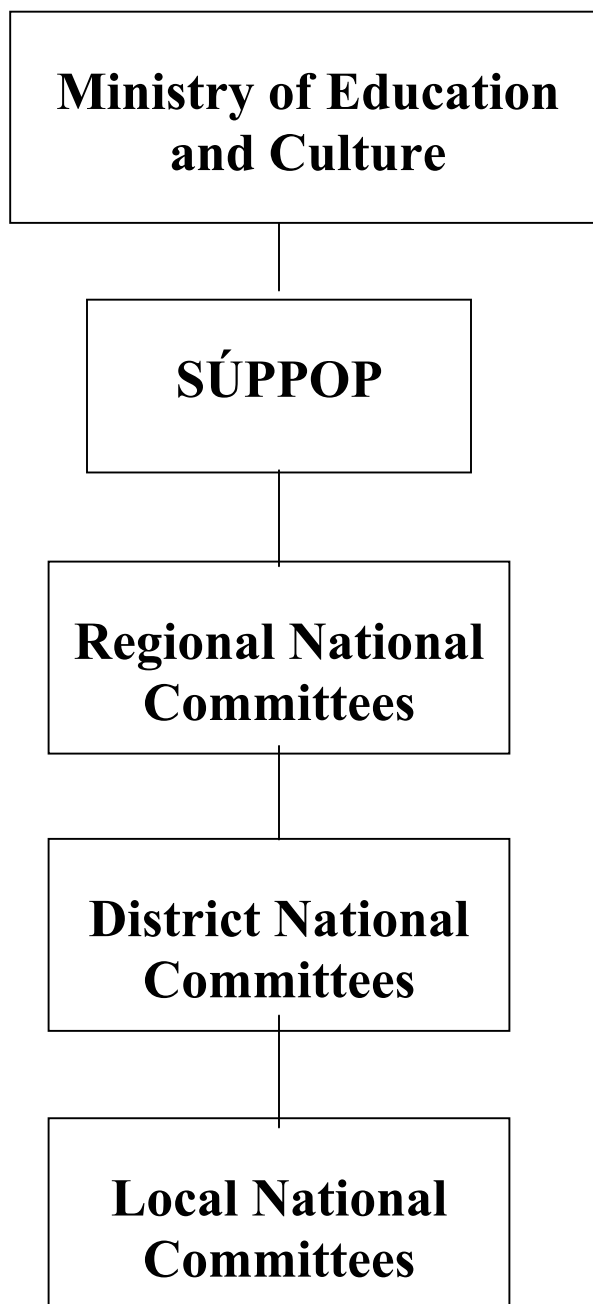


Figure 66 Hierarchy of monument care administration as established by the 1958 Act (zákon č. 22/1958).

Finally, the 1958 Act also provided for inter-governmental cooperation in matters related to monument care. The executive body of a regional national committee was entitled to be invited to “any proceedings in which the interests of state protection of monuments could be affected [including]...territorial planning, community development, constructions, communications, telecommunications, electrification, water conservancy or mining activities.”¹²⁹ As a hoped-for further layer of protection, the legal regulations governing these activities also spoke to monument care concerns.¹³⁰ If a particular monument was found to be under threat by any of these activities, the district conservator was empowered to take the “necessary steps to secure its protection”. The ultimate decision had to be made by the executive body of the regional national committee within eight days or lose its legal force.¹³¹ Created by the 1958 Act and the 1960 decree for national committee tasks, the Center for Monument Care and Nature Protection of the Greater City of Prague (*Středisko památkové péče a ochrany přírody hlavní města Prahy*) served as the primary historic preservation agency for the Czechoslovak capital.¹³²

The 1958 Act was the legal blueprint for nearly forty years of Communist-era historic preservation efforts in Czechoslovakia. Although supplemented by other legislation, including the 1960 decree dealing with the reassignment of national committee tasks, the 1971 declaration of Prague’s core as a “historical reservation” (*památkové rezervace*) and 1976 legislation on building codes and planning and zoning,¹³³ the 1958 Act outlined the activities to be undertaken

¹²⁹ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 24(1)Sb.

¹³⁰ Siegler, 69.

¹³¹ Zákon č. 22/1958 § 24(2)Sb.

¹³² Ladislav Špaček, Director of the State Monument Institute in the Greater City of Prague (*Státní památkový ústav v hlavním městě Praze*), Letter to the author, 10 August 2001. The Center for Monument Care and Nature Protection acquired an archaeological section in 1965. The agency’s name changed several times between 1960 and 1991: The Center for Monument Care and Nature Protection of the Greater City of Prague to the Prague Center for State Monument Care and Nature Protection (*Pražské středisko státní p.p. a o. p.*) to the Prague Institute for State Monument Care and Nature Protection (*Pražské ústav státní p.p. a o.p.*) to the Prague Institute of Monument Care in 1991 (*Pražské ústav památkové péče*) to finally the State Monument Institute in the Greater City of Prague (*Státní památkový ústav v hlavním městě Praze*) as it is currently known.

¹³³ Hobzek, 52; Siegler, 65. The laws are respectively the Decree of the Government of the Czech Socialist Republic No. 66/1971, and Act No. 50/1976 (“concerning territorial planning and building rules”), and Notice No. 83/1976 of the Federal Ministry for Technological and Capital Construction Development.

by those charged with monument care responsibilities. SÚPPOP specifically concentrated its efforts on further development of a register of historic immovable and moveable objects, restoration of historic buildings, and town planning and regeneration.

The development of a comprehensive “State Directory of immovable and moveable cultural monuments” (*Státní seznam nemovitých a movitých kulturních památek*) was one of SÚPPOP’s priorities. SÚPPOP prided itself on its efforts to compile an objective register, employing qualified monument care professionals for the task. However, the level of professionalism dropped when political factors intervened, and “external unqualified workers” were hired for the work. Despite this shortcoming, SÚPPOP managed to put together a list of some 30,000 immovable and nearly 50,000 moveable objects throughout the country worthy of heightened protection and preservation.¹³⁴ In 1964, the National Committee of the Capital of Prague approved the Prague-specific directory, which by 1965 included a wide range of some 1718 objects: 1365 houses and towers, 109 religious buildings and castles, 9 fountains and wells, various sculptural groups, 14 cemeteries, 5 bridges and viaducts, 7 sets of castle walls and/or fortifications, and 18 archaeological sites.¹³⁵ Working in cooperation with the State Institute for the Reconstruction of Monument Towns and Objects (*Státní ústav pro rekonstrukci památkových měst a objektů*, SÚRPMO), SÚPPOP evaluated the relative significance of these objects as well as investigated their construction techniques and historical development. For each object, SÚPPOP attempted to record information about its history, construction development, and its creators, and supplement these facts with individual files that included any bibliographic and/or archival material already in SÚPPOP’s possession (such as the archives of the defunct State

¹³⁴ Státní ústav památkové péče (State Institute for Monument Care), “Historie, Vývoj (History, Development)”, available from <http://www.supp.cz>; Internet; accessed 11 November 2000.

¹³⁵ Zdislav Buřival, “Památková péče v Praze 1945-1965 [Monument Care in Prague 1945-1965],” *Staletá Praha* (Praha: Orbis, 1965), 12-13; Hubert Ječný, “Soupis Nemovitých Památek v Praze (List of Immoveable Objects in Prague),” *Staletá Praha* (Praha: Orbis, 1965), 117. Interestingly, Buřival refers to religious structures using the Communist-era term *kultové stavby* or literally, “cult buildings”.

Photo-survey Institute).¹³⁶ In Prague, as elsewhere throughout Czechoslovakia, these object inventories not only identified what was considered worthy of restoration but also which buildings and objects would be included in town regeneration programs.¹³⁷

As for restoration in Prague, the final violent days of the Second World War in that city damaged or destroyed a number of its most significant historic structures and presented Czech preservationists with an adequate stock of buildings and objects that required immediate care. As mentioned in Chapter 1, in February 1945 Allied bombers attacked Prague in the mistaken belief that it was their target of Dresden and heavily damaged the Emmaus Monastery, while street fighting with recalcitrant German forces in May 1945 ruined the medieval Old Town City Hall and other buildings on the Old Town Square. Therefore, understandably, the early Communist-era restoration efforts dealt with these projects.¹³⁸ However, in addition, the new government also tackled the restoration of numerous other structures and objects in Prague, motivated by ideological considerations as much perhaps as true need. Designated in 1954 as a “protected domain” (*chráněné oblast*) in 1954,¹³⁹ the Prague Castle complex (*Hradčany*) received special attention as the seat of the “people’s” government, as SÚPPOP attempted to expand public access to it and to convert spaces into those “appropriate for cultural and social use”.¹⁴⁰ Other national cultural monuments were singled out for special attention, especially those with some connection to the Communist Party or 1948 putsch or whose association was capable of being manipulated to serve ideological interests (i.e. the Bethlehem Chapel).¹⁴¹ Likewise, existing residential buildings were “modernized to meet the requirements

¹³⁶ Ječný, *Soupis*, 119.

¹³⁷ Státní ústav památkové péče, *Historie, Vývoj*.

¹³⁸ Státní ústav památkové péče a ochrany přírody, *ČSSR*, 70.

¹³⁹ Ministerstvo kultury, “Nástin vývoje právní úpravy,” 83.

¹⁴⁰ Státní ústav památkové péče a ochrany přírody, *ČSSR*, 70.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 72-74; Buřival, “Památková péče v Praze 1945-1965”, 7-10. Other Prague landmarks also underwent restoration during the Communist era, most notably the Baroque Estates Theatre and site of some of Mozart’s performances, the nineteenth-century National Theatre, the Rudolfinum, the Convent of St. Agnes of Bohemia, and the Troja chateau. See Zdeněk Vávra, “Rekonstrukce Historických Staveb (The Reconstruction of Historic Buildings)”, *Česká architektura 1945-1995* (Czech Architecture 1945-1995) (Praha: Obec architektů, 1995), 120-129.

of the current living standard”¹⁴². An estimated 7800 apartments were estimated to be located within the Prague historical reservation in 1965.¹⁴³ Other residential blocks were converted into “experimental comprehensive reconstruction projects”, including for higher educational and hospitality industry purposes, and the original occupants were relocated elsewhere.¹⁴⁴ The construction of the Prague underground metro systems in the 1970s and 1980s brought about a new wave of reconstruction and demolition activity.¹⁴⁵ Theoretically, these restoration projects were not accomplished in isolation, but as with most other aspects of Communist governance, part of a larger plan—here, town regeneration and redevelopment.¹⁴⁶

Town regeneration and redevelopment efforts in communist Czechoslovakia was first and foremost a function of Communist centralized planning. Under state socialism, the physical development of cities and regions was redefined as central to industrial and economic development and physical planning was institutionalized as an instrument of the centrally planned economy. Urbanization, for example, was a centrally planned and directed process, described as ‘managed urbanization’ and outlined in a series of two-year and five-year plans. Planners were part of the state apparatus, and worked in hierarchically organized, centrally directed institutes at district, regional and national level, producing highly formalized, detailed plans. Plans were inflexible documents. Once a site was selected for the expansion of a factory, for example, it could not easily be reassigned.¹⁴⁷ In terms of historic preservation, the town regeneration and reconstruction programs emphasized not only the importance of collections of historic buildings as well as of the individual structure, but also further required that “entire environment

¹⁴² Státní ústav památkové péče a ochrany přírody, *ČSSR*, 74.

¹⁴³ Buřival, “Památková péče v Praze 1945-1965”, 16.

¹⁴⁴ Státní ústav památkové péče a ochrany přírody, *ČSSR*, 74.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Lily M. Hoffman, “After the fall: crisis and renewal in urban planning in the Czech Republic,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 18, no. 4 (1994), 692.

surrounding the structure must also be regarded as part of the monument”.¹⁴⁸ Prior to the 1958 Act, the Communist Czechoslovak government designated in 1950 some 30 municipal historic reservations in Bohemia and Moravia.¹⁴⁹ However, early efforts at restoration within these reservations, particularly of derelict buildings, did not on the whole work in tandem or collaboration with more generalized development plans for towns, and “left the historic core as a ‘white space’ on the map of the town—a job for [the professional preservationists]”.¹⁵⁰ By the late 1960s and early 1970s, Czech preservation professionals endeavored to insert the preservation and restoration of the historic core into overall schemes of town planning. Each town’s building stock was inventoried, and urban plan studied and mapped out. Using this research, the various functional uses of the town’s areas were analyzed, and future development patterns “fixed”.¹⁵¹ SÚRPMO was then charged with creating a “detailed physical plan” of the historic core, followed by recommendations for building use, services, social and civic facilities and spatial arrangements, emphasizing the town’s internal as well as domestic role in the larger region.¹⁵² As for reconstruction, an even more exact plan, focusing on individual blocks and buildings, was produced.¹⁵³ As a parallel activity, SÚPPOP identified urban ensembles and assessed each in terms of the value of its structures, producing in the early 1970s the study “Records and Categorization of Historic Towns in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic” (*Evidence a kategorizace historických měst v ČSR*). This assessment project was continued in various forms throughout the 1980s, including the mapping out of the nation’s monuments and historic ensembles, which continues to serve as a good planning tool for local and regional planners.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸ Svatopluk Voděra, “New approach to preservation,” *The Architects’ Journal* 145, no. 25 (June 21, 1967): 1499.

¹⁴⁹ Státní ústav památkové péče a ochrany přírody, *ČSSR, ICOMOS Bulletin* 4, 52.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Voděra, “New approach to preservation”, 1503.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Státní ústav památkové péče [State Institute for Monument Care], “Historie, Vývoj”.

Despite the theoretical, on-paper strengths of the Communist-era historic core regeneration and reconstruction program—thorough preparation and a systematic approach to functionality and regional planning—the projects lauded in the 1960s and 1970s as enlightened examples of preservation often in practice meant crude, autocratic exercises of state power at the expense of both the residents and architectural heritage of a town. In the border city of Cheb, this approach was characterized as “efficient and economical, even though numbers of people ha[d] to be rehoused”.¹⁵⁵ A post-1989 article that explored the question of town clearance (*asanace*), reconstruction, and the regeneration of historic cores revealed the truly destructive nature of the “regeneration” of Cheb, which lost historic buildings to demolition and gained replacements that were not differentiated in size or character from the original, afterwards substituted, historic architecture.¹⁵⁶ Voděra’s observation that “this method [was] possible in Czechoslovakia because most of the buildings [were] owned by the state or by socialist organisations” underscores the omnipotence of the Communist Party and the importance of centralized, top-down planning in matters of historic preservation between 1948 and 1989.¹⁵⁷

Prague’s own experience with the historic core regeneration program was unique because of its role as a capital city and its rich, expansive architectural ensemble.¹⁵⁸ Like its sister Czech municipalities, Prague, too, had a town development plan that attempted to combine the implications of historic preservation of the core with economic development and expansion. Mixed-use areas—where residences and commercial uses overlapped—were decried as antiquated and inappropriate. The decreasing residential population of the historic core, local transportation inadequacies (individual commutes and transport deliveries), and the shrinking of

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Miroslav Baše, “Asanace, Rekonstrukce a Regenerace Historických Jader (Town Clearance, Reconstruction, and Regeneration of Historic Cores),” *Česká architektura 1945-1995 (Czech Architecture 1945-1995)* (Praha: Obec architektů, 1995), 112.

¹⁵⁷ Voděra, 1503.

¹⁵⁸ Státní ústav památkové péče a ochrany přírody, *ČSSR*, 74.

open and green space were viewed by the authorities as challenges to be overcome.¹⁵⁹ The solution consisted of “the consistent regeneration of the historic core, by determining appropriate functions and by ascertaining correct functional and spatial relations between the historic core and the [greater] city”¹⁶⁰ and “the full integration of the historic core in the future development of the city”.¹⁶¹ The plan as of 1976 called for:

- the elimination from the core of vehicles and institutions “which inadequately overburden it or which claim new spaces” and a new “system of transport servicing” to limit traffic through the historic core¹⁶²;
- only residential structures with adequate hygienic and transportation support with a preference for non-residential uses, especially “administrative, cultural, social and scientific institutions and commercial organizations”¹⁶³;
- the siting of “social, administrative, shopping and cultural centres” at nodes of mass transit systems and other frequented nodes in the greater city “to alleviate the overburdened historic core and to help increase the attractiveness of the other parts of the city”¹⁶⁴;
- new construction within the historic core, emphasizing “absolute human criteria...applied...in balanced artistic expression so typical of Prague’s old and new architecture”, but no high-rise buildings¹⁶⁵;
- specific functions for individual sectors of the historic core, specifically city administration and higher education uses in the Old Town (*Staré Město*), cultural and commercial uses in the New Town (*Nové Město*), recreational uses for the Letná plain and Troja basin; diplomatic missions and state administration in the Little Side or Lesser Quarter (*Malá Strana*), and “the

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 76-78.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 78.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 82.

¹⁶² Ibid., 80.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 82.

highest ideological function as the seat of the Head of State, the national memorial and the starting point or goal or tourism” for the Prague Castle complex (*Hradčany*).¹⁶⁶

While the 1958 Act was considered to be an example of “progressive” historic preservation legislation, it was not without its own problems.¹⁶⁷ The 1958 Act did not effectively “integrate cultural monuments into present-day life and environment”, emphasizing instead “passive protection and preservation”.¹⁶⁸ In addition, the Act did not “sufficiently differentiate between cultural monuments from the viewpoint of their importance”; “create the conditions for building up an effective network of professionally-staffed organizations of state care of monuments”; as well as “govern in...detail the system of professional supervision over the observance of legal regulations covering state care of cultural monuments”.¹⁶⁹ Finally, the Act failed to “provide for effective sanctions against individuals and organizations violating legal provisions protecting cultural monuments”.¹⁷⁰ Citing the shortcomings of the 1958 Act, the government saw fit to promulgate new historic preservation legislation, and passed Act No. 20/1987 in March 1987.¹⁷¹

Act No. 20/1987

Taking effect on January 1, 1988, the 1987 Act followed the format of its predecessor Act No. 22/1958. As the 1958 Act’s purpose emphasized public access and the ideological importance of monuments, the 1987 Act also looked to political considerations:

The State shall protect cultural monuments as an integral part of the cultural heritage of the people, as an important component of human environment, and as the irreplaceable treasure of the socialist state. The purpose of the present Act is to create all-round conditions for the continued deepening of the political-organizational, cultural and educational role of the state in taking care of cultural monuments, their preservation, and their appropriate utilization, so that they may play a role in the development of culture, the arts, science and education, in the formation of socialist traditions and

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Siegler, 71.

¹⁶⁸ Lesaj, 9.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

socialist patriotism and in the aesthetic education of the people, and thereby contribute to the further advance of socialist society.¹⁷²

Although originally distinguished by such obvious Communist-era language and a product of the now defunct Communist government, the 1987 Act with minor modifications remains in force as the foundation for current historic preservation efforts in the Czech Republic.

Borrowing from the 1958 Act's definition of cultural monuments, the 1987 Act governs the designation of cultural monuments which:

- (a) are important documents of the historical development, way of life and environment of society from the oldest time to the present as manifestations of man's creative ability and work in different areas of human activity, because of their revolutionary, historical, artistic, scientific and technical value.
- (b) Directly relate to important personalities and historical events.¹⁷³

Additionally, the 1987 Act provides for the designation of ensembles as cultural monuments, including both contributing and non-contributing resources within the ensemble.¹⁷⁴ Under the original 1987 Act, the Ministry of Culture was charged with the responsibility of designation of both monuments and archaeological finds with input from regional and district national committees, and was required to notify the owner, who could comment on the designation. In turn, the owner or administrator of the object was obligated to "protect the object against damage, destruction, or loss" after designation, to inform the Ministry of Culture or appropriate national committee of any planned changes to the monument, and to cooperate with the Ministry's request for information, inspection, or documentation.¹⁷⁵ The 1987 Act retained the 1958 Act's provisions regulating national cultural monuments as well as monument reservations and zones. Originally, if owners failed to consent to their property's inclusion in the designation of an

¹⁷² Zákon č. 20/1987 § 1(1) Sb.

¹⁷³ Zákon č. 20/1987 § 2(1) Sb.

¹⁷⁴ Zákon č. 20/1987 § 2(2) Sb.

¹⁷⁵ Zákon č. 20/1987 § 3(1)-(5) Sb. In terms of archaeological research and finds, the 1987 Act also authorizes the Archaeological Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences to carry out research, and regulates the conduct of archaeological research and finds, and provides for the compensation for property loss. Zákon č. 20/1987 § 21-24 Sb.

ensemble, the state could expropriate the property.¹⁷⁶ Continuing the decades-long efforts to record and document the nation's historic resources, the 1987 Act provides for the maintenance of a "Central List" (*Ústřední seznam*) of cultural monuments on a territorial basis, detailing the procedures for reporting a change in the monument's ownership or its removal from the Central List.¹⁷⁷

The 1987 Act, like its predecessor, speaks to the protection and use of cultural monuments, giving the duty of care and appropriate use to owners or administrators, who were on the behalf of the public to "use the cultural monument only in a manner corresponding to cultural and political importance, historical value and technical condition".¹⁷⁸ Moreover, the law also covers non-owners, i.e. the public, were to "act in such a manner as not to cause negative changes in the condition of cultural monuments or their environment and not endanger the preservation and appropriate social use of cultural monuments".¹⁷⁹ Failure to follow these mandates for care would result in the issuance of a decision from local authorities in cooperation with historic preservation agencies, stipulating the actions the party responsible for the monument must take to rectify the situation.¹⁸⁰ Administrative agencies, likewise, are required to follow a similar procedure for approval of proposed changes in use or condition of a monument, while owners are obligated to report threats or damage to a monument to local authorities.¹⁸¹ Both individual owners as well as administrators of monuments must submit all proposals for restoration to local authorities (originally local national committees) for a binding opinion as to the admissibility of the changes, which formerly had to be undertaken by approved state agencies (like SÚRPMO),

¹⁷⁶ Zákon č. 20/1987 § 4, 5, 6, 17 (2) Sb.

¹⁷⁷ Zákon č. 20/1987 § 7, 8 Sb. See Ministerstvo Kultury České republiky, *Věcný zaměr zákona o ochraně kulturních památek a památkové* [Future Plan of the Law of the Care of Cultural Monuments and Monument Care.] (Praha: Ministerstvo Kultury České republiky, 1999), 35-37.

¹⁷⁸ Zákon č. 20/1987 § 9 (1) Sb.

¹⁷⁹ Zákon č. 20/1987 § 9 (3) Sb.

¹⁸⁰ Zákon č. 20/1987 § 10, 11 Sb.

¹⁸¹ Zákon č. 20/1987 § 11, 12 Sb.

now by certified restoration firms.¹⁸² Failure to protect, to report damage to, or to maintain an object as well as to obtain restoration permits for cultural monuments or any resource within a protected ensemble or permit for archaeological excavations results in financial sanctions¹⁸³. The current maximum penalties for some violations is 10 million Czech crowns.¹⁸⁴ The movement of both immovable and moveable monuments is allowed only with the prior consent of the Ministry of Culture.¹⁸⁵ Interestingly, the 1987 Act in its original form addressed the question of governmental purchase of cultural monuments. The State retained a right of first refusal on all monuments put up for sale, and could buy a monument at a price set by regulation.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, the original 1987 Act authorized national committees to contribute financially to maintenance and reconstruction of monuments.¹⁸⁷

Perhaps most importantly, the 1987 Act also streamlined the administrative structure for state historic preservation. The Ministry of Culture directs the central agency for historic preservation, until 1990 the State Institute for Monument Care and Nature Protection (*Státní ústav památkové péče a ochrany přírody, SÚPPOP*), and since then the State Institute for Monument Care (*Státní ústav památkové péče*), which is charged with the “exercise and coordination of all professional work in the sphere of state care of monuments”.¹⁸⁸ The State Institute is to

¹⁸² Zákon č. 20/1987 § 14 Sb.

¹⁸³ Zákon č. 20/1987 § 35, 36, 37, 38, 39 Sb.

¹⁸⁴ *Věcný zaměr zákona*, 59.

¹⁸⁵ Zákon č. 20/1987 § 18 Sb.

¹⁸⁶ Zákon č. 20/1987 § 13 Sb. Under a socialist economy operated by the Communist authorities, prices were officially set and regulated by the government through its Price Control Bureaus, not determined by the free market. See footnote 5 of Act No. 22/1987 in *Bulletin of Czechoslovak Law* 27, no. 1-2 (1988): 51.

¹⁸⁷ Zákon č. 20/1987 § 16 Sb.

¹⁸⁸ Zákon č. 20/1987 § 26, 32 Sb.; *Státní ústav památkové péče, Historie, Vývoj*. Specifically, the 1987 Act directs the Ministry of Culture to

- (a) draw up prognoses, concepts and proposals of long-range prospects of development of state care of monuments,
- (b) coordinate the drafting of a uniform programme of comprehensive care of cultural monuments and shall create all-round conditions for such care, and consider drafts of long-term, medium-term and implementing plans of restoration of cultural monuments,
- (c) control the cultural and educational utilization of national cultural monuments, and provide guidance for the cultural and educational utilization of other cultural monuments in conformity with the interests of the State’s cultural policy,
- (d) coordinate scientific research in the area of state care of monuments,

supervise monument care, the research and compilation of the Central List, and to provide guidance to its regional components.¹⁸⁹ Originally, the 1987 Act organized the lower levels of historic preservation agencies according to the national committee model of the 1958 Act, but following the collapse of the Communist government in 1989, amendments to 1987 Act modified the organizational structure to its current state and replaced the regional national committees with Regional Monument Institutes (*Regionální památkové ústavy*, See Figure 67).¹⁹⁰ The 1987 Act

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- (e) establish as its expert consultative body a scientific council for state care of monuments,
 - (f) cooperate with the Ministry of Education...in the training of personnel for state care of monuments, and shall attend to the continued education of this personnel,
 - (g) ensure international cooperation in the area of state care of monuments,
 - (h) issue the statutes of the central agency of state care of monuments,
 - (i) issue model organizational rules for regional organizations of state care of monuments,
 - (j) fulfill other tasks assigned to it under the present Act.”

See Zákon č. 20/1987 § 26 Sb.

- ¹⁸⁹ Zákon č. 20/1987 § 32, 33 Sb. Specifically, the 1987 Act charges the State Institute with
- (a) elaborate analyses of the condition and development of state care of monuments and background materials for prognoses, concepts and long-range prospects of development of state care of monuments,
 - (b) organize, coordinate and carry out research tasks of state care of monuments and elaborate the theory and methodology of the public use of cultural monuments,
 - (c) carry out the duties of the central professional, methodological, documentation and information body in the area of state care of monuments,
 - (d) keep a central list of cultural monuments,
 - (e) draw up expert opinions for the Ministry of Culture, in particular for the purpose of designating cultural monuments,
 - (f) provide methodological guidance to regional organizations of state care of monuments,
 - (g) ensure expert supervision of comprehensive care of cultural monuments and of their systematic utilization,
 - (h) ensure project-design, reconstruction and restoration work for the restoration of selected cultural monuments,
 - (i) provide for the continued education of personnel for state care of monuments,
 - (j) fulfill other tasks assigned to it by the Ministry of Culture in the area of state care of monuments.

See Zákon č. 20/1987 § 32 Sb.

¹⁹⁰ Zákon č. 20/1987 § 33 Sb. There are now eight Regional Monument Institutes—central Bohemia (Prague), southern Bohemia (České Budějovice), western Bohemia (Plzen), northern Bohemia (Ústí nad Labem), eastern Bohemia (Pardubice), central Moravia (Brno), and northern Moravia (Ostrava)—plus the Prague Institute of Monument Care. “Vznik a organizace památkové péče”, 7. The 1987 Act originally charged the regional organizations to

- (a) elaborate expert opinion for the regional national committee and under its instructions for district national committees as well,
- (b) elaborate expert opinion for prognoses, concepts and long-range prospects of development of state care of monuments,
- (c) draw up uniform programmes of comprehensive care of cultural monuments,
- (d) participate in the realization of the research tasks of state care of monuments,
- (e) carry out the duties of the professional methodological, documentation and information body in the respective region for state care of monuments,
- (f) keep a list of cultural monuments in the region,

also established a Monument Inspection Agency (*Památková inspekce*), which oversees the implementation of “comprehensive care for cultural monuments” and the “observance of decisions” of historic preservation agencies, and analyzes the status of state monument care and propose steps for improvement.¹⁹¹

The 1987 Act would be the last major piece of historic preservation legislation produced by the Communist government of Czechoslovakia. (Current Czech preservation law still relies upon the 1987 Act as its foundation. Currently the Czech Ministry of Culture is actively engaged in the preparation of a new heritage law that more accurately reflects the “social development within the Czech Republic” since 1989.¹⁹²) Two years following the 1987 Act’s passage, greater forces coincided to bring an end to Communist rule throughout the nations of the then Warsaw Pact. The economic and political reforms initiated by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev—perestroika and glasnost respectively—seemed to have little chance of bringing about greater reform in a still hard-line Czechoslovakia. The regime in Prague continued to deter dissent through arrests and imprisonment. But the events of 1989 moved with a momentum of their own. Solidarity candidates won national office in Poland, and reformist Communist Hungary demilitarized much of its border with Austria. East Germans, carrying visas for Hungarian

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- (g) provide expert assistance to owners of cultural monuments in the process of ensuring care of cultural monuments and elaborate expert opinions on the restoration of cultural monuments and on substantive changes in their utilization and of their environment,
 - (h) carry out expert supervision of comprehensive care of cultural monuments and propose to the agencies of state care of monuments elimination of ascertained defects,
 - (i) provide for the survey, research and documentation of cultural monuments,
 - (j) follow how cultural monuments are being educationally and culturally utilized and how they are publicized, and shall ensure comprehensive care for the cultural and educational utilization and accessibility of cultural monuments under its administration,
 - (k) provide expert assistance to national committees in the exercise of state care of monuments and, in addition, to district national committees in the methodological guidance of district conservators and reporters,
 - (l) perform the duties of the investor in the restoration of selected cultural monuments in the region,
 - (m) ensure the project-design, reconstruction and restoration work in the restoration of cultural monuments,
 - (n) fulfill other tasks assigned to it by the regional national committee in the area of state care of monuments.“

See Zákon č. 20/1987 § 33.

¹⁹¹Zákon č. 20/1987 § 27 Sb.

vacations, fled to the west through the newly opened borders. Mass protests in East Germany in early November made that government cave and open its own borders, including the famous Checkpoint Charlie, and the lid was off.¹⁹³

The Czechoslovak Communist government, while concerned about the developments in neighboring nations, endured, and the general public mood was one of “it won’t happen here”.¹⁹⁴ A student protest in Prague on November 17, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the murder of a Czech student by the Nazis during the German occupation, ripened into a pro-democracy march in the face of the events in East Germany, Poland, and Hungary. The brutal crackdown by police, who beat the students, only served to stimulate popular support, and the streets and squares of Prague swelled with hundreds of thousands of Czechs. Dissidents led by playwright Václav Havel formed Civic Forum (*Občanský forum*, OF), which came to speak on behalf of the public. By December 10, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia had collapsed, and the non-violent public protests of the “Velvet Revolution”, as it came to be called, made the once imprisoned and banned poet-playwright Václav Havel president on December 29, and the new year ushered in a new Czechoslovakia.¹⁹⁵

As British political scientist Timothy Garton Ash, an eyewitness to Prague’s self-liberation, observes: “The ice had thawed. After twenty years, the clocks had started again in Prague. The most Western of all the so-called East European countries was resuming its proper history.”¹⁹⁶ And the “proper history” of Ash’s estimation meant democracy and its attendant freedoms as well as a free market economy for a new Czechoslovakia. Historic preservation, as with so many other aspects of Czechoslovak society, would be in its own way in the forefront of

¹⁹² Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, “Concept of a More Effective Care for Cultural Monuments in the Czech Republic until 2005”; available from <http://www2.mkcr.cz/english/concept.rtf>; Internet; accessed 3 February 2002.

¹⁹³ Fawn, 25-26.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 26-28.

¹⁹⁶ Timothy Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern* (New York: Random House, 1990), 130.

these transformations and transitions, and Prague itself would be the most visible laboratory for historic preservation in a free Czechoslovakia.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ On January 1, 1993, the former state of Czechoslovakia, whose official name was changed in 1990 from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic to the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, ceased to exist as it experienced a mutually agreed upon “Velvet Divorce” of its Czech and Slovak territories. This division created the separate Czech Republic and Slovak Republic. The capital of the Slovak Republic, or Slovakia as it is also known, is Bratislava, while the Prague serves as the capital of the Czech Republic. See Fawn, 29, 34-35.

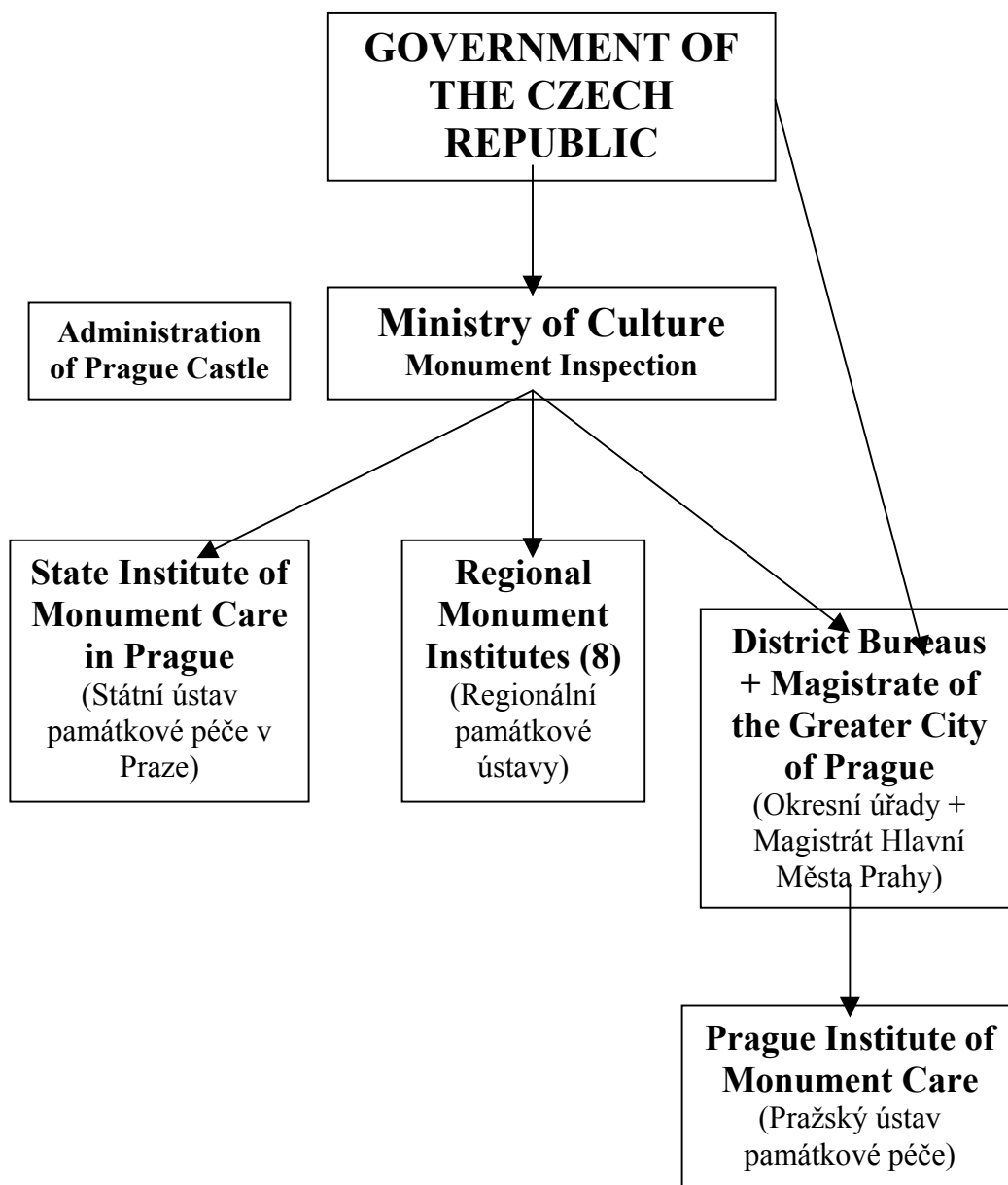


Figure 67 Current Organizational Structure of Monument Care in the Czech Republic, adapted from *Vznik a organizace památkové péče*, 8.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN PRAGUE SINCE 1989

In the aftermath of over four decades of Communist rule, Prague emerged in 1990 as a city with a largely intact architectural heritage spanning nearly a millennium. However, the excesses of the Communist era translated into a legacy of careless historic preservation practice. The privatization of property revealed the need for new institutions and approaches to maintenance and restoration of historic resources. The existing permit process for new development and adaptive use projects in areas designated as historic is cumbersome, opaque, and lengthy. Prague's status as a prime European tourist destination has spawned a host of dilemmas, namely the need for tourist infrastructure and the ensuing pressure on historic resources. The transition from a centralized Communist regime to a devolved administrative hierarchy has made planning a fragmented process as well as a discipline given to a public perception of association with the Communist ideology. Forty years of state controlled public association has resulted in a weak nonprofit sector and little public participation in planning and interest in historic preservation. The conversion from a planned economy to a capitalist one has brought about severe government budget crises, and funding for historic preservation has suffered as well. The challenges for historic preservation in the Czech Republic, and specifically Prague, are great, and great care to foster a nurturing environment for historic preservation must be taken.

Prague's Status in 1990 and the Legacy of Communism

The city of Prague emerged from four decades of Communist rule with a largely intact yet inconsistently maintained stock of historic architecture. In 1971, the Czechoslovak government had designated the original five boroughs of the city—the Little Side (*Malá Strana*),

the Castle (*Hradčany*), Old Town (*Staré Město*), New Town (*Nové Město*), and Vyšehrad—as a historic reservation recognized by the 1958 Act. This area of nearly 900 hectares (or approximately 2200 acres) includes 28 national cultural monuments (as of 2001), and 1400 architectural monuments, including 105 palaces, 58 churches, 35 monasteries and convents, 10 chapels, as well as historic gardens, and makes up 1.6% of Prague’s administrative area (see Figures 68 and 69).¹ However, the Velvet Revolution of 1989 cast a new light on the state of



Figure 68 Historic Reservation in the Greater City of Prague (*Památková rezervace v hlavním městě Praze*); Buřival, *Koncepce*, 25.

¹ Jiří Hruza, “Historical development of Prague,” *Development and Administration of Prague*, ed. Max Barlow, Petr Dostál and Martin Hampl (Amsterdam: Instituut voor Sociale Geografie, 1994), 25. The reservation consists of exactly 866 hectares. See Appendix for a list of Prague’s national cultural monuments.



Figure 69 Ječná Street on the border of the Prague Historic Reservation; note sign on lamppost, which reads *UNESCO Pražská památková rezervace*, or Prague Monument Reservation, a historic reservation under the 1958 Act; photo taken by author in June 2000 and in author's possession.

Prague's historic resources, and the inconsistency and inadequacy of Communist stewardship became glaringly evident, particularly in terms of pollution and politically driven maintenance (or neglect).

Emissions from the inefficient heavy industry fostered by the Communist government along with the use of low-octane gasoline and native low-grade brown coal have resulted in a grave pollution problem for Prague. Situated in a river valley, the historic reservation of central

Prague is especially prone to an air pollution trap generated by these pollution sources.² Not surprisingly, Prague's buildings as well as residents suffer. In 1990 coal dust and grime coated cathedral and home alike, while accompanying acid rain speeded erosion of stone buildings as well as valuable monuments and sculptures.³ In an extreme example of the insensitive intersection of Communist industrial policy and historic preservation, the hilltop Jezeri Castle in northern Bohemia, once surrounded by silver birch forests, now overlooks a strip coal mine 20 miles wide and 40 miles long.⁴

The maintenance or neglect of buildings during the Communist era depended a great deal on politics...and good taste, too. Take for example, Prague Castle, the "Versailles, Westminster Abbey, and the Smithsonian" of the Czech nation.⁵ Curator Eliška Fučíková detailed the makeover undertaken by the Communists:

Linoleum was laid over parquet, walls of laminated cabinets were shoved next to Renaissance armoires, ceilings were covered in acoustic tile, and airconditioning ducts were smashed through priceless boiseries. When the communists attempted restorations, as they did in rooms used for state occasions, they simply glopped gold paint over everything.

'Vulgar,' pronounces Eliška Fučíková, the curator of Prague Castle. 'They look like they're made of plastic,' she says, gazing up at over-gilded chandeliers. 'But to redo it is not possible. We must use the money for things that are falling apart.' Meanwhile, Fučíková jokes that she encourages people to smoke in the state rooms, 'to make a patina on the gilding.'⁶

While Fučíková deals with the situation at Prague Castle with a bit of levity, the bad taste of the Communists is only one consideration for post-Communist historic preservation. As explored in Chapter 2, much of the effort for monument care between 1948 and 1989 centered on monuments and resources central to maintaining and reinforcing the leading role of the Communist Party. As

² Richard Hammersley and Tim Westlake, "Planning in the Prague Region: Past, present and future," *Cities* 13, no. 4 (1996): 251, 254.

³ Jon Thompson, "East Europe's Dark Dawn: The Iron Curtain Rises to Reveal a Land Tarnished by Pollution," *National Geographic*, June 1991, 44-47.

⁴ Christine Temin, "Noble purpose," *The Boston Globe Magazine*, 27 February 1991, 31-32.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

current director of the State Institute for Monument Care (*Státní ústav památkové péče*) Josef Štulc, who first went to work in the Czech historic preservation field in 1968⁷, explained in 1993:

In all fairness, the former state must be given credit for spending relatively extensive amounts of money on heritage preservation, but unfortunately, it was usually without providing for the rational and effective use of funds. The distribution of funds available had been primarily affected by ideologically motivated preferences or inhibitions. State funds had been lavishly spent on reconstruction of what used to be called ‘revolutionary heritage items and the Communist movement monuments’ (more likely than not without any architectural value whatsoever) or, alternately, the funds were concentrated on a few selected and unnecessarily ambitious projects which received publicity and were very lucrative for the project teams and contractors. Thereby, the state created the appearances of taking all necessary care of the nation’s cultural heritage. On the other hand, churches and other church buildings, the best representatives of the millennia of architectural progress in the land, had been purposefully neglected.⁸

Religious institutions and the property of the so-called ‘bourgeoisie’ were particular targets for purposeful neglect. In 1991, an estimated 80 percent of Czech historic buildings were in a “parlous condition”, having been used by trade unions, agricultural cooperatives, schools, army barracks, and prisons after the confiscation from their rightful owners in the late 1940s and early 1950s.⁹ Often, these buildings suffered structural damage and extreme alteration in the process to conversion to other uses, especially in the case of pensioners’ homes or military barracks.¹⁰

The communal property scheme instituted by the Communist state also resulted in a lack of accountability for the maintenance of property, historic or not.¹¹ Until the Velvet Revolution, the government or one of its agencies or cooperatives owned some 70 percent, or about 36,000 pieces of realty, of the State Directory of immoveable and moveable cultural monuments.

“Collective responsibility” resulted in “chronic neglect” of historic structures, and the consequent

⁷ Zuzana Smidova, “Past Imperfect,” *Prague Business Journal*, 30 July 2001, available from <http://www.pbj.cz>; Internet; accessed 4 August 2001.

⁸ Josef Štulc, “The Current and Future Prospects for Conserving the Architectural Heritage of the Czech Republic,” *Architectural Conservation in the Czech and Slovak Republics* (New York: World Monuments Fund, 1993), 62.

⁹ John Harris, “A Czech catastrophe: The desperate plight of rural monuments,” *Apollo* 133, no. 348 (February 1991), 78.

¹⁰ “Bohemia’s raddled face,” *The Economist* 324, (18 July 1992): 89.

¹¹ This attitude continues as a legacy of four decades of Communism. The author recalls her first visit to Prague in 1995 and seeing the unkempt lawns of a 1950s apartment block. When I asked why the grass (waist-high in late May) had not been cut in such a long time, I received the answer, “*Všemu a ničemu patří*”, or “It belongs to all and yet no one”.

deterioration was a central cause behind the loss of over 3500 historic buildings (10 percent of the country's identified historic architectural stock) between 1958 and 1989.¹² Frequently, the state property service did not perform preventive maintenance, leaving the buildings to become more dilapidated so a bigger repair job—and more lucrative contract, based on the number of persons and amount of materials, and not the quality of work—would be necessary.¹³ A shortage of skilled laborers, especially bricklayers and plasterers, to do the kind of specialized work required by historic monuments only exacerbated the maintenance problem, as the entire Communist-era construction industry had undergone a modernization to fulfill the state plans for fabricated housing and buildings.¹⁴ Three elements—collective non-responsibility, lack of routine maintenance, and an unnatural shortage of skilled laborers—combined to create an “absurd vicious circle”, where large scale renovation and reconstruction projects deemed necessary by advanced deterioration of structures depleted already limited state funds for preservation as well as preventive maintenance.¹⁵

The exit of Communism in 1989 brought to a close, in one degree or another, or mitigated these trends counterproductive to successful historic preservation in the Czech Republic and Prague. Steps to battle pollution include the switch to natural gas and vehicles equipped with catalytic converters, while both the construction industry and property ownership have escaped state control through privatization. Yet these great societal changes have brought about their own set of challenges; historic preservation has not been immune, and in the past decade, has been forced to confront the new difficulties and opportunities created by the free market and privatization. As the director of the Prague Institute for Monument Care, Ladislav Spaček put it,

¹² Štulc, “The Current and Future Prospects”, 62.

¹³ “Bohemia's raddled face”, 89.

¹⁴ Štulc, “The Current and Future Prospects”, 63.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

“[d]uring the communist era, we had big problems, but under the market economy [historic preservation agencies are] having a more difficult time protecting historical buildings.”¹⁶

Private property, restitution, and what they have wrought

The confiscation of private property conducted by the Communist government in the late 1940s and early 1950s was reversed as part of a nation-wide economic transition from a centrally planned economy to a free market model through restitution and privatization. Property confiscated after the Communist putsch fell into the restitution pool to be returned to those from whom it was taken; only Czechoslovak citizens were eligible to regain this property, and émigrés were automatically disqualified. The goal was to effectuate and to foster once again private property ownership as well as to provide some sense of justice to the original owners.

Privatization took place in two steps—“small” for minor industry and retail and service sectors, and “large” for businesses that required multiple owners or shareholders, namely banks, heavy industry, department stores, and wholesale establishments.¹⁷ A significant process for historic resources, restitution left only seven (7) percent of recognized monuments under state control by 1997.¹⁸ In the Prague 1 district within Prague’s historic reservation, the District Housing Services Corporation in 1989 controlled a little over 1500 houses; by 1992, approximately 1100 had been restituted. An estimated 80 percent of the housing stock in central Prague was returned to its original owners or their successors; restitution did not have as much of an impact in the outer districts of Prague, where Communist-originated prefabricated housing estates predominate.¹⁹

For the average Czech, ownership of a historic building is often times burdensome. Often basic domestic conveniences are outdated, and need to be modernized. Basic preventive

¹⁶ Gary Byrd, “City’s Heritage is ‘Under Threat,’” *The Prague Post*, 17 August 1994, 8.

¹⁷ Fawn, 89-97. The story of post-Communist economic transitions is a sub-field in the disciplines of political science, sociology, and economics.

¹⁸ Dasha Havel, “Preservation and Partnerships in Emerging Market Economies,” *Preserving the Built Heritage: Tools for Implementation*, ed. J. Mark Schuster (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England), 186. Ms. Havel is the wife of Czech president Václav Havel.

¹⁹ Luděk Sýkora and Ivana Simoníková, “From totalitarian urban managerialism to a liberalized real estate market: Prague’s transformations in the early 1990s,” *Development and Administration of Prague*. Ed. Max Barlow, Peter Dostál and Martin Hampel (Amsterdam: Instituut voor Sociale Geografie, 1994), 51.

maintenance, as aforementioned, has often been neglected, and the new owner must deal with the consequences.²⁰ As in the United States, ownership of a historic building in the Czech Republic, if located within a legally established preservation zone or ensemble, means the owner is subject to design review for new construction and/or alterations, including those affecting windows, entrance doors and spaces, color, and roof shape.²¹ Failure to comply with the permit process, which will be discussed shortly, for historically sensitive alterations and new construction, results in a mere 10,000 Czech crowns (or \$380 USD) penalty for an individual private owner; demolition of a protected structure without a permit will cost the individual 50,000 Czech crowns (\$1,900 USD).²² Demolitions without permits are not uncommon in Prague. For example, homes in the architecturally significant, early twentieth-century Baba housing estate, an important example of the Czechoslovak Werkbund school and one of only five similar projects in the world, have been demolished since the year 2000 without authorization from the proper historic preservation agencies.²³

While developers can afford to absorb these inadequate, “slap on the wrist” penalties for demolition and incompatible alterations and continue with their projects, the average post-Communist era Prague property owner may do so for different reasons. As Dasha Havel emphasizes, the majority of new owners in Prague, are those

who, over the last forty years, have not had the opportunity to accumulate any capital. They cannot afford to pay for the necessary maintenance and repairs. Moreover, because the government regulates residential rent, owners do not have the option to raise rents in order to pay for the costs of renovations, repairs, and general maintenance.²⁴

²⁰ Jan Nováček and Marcela Němečková, “Starší dům? Ano, nebo ne? [Older House? Yes or no?],” *MF Dnes*, 5 April 2001; available from <http://www.idnes.cz>; Internet; accessed 1 May 2001.

²¹ Magdalena Krajmerová, “Majitelé starobylých domů to nemají jednoduché [Owners of old houses don’t have it easy],” *MF Dnes*, 30 April 1999, available from <http://www.idnes.cz>; Internet; accessed 1 May 2001.

²² Vladislav Čadil, Petr Pirochta, and Petr Severa, “Ochrana historických památek v Českém Krumlově, Brně a Praze [The care of historic monuments in Český Krumlov, Brno, and Prague]”; available from http://www.natur.cuni.cz/~sykora/ref/rgm98_2/mpr.htm; Internet; accessed 5 June 2001.

²³ “V kolonii Baba se bourá bez povolení [In the Baba colony demolition without permission],” *MF Dnes*, 26 August 2000, available from <http://www.idnes.cz>; Internet; accessed 1 May 2001.

²⁴ Havel, 188-189.

As a result, many of these owners are unable to maintain or to use effectively their property, and wish to sell to developers.²⁵ Other owners prefer to do whatever they can to keep their property, by renting out rooms or working with foreign investors in joint ventures to convert the property to tourist accommodations.²⁶ State subsidies have been woefully insufficient to assist homeowners in maintenance. In 1994, the thirteen million Czech crowns (approximately \$520,000 USD at 1994 exchange rates) allocated by the Ministry of Culture for the yearly budget of the Mayor of the City of Prague's Department of Care for Historical Buildings was equivalent to the cost of renovating one building in Prague's Malá Strana borough.²⁷ The situation may only grow worse as more Prague boroughs sell off their remaining apartments to the tenants.²⁸ For those individuals who received historic property through restitution and opted to keep it rather than sell, new Czech tax legislation offers some incentives for these owners: a 100% deduction for repairs, calculated by subtracting the cost of repairs from revenue before determining profit, and treatment of renovations as investment, taxed at a lower rate. In Prague's historic reservation, almost one half of the building stock (approximately 1,600 of 3,700) consists of listed structures and protected by monument care law, and stand to benefit from these tax maintenance incentives.²⁹ Despite the tendency of some owners to sell to developers, SÚPP Director Josef Štulc believes privatization and private property ownership "[bring] to heritage buildings tremendous positive opportunities", because "it will be in the interest of every owner [private citizen or developer] to maintain his or her building in a timely and conservative manner to forestall the heavy investment necessary for large-scale overhaul."³⁰

While the average Czech may have received a single-family house or flat in restitution, others as members of land-rich noble or First Republic industrialist families have had

²⁵ Hammersley and Westlake, "Planning in the Prague region: Past, present and future," 254.

²⁶ Hammersley and Westlake, "Urban Conservation Policy in the Czech Republic," 145.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Yekaterina Zapletnyuka, "Municipalities shrug off landlord role," *Prague Post*, 18 April 2001; available from <http://www.praguepost.cz>; Internet; accessed 1 May 2001.

²⁹ Havel, 188-189.

substantially more returned to them. Martin Lobkowicz, scion of the Roudnice branch of the same family that was patron to Beethoven, by 1994 owned by restitution eight castles, with artwork by Rubens, Canaletto, Velázquez and Brueghel and original scores by Beethoven and Mozart, as well as a vineyard, brewery, and acres of forests and farmland.³¹ By 1996, the Lobkowicz clan was able to reclaim some 200 properties.³² While the Lobkowiczes are property rich, they are now cash poor—legal expenses for the restitution claim process along with the costs for basic maintenance have nearly bankrupted the affluent Roudnice Lobkowiczes.³³ Yet, the family has consistently refused to sell its holdings (although it has donated the Jezeri Castle to the state³⁴), and is dedicated to a stewardship role for its properties, including the family seat of Roudnice, used until the middle 1990s as a army music school.³⁵ In fact, their legal fight to regain title to the Lobkowicz Palace at the Hradčany in Prague was still in litigation in 1999, some nine years after the Velvet Revolution.³⁶ Sales of Lobkowicz wine and beer along with the operation of a resort spa and a newly inaugurated museum store with reproductions of the castles' collections partly fund the castles' operations, repairs, and maintenance.³⁷ Personal funds of the Lobkowicz family, together with the donations of the family's nonprofit association American Friends for the Preservation of Czech Culture, based in Boston, supplement these assets.³⁸ But the Lobkowicz case is extraordinary, and countless other owners, particularly émigré families who do not wish to return permanently to the Czech Republic and/or to undertake expensive

³⁰ Štulc, "Current and Future Prospects," 64.

³¹ Phyllis Berman, "Noblesse oblige," *Forbes*, 25 April 1994, 100, 102.

³² Ryan, 8-9.

³³ Berman, 102.

³⁴ Johanna Grohová, "Rodina Lobkowiczů je nyní blíže úspěchu v boji o palác na Hradě (The Lobkowicz family is now closer to success in fight for the palace at the Hrad)," *MF Dnes*, 14 March 1999; available from <http://www.idnes.cz>; Internet; accessed 30 December 2000.

³⁵ Berman, "Noblesse oblige," 102; Ryan, "What Would You Do with a Palace?" 9; Temin, "Noble Purpose," 13.

³⁶ Grohová, "Rodina Lobkowiczů je nyní blíže."

³⁷ Berman, 102; Kate Day, "The Castle Challenge: Can a museum shop in the Czech republic keep an extraordinary collection open to the public?," *Museum Store*, Winter 1998, 33-34, 74-76.

³⁸ Ryan, 9.

restorations and renovation projects, have elected to take the cash rather than the castle, resulting in a small yet specialized real estate market for castles and country houses.³⁹

For the historic core of Prague, restitution unsurprisingly created a thriving real estate market, and along with it, the tendency for the rightful owners to sell and leave the restoration, renovation, and/or reconstruction and its cost to any of a league of developers that seemed to sprout in the early 1990s like mushrooms after a rain. The availability of literally “thousands of square meters of office, retail and residential space in Prague’s center” has translated into clashes between official preservation agencies, private preservation advocacy groups (including the revived Club for Old Prague), and developers.⁴⁰ A complicated permit process for new construction or alteration to a building within the central historic reservation as well as any of the lesser legally protected ensembles serves as a check on insensitive or mediocre development. This development and the question of extraordinary levels of tourism in Prague are products of the transition from Communism to a free market democratic society.

A letter received from the State Monument Institute in the Greater City of Prague responded to my question of “How does the process for construction permits as well as the consideration of renovation of protected monuments in Prague (appeals, opinions, decisions, rationale, advice and so forth) work?” with the following response: “The answer to your third question would be very complicated and difficult to condense.”⁴¹ Indeed. New development projects “typically need the approval of some 60 agencies, a process that takes years and absorbs about 30 percent of architects’ hours. Placating the bureaucracy emerges as a major design force

³⁹ Scott MacMillan, “The Castle Keep,” *Prague Business Journal*, 9 April 2001, available from <http://www.pbj.cz>; Internet; accessed 15 May 2001; Ludmila Škrabáková, “Making a castle your home,” *The Prague Tribune* 59, June 2000, 48-49. Because of the multiple branches of the family and the number of restituted properties, the Lobkowitz case is special. Other aristocratic families, including the Sternbergs, Bartoš-Dobeníns, Colloredo-Mansfelds, Kinskýs, and Schwarzenbergs, have also decided to keep the properties returned to them. Irena Jirků, “Vítejte na našem zámku [Welcome to our castle],” *MF Dnes*, 12 August 2000, available from <http://www.idnes.cz>; Internet; accessed 30 December 2000.

⁴⁰ Byrd, 8.

⁴¹ Ladislav Špaček, Letter to the author, 10 August 2001.

if not the motive behind many projects.”⁴² As of 2000, the State Monument Institute in the Greater City of Prague has review authority over structures and sites within the Prague historic reservation (the five original boroughs); beyond the reservation, the State Monument Institute has control only over archaeological sites.⁴³ Beyond the historic core of Prague, owners of immovable property (i.e. realty) located within a historic reservation (*památková rezervace*), monument zone (*památková zóna*), or protective zones (*ochranné pásmo*) of cultural monuments or national cultural monuments are under the authority of local districts (within Prague, the encompassing umbrella administration for the entire city, the Magistrate of the City of Prague [*Magistrát*] and its 57 districts) and the corresponding regional preservation agency (see Table 1).⁴⁴ In Prague, to obtain a building permit for new construction or change to an existing structure, including demolition, an owner must at the same time request an “expert’s statement” (*závazné stanovisko*) from the Magistrate of the City of Prague. This request (*žádost*), which includes a project summary and initial plans, is sent to the State Monument Institute in the Greater City of Prague, which investigates the project and issues the expert opinion.⁴⁵ The expert opinion includes a decision (*rozhodnutí*), and rationale (*odůvodnění*). A process for an appeal to the Ministry of Culture is available to the owner if he or she disagrees with the opinion.⁴⁶ The expert opinion is forwarded to the Magistrate of the City of Prague, which makes a decision about the project based on the expert opinion; although the Institute’s opinion is advisory only, it is often followed by the City.⁴⁷ At the city level, the reviewing personnel may be architects or art historians, while at the Ministry level, the reviewer may or may not have academic training in

⁴² Joseph Giovannini, “Czechs and balances,” *Architecture* 86, no. 2 (1 February 1997), 34.

⁴³ Irena Hladká, “Radosti a strasti pražských památkářů [Pleasures and fears of Prague preservationists],” *Časopis Praha*, no. 5 (Oct. 1999); available from http://www.praha-mesto.cz/casopis_praha; Internet; accessed 18 Feb 2001.

⁴⁴ Zákon č. 20/1987 Sb., changed by Zákon č. 242/1992 Sb. and Zákon č. 361/1999 Sb.

⁴⁵ Jana Bauerova, “Institution works to preserve historical monuments,” *The Prague Post*, 19 July 2000; available from www.praguepost.cz; Internet; accessed 18 August 2000.

⁴⁶ *Závazné stanovisko* for Karel Martínek from the Department of Monument Care (*Odbor památkové péče*) of the Magistrate of the City of Prague (*Magistrát hlavního města Prahy*), 30 June 1999. In possession of author.

⁴⁷ Bauerova, “Institution works to preserve historical monuments.”

architectural history—at least one reviewer had a law degree with no background in architecture.⁴⁸ According to the Institute’s director Ladislav Špaček, reviewers strive to make on-site visits and investigations as part of the review process.⁴⁹ Often times, a single opinion issued by the Institute is the combined work of staff landscape architects and archaeologists, as well as a monument care expert. At the present time, employing a mere seventy, with an expert staff of 10 monument care workers, 20 archaeologists, and 2 landscape architects, the Institute is understaffed and underbudgeted. It is not unusual for employees to work twelve-hour days.⁵⁰ As a result, turnaround for the review process is slower than Špaček would like. A file in the author’s possession for planned renovations to a single-family residence—with appeals taken—had been active for over a year, while more complicated commercial projects take longer.⁵¹ Some developers and property owners, however, consciously refuse to participate in the review process, and according to Špaček, the state administration is without remedy other than minor financial penalties.⁵² Forcing a developer to reverse incompatible designs and succeeding is a rare occurrence for the municipal preservation authorities, and some observers have commented that the stronger the investor/developer, the more likely the incompatible design will stand.⁵³

The example of the nineteenth-century Bud’ánka workers’ settlement—“a village within a city”—illustrates the complex nature of the present review process. Recognized as a municipal

⁴⁸ Ibid.; Author interview with Mgr. Martin Zidek, Odbor Památkové péče, právní oddělení (Department of Monument Care, Legal Section), Ministry of Culture, Prague, 4 June 2000.

⁴⁹ Hladká, “Radosti a strasti pražských památkářů.”

⁵⁰ Bauerova, “Institution works to preserve historical monuments.”

⁵¹ Ibid.; Martínek file, obtained from Mgr. Martin Zidek, Ministry of Culture, June 2000, in author’s possession.

⁵² Bauerova, “Institution works to preserve historical monuments”.

⁵³ Smidova, “Past Imperfect.”

Designated protected areas	Number of monuments	Area in hectares	Year designated
Prague Historic Reservation	1281	865	1971
Protected zone (<i>ochranné pásmo</i>) of the Prague Historic Reservation	414	8963	1981
Municipal historic zones			
Barrandov	8	112	1993
Staré Bohnice	4	-	1993
Osada Bud'ánka	-	1.52	1991
Dejvice, Bubeneč, horní Holešovice	51	240	1993
Baba	6	13.5	1993
Staré D'áblice	3	8.2	1991
Stará Hostivař	28	14	1993
Karlín	31	98	1993
Královice	2	58	1991
Nusle	4	95	1993
Vilová kolonie Ořechovka	3	31.8	1991
Osada Rybáře	3	11.2	1991
Smíchov	45	220	1993
Vinohrady, Žižkov, Vršovice	199	533	1993
Folk architecture reserves			
Ruzyně	7	7.3	1995
Stodůlky	6	8.1	1995

Table 1 Protected lands subject to official historic preservation review in the City of Prague as of August 2001. Ladislav Špaček, Director of the State Monument Institute in the Greater City of Prague (*Státní památkový ústav v hlavním městě Praze*), Letter to the author, 10 August 2001.

historic zone in a Prague district (Prague 5), the nearly abandoned Bud'ánka suffered damage from a series of fires apparently set by homeless squatters. The suburb's borough government now owns the settlement, and has worked in the last year to obtain permission to demolish all but four of the remaining houses, citing cost limitations of an estimated 200 million Czech crowns (or \$5 million USD) to repair the neglected buildings' failing structures, roofs, and missing doors and windows. Representatives of the various historic preservation agencies in Prague have opposed the proposed demolition and will not grant permission for demolition. As a result, the only way that the borough government of Prague 5 can demolish these protected buildings is to have the municipal historic zone designation canceled. Little to no investor interest in the settlement has

only compounded the dire situation⁵⁴; the relative disregard for the plight of more recently constructed (in the last century and a half) buildings in Prague versus the market for older and also available structures may also be a grave factor for Bud'ánka and similar projects (see Figure 70).



Figure 70 The abandoned and dilapidated *Vyšehradské nádraží*, or Vyšehrad railway station, built at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; photo taken by author in June 2000 and in her possession.

Tourism and Development

Following the collapse of the Communist regime, Prague, one of the few European capitals with an relatively intact architectural heritage after the destruction of World War II, has become a favorite tourist destination; in 1991, the first year after the Velvet Revolution, 45

⁵⁴ Petr Ježek and Petr Kolář, “Jedna z budov kolonie Bud'ánka v Praze 5 hořela,” *MF Dnes*, 12 September 2000, available from <http://www.idnes.cz>; Internet; accessed 30 December 2000; Radek Keďřon and Eduard Friesler, “Kolonii Bud'ánka v Praze 5 čekají už jen buldozéry [The bulldozers wait for the Bud'ánka colony in Prague 5],” *MF Dnes*, 30 October 2000, available from <http://www.idnes.cz>; Internet; accessed 30 December 2000; Martina Klapalová, “Waldorfská škola v kolonii Bud'ánka zřejmě nebude [Waldorf school in Bud'ánka probably not to be],” *MF Dnes*, 24 January 2001; available from <http://www.idnes.cz>; Internet; accessed 1 May 2001. The mothballed Vyšehrad train station in Prague 4 suffers from a similar lack of investor/ owner interest. See Miloš Solař, “*Vyšehradské nádraží chatra za nezajmu majitele* [Vysehrad train station decays from owner disinterest],” *MF Dnes*, 8 August 2000; available from <http://www.idnes.cz>; Internet; accessed 1 May 2001.

million tourists—45 times the population of Prague itself—visited the Czech capital.⁵⁵ The demands of such a large visitor presence on the city’s infrastructure combined with the newly restored capitalist economy has brought about a construction boom in Prague—new hotels, office space, and commercial space vie for space in the core and punctuate the city’s skyline.⁵⁶ As Cooper and Morpeth observe:

The conservation of the historic core of Prague...is absorbing an injection of foreign capital that is reconfiguring a crumbling centre into a renovated and ‘authentic’ tourist centre—‘authentic’ in that it conforms to the norm of a busy tourist centre as evident throughout Europe. The symbols of a tourist city are manifest in Prague, with Versace, Benetton, Marks and Spencer and Burger King, all totems of more homogenised brands of tourist accoutrement, adorning the city centre.⁵⁷

Much of the development in Prague itself, and throughout the Czech Republic, is fueled by foreign investors; German and Italian firms are in the lead.⁵⁸

More often than not, the end product of a development project, whether rehabilitation or new construction, is mediocre at best, exacerbated by the diffused state post-Communism planning model. To compound the difficulty of protecting the unique appearance of the city, regulations for developers are less strict in terms of signage and storefront design. Josef Štulc commented in 1992, “the alteration of shop windows and doorways and their replacement with cheap, bad taste refurbishments, together with advertisement hoardings, detracts from Prague’s character and deprives the centre of Prague of its *genius loci*.”⁵⁹ The placement of a McDonald’s restaurant in the 1750s Baroque Sylva-Taroucco Palace in the city’s center has been decried by preservationists as an example of this insensitive development mentality.⁶⁰ Plastic window

⁵⁵ “Bohemia’s raddled face”, 89; Hammersley and Westlake, “Urban Conservation Policy in the Czech Republic,” 145.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁵⁷ Charlie Cooper and Nigel Morpeth, “The Impact of Tourism on Residential Experience in Central-eastern Europe: The Development of a New Legitimation Crisis in the Czech Republic,” *Urban Studies* 35, no. 12 (1998): 2260.

⁵⁸ Jennifer Lynch, “History repeats itself: Italian developers influence Prague’s architecture,” *Prague Post*, 18 April 2001.

⁵⁹ “Bohemia’s raddled face”, 89.

⁶⁰ Miloš Solař, “Umístění provozovny McDonald’s do paláce Sylva-Taroucca památku kulturně degraduje [Placement of McDonald’s in the Sylva-Taroucco Palace culturally degrades monuments],” *MF Dnes*, 8 April 1999; available from <http://www.idnes.cz>; Internet; accessed 1 May 2001.

casings have also come into vogue for a variety of buildings.⁶¹ At the same time, the proliferation of Western-style malls in throughout Prague ironically has been welcomed by some preservationist activists because of their “important role in reviving...neighborhoods.”⁶² Yet the fact remains that much of this commercial development led to Prague’s inclusion in 1998 on the World Monument Fund’s list of 100 most endangered sites.⁶³

Perhaps more vital to preserving the unique character of the city than inappropriate height, signage, and storefront designs are new construction and rehabilitation projects, which often present the challenge of architectural compatibility. Czech-born architect Jan Pokorný put it this way, “How do we successfully build new structures next to, or across the street from historic monuments?”⁶⁴ Pokorný correctly has recommended paying close attention to the height and massing of new buildings, and in doing so, has pointed out the necessity of taking into account the place of the new project in its spatial context—from the neighborhood to the larger city.⁶⁵ Czech preservation practitioners have recognized this fundamental principle for new construction for decades. Czech cubist architecture of the early twentieth century exemplifies the ability of modern architects to reinterpret historic forms in new ways, “while successfully finding a balance of scale and composition within its historical context.”⁶⁶ In more recent times, Prague’s Nationale-Nederlanden Building on the bank of the Vltava in the city’s center exemplifies the fine line between inappropriate and mediocre avant-garde architecture in a historic district. The ‘dancing house’ or ‘Fred and Ginger’ building, as it is referred to because of its fluid, anthropomorphic forms resembling a dancing Astaire and Rogers, was built on the site of a

⁶¹ Miloš Solař, “*Plastova okna degradují hlavní město* [Plastic windows degrade the city],” *MF Dnes*, 27 February 2001; available from <http://www.idnes.cz>; Internet; accessed 1 May 2001.

⁶² Andrew Nagorski, “The Mall of the East,” *Newsweek*, 13 January 1997, 35. Two examples are the Vinohradský Pavilion, developed in an abandoned nineteenth-century farmer’s market in the inner Vinohrady suburb, and the shopping complex built near the Černý most housing estate on the outskirts of Prague.

⁶³ Smidova, “Past Imperfect.”

⁶⁴ Jan Pokorný. “New Building in the Historic Environment,” *Architectural Conservation in the Czech and Slovak Republics* (New York: World Monuments Fund, 1993), 21.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 22-24.

bombed out apartment block and designed by American Frank Gehry and Yugoslav Vladimir Milunic (see Figure 71). It has its equal share of censors and fans. Its critics, Prague's



Figure 71 "Fred and Ginger", the Nationale-Nederlanden Building; photo taken by author in June 2000 and in her possession.

architectural conservatives, are equally vociferous; Milan Knizak, rector of Prague's Academy of Fine Arts, has called it "a dead carp or sentimental syphilitic" and dismisses it as 'superfluous speculation', 'absolutely irrelevant' and a 'contrived expression'.⁶⁷ Its admirers praise the offices for its "sculptural architecture", the juxtaposition of hard and soft, transparent and solid, and the continuity of setback and height with its neighbors. The fans of the "dancing house" see it at as the first building in a new stage of innovative Prague architecture.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Peter Hruška, "Compatibility with History," *Architectural Conservation in the Czech and Slovak Republics* (New York: World Monuments Fund, 1993), 33.

⁶⁷ "Dancing-masters," *Economist*, 11 December 1993, 98.

⁶⁸ Benjamin Forgey, "Prague's Gingerfred House...A New Stone Waltz," *Washington Post*, 4 August 1996, G1.

Despite the pleading of preservationists for development to occur in a sensitive manner, the breaching of the Prague skyline by new office towers and hotels illustrates the consequences of not heeding such advice. The denigration of Prague's historic skyline, once interrupted only by the hundred spires of the city, began in the 1980s with the construction of the Žižkov television tower in the northwest of the city, and the Palace of Culture (*Palác kultury*), now the Prague Congress Center (*Kongresové centrum Praha*) adjacent to the Vyšehrad fortress complex. As of 1994, the lack of a “coherent building heights policy” for “poorly-located and designed high-rise hotels, offices and towers” had continued to result in the destruction of panoramic views of the hills surrounding the historic core.⁶⁹ Despite the troubling trends spawned by Prague's tourist trade, the City's Strategic Plan recognizes the

challenge of balancing the needs of conservation with the desire to promote these cultural assets as a resource for tourists whilst, at the same time, recognising the need to avoid the potential pitfall of creating an ‘open-air museum’ or ‘downtown zone’ without a resident population....The retention of a historic core, with a synergy between local and tourist activity, is viewed as an essential requirement to resist the transformation of this zone into a typical [commercial business district].⁷⁰

A bright spot in Prague's historic preservation efforts is a number of adaptive use projects that could ensure this balance between tourist and local activity in the historic core—such as the reconstruction of the Sovovy mill in Malá Strana into gallery space and the Expo '58-Bruselska Restaurant building into office space.⁷¹ The saga of Expo '58 deserves special explanation and illustrates the universal complexity when the political process intersects with publicity. Originally built in Brussels as the Czechoslovak pavilion for the 1958 World Expo, the Expo '58, was disassembled and reconstructed in Prague as the Bruselská Restaurant, operated as one of the few gourmet establishments in Communist-era Prague and noted for its landmark architectural style and its sweeping vistas of the city from its perch on the Letná plain. A 1990 privatization auction

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Cooper and Morpeth, 2266.

⁷¹ "Oprava Sovových mlýnu na Kampě vyvolává mnoho diskuzí [The repair of the Sovovy Mill on Kampa generates a lot of discussion], *MF Dnes*, 8 August 2000; available from <http://www.idnes.cz>; Internet; accessed 1 May 2001.

placed it in investors' hands. By 1996, Prague's municipal historic preservation agency had fined it 100,000 Czech crowns, or about approximately \$3,000 USD for neglect of the building's condition. The initial investors went bankrupt later that same year, and stripped the building of its interior. In short succession, ownership passed to a Czech bank, who after its assets were liquidated, sold Expo '58 to the German development firm Allgemeine Immobilien Verwaltung (AIV) in 1997. While AIV made plans to convert Expo '58 into office space (plans that were never put into action) the building's condition continued to deteriorate, and a municipal neglect fine was once again levied against the owner. Proposals for gallery space were rebuffed, and the office plan were resurrected, and once again rejected by Prague's preservation authorities because of structural problems. Meanwhile, the Club for Old Prague and a citizen petition campaign also challenged the developer's plans, preferring the return of Expo '58 to its restaurant function. The city then began expropriation negotiations with AIV, which by June 2000 had failed. Then in May 2001, the borough government of Prague 7, the district in which the restaurant is situated, was met with opposition from the Minister of Culture Pavel Dostal to the borough's grant of a construction permit for a conversion to offices. Dostal then canceled the permits himself. The next six months of news coverage revealed little to no apparent movement on this battle between the national and local governments; finally in November 2000, construction began after Prague 7's authorities re-granted the permits. By October 2001, the restoration was completed, and the building is said to have been returned to nearly its original condition. Some critics, however, see it as a reconstruction, and no longer "authentic architecture". However, from this author's viewpoint, a reversal of Expo '58's fortunes, from its state at the time of her visit in the summer of 2000, when it was little more than a windowless, stripped, concrete and steel shell encircled by a 10-foot tall barbed wire fence and vicious guard dogs, is a better state of affairs than the status quo (see Figures 72 and 73).⁷²

⁷² Felice Wilson, "From glory days to dog days on Letna," *Prague Post*, 21 June 2000; "Kauza: Restaurace

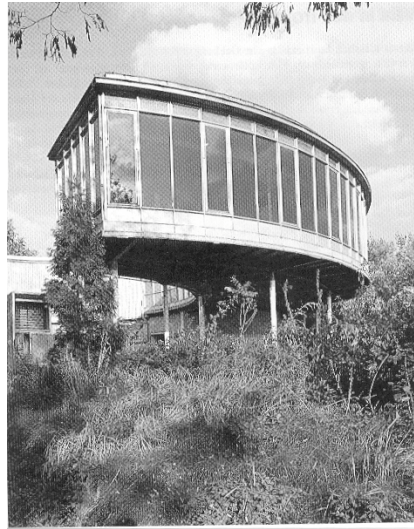


Figure 72 Expo '58 as it appeared prior to 1989; Margolius, *Prague: A Guide to Twentieth Century Architecture*, 265.



Figure 73 Expo '58 in June 2000; photo taken by author and in her possession.

Historic Preservation and Public Administration

Prior to 1989, the planning process in Prague, like the vast majority of Communist era public administration, was an example of centralized control. The City Architect's Office was the

Expo '58 (1. pokr.) [Cause: Restaurant Expo '58]," *Pražské noviny*, Internet. Available: <http://www.prazskenoviny.cz/prilohy/kauzy/expo/index2.php4>. Accessed 29 October 2001; Susan Ondrasek, "Expo '58 occupied once again," *Prague Post*, 3 October 2001.

most important planning agency in Prague, and effectively sidelined most local authorities (through the Prague City Magistrate, trickling down to ten districts and 47 local committees). The Prague City Development Authority replaced the Architect's Office in the early 1990s, and more power "devolved" to local government, fragmenting the task of land use planning in the capital (see Figures 74 and 75).

Both Czech and international planners have criticized the current scheme of historic preservation planning. Kamila Matoušková of the Ministry of Culture has gone on record as saying, "most local regulations and ordinances do not yet adequately take preservation values in to account...[and there is a] need for standards of appropriate development in historic areas to guide negotiations about proposed changes. With [little] exception, planning is not serving as a preservation tool...."⁷³ Matoušková's international colleagues agree with her assessment, pointing to the pressures of post-Communist planning; "following 40 years of centralism there is vociferous support for abolishing anything associated with the socialist system, irrespective of its merits, and for introducing maximum local autonomy."⁷⁴ Planning on the municipal and regional level suffers from a disconnect from national historic preservation policy and values because of the myopic nature of "unfettered localism".⁷⁵ Indeed, in late 1990, in the immediate aftermath of the Velvet Revolution, local and regional institutions had little to no "definition of their powers or a code of conduct for the use and transformation of historic monuments".⁷⁶ In the political and administrative vacuum of post-Communism planning, including historic preservation, lost the centralized character imposed upon it by the Communist system, and went

⁷³ Phyllis Myers, *Democracy in Development: A Reconnaissance of Monuments Protection Law and Cultural Diversity in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia*. (Washington, DC: State Resource Strategies, 1996), 22.

⁷⁴ Hammersley and Westlake, "Urban Conservation Policy in the Czech Republic," *Planning Practice and Research* 9, No. 2 (1994), 149.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Robert Gibbs, "Prague in Peril," *Apollo* 132, no. 345 (1990), 299.

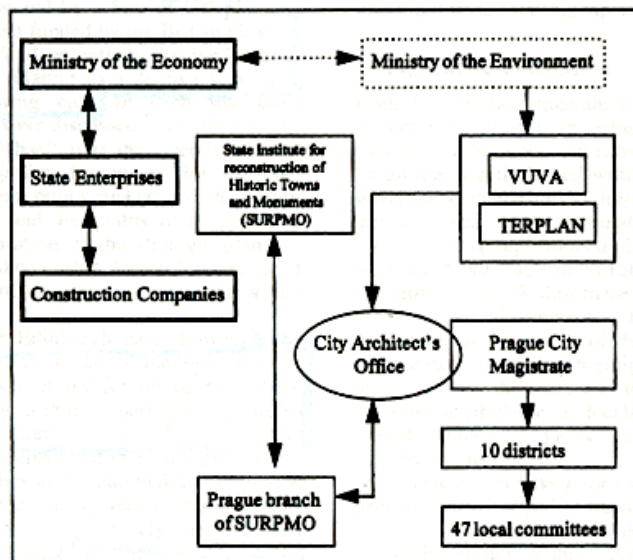


Figure 74 Pre-1989 planning structure for city of Prague; Fiona Simpson and Michael Chapman, "Comparison of urban governance and planning policy: East looking West." *Cities* 16, no. 5 (1999), 360.

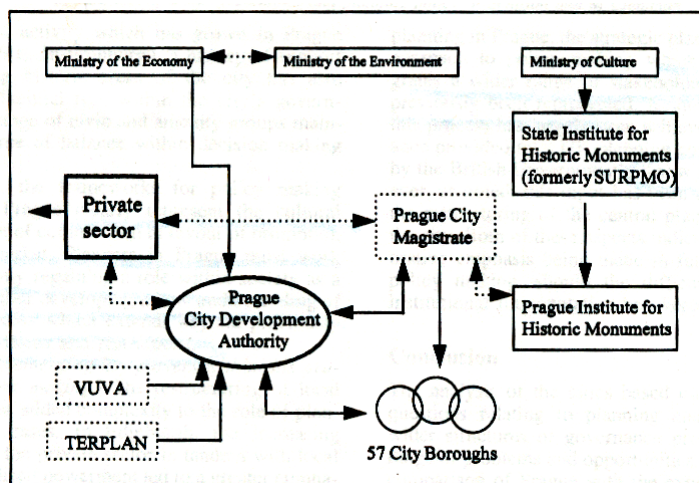


Figure 75 Planning structure for the city of Prague, circa 1998; Simpson and Chapman, 361.

to the other extreme—to a highly localized autonomy. Restitution illustrated some of the first negative results of localized planning, as Hammersley and Westlake observed in 1996:

This land [located between apartment blocks in suburban housing estates and an access road] is being restituted, usually in the form of small plots with road frontage, to former owners who are now pressing to capitalize on their asset by building shops, filling stations, cafes and houses on these individual plots.... Unfortunately local authorities can be inclined to grant permission and in planning terms this is often disastrous, with the creation of numerous dangerous access points, bizarre straggles of small buildings, and the removal of landscaping and open schemes. Attempts to reationalize such developments in the form of pooling the plots into a potentially viable scheme often fall on deaf, individualistic ears.⁷⁷

Another casualty of the backlash against planning was planners' proposed signage and advertising regulations for Prague's historic center. The controls were not supported by the public despite their concession that the result was "environmental deterioration".⁷⁸

The reality of localized planning has also led to "duplication of services" and "uneven levels of development" between Prague's boroughs as well as the prevalence of "short-termism...over more long-term strategic policy approaches".⁷⁹ Land use planning by governmental agencies, including historic preservation planning, is "now condemned" as a Communist-era discipline, and "must fight to reestablish [its] role in society".⁸⁰

Perhaps the most efficacious and rapid means for historic preservation planning to overcome the ill effects of localized, fragmented planning throughout the far flung reaches of the city of Prague—its core and suburban boroughs alike—is the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive land use plan for the city. To date, historic preservation agencies, "whilst remaining a consistently important part of policy making, have not effectively contributed to mainstream policy making".⁸¹ According to Josef Štulc,

the overwhelming nature of development pressure in Prague and in particular within its historic core has led to conservationists becoming further entrenched and isolated from

⁷⁷ Hammersley and Westlake, "Planning in the Prague Region: Past, present and future," 251, 255.

⁷⁸ Fiona Simpson and Michael Chapman, "Comparison of urban governance and planning policy," *Cities* 16, no. 5 (1999): 358-359.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 359.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 361.

wider aspects of development, not yet effectively communicating and compromising to work towards a more positive outcome than is being achieved at present.⁸²

The establishment by Mayor Jan Kasl of a Historic Preservation Council for the Mayor's Advisory Committee for the City of Prague marks an important step to reverse the trend Štulc has identified. The Committee strives to "contribute to the active care of the development of community cultural spaces, especially architectural and urban, in the city of Prague" as well as to "express itself in terms of the fundamental concept of the development of the city". In April 2000, the Council requested a meeting with the authors of the city's strategic plan.⁸³ Apparently, the Council had an impact on the final draft of the city's strategic plan, which has called for

- new development outside the city's core;
- polycentric development which links the various districts of the city;
- "sensitive completion of the development of those city parts set aside for the new city-wide and district-wide centres";
- preservation of the local parts of Prague;
- "develop the quality of urban structure and architecture"; and
- perhaps most importantly, cooperation between the city and individual boroughs.⁸⁴

The implementation of these goals, however, will possibly be a more difficult task. An understaffed State Monument Institute in the Greater City of Prague (*Státní památkový ústav v hlavním městě Praze*) currently processes approximately 20,000 files a year.⁸⁵ Running seemingly counter to Prague's goal to foster heightened cooperation between its fragmented city administration, the State Institute of Monument Care has announced plans to continue

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Poradního sboru primátora hlavního města Prahy [Advisory Committee of the Mayor of the City of Prague], "Zápis y třetího zasedání [Minutes from third session]"; available from <http://www.praha-mesto.cz>; Internet; accessed 5 June 2001; Poradního sboru primátora hlavního města Prahy [Advisory Committee of the Mayor of the City of Prague], "Zápis y ze zasedání [Minutes from sessions]"; available from <http://www.praha-mesto.cz>; Internet; accessed 5 June 2001;

⁸⁴ Hlavní město Prahy, *Strategický plan* (Praha, 2000), 67, 72-78.

⁸⁵ Ladislav Špaček, Letter to the author, 10 August 2001.

“decentralization and simplification of the exercise of...state authority.”⁸⁶ And as mentioned previously, the enforcement of the existing historic preservation laws is still, in the words of Josef Štulc, “a very delicate issue”.⁸⁷ However, despite these challenges, efforts are underway in Prague to improve the administrative agencies responsible for the preservation of the city’s historic resources.

The Nonprofit Sector, Money, and Historic Preservation after 1989

“Effective historic preservation policies...depend on citizen involvement. One hears repeatedly that the Communist era has left a legacy of passivity among citizens....”⁸⁸ In large measure, this observation regarding the role and status of civic groups dedicated to Czech historic preservation still rings true. The “nonprofit” public sector, a key component of a “civil society” in any democratic nation, has had an uphill battle in the Czech Republic to reestablish itself after nearly five decades of Communist rule, a system which precluded the development of civic groups not directly under the supervision and direction of the centralized government.

“Volunteer social organizations”, or the only civic groups sanctioned by the Communist regime, were represented in the umbrella organization known as the National Front and subordinate to the state and Communist Party.⁸⁹ One commentator has referred to “civil society” during the Communist era as “public enemy number one for a system that required social atomization as a necessary condition for its survival and reproduction”.⁹⁰ To understand the importance of civic groups and the nonprofit sector in the growth of historic preservation in the Czech Republic, one must first understand the role of these citizen associations in a free society in general.

⁸⁶ State Institute for Monument Care, “Concept of a More Effective Care for Cultural Monuments in the Czech Republic until 2005,” provided to author by Václav Váňa of SÚPP in June 2000.

⁸⁷ ⁸⁷ Zuzana Smidova, “Past Imperfect.”

⁸⁸ Myers, *Democracy in Development*, 27.

⁸⁹ Markéta Dvořáčková, “The Non-profit Sector Seeks its Place,” *The Heart of Europe* 5, no.3 (1998); available from <http://www.export.cz/hj/9803/society.htm>; Internet; accessed 16 June 2001.

⁹⁰ G. Schöpflin, “Post-communist constituting new democracies in Central Europe,” *International Affairs* 67, no. 2 (1991), 241. Quoted in Martin Potůček, “The Uneasy Birth of Czech Civil Society,” *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 11, no. 2 (2000): 108-109.

First, consider a few definitions to create a syllogism. According to Etzioni, “citizenship” means not only “allegiance to a particular government” but also “the moral obligation of individuals to take an interest in the community in which they live”, leading “people to take action on behalf of others”.⁹¹ By extension, a “civil society” acts as the outlet for the expression of this kind of “citizenship”, and has been defined by Weigle and Butterfield as “the independent self-organization of society, the constituent parts of which voluntarily engage in public activity to pursue individual, group, or national interests within the context of a legally defined state-society relationship”.⁹² By extension, the “civic or nonprofit sector” is the

institutionalized expression of the life of civil society...made up of nonprofit organizations, being voluntary associations of citizens who share common values and are willing to work together. Legal and other conditions that govern the functioning of the civic sector may, then, support and cultivate—or stifle and destroy—the potential for social participation and people’s willingness to be involved in creating positive social conditions for their lives and the lives of others.⁹³

For the Czech Republic, these foundation principles exist in the toddling stage. Communist rule left citizens throughout the former Soviet bloc with “great distrust” of public institutions and organization⁹⁴, and civic groups and foundations in a precarious situation.⁹⁵ “Community involvement remains very low”. For example, consider the observations of architect Jan Kasl, now the mayor of Prague:

part of the problem [in the planning process] is that community involvement remains very low. ‘When we held public hearings to explain our new ideas for the city after the revolution, no one showed up. People have to learn that being a citizen of democracy means expressing oneself. If you don’t, then you’re not part of the process.’⁹⁶

⁹¹ Martin Potůček, “The Uneasy Birth of Czech Civil Society,” *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 11, no. 2 (2000): 108-109.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 109.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Mikuláš Hulec, “Public Participation in the ČSFR,” *Architectural Conservation in the Czech and Slovak Republics* (New York: World Monuments Fund, 1993), 71.

⁹⁵ Havel, 191.

⁹⁶ Jeremy Bransten, “Chrome and Glass Encroach on Historic Prague,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 17 July 1996, 14.

And by failing to become “part of the process”, Czechs do themselves a disservice; in Brown’s view, a “strong and well organized” sector only brings about “great benefits for democracy”.⁹⁷ In terms of land use planning, “local political lethargy on the part of ordinary community members may have led to the dominance of more active and entrepreneurial [sic] oriented candidates, motivated by vested business or economic interests as opposed to the needs of the community as a whole”.⁹⁸

Following the Velvet Revolution of 1989, the Czechoslovak, and later Czech, government passed a number of statutes establishing new categories of civic groups, including the catch-all civil law foundation, endowment funds, and public benefit corporations. The restoration of a constitutionally guaranteed right to free association in 1990 serves as the legal underpinning for civic groups in the Czech Republic.⁹⁹ However, the support of the nascent nonprofit sector by the Czech government has been a controversial issue. One political party has favored and fostered the growth of civic groups, while the other had actively sought to stave their development through such measures as a five-year freeze of a government fund dedicated to nonprofit support.¹⁰⁰

In addition, the Czech public’s attitude towards civic groups has been less than encouraging. A 1995 study conducted by Charles University showed that a little under half of citizens said they were “prepared to directly and personally participate in public affairs”.¹⁰¹ Czech scholar Martin Potůček has hypothesized that the public’s passivity can be traced to four factors: 1) an amnesia as to “how to ‘speak up’” dating to the Communist era; 2) the pressing need to worry about how to make a living before any civic activity; 3) a lack of trust in the

⁹⁷ Potůček, 109-110.

⁹⁸ Simpson and Chapman, 359.

⁹⁹ See zákon č. 83/1990 Sb.; zákon č. 248/1995 Sb.; and zákon č. 227/1997 Sb.; English translations available at the website of the International Center for Non-profit Law at <http://www.incl.org>.

¹⁰⁰ Potůček, 111-113.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 118.

effectiveness of civic groups to address the needs of real people; and 4) the lingering effects of political rule by parties opposed to an active nonprofit sector.¹⁰²

Despite the troubles of the Czech nonprofit sector, citizen advocacy groups for historic preservation do exist throughout the Czech Republic. An Internet search of groups yielded a list of “Friends of historic objects and monuments” (*Přátele historických objektů a památek*). The associations ranged from those protecting border fortifications that dated from the late 1930s to the more traditional town monuments organization to ones dedicated to a specific church, synagogue, or castle; a regional society for the care of monuments in eastern Bohemia also appeared in another Internet search.¹⁰³ In 1999, the Center for the Preservation of Architecture, or CORA (*Centrum pro ochranu a restaurování architektury*), in Prague returned my letter with an explanation that it did still exist but was having financial difficulties.¹⁰⁴ In addition, a number of professional groups related to historic preservation operate, including STOP, or the Society for Technology of Monument Care (*Společnost pro technologie ochrany památek*); and WTA, or the Scientific-technical Society for the Maintenance of Buildings and Care of Monument Objects (*Vědecko-technická společnost pro udržování staveb a péči o památkové objekty*).¹⁰⁵

The most famous historic preservation advocacy group in the Czech Republic is Prague’s own Club for Old Prague (*Klub za Starou Prahu*). As discussed in Chapter 2, the Club originated in its protest of late nineteenth century ghetto and slum clearances, and continues to be an active voice for historic preservation issues in Prague. The Club regularly offers its opinion on the latest controversies related to historic preservation—from proposed adaptive use projects,

¹⁰² Ibid., 119.

¹⁰³ “Seznam”; available from <http://www.seznam.cz>; Internet; accessed 7 July 2001. “Seznam” is the Czech word for “directory” or “index”. This list was found under “Obsah > Společnost > Sdružení a spolky > Historické > Přátele historických objektů a památek.”; “Společnost ochránců památek ve východních Čechách”; available from <http://www.hk.ipex.cz/sopvc>; Internet; accessed 13 June 2001.

¹⁰⁴ Daniel Špička, Center for the Preservation of Architecture, or CORA [*Centrum pro ochranu a restaurování architektury*]. Letter to the author, 18 June 1999.

¹⁰⁵ *Společnost pro technologie ochrany památek*, “STOP”; available from <http://www.vol.cz/wstop>; Internet; accessed 13 June 2001; WTA, “WTA Česká republika se představuje”; available from <http://www.wta.cz>; Internet; accessed 13 June 2001.

such as Expo '58, to the sale of inactive church properties.¹⁰⁶ However, the Club does not choose its causes of the moment, but rather in the words of Secretary Dr. Kateřina Bečková, it

follows what's going on through various friends of the organization who are in historic preservation, as an issue addresses us and we feel uneasy, that preservationists alone won't keep an eye on it, we push our view and then we try to follow the development of the issue.¹⁰⁷

Bečková has admitted that the Club does not have many chances to influence the political process, but does contact architects and contractors to share the Club's view. However, Bečková conceded in a 2000 interview as well as in a letter to the author that the Club often times has little hope or chance to influence new construction projects.¹⁰⁸ The Club does not favor the tactics of activists, and the Club will not resort to blocking bulldozers bodily. The Club has working relationships with other preservation organizations, but prefers to work with its own members and functionaries on its causes.¹⁰⁹

Since the Velvet Revolution, the Club has been busier than ever. In the words of Bečková, the post-Communist construction boom means more problems, and the Club, which is no longer an entity dependent on the state's sanction, does not have to fear raising its voice.¹¹⁰

The following list is a sampling of current causes from the Club's Internet site and illustrates the sort of issues that have captured the Club's attention:

- **The Sovovy Mills:** The controversial reconstruction of the former mills as a gallery of modern art, its resulting realization would without precedent harm the character of Malá Strana as well as in the long term the world renowned panorama of the Hradčany;
- **The sale of the Church of Saint Kajetan in Nerudova Street:** The proposed sale of the High Baroque church in Nerudova Street opens up a large and very sensitive problem as to the future use of the church, which church officials consider to be a superfluous pastoral property;

¹⁰⁶ Klub za starou Prahu, "Kauzy [Causes]"; available from <http://klub.za.starou.prahu.misto.cz/kauzy/rozc.htm>; Internet; accessed 13 June 2001.

¹⁰⁷ Kateřina Bečková, Letter to the author, 8 July 2001.

¹⁰⁸ "Ptejte se předsedkyně klub Za starou Prahu Kateřiny Bečkové [Question Secretary of the Club for Old Prague Kateřina Bečková]"; 16 November 2000 Internet interview; available from <http://www.idnes.cz>; Internet; accessed 27 May 2001.

¹⁰⁹ Kateřina Bečková, Letter to the author, 8 July 2001.

¹¹⁰ "Ptejte se předsedkyně klub Za starou Prahu Kateřiny Bečkové [Question Secretary of the Club for Old Prague Kateřina Bečková]".

- **Hotel Juliš:** Reconstruction into a department store threatens the neglected functionalist Hotel Julis (by architect Pavel Janak), the design will retain only the building's side peripheral walls from its original structure.¹¹¹

The Club is also involved in the selection for the *Bestia triumphans* “anti-prize” for the worst examples of anti-preservation activity in Prague during the past year. Leading municipal preservation officials have been among past winners.¹¹²

Unfortunately, private historic preservation advocacy groups appear to suffer from some measure of negative public sentiment. Prague city council member Zdeněk Kovařík, a self-avowed Adam Smith capitalist, has referred to preservation advocates as ““a bunch of academics’ who ‘think they should have a voice in every decision’”.¹¹³ Kovařík also has shared his opinion that “dissenters who stand in the way of modern development are wasting their breath. ‘Prague...has always been a mixture of styles. So to claim that an area should be all Gothic or all Baroque, for example, would be pure idiocy’”.¹¹⁴ Mr. Kovařík’s comments may have an element of truth. The Club for Old Prague had in 2001 only 1000 members, a mere 1/10 of 1% of the total population of the city, and counted architects and university professors among its leading members.¹¹⁵ The practical effect of the opinion held by Mr. Kovařík and others of a like mind is derision counterproductive to the Club’s lobbying goals. Former architect, now mayor of Prague, Jan Kasl has said “whenever civic groups...try to press their point, they are treated as a nuisance”.¹¹⁶

In contrast to American advocacy associations, Czech historic preservation groups do not seem to have ventured forth into the fundraising sphere. For example, apparently the Club for

¹¹¹ Klub za starou Prahu, “*Kauzy* [Causes]”; available from <http://klub.za.starou.prahu.misto.cz/kauzy/rozc.htm>; Internet; accessed 13 June 2001.

¹¹² “*Pamatkari maji anticenu* [Preservationists have anti-prize],” *MF Dnes*, 14 June 2000; available from <http://www.idnes.cz>; Internet; accessed 1 May 2001.

¹¹³ Bransten, 14.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Klub za starou Prahu, “DOMACI RADA KLUBU ZA STAROU PRAHU PRO ROK 2001 [Domestic council of the Club for Old Prague for the year 2001],” available from <http://klub.za.starou.prahu.misto.cz>; Internet; accessed 20 January 2002.

¹¹⁶ Bransten, 14.

Old Prague's only fundraising effort is the publication and sale of an anniversary history book.¹¹⁷ Indeed, the Club operates as a “non-political citizen association” (*nepolitické občanské sdružení*), and not as a “foundation” (*nadace*), which is defined legally as a “non-profit organization whose purpose is ‘to accumulate assets and distribute them for non-profit activities’”.¹¹⁸ As of 1998, although over 5000 organizations have the word “foundation” incorporated into their official titles, only thirteen true groups that fit the legal description of “foundation” existed in the Czech Republic.¹¹⁹ A search of the Czech Information Center for Nonprofit Organizations (*Informáční centrum neziskových organizací*) yielded the listing of the Foundation for the Protection of Monuments (*Nadace záchrana pámatek*) in the northern Bohemian city of Most, whose activities include “the support of the protection and renovation of moveable and immovable cultural monuments for their preservation for the future as examples of cultural historical development” but do not appear to include fundraising or grant activities.¹²⁰

The Civic Forum Foundation (*Nadace OF*), on the other hand, does manage two grant programs funded through commercial and private donations: the “PaZ Monuments and Health” grant program for “the best projects in the mutually dependent area of health or social care and the preservation of cultural monuments” and the “Neglected monuments” (*Opomíjené památky*) grant program. In its fifth year of operation, the PaZ program dispersed in 2000 some 600,000 Czech crowns, or approximately \$15,000 USD, to three projects throughout the Czech Republic. Since 1996, the Neglected Monuments program has given financial assistance for the preservation of 26 endangered monuments in the Czech Republic, including village chapels, stations of the cross, and examples of residential folk architecture; in 2000, the program dispersed 150,000 Czech crowns, or approximately \$3,750 USD to 3 projects out of a total of 150

¹¹⁷ Klub za starou Prahu, “Publikace (Publications)”; available from <http://klub.za.starou.prahu.misto.cz>; Internet; accessed 20 January 2002.

¹¹⁸ Dvořáčková, “The Non-profit Sector Seeks its Place.”

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ *Informáční centrum neziskových organizací*, “*Nadace záchrana pámatek*”; available from www.icn.cz; Internet; accessed 16 June 2001.

applications.¹²¹ The Civic Forum Foundation, however, is joined by a few other non-governmental funding sources and groups, which offer services from small grants to technical assistance and advice.¹²²

The non-governmental grant programs in the Czech Republic are complemented by those administered by the Czech government itself. The Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic had advertised its own Foundation for the Preservation of the National Heritage (*Nadace záchrany kulturních památek*) in the early 1990s.¹²³ By 2000, the Ministry had announced a competition for the “support of projects of citizen associations (*občanské sdružení*) in the area of monument care” with a fund of 200,000 Czech crowns, or approximately \$5,000 USD, at its disposal for the grant year.¹²⁴ Parallel governmental grant programs have been made available through other national ministries and funds.¹²⁵ The city of Prague itself has distributed its own grants in the recent past through its Department of Care for Historical Buildings; in late 2000, nearly 16 million Czech crowns was distributed with 3.4 million Czech crowns, or approximately \$85,000 USD, dedicated to the restoration of monuments; in 2001, 200 million crowns, or \$500,000 was earmarked for restoration projects to private owners of monuments or churches.¹²⁶

¹²¹ *Nadace OF*, “Památky a zdraví”; available at <http://www.radio.cz/nadace-of/paz00.htm>; Internet; accessed 20 January 2002; *Nadace OF*, “Opojimené památky”; available at http://www.radio.cz/nadace-of/opom_web.htm; Internet; accessed 20 January 2002.

¹²² Státní ústav památkové péče, “Programy, příspěvky a granty na podporu péče o kulturní dědictví”; available from www.supp.cz/html/culture2000heritage/granty.htm; Internet; accessed 13 June 2001. These groups include the Foundation for the Development of Architecture and Construction (*Nadace pro rozvoj architektury a stavitelství*); the Foundation for Czech Monuments (*Nadace českých památek*); the Partnership Foundation (*Nadace Partnerství*); the Open Society Fund; the Foundation for the Development of a Civil Society (*Nadace pro rozvoj občanské společnosti*); and the Swedish-funded Pro Helvetia group.

¹²³ Ministerstvo kultury České republiky, “*Nadace záchrany kulturních památek*,” *Zprávy památkové péče* 5 (1992): 41.

¹²⁴ Ministerstvo kultury České republiky, “*Konkurs Ministerstva kultury na podporu projektů občanským sdružením v oblasti památkové péče*”; available at <http://www.mkcr.cz/cesky/opp/opp-konk.rtf>; Internet; accessed 16 February 2000.

¹²⁵ Státní ústav památkové péče, “*Programy, příspěvky a granty na podporu péče o kulturní dědictví*.” These funding sources include programs administered by the Ministry for Local Development (*Ministerstvo pro místní rozvoj*), the Ministry of the Environment (*Ministerstvo životního prostředí*), and the Czech-German Fund of the Future (*Česko-německý fond budoucnosti*).

¹²⁶ Hammersley and Westlake, “Urban conservation policy in the Czech Republic,” 145; “Praha přispěje na opravy památek (Prague contributes to the repair of monuments),” *MF Dnes*, 8 November 2000; “Where is money to maintain Prague’s historical monuments?” *CTK Czech News Agency*, 2 March 2001.

However, despite the theoretical availability of governmental funds, reality says otherwise. Government budgets have allocated fewer and fewer Czech crowns to historic preservation on an annual basis.¹²⁷ Despite Prague's status as a major tourist destination, "not a single crown goes back to Prague monuments from tourism," according to Director of the State Institute for Monument Care [SÚPP] Josef Štulc.¹²⁸ Likewise, the funds that are available are extremely limited. Current preservation law requires private owners of historical monuments, and not the state, to take responsibility for maintenance. Estimates for renovation of one building in Malá Strana would swallow the entire annual grant budget in Prague in the early 1990s, and an individual's lack of personal funds for repair costs because of low wages and heightened inflation compound the problem.¹²⁹ For state owned monuments, the government is responsible, and therein lies the rub—making the state fulfill its duty. The recent controversy over the repair of Charles Bridge illustrates this point. The nearly seven-century-old masonry bridge in the center of Prague is once again in need of repairs to forestall spreading cracks in its structure. The Czech government, specifically, prefers to wait until the problem is more pressing, while Prague mayor Jan Kasl would rather see preventative maintenance, paid for by the state, the official custodian of the National Cultural Monument bridge. Furthermore, the Ministry of Culture has pointed out that the repair cost of the bridge would exceed the annual budget dedicated to upkeep of all historic monuments in the Czech Republic. In the face of the financial crisis the Charles Bridge would cause, Kasl has called for a national fund and corporate and private contributions to foot the bill.¹³⁰ Josef Štulc diagnosed the problem in the early 1990s. Because of the scarcity of funds, "conservationists have been forced to adopt a new strategy: the restricted funds available

¹²⁷ Miloš Solář, "Peněz na opravy a údržbu historického dědictví bude napřesrok málo (Money for repair and maintenance of historical heritage will be little next year)," *MF Dnes*, 5 October 1999; available from <http://www.idnes.cz>; Internet; accessed 1 May 2001.

¹²⁸ "Where is money to maintain Prague's historical monuments?" *CTK Czech News Agency*, 2 March 2001.

¹²⁹ Hammersley and Westlake, "Urban conservation policy in the Czech Republic," 144.

¹³⁰ Michael Mainville, "Kasl says Charles needs fix," *Prague Post*, 21 February 2001; available from <http://www.praguepost.cz>; Internet; accessed 1 May 2001.

are distributed among the largest number of possible maintenance projects”.¹³¹ Perhaps the Communist era’s tendency to spend lavishly on a “prestigious” projects makes the Czech government today very wary of committing to the Charles Bridge repair project.¹³² The solution for Charles Bridge may be help from any of the international initiatives that have already placed seed monies in the Czech Republic, including the Prince of Wales’ Prague Heritage Fund as well as Programme Raphael, or PHARE 2000, both funded and administered by the European Union.¹³³

Conclusion

The history of historic preservation in Prague, Czech Republic, presents an extraordinary and varied record to both academic and casual observer alike. The survival of the city's rich architectural heritage, spanning over a thousand years, is rare among European cities. The comprehensive nature of Prague's official historic preservation legislation and practice offers lessons to its international counterparts. Prague's experience with the reordering of history by a totalitarian regime provides a useful lesson for both historians and historic preservationists. What is worthy of preservation? Why preserve X and not Y? The legacy of Communist rule--private property restitution, the challenges of heightened tourism & development, a suspicion of centralized planning, a nascent non-profit sector, and the limited availability of historic preservation funding--outline in sharp relief challenges found throughout the international preservation community. To that end, this study concludes with a series of recommendations for strategies to meet the challenges of historic preservation policy and practice in Prague, Czech Republic in the next century.

¹³¹ Josef Štulc, “The Current and Future Prospects for Conserving the Architectural Heritage of the Czech Republic,” 65.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Susan Ondrasek, “Aristocratic sojourn,” *Prague Post*, 8 November 2000; available from <http://www.praguepost.cz>; Internet; accessed 1 May 2001; Státní ústav památkové péče, “Programy, příspěvky a granty na podporu péče o kulturní dědictví.”

CHAPTER 4

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN PRAGUE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: RECLAIMING THE CZECH PATRIMONY

The last decade of the twentieth century marked the end of perhaps the most tumultuous era of Prague's history. With the return of a capitalist economy and democratic government following the Velvet Revolution, the Czech Republic and its capital city have the opportunity to reclaim the Czech patrimony of official historic preservation practice and private historic preservation advocacy. The following recommendations are designed to address the specific challenges faced by preservation professionals and supporters in Prague, and are grouped by issue. These suggestions have worked in other places in the world, namely the United States, and they may prove to be of value to Czech preservation professionals and officials. The level of priority that both government officials and private citizens should attach to each recommendation is outlined in turn. The timetable for implementing these recommendations is indefinite, and in some cases, may take more than a generation to achieve.

Private Property and Restitution

The challenges of the restitution of private property as part of the transition from a Communist to a democratic government are many. The previous lack of accountability and incentive for occupants and users of buildings gave many little experience with maintenance and architectural design issues. Technical assistance for owners of private property and tax incentives for certified restoration and adaptive use projects would assist in reversing this legacy of the Communist period.

1. **Provide technical assistance for private owners.** Exposing private property owners to

appropriate restoration and rehabilitation treatments for historic structures is key to fostering a conscientious attitude towards their property. Representatives from the State Institute for Monument Care, the Club for Old Prague, and municipal historic preservation boards could be called upon to offer such technical assistance to interested owners in workshop and charrette weekend formats. Graduates of a community education series in historic building maintenance could qualify as instructors, increasing the outreach capacity of this program. As an incentive to participate, property owners could be given a tax credit for their year's property taxes.¹ This type of program would accomplish what James Marston Fitch has termed the "education of the layman".² Such a program could be introduced on a small scale within the next few years as a service outreach project of historic preservation educational programs, and grow nationally over time.

2. Establish tax incentives for owners of historic homes and apartment cooperatives. The Czech government has yet to enact legislation granting tax incentives to owners of historic properties for certified adaptive use and restoration projects. The availability of such incentives in the United States has had an overall positive effect on the number and quality of adaptive use projects. The introduction of a parallel system in the Czech Republic would certainly bring about similar results pending adoption by the Czech Parliament.³ A tax incentive system could be later expanded to include commercial real estate projects as well. The introduction of tax incentives in tandem with technical assistance would be the most desirable option, and this legislative-educational program should be put into action in the short term.

¹ "Finance and Tax Incentives," *Architectural Conservation in the Czech and Slovak Republics* (New York: World Monuments Fund, 1993), 112-113.

² James Marston Fitch, "Curatorial Management of the Built World," *Architectural Conservation in the Czech and Slovak Republics* (New York: World Monuments Fund, 1993), 32.

³ Jiří Marek, "Writing Tax Law for the Czech and Slovak Republics," (New York: World Monuments Fund, 1993), 43-44.

Funding for Historic Preservation

The lack of proper funding for historic preservation projects at both the governmental and private level is a serious handicap to effective historic preservation practice in the Czech Republic and in Prague. Without sufficient financial resources—private or public subsidies, or private loan products—many property owners as well as the government itself are in no position to maintain historic structures properly. A wide availability of financing options would provide an important incentive framework for private preservation initiatives, including adaptive use and restoration projects. From a public finance standpoint, several methods of underwriting historic preservation activities could be undertaken without imposing a large tax burden on the public—a tourist tax in Prague; a national historic preservation lottery; and a real estate excise tax.

1. Establish a “family” of financing options for historic preservation projects.

The establishment of a “family” of financing options for owners and private organizations to undertake adaptive use projects or restoration projects, and to maintain standard upkeep would do a great deal to reverse this situation.⁴ The State Institute for Monument Care along with private preservation groups should spearhead an effort to help the financial sector develop a myriad of construction loans at for historic structures. The Czech government could set a ceiling for favorable interest rates for these types of specialized loans pending adoption by the Czech Parliament.

2. Institute a tourist tax to fund the Prague municipal historic preservation budget.

The idea of a tourist tax paid by the multitude of visitors to Prague each year could provide much needed funds for the upkeep of the very monuments and architecture they come to see; collection boxes placed throughout Prague could supplement the formal tourist tariff imposed on accommodation bills.⁵

⁴ Ibid., 111.

⁵ “Where is money to maintain Prague’s historical monuments?” *CTK Czech News Agency*, 2 March 2001.

3. Authorize a national lottery to fund historic preservation to fund official historic

preservation efforts and grant programs. On the national level, a Czech-wide lottery could do for historic preservation what it has done for higher education in the state of Georgia.⁶ The money could be distributed according to population and/or regional contribution percentages. A national lottery could be put in place as soon as adopted by the Czech Parliament.

4. Levy a national excise tax on real estate transactions to fund official historic

preservation efforts and grant programs. An national excise tax on real estate transactions of ¼ to ½ of 1% of the total sale price, as was previously proposed in the state of Georgia but rejected by referendum, could also be a viable option to raise funds for public support of historic preservation activities. Such a tax could be put in place as soon as adopted by the Czech Parliament.

Public Participation and Historic Preservation

Numerous academic commentators as well as the representatives of both national and local historic preservation agencies in the Czech Republic, including the director of the State Institute of Monument Care Josef Štulc have identified the relatively limited public involvement in the preservation process.⁷ The public must be brought into the “system of heritage preservation, including their appropriate participation in the decision making processes”.⁸ The challenge for historic preservation advocacy groups in the Czech Republic is to overcome the negative parochial attitudes that work to undermine their efforts; responding to the question of funding for repairs to the Charles Bridge in Prague, a man from southern Moravia—on the other side of the country—answered: “Why must Moravians pay...?”⁹ The negative public perception

⁶ Irena Rysankova, “Back to the future: Collection box returns to fund old and new building,” *Prague Business Journal*, January 28, 2002.

⁷ See, for example: Smidova, “Past Imperfect,” and Potůček, “The Uneasy Birth of Czech Civil Society.”

⁸ Státní ústav památkové péče [State Institute for Care of Historic Monuments], “Concept of a More Effective Care for Cultural Monuments in the Czech Republic until 2005”; available from <http://www2.mkcr.cz/english/concept.rtf>; Internet; accessed 3 February 2002.

⁹ “Kde by podle vás mělo město brát finance na opravu památek? (From where should Prague get money for monument restoration according to your opinion)”; available <http://praha.idnes.cz/chat.asp?t=MOST>; Internet; accessed 23 March 2001.

of planning as an outmoded Communist-era tool has alienated much of the public, and the current permit process is seen as a mysterious, impenetrable bureaucratic morass. The current state of historic preservation advocacy in the Czech Republic and Prague is fragmented, elitist, and limited in scope. A national preservation organization with companion regional preservation partners along with greater transparency in the planning and permit process would further the development of a viable civil society and strengthen private historic preservation efforts. In Prague, specifically, the Club for Old Prague needs to diversify membership, enlarge the scope of its activities, and establish borough committees.

1. Found a nation-wide historic preservation advocacy organization—the Czech National Trust to coordinate advocacy, grant-making, and preservation efforts. The formation of a nation-wide preservation advocacy organization, along the lines of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States, or the National Trust in the United Kingdom, would serve as a good step in coordinating local and regional historic preservation advocacy endeavors. In addition, such an organization could act as a clearing house for private grants for historic preservation, and partner with existing nonprofit institutions such as the Civic Forum Foundation [*Nadace OF*]. A Czech National Trust could also undertake the maintenance and administration of some important historic resources formerly overseen by the state; the “contributions of volunteers, individuals and collective members of the Trust could then enlarge the resources spent...these resources would grow with the number of members”.¹⁰

2. Found a companion series of regional preservation partner groups. Likewise, a Czech National Trust could help to found a uniform series of regional advocacy groups parallel to the state regional historic preservation agencies, coordinate the efforts of existing regional and local groups, and address in a comprehensive manner many of the problems that are replicated not only in Prague but also throughout the Czech Republic. This effort could very easily build on the

¹⁰ Eliška Fučíková, “The Need for Institutions for Historic Preservation in the ČSFR, *Architectural Conservation in the Czech and Slovak Republics* (New York: World Monuments Fund, 1993), 79-82.

existing regional heritage associations, and contribute to lessening the parochial attitude of many Czechs towards preservation by partnering to address shared historic preservation challenges.

3. Club for Old Prague: diversify membership. As for Prague itself, the Club for Old Prague is the premier private historic preservation advocacy group. However, the Club has a very small, elite membership, composed mostly of architectural and planning professionals and historians. The Club would do well to increase and diversify its membership and transform the club from an academic guild of sorts to a truly civic lobbying association. A membership drive would accomplish this goal as well as raise needed funds for expanded advocacy efforts; establishing district committees of the Club in each of Prague's boroughs would attract new members and supplement the Club's network for responding to preservation emergencies. A school-advocacy group partnership for an "adopt a monument" program for children and young adults could likewise diversify membership, thereby creating a pool of willing maintenance volunteers, and laying the foundation for the next generation of Prague historic preservationists.¹¹ This organizational expansion should be a priority for the Club for Old Prague, but undertaken after developing a clear plan for accomplishing this goal.

4. Club for Old Prague: Increase public exposure of historic preservation issues. The well known *Bestia triumphans* "anti-prize" for historic preservation, derived from the 1897 essay by one of the founders of the Club for Old Prague, condemning the demolition of Prague's Jewish ghetto, has successfully drawn attention to the most heinous examples of insensitive preservation policy as well as demolitions.¹² Looking to the *Bestia triumphans* "award" as a starting point, the Club for Old Prague could piggyback on successful publicity methods for drawing needed attention to historic preservation and expand its reputation; the Club could co-sponsor or adapt these techniques to its own needs. Take for example, the "Monuments Need Publicity" campaign, and the State Institute of Monument Care's version of the National Trust for Historic

¹¹ "Public awareness," *Architectural Conservation in the Czech and Slovak Republics* (New York: World Monuments Fund, 1993), 120.

Preservation's 11 Most Endangered Places list. The "Monuments Need Publicity 2000" campaign of the civic group Pro Bohemia and the Association of Journalists of the Czech Republic celebrated its third year in 2001; estimating the occurrence of articles and media coverage dealing with the problem of the care of cultural heritage, the sponsors in 2001 especially praised the work of Miloš Solař, an employee of the State Institute for Monument Care, who has written the weekly column "Monument Restoration" [*Obnova památek*] for the major Prague newspaper *MF Dnes* since 1996 as placing a much needed spotlight on historic preservation in Prague.¹³ Likewise, the State Institute of Monument Care's "List of Most Threatened and Exploited Immoveable Monuments in the Czech Republic" was updated in 2001, and inventories properties throughout the country region by region, including the top ten imperiled resources in Prague.¹⁴

Planning, Development, and Historic Preservation

The Czech public has proven over and over again its relative disinterest in public affairs, and mistrust of public agencies. Planning and the development process is no exception. The challenge is to increase transparency and to increase public participation. Efforts to increase transparency of the planning process in tandem with public participation in advocacy and decision making will result in ameliorating the post-1989 fragmentation of municipal planning while maintaining a flexible approach to historic preservation and planning. Heightened accountability for historic preservation officials, more staff at better salaries, and the use of public hearings will work to improve transparency and public trust of the official planning process. The development of public-private partnerships is a necessary adjunct program to accomplish the goals of greater transparency and public participation.

¹² "Památkáři mají anticenu," *MF Dnes*, 14 June 2000.

¹³ Lukáš Krejčí, "Potřebují památky publicitu?" *Pražské noviny*, 9 March 2001; available <http://www.prazskenoviny.cz>; Internet; accessed 1 May 2001.

¹⁴ Státní ústav památkové péče [State Institute for Care of Historic Monuments], "Seznam nejohroženějších a nevyužívaných nemovitých památek v České republice, 2001"; available <http://www.supp.cz/html/publikace/>; Internet; accessed 3 February 2002.

1. Make the planning and permit process as transparent as possible. This goal is of utmost importance and should be a priority for Czech historic preservationists. Prague's

Strategic Plan has itself recommended: "it is important to give some time to the problem of transparency in the performance of the administration with the removal of bureaucratic methods."¹⁵ In plain language, the current planning and permit process needs to become more understandable to the public, and not veiled by time nor shrouded by red tape.

2. Introduce heightened accountability standards for historic preservation officials.

In addition, changes in the legislative and administrative codes could introduce heightened accountability for historic preservation agency and municipal officials who make planning decisions affecting historic resources. Heightened accountability inevitably leads to greater transparency of the planning and permit process, and generate more public participation and interest in these governmental functions.

3. Hire more staff at higher salaries. The hiring of more staff and more funding for their salaries would increase efficiency and thereby transparency. Higher salaries mean fewer defections of staff to more lucrative private careers, and more incentive to expedite the review process for permit applications.

4. Incorporate public hearings and more elements of due process into the permit process.

Incorporating public hearings into the existing permit process would help to pierce the opaque veil that now exists. Public disclosure upon request of permit applications and decisions would also aid in establishing greater transparency of the process.

5. Establish public-private partnerships as an adjunct to the permit process.

Public-private partnerships between municipal historic preservation agencies and advocacy groups would inject the sort of public comment and participation necessary to improve the permit process for new development and adaptive use projects in historic areas as well as historic

¹⁵ "Strategický plan hlavního města Prahy" [Strategic Plan for the Greater City of Prague]; available from <http://212.67.66.237/strategplan/obsah.asp>; Internet; accessed 17 November 2001, 70.

preservation planning in general.¹⁶ This goal should be a priority. The Historic Preservation Council for the Mayor's Advisory Committee could act as the model for and progenitor of future public-private partnerships.

An inevitable and essential outgrowth of these partnerships will be development that is more sensitive to the existing historic fabric and context. Encouraging compatible, architecturally superior development is key to winning public trust in historic preservation while fostering new, bold design in a city noted for its avant-garde architectural movements.

6. Encourage development sensitive to historic preservation needs through comprehensive design guidelines, design workshops, technical assistance to commercial property owners, and historic property-investor "match" program.

With the privatization of property in the early 1990s, Prague became a hotbed of commercial and residential development. Unfortunately, the real estate investors who spawned this sector have not always been sensitive to the delicate balance between innovative architecture for new and adaptive use projects and mediocre design. The drafting of comprehensive design guidelines and their strict enforcement by municipal officials is the stick to accomplish this goal, but establishing private-public partnerships is the carrot. "A necessary condition for any business's success is its acceptance by society, which includes gaining the support of both clients and employees...Clever companies in Central and Eastern Europe are establishing real relationships with their communities to improve their image."¹⁷ One method developers can use to work with their neighbors and historic preservation advocacy groups is the Action Planning Weekend. This program works much like an American design charrette, has been a tool of the Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum, which carried out the successful Wenceslaus Square Planning Weekend in 1995 in cooperation with private owners, nonprofit community groups, and the Prague 1 borough government.¹⁸ This design tool

¹⁶ Ibid., 71.

¹⁷ Havel, 191-192.

¹⁸ "The Wenceslaus Square Planning Weekend"; available <http://www.lucerna.cz/weekend/index.html>; Internet; accessed 28 December 2000.

is especially potent in situations where an intermediary is needed to help find a common understanding between different negotiating parties and/or when a project is too complex to be understood by nonspecialists....A consensus is emerging from within the public and private sectors that a more effective way to create sustainable development is to get everyone involved in the process....Planning weekends are a technique by which a collaborative, interdisciplinary dialogue can be created at the formative stage of a project. All of the relevant parties can be created at the formative stage of a project. All of the relevant parties can be involved in this intensive period of working together.¹⁹

As with homeowners, technical assistance in the form of training programs and workshops could be offered to owners of commercial or investment property located in historically sensitive areas to educate owners about proper rehabilitation and restoration methods as well as the “economic potential of historic preservation”.²⁰

In addition, a “clearing house” for matching endangered properties with investors and developers could help to address the problem of neglected properties such as the Bud’ánka housing estate or Výšehrad train station and lead to a specialized niche for real estate agencies or revolving funds administered by private advocacy groups.²¹

Looking to the Future

The future of historic preservation in Prague is bright, indeed. The tradition of historic preservation in the Czech lands provides a solid foundation for future efforts in Prague and offers lessons for the international preservation community. The preceding list of recommendations is a starting point for the potential of the short term along with long term objectives in the areas of assistance for private property owners, funding, civic involvement, and planning and development. In order for the practice of historic preservation in Prague to continue to be enriched and improved, the free exchange of professional practice lessons is of utmost importance. To that end, the establishment of professional exchanges between Czech preservationists—both public and private—and their international colleagues will guarantee the success of historic preservation practice in Prague and the Czech Republic for years to come.

¹⁹ Havel, 199.

²⁰ “Finance and Tax Incentives,” 112-113.

²¹ Ibid.

1. Expand formal professional exchange programs between Czech and

international preservationists. Exchange programs already exist to a limited extent between Czech preservationists & their international colleagues; for example, the Nadace Via foundation has coordinated with grant money from the Trust for Mutual Understanding the visits of selected international advisors in the field of community revitalization with a special emphasis on historic preservation.²² Although formal education in historic preservation studies is available in several institutions in the Czech Republic, many employees of government agencies have not had proper training in architecture, architectural history, or planning. For the benefit of employees lacking formal degrees in related fields and for those with specialized educational backgrounds, such programs should be expanded and replicated throughout the Czech Republic, but especially in the urban environment of Prague. Funding could come from a variety of sources, including the World Monument Fund or the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), to make six-month to one year long appointments for exchanges of Czech and international preservationists. The various exchange programs sponsored by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) or the United States State Department's Hubert Humphrey Fellowship program for mid-career professionals could provide useful models for a preservation exchange program.²³ The fact of these precedents for small scale exchanges can mean that there could be an annual competition for an professional exchange program in future, and the Czech Republic could be a pilot program for an international exchange program, which would only enhance the level of professionalism among both public and private historic preservationists in the Czech Republic.²⁴

²² "Short-term Advisors Program"; available from http://www.nadacevia.cz/english_pages/Advisors%20program.htm; Internet; accessed 3 February 2002.

²³ "US/ICOMOS International Summer Intern Program"; available from <http://www.icomos.org/usicomos/SIP/internships.html>; Internet; accessed 3 February 2002; "Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program"; available <http://www.iie.org/pgms/hhh/>; Internet; accessed 3 February 2002.

²⁴ Myers, 50-51.

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APPENDIX

NATIONAL CULTURAL MONUMENTS IN PRAGUE

The present national cultural monuments in the city of Prague include (an * indicates those within the reservation, followed by the year of designation):

1. * The Prague Castle (*Hradčany*) in Prague 1 (1962);
2. * The Czech Coronation Jewels (1962);
3. * Charles Bridge with its sculptural works (*Karlův most*), spanning the Vltava between the Old Town and the Little Side (1962);
4. * Old Town Square (*Staroměstské náměstí*) in Prague 1 (1962);
5. * Church of the Virgin Marie at Týn (also known as the “Týn Church”), Old Town (*Staré Město*), Prague 1 (1962);
6. * Kinsky Palace, Old Town, Prague 1 (1962);
7. * Old Town City Hall, Old Town, Prague 1 (1962);
8. * New Town City Hall, New Town, Prague 2 (1962);
9. * The National Theatre (*Národní divadlo*), Prague 1 (1962);
10. * The National Museum (*Národní muzeum*), Prague 1 (1962);
11. * Bethlehem Chapel, Old Town, Prague 1 (1962);
12. * Estates Theatre (*Stavovské divadlo*), Old Town, Prague 1 (1962);
13. * The Carolinium (*Karolinium*), Old Town, Prague 1 (1962);
14. * Vyšehrad, Prague 2 (1962);
15. National Monument at Vítkov, Žižkov, Prague 3 (1962);
16. Battlefield at White Mountain and the Star summerhouse (*bojiště bitvy na Bílé Hoře s mohylou a letohrádek Hvězda s oborou*), Prague 6 (1962);

17. * St. Agnes of Bohemia Cloister (*Anežský klášter*), Old Town, Prague 1 (1978);
18. Cemetery of Fighters for Freedom (*čestná pohřebiště spojeneckých armád a bojovníků za svobodu na Olšanských hřbitovech*), Žižkov, Prague 3 (proclaimed 1978, listing modified 1999);
19. * Emmaus Cloister (*klášter na Slovanech*), New Town, Prague 2 (1978);
20. Monument to the Anti-Fascist Struggle (site of Reinhard Heydrich's assassination by Czechoslovak parachutists), Kobylisy, Prague 6 (1978);
21. Archive of the Czech Crown (1988);
22. * House of Artists, the Rudolfinum, Old Town, Prague 1 (1989);
23. * Monument to the Czech Resistance at the Petsch Palace, Old Town, Prague 1 (1989);
24. * Strahov Cloister, Little Side, Prague 1 (1989);
25. Břevnov Cloister (*Břevnovský klášter*), Prague 5 (1991);
26. * The Municipal House (*Obecní dům*), Old Town, Prague 1 (1995);
27. * The Clementinum in the Old Town, Prague 1 (1995);
28. * The former Jesuit gymnasium (school) in the Little Side (*Malá Strana*), Prague 1 (1995);
29. The Šárka fortress in Prague 6, Divoká Šárka (1995);
30. * Church of St. Nicholas in the Little Side, Prague 1 (1995);
31. The Muller Villa by Adolf Loos in Střešovice, Prague 6 (1995);
32. * The Monument of Saint Wenceslaus in Wenceslaus Square, New Town (*Nové Město*), Prague 1 (1995);
33. * Old-New Synagogue, Josefov, Prague 1 (1995);
34. * Old Jewish Cemetery, Josefov, Prague 1 (1995);
35. * Wallenstein Palace, Little Side, Prague 1 (1995);
36. The Zbraslav cloister complex in Prague 5 (1995);

37. * Site of the Parliament of the Czech Republic (a block of buildings consisting of the Wallenstein, Kolovrat, and Furstenberg palaces as well as a baroque house by Palliardi), Little Side, Prague 1 (1996).

This list was derived from information given to the author by PhDr. Václav Váňa. See Státní ústav památkové péče (State Institute for Care of Historic Monuments), “*Národní kulturní památky* (National Cultural Monuments)”; available from www.supp.cz/html/ipam/nkp.htm; Internet; accessed 16 September 2001.